In Pursuit of Successful Strategies

Principal Investigator: (b) (5)

Produced for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Office of Net Assessment
under contract vehicle:

HQ0034-11-C-0056

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Introduction

Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy. Once it has been determined,... it is easy to chart its course. But great strength of character, as well as great lucidity and firmness of mind, is required in order to follow through steadily, to carry out the plan, and not to be thrown off course by thousands of diversions.[1]

In my career as a military historian, the subject of strategy has come to play an increasingly important role in the topics that I have examined.[2] This is to a considerable extent been the result of the realization expressed by my colleague, Allan Millett and myself in an article dealing with the lessons to be learned from our study on military effectiveness in the first half of the twentieth century:

Whether policy shaped strategy or strategic imperatives drove policy was irrelevant. Miscalculations in both led to defeat, and any combination of politico-strategic error had disastrous results even for some nations that ended the war as members of the victorious coalition.... This is because it is more important to make correct decisions at the political and strategic level than it is at the operational and tactical level. Mistakes in operations and tactics can be corrected, but political and strategic mistakes live forever.[3]

Not surprisingly then, this is a book about strategy. Unlike its most recent predecessor, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, it addresses strategy in the widest sense: grand strategy in

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[1] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1976), p. 178.

[2] For two of the works that have resulted from this interest, see Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy, Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge, 1992); and Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey, eds., *The Shaping of Grand Strategy, Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011).

[3] Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, "Lessons of War," *The National Interest*, Winter 1988-1989.

peacetime as well as in war, theater strategy, military strategy, and political strategy. In most of these case studies, the key players in success have been the statesmen and military leaders at the center of events who not only have crafted and guided a successful approach to a knotty and inevitably complex strategic environment but have also had the strength of character to pursue their perceptions through to successful conclusion. But this study is more than just an examination of how a few exceptional individuals have managed to shape and mold strategy. There are also several examples of how organizational culture or groups succeeded in setting the parameters for success in the strategic realm. Since statesmen and military leaders will make strategy in the future, the authors of the essays in this study believe it is of crucial importance that America's political and military leaders understand how their predecessors in the past have developed and executed successful approaches to strategy.

In particular, the essays contained in this volume do not confine themselves to examinations of the employment of military forces in war to achieve strategic political aims, although any volume that aims at discussing strategic performance in the realm of the relations between states must devote a substantial portion of its examination of the use of military power in achieving political aims, the only reason for waging war. Inevitably, war or the threat of its employment is intimately intertwined with the conduct of strategy in the international environment. As the much quoted -- at least by all too many national political and military leaders – but little understood statement of Clausewitz underlines: "we see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."[4]

This collection is about approaches to the guiding of polities and military organizations

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[4] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 87. For the obdurate, and disastrous unwillingness of Germany's military leaders to recognize the wisdom of Clausewitz's observation, see particularly Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction, Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

into the future. Its case studies focus on individuals or corporate bodies that have developed and then prosecuted strategies that have led to success. It does not examine strategic approaches that have failed. Why not? Largely because history is replete with innumerable examples of states, statesmen, military organizations and generals and admirals who have failed ignominiously in pursuit of flawed strategy or strategies, or who in most cases have possessed no discernible strategy. In fact, the failures throughout history in strategic decision making have been legion. They litter the landscape with broken armies, collapsed economic systems, and all too often the wreckage of states and empires.

The simple truth is that statesmen and military leaders throughout history have embarked on various military ventures or attempted to manipulate the international arena with an enthusiastic disregard for realities. Clausewitz, with enormous irony, notes that "no one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."[5] But, of course, too many have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future.[6]

Monday-morning quarter-backing of this wreckage, of course, has provided royalties for innumerable historians, some with useful insights, but most without.[7] The reasons and factors that have produced successful strategies, however, have received either less attention than they deserve or overly critical analysis that set standards of behavior that would have been impossible

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[5] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 579.

[6] One might cynically note that in the case of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the senior policy makers simply wished away the possibility that there might be an insurgent conflict after the conventional conflict in spite of everything that history suggested about the political and religious milieu of Mesopotamia. They might even have read the memoirs of the British general who put down the uprising of the Iraqi tribes against British rule in 1920, but they did not. See Lieutenant General Aylmer L. Haldane, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, 1920* (London, 1922). Not surprisingly it was reissued in 2005 – a bit late in the game.

[7] For some of the factors that have lain behind and contributed to strategic and military disasters, see Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes, The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York, 1990).

to meet in the past, and will undoubtedly be impossible to meet in the present.[8] Much of the inadequacy of such accounts reflects the fact that most historians have never had the opportunity to serve in the highest levels of government, where they might have observed how strategy is made, or not made as the case may be.[9] Nevertheless experience has its limits. One is reminded of Frederick the Great's comment that one of his mules had participated in every one of his campaigns but was none the wiser.

Thus, this volume focuses specifically on those few areas where states, or military organizations, or individuals have crafted strategies that have led to success in the international arena in peacetime, the conduct of complex military operations in war, and the projection of military forces to achieve a successful end state. The purpose has been to suggest those attributes of successful strategies that might be of use to those charged with the responsibilities of thinking about, developing, articulating, and then conducting strategy for the United States in the twenty-first century.[10] Underlying our effort has also been our belief that history in particular provides insights and perceptions that are germane to any understanding of the strategic challenges that will confront the United States in the coming decades.

Moreover, it is our sense that simply achieving success in the short term, a period of say five to ten years, represents a considerable success at the strategic level, while successes that last for several decades represent strategic genius. Beyond several decades, it is almost impossible to

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[8] Moreover, historians have had a tendency to minimize the difficulties, ambiguities and uncertainties that are intimately intertwined with the development, articulation, and execution of successful strategic approaches at any level.

[9] Maurice Ashley, one of the great historians of Oliver Cromwell and who served Winston Churchill as a research assistant on the writing of the great man's biography of the Duke of Marlborough, noted that Churchill's work would stand as a great work of history well into the future particularly because he knew how great men interacted and talked with each other. However, one might also note that most historians who might observe the processes of strategic decision making would be no better prepared to judge what they saw than those who were making a hash of the strategic problems their nation was confronting.

[10] There is, of course, a caveat. One might argue that in some of the cases discussed in this volume strategic success was as much the result of incompetence or weaknesses of the losers as the brilliance of those who achieved strategic success.

plan, and those who believe that statesmen or military leaders can articulate strategies that will reach out far into the future are naive, arrogant, or unaware of the complexities that human interactions inevitably involve.[11] The proof of this lies in the simple fact that strategies which are successful for a decade or more are so rare in historical terms. Their rarity suggests the extent of the fog that enshrouds decision making in the realm of human affairs. Uncertainty and ambiguity as well as incomplete information have in the past and will in the future dominate the world of the strategist.

So what is strategy? Simply put, one can argue that it is a matter of connecting the available means to a political goal or goals. But, of course, it is much more than that. As Sun Tsu suggests, not only a deep understanding of oneself, but an equally sophisticated understanding of one's opponent distinguish the great strategist from the rest of the herd. Moreover, strategy demands constant adaptation to ever changing political and military environments. And that is where history proves to be the crucial enabler. Those who developed and conducted successful strategic approaches in the past have in almost every case possessed a sophisticated understanding of history and historical precedent.[12]

Moreover, one should note that the most sophisticated theorists of war and strategy, namely Thucydides and Clausewitz, immersed their examination of those two crucial topics in their deep understanding of history. As the ancient Greek historian explained, his reason for writing his history of the great war between Athens and Sparta lay in his hope that "these words

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[11] There are of course exceptions. The policy of containment that was developed in the late 1940s (see the chapters by Brad Lee and Thomas Mahnken later in this collection) certainly formed the basis for American strategy for most of the remainder of the Cold War, but it doubtful that George Kennan and Paul Nitze foresaw a strategy that would have to last for over 40 years, or which would have to wind its way through so many twists and turns, which in some cases involved even major limited wars, before reaching its end in the late 1980s and early 1990s, an end which virtually no one saw until the Soviet collapse came. For the best overall summary of the Cold War, the reader might want to consult John Gaddis, *Now We Know, Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford, 1998).

[12] The one exception might be the Athenian politician, general and strategist in the fifth century BC, who is the subject of our first case study.

of mine [will be] judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways be repeated in the future."[13]

For the Prussian theorist of war, the value of history lay in its ability to educate the mind of the future strategist or commander, not to provide them with answers. As he suggests in a comment about war, but which is equally applicable to strategy: "[A theory of strategy] is an analytical investigation leading to a close *acquaintance* with the subject; applied to experience – in our case, to [strategic] history – it leads to thorough *familiarity* with it. The closer it comes to that goal, the more it proceeds from the objective form of a science to the subjective form of a skill, the more effective it will prove in areas where the nature of the case admits no arbiter but talent."[14] Historical knowledge provides the opening through which one can frame the right question or questions, and if the strategist asks the right question, he or she has the chance of discovering answers of some utility. On the other hand, the wrong question, no matter how brilliantly articulated and phrased, is always guaranteed to provide an irrelevant or misleading answer.

In the Washington of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the concept of strategy has generated considerable interest at every level of government with innumerable "strategic" products the result. Proliferating like tasteless mushrooms in an overheated dark room, they include the "National Strategy for Maritime Security," the "National Strategy for Homeland Security," the "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," and the "National Military Strategy," among others. The list seems to stretch on into infinity, and these efforts are absolutely useless. A perceptive examination of the military balance in Asia has recently noted:

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[13] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, p. 48.
[14] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 141.

"Recent national security strategies – as well as the Obama administration's recent defense guidance white paper – tend to speak in general terms. Rather than outlining a limited and prioritized set of objectives, they often contain undifferentiated lists of desirable ends... [T]hey tend to speak of challenges in only the vaguest terms."[15]

A senior officer once commented to me about a draft of the "National Military Strategy" that, if one were to take every place where U.S. or American or United States appeared and replace those adjectives and nouns with Icelandic and Iceland, the document would be equably applicable to that tiny island nation. The problem lies in the fact that these so-called strategic documents are the products of bureaucratic processes that aim to remove every contentious issue, while insuring that those issues near and dear to the hearts of the participants receive the proper highlighting.[16] Written by large groups of the unimaginative, they are passed up the chain of command to insure that there is nothing daring or controversial that might upset the conventional wisdom with its comfortable assumptions about the future.

In his own day Clausewitz accurately portrayed a similar array of theories about the nature of war and strategy:

> It is only analytically that these attempts at can be called advances in the realm of truth; synthetically in the rules and regulations they offer, they are absolutely useless.
>
> They aim at fixed values; but in war everything is uncertain, and calculations have

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[15] Thomas G. Mahnken with Dan Blumenthal, Thomas Donnelly, Michael Mazza, Gary J. Schmitt, and Andrew Shearer, "Asia in the Balance, Transforming US Military Strategy in Asia," American Enterprise Institute, June 2012.

[16] This is true of virtually all government documents, the one exception being the *9/11 Report* , but much of bureaucratic Washington, not to mention a number of major political figures, attempted to strangle that effort before it even got started.

to be made with variable quantities.

They direct the inquiry exclusively towards physical quantities, whereas all military action is intertwined with psychological forces and effects.

They consider only unilateral action, whereas [strategy] consists of a continuous interaction of opponents.[17]

Each statement applies equally to the conduct of strategy. And so, as in so many human endeavors "*plus ça change, plus c'est la méme chose* (the more things change, the more they stay the same)."[18]

Paralleling the search in Washington for the magic elixir of strategic success has been an equally intense effort by so-called business strategists to unlock strategy, or more specifically strategic concepts to repair and guide corporations to success. Virtually all of those efforts over which business consultants spend endless hours – at great cost, one might add, to those who employ them – are useless. As one of the few perceptive theorists of business strategy has noted: "Bad strategy is long on goals and short on policy or action." Like most of those interested in strategy in the nation's capital, "[i]t puts forward strategic objectives that are incoherent and, sometimes, totally impracticable. It uses high sounding words and phrases to hide these failings."[19]

The same must be said of most of what passes for strategy in the policy and military realms – as well as in the academic world. Again Clausewitz's analysis is equally applicable to our current world of governmental and business strategy making: "Thus, it has come about that

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[17] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 136.

[18] A French proverb – one that goes well with the comment about the Bourbons on their return to France in 1815 – "they have learned nothing, and forgotten everything."

[19] Richard P. Rumelt, *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, The Difference and Why It Matters* (New York, 2011), pp. 36-37.

our theoretical and critical literature, instead of giving plain, straightforward arguments in which

the author at least always knows what he is saying and the reader what he is reading, is crammed

with jargon, ending at obscure crossroads where the author loses his reader."[20]

The Importance of History to Strategic Success

> *From the enemy's character, from his institutions, the state of is affairs and his general situation,*
> *each side, using the* <u>*laws of probability*</u>*, forms an estimate of its opponent likely course and acts*
> *accordingly.[21]*

Why then is history so important to the strategist? Just as steering a course requires a

point of departure, to think about the future, the strategist must understand the present. But the

only way to understand our own circumstances as well as the circumstances of allies and

opponents with whom we must deal, demands a deep understanding of how we and they have

reached the present. And that demands historical knowledge. Absent such knowledge, we are

like the English tourists, who, having asked an Irish farmer how they might get to Dublin

received the reply: "If I were going to Dublin, I would not start from here." [22] With no

knowledge of the past, any road into the future will do, and it will in nearly every case prove to

be the wrong road. Simply put, "a perceptive understanding of the present based on historical

knowledge is the essential first step for thinking about the future."[23]

The question then arises as to why so few statesmen, diplomats and military leaders have

been willing to examine strategic problems and issues through the lens of historical analysis.

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[20] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 169.

[21] Ibid., p. 80.

[22] I am indebted to Sir Michael Howard for this story. Unfortunately most of those who have practiced strategy throughout history have had little or no understanding of where they stand.

[23] Williamson Murray, "History and the Future," in Williamson Murray, *War Strategy and Military Effectiveness* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 16.

The unfortunate answer is that complexities of history demand time, effort, and guidance to grasp to the point where they are useful to the practioner of strategy.[24] To be of any real utility in dealing with the complex problems and uncertainty of strategy, their study must be a lifetime avocation, involving real commitment, not just an occasional reading or briefing.[25] Without that commitment, the attempt to use history becomes no more than a dumping ground from which one can salvage irrelevant ideas. Where the statesman has prepared herself or himself by lifelong study, history becomes an important and useful tool to compare, contrast, and evaluate the present against the past in order to think about the future. As Bismarck once noted, he preferred to learn from the mistakes of others.[26]

What then might history suggest about the fundamental requirements involved in the developing and conduct of successful strategy? First, it might suggest that even when a strategic course of action has some connection with reality and the means available, more often than not it will involve complex and difficult choices, annoying setbacks, and constant surprises. Those choices in turn will demand constant shifts and adaptation to an environment that is constantly shifting and changing in response to our actions. Those who make strategy confront the reality that they exist in a world in constant flux. Not only are their opponents making every effort to frustrate their moves, but unexpected and unpredictable events buffer strategists like waves pounding on a shore. As I noted in an earlier work:

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[24] In fairness, one must also note that most diplomatic and military historians write their studies with the aim of making them useful and comprehensible not only to present practioners, but to those who might be in positions to influence strategic decision making in the future.

[25] I addressed this problem in an earlier essay: See Williamson Murray, "Thoughts on Military History and the Profession of Arms," in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge, 2006).

[26] One must also underline that great literature as well as history can be of enormous utility in preparing the statesman or military leader to grapple with the strategic and political problems of the present. Bismarck, not surprisingly, was a great fan of Shakespeare.

Constant change and adaptation must be... the companions of grand strategy must be its companions if it is to succeed. Not only does it find itself under the pressures and strains of the politics and processes of decision making, but the fact that the external environment can and often does adapt will inevitably affect the calculations of those who attempt to chart its course. The goals may be clear, but the means available and the paths are uncertain. Exacerbating such difficulties is the reality that... strategy demands intuitive as much as calculated judgment.[27]

A table in Joint Operational Environment of 2008 suggests the extent of the political, diplomatic, economic, and ideological changes that overwhelmed the strategic environment over the course of the last century:

1900: If you are a strategic analyst for the world's leading power, you are British, looking warily at Britain's age-old enemy France.

1910: You are allied with France [and Russia], and your enemy is Germany. [Nevertheless, Britain's chief trading partner is Germany. The world's first period of globalization is reaching its peak.]

1920: Britain and its allies have won World War I, but now the British find themselves engaged in a naval race with their former allies, the United States and Japan. [The Great War has ended the first period of globalization, while the United States has emerged as the world's dominant economic and industrial

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[27] Murray, Sinnreich, and Lacey, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, p. 11.

power.]

1930: For the British, the naval limitation treaties are in place, the Great Depression has started, and defense planning for the next five years assumes a 'ten-year rule no war in ten years. British planners posit the main threats to the Empire as the Soviet Union and Japan, while Germany and Italy are either friendly or no threat.

1935: A British planner now posits three great threats: Italy, Japan, and the worst a resurgent Germany, while little help can be expected from the United States.

1940: the collapse of France in June leaves Britain alone in a seemingly hopeless war with Germany and Italy, with a Japanese threat looming in the Pacific. The United States has only recently begun to rearm its military forces.

1950: The United States is now the world's greatest power, the atomic age has dawned, and a "police action" begins in June in Korea that will kill over 30,000 Americans, 58,000 south Koreans, nearly 3,000 Allied soldiers, 215,000 North Koreans, 400,000 Chinese, and 2,000,000 Korean civilians before a cease-fire brings an end to the fighting in 1953. The main [U.S.} opponent is China, America's ally in the war against Japan.

1960: Politicians in the United States are focusing on a missile gap that does not

genuinely exist; [the policy of] massive retaliation will soon give way to flexible response, while a small insurgency in South Vietnam hardly draws American attention.

1970: The United States is beginning to withdraw from Vietnam, its military forces in shambles. The Soviet Union has just crushed incipient rebellion in the Warsaw Pact. Détent between the Soviets and the Americans has begun, while the Chinese are waiting in the wings to create an informal alliance with the United States.

1980: The Soviets have just invaded Afghanistan, while a theocratic revolution in Iran has overthrown the Shah's regime. "Desert One" – an attempt to free American hostages in Iran – ends in a humiliating failure, another indication of what pundits were calling the "hollow force." America is the greatest creditor nation the world has ever seen.

1990: The Soviet Union collapses. The supposedly hollow force shreds the vaunted Iraqi Army in less than 100 hours. The United States has become the world's greatest debtor nation. Very few outside of the Department of Defense and the academic community, use the internet.

2000: Warsaw is the capital of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Terrorism is emerging as America's greatest threat. Biotechnology, robotics,

nanotechnology, HD energy, etc. are advancing so fast they are beyond forecasting.[28]

Perhaps the most difficult problems that any strategist must confront are those involved in securing the peace in the aftermath of war.[29] What many are now terming conflict termination represents a host of intractable problems. In some cases, the making of peace confronts a "wicked problem," one where quite simply there is no satisfactory solution. Historians and pundits have often criticized the Treaty of Versailles as not only an unfair*,* but also an incompetent treaty that made World War II inevitable.[30] Yet what other avenues were open to the peace makers in Versailles? A harsher peace would have made a future conflict impossible, but that path required the continuation of military operations, as the American General John J. Pershing urged, and the imposition of peace terms in Berlin with Allied troops occupying the remainder of Germany. However, not surprisingly, there was no willingness among the French and British, after four years of slaughter on the Western Front, to continue the war onto German territory.

The other option would have been to grant the Germans an easy peace, but such a peace would have made Germany the dominant power on the continent, in other words the victor, a conclusion that was absolutely unacceptable, given the atrocities that the Germans had committed in France and Belgium throughout the war, not to mention the terrible casualties the

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[28] Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operational Environment* (Norfolk, 2008). Jim Lacey and the author of this essay were the authors of this document. The study was sponsored by General James Mattis, at the time the commander of Joint Forces Command and presently (2012) the commander of Central Command and one of the foremost thinkers among senior officers in the U.S. military.

[29] For a wider discussion of the issues involved in the aftermath of war, see Williamson Murray and James Lacey, *The Making of Peace, Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge, 2008).

[30] The magazine, *The Economist*, commented in January 2000 the "The final crime [was] the Treaty of Versailles, whose harsh terms would ensure a second [world] war." For an examination of the complexities of peace-making in 1919 see my peace, "Versailles: the Peace without a Chance," in *The Making of Peace.*

victors had suffered in defeating an arrogant and aggressive opponent.[31]

Similarly, the great strategist Otto von Bismarck confronted the wicked problem of war termination when it came to making peace with France in 1871. In Prussia's victory over Austria in the Seven Weeks' War in 1866, the Iron Chancellor had been able to finesse the problem of making peace by imposing a peace in which the Austrians lost nothing, while the Prussians made their gains entirely at the expense of the other German states. However, in the case of France, Bismarck first confronted the difficulty that the French empire of Napoleon III had collapsed to be replaced by an intransigent republic that had declared a *lévee en masse*. Moreover, having let loose German nationalism to cement the south German states to his new creation, Bismarck discovered an aroused populace that demanded its pound of flesh from their ancient enemy, while the leaders of the Prusso-German Army were demanding an extension of the new German Empire's frontier to the west for purposes of strategic security.

The result was that Bismarck imposed on the French a peace treaty that saw the inclusion of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine within the borders of the new German Empire – an inclusion that poisoned Franco-German relations for the next 43 years. Bismarck must undoubtedly have also calculated that the French Republic would never have been reconciled to the appearance of a powerful German state on its western frontier, but whatever the nature of the peace, it fully contained the seeds of a future conflict. In every respect it represented an unsatisfactory result in terms of war termination, but in the real world of politics and rabid nationalism, was there a viable alternative?

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[31] Not only had the Germans slaughtered approximately 6,000 civilians as hostages in response to supposed guerrilla activities (most of which had not occurred), but thereafter they had come close to starving the Belgians and French in the areas they had occupied, and then during their retreat back toward the German frontier in the war's last months they had destroyed everything that could be destroyed. Among the more recent examinations of the extent of German atrocities in 1914 see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT, 2001).

The problems involved in the making of peace reflect the inherent difficulties involved in all strategic decision making. Inevitably unpredictable and unforeseen second and third order effects will arise to plague strategic decisions. The problem that confronts most flawed strategies is that in a non-linear world of complexity and uncertainty, policy makers and military leaders most often follow a linear course which fails to take into account three fundamental drivers in international relations. The first is the nature of human beings. No matter how clever and sophisticated the policy, it will in the end be executed by individuals who are often less than competent, as well as those whose emotions more often than not get in the way of clear thinking.[32] Thus, anger, bitterness, and shortsightedness will inevitably twist and distort the execution of any effort to formulate coherent policy. The second lies in the fact that chance and the unforeseen will inevitably interfere with whatever path is chosen. And the third lies in the fact that one's opponent always has a vote, and will more often than not choose the unexpected response to whatever policy has been determined.[33]

Nevertheless, no matter how rare, sophisticated strategic thinking has been around since the beginning of recorded history. In his brilliant account of the Peloponnesian War, one that is both historical and theoretical in its examination of war, Thucydides imbedded in his history a deep appreciation of strategy, along with the difficulties involved in its implementation. There have been a number of recent classical historians who have cast doubt on the idea that the Greeks and the Romans had a conscious understanding of strategy in the modern sense, but a simple reading of the first book in the Peloponnesian War suggests otherwise.[34]

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[32] For the role of incompetence in human affairs see the concluding chapter in Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939, The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, NJ, 1984).

[33] This is particularly the case because estimates of how an opponent might react are so often cast with little knowledge of his history, his culture, and a Weltanschauung that is fundamentally at odds with what we would like to believe.

[34] The publication of Edward Luttwak's *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century to the Third* (Baltimore, MD, 1979) set off efforts by a number of Roman historians to dismiss Luttwak's thesis entirely on the

The Spartan king, Archidamnus in addressing the Spartan assembly as to whether Sparta should declare war on Athens laid the strategic issues in exquisite and all too accurate terms. It is a speech driven by a keen sense of the strategic environment and the difficulties Sparta might – and did – confront in the war on which it embarked in 431 BC.

Spartans, in the course of my life I have taken part in many wars, and I see among you people of the same age I am. They and I have had experience, and so are not likely to share in what may be a general enthusiasm for war, nor to think that war is a good thing or a safe thing. And you will find, if you look carefully into the matter, that this present war which you are now discussing is not likely to be anything on a small scale.... [Against the Athenians] we shall be engaged with people who live far off, people who also have the widest experience of the sea and who are extremely well equipped in all other directions, very wealthy both as individuals and as a state, with ships and cavalry and hoplites, with a population bigger than that of any other place in Hellas, and then, too, with numbers of allies who pay tribute to them. How then can we irresponsibly start a war with such a people? What have we to rely upon if we rush into it unprepared?... What sort of war, then are we going to fight? If we can neither defeat them at sea nor take away from them the resources on which their navy depends, we shall do ourselves more harm than good.[35]

Arcidamnus' opponent in the debate was the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas, whose speech at

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basis that the ancients had no understanding of strategy. See the discussion of this phenomenon in the Lacey chapter of this collection.

[35] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Rex Warner (London, 1954), pp. 82-83.

first glance appears to modern ears, which know how the war will turn out, a simple-minded strategic approach: march into Attica, destroy the countryside and the Athenian shrines, and the Athenians will march out to face the hopeless task of defeating the Spartan phalanx.[36] Yet, in fact, the ephor's strategic vision came close to realization in the first year of the war. Only by preventing the Athenian assembly from meeting was Pericles able to prevent the Athenians from voting to march out and meet the Spartans, in what would have probably resulted in a disastrous Athenian defeat.

Nevertheless, the question inevitably must arise: if in the end Archidamnus's strategy was so wise why did the Spartan assembly reject it out of hand? Here Clausewitz provides the most cogent answer: "Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy. Once it has been determined, from the political conditions, what a war is meant to achieve and what it can achieve, it is easy to chart its course." But there is a stumbling block. "But great strength of character, as well as great lucidity and firmness of mind, is required...."[37] For the Spartans, a major contributor to the vote against Archidamnus' strategic approach was the fact that not only did it postpone the settlement of the Athenian problem to some later dated, but it posited a difficult and uncertain strategic course of action that has its sub-text great difficulties and challenges not only in terms of its military aspects, but to Sparta's very way of life.[38] Nevertheless, despite the fact that Archidamnus's alternative seems both reasonable and perceptive to us in the twenty-first century, especially given the fact that we know how the war will turn out, to the Spartans nothing was clear or certain, as the debate in the

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[36] Given the secretive nature of Spartan society, it is not entirely clear where the position of ephor fit within the political framework of the Spartan constitution. Nevertheless, the position appears to have been similar to that of tribune in the Roman Republic.

[37] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 178.

[38] Which is why, of course, no one listened to the Trojan princess Cassandra – she demanded that her countrymen address the uncomfortable realities that challenged their comfortable assumptions.

assembly of warriors unfolded.

Thus, when it turned out that Sthenelaidas was wrong, and the Athenians did not come out to fight, the Spartans ended up in following the advice of their king, but only because the force of circumstances forced them to follow that hard strategic path. But it was to prove an extraordinarily difficult course that saw the Spartans confronted defeats not only at sea, but even on land. And at the Battle of Mantinea against the Argives and Athenians, they came close to losing the war. In the end they won, but even Archidamnus could not have conceived of a struggle that would last for 27 years, exhaust all the contestants, and in the long-run undermine the political and demographic basis on which Spartan society had rested for nearly three centuries. Indeed, even successful strategy can have a darker downside. Success in the present may well carry the seeds of future, unpredictable results. Moreover, the unintended effects of success can have serious, if not disastrous, consequences, as American policy makers discovered in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in April 2003.

An attempt to draw lessons from the past also demands that we pay the closest attention to the context within which past events have occurred. Not to do so is to court a faulty approach to the problems of the present. In understanding the lessons of strategic history, the context matters. Basil H. Liddell Hart, one of the great strategic pundits of the first half of the twentieth century, developed a theory of what he termed "the British way in war." Repelled by the horror of the First World War, during which he had been badly gassed on the Somme, Liddell Hart argued that in the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, Britain, employing a strategy of indirect approach had committed relatively few troops to the great wars that had erupted on the European continent, but had instead used the opportunity to attack its main enemies, France and Spain on the periphery, and thereby had seized a great colonial empire.

Thus, he posited that Britain's decision to create a great army in the First World War and then commit it to the fight against the Germans in northern France and Belgium represented a terrible strategic mistake.

All in all, the theory of the "British way in war" seemed to make great sense in the aftermath of the Great War. It certainly influenced British political leaders like Neville Chamberlain to minimize the preparation of the British Army for a war on the continent until far too late.[39] But there was a major flaw in Liddell Hart's strategic theory. It entirely ignored the contextual differences between the First World War and the great global conflicts of the eighteenth century. As Michael Howard has suggested: "It was... precisely the failure of German power to find an outlet and its consequent concentration in Europe, its lack of any significant possessions overseas, that made it so particularly menacing to the sprawling British empire in two world wars and which make so misleading all arguments about 'traditional' British strategy drawn from earlier conflicts against the Spanish and French Empires, with all the colonial hostages they had offered to fortune and the Royal Navy."[40]

But even in the war against the French at the turn between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British had discovered that what had worked for them in earlier wars was no longer applicable. At the start of the war against Revolutionary France, the strategy of attacking the French colonies again came into play. As Henry Dundas, in charge of Britain's conduct of the war against Revolutionary France, commented, "This country [Britain] having captured the French West India islands and destroyed their existing fleet, may long rest in peace."[41]

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[39] For a discussion of these issues Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power*.
[40] Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (London, 1989), p. 32. And one might note that in both the War of Spanish Succession as well as the Napoleonic Wars, the British were forced to commit major armies at great cost to the wars on the European continent.
[41] Quoted in N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean, A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1845* (London, 2004), p. 426.

Dundas was, of course, completely wrong. Napoleon put paid to the British minister's assumptions, because in his destruction of the other major powers, the emperor could not have cared less about what the British did or did not do in the Caribbean. Thus, as Richard Sinnreich points out in his essay in this volume, the British governments that attempted to cobble together a strategy that looked much like what Liddell Hart suggested, discovered that it was not until they could confront the power of France on the continent not only with allies capable of staying the course but with a major military effort in Spain, led by the Duke of Wellington, that they could finally destroy Napoleon's Empire and remove that existential threat to Britain's national security and interest.

In addressing of the strategic problems of the present, one must remember that history always suggests that unexpected third and fourth order effects will plague one's steps and that the unintended impact of unexpected results will affect the future course of strategy. No should we forget that strategic surprises will haunt the decisions that are made. Indeed as Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians suggests about our understanding of the future: "We see through a glass darkly."[42] History can suggest possibilities about the future, but it can never remove the fact that chance, ambiguity, and uncertainty will always mask the road into the future

Conclusion

I has always been a shortcoming of the Germans to seek all or nothing, and to focus exclusively on a particular method. In contrast I was always pleased if I managed to come three steps closer to German unification, by whatever means. I would have grasped at any solution that led to the expansion of Prussia and German unity without war. Many paths led to my goals, and I had to arrange them one after the next, with the most dangerous last. Uniformity in business is not my

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[42] 1st Corinthians, 13-12, King James Version of the Bible.

During the course of the twentieth century, the United States confronted three great challenges: World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. In each of those conflicts the United States found itself engaged in an existential struggle, in which the values that it regarded as fundamental to its conception of civilization were in danger of collapse at least in the outside world, if not within its borders. The strategic approaches cast by America's political and military leaders proved essential in the defeat of Wilhelmine Germany, the Axis coalition, and the Soviet Union.

In those three contests, one of the great advantages the Americans enjoyed was the fact that they understood their opponents better than their opponents understood them.[44] That understanding was informed by an historical knowledge that allowed American statesmen and military leaders to recognize the fundamental nature of their opponents, their strengths as well as their weaknesses.[45] Many of those leaders were deeply informed about the course of human events, reaching far afield, even into ancient history. Thus, it is not surprising that George C. Marshall in an address at Princeton in February 1947 commented that he doubted "whether a man can think with full wisdom and with conviction regarding certain of the basic international issues today who has not reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the fall

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[43] Quoted in Marcus Jones, "Strategy as Character: Bismarck and the Prusso-German Question," in Murray, Sinnreich, and Lacy, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, p. 86.

[44] In the late 1970s and early 1980s American military historians became intrigued with the tactical and operational virtuosity of the German Army. What they missed was the extraordinarily flawed approach to strategy that drove the Germans to defeat in both the great world wars. And at the heart of that mishappened strategy lay the German ignorance not only of America's political strengths and capabilities, but of its extraordinary economic strengths that in World War II would allow it to fight a two front war in the Atlantic and the Pacific as well as supporting the military efforts of its allies Britain and the Soviet Union.

[45] Admittedly other factors, such as geography and major strategic mistakes by its opponents aided the United States in achieving success.

of Athens."[46]

Unfortunately for the prospects of U.S. strategy in the twenty-first century, the generals and admirals who lead America's military institutions to a great extent reflect the society from which they spring. One doubts that many, if any, of the generals or admirals on active duty today have read Thucydides, much less others of the great books that inform and educate their readers about the complexity, ambiguities, and uncertainties of history.[47] As for America's political leaders, given what has been occurring in the hallowed halls of major university history departments with the destruction of the study of serious history, one can doubt whether any of the senior policy makers in Washington have the slightest concept of even our most recent history.[48] What makes this particularly worrisome is the fact that a sophisticated knowledge of history is necessary to understand who we Americans are: our strengths, our weaknesses, and the perspectives of potential opponents in the twenty-first century. Over the past several decades we have come to mirror image, distort, and misunderstand not only the nature of our allies, but of our opponents as well.

In Thucydides's history of the Peloponnesian War, the Corinthian ambassadors to Sparta described the Athenians in the following terms:

An Athenian is always an innovator, quick to form a resolution and quick at carrying it out. You [Spartans] on the other hand are good at keeping things as

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[46] Quoted in W. Robert Conner, *Thucydides* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), p. 3. It is clear that Marshall had read Thucydides, because there was no other source for an understanding of that conflict that provides the richness of that history by the greatest of all military and strategic historians.

[47] There is one exception: the Strategy and Policy course at the Naval War College has at its center piece a week long study of Thucydides and the course of the Peloponnesian War. But then, the navy sends few of its most outstanding officers to study at the Naval War College.

[48] In the early 1990s the U.S. postal service printed a series of stamps to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the major events that involved U.S. military forces. One of those stamps was to commemorate the dropping of the Atomic bomb on Japan in early August 1945, but considering the vociferous objections of the Japanese government, the Clinton administration cancelled the issuing of the stamp on 7 December 1994.

they are; you never originate an idea, and your action tends to stop short of its aim.... Think of this too; while you are hanging back, they never hesitate... [E]ach man cultivates is own intelligence, again with a view to doing something notable'" If they aim at something and do not get it, they think they have been deprived of what belongs to them already; whereas, if their enterprise is successful, they regard the success as nothing compared to what they will do next.... Of them alone it may be said that they possess a thing almost as soon as they have begun to desire it, so quickly with them does action follow upon decision. And so they go working away in hardship and danger all the days of their lives, seldom enjoying their possessions because they are always adding to them.[49]

Should someone describe Americans in similar terms, it is likely that many Americans would take such words as a favorable description of who we are and how we act on the world's stage. It is equally likely that many in the countries outside the United States would believe it a great insult were such words to be used to describe their nation. That alone underscores the extent of our inability to understand the "other." And in the twenty-first century the "other" will matter to an extent never before true in the history of the United States.

In the end, the development and articulation of a strategy that has some chance of success in a world of ambiguity, uncertainty, and constant political and economic change demands that the right questions be asked. Such questions must address not only the realistic possibilities that rest on an understanding of potential opponents, but ourselves as well. Moreover, the examination of critical strategic decisions must also address the possibility of unintended effects

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[49] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* p. 76.

on the other complex issues that confront policy makers and military leaders. It is our hope that these case studies may illuminate the complexities of the past. We offer this work to the strategists of the future.

The Strategic Thought of Themistocles

The Athenian statesman and general Themistocles (524-459 BC) was generally regarded by the ancient world as the architect of fifth-century Athenian naval power and the visionary who put in place the foundations of the Athenian Empire that came to fruition under the subsequent leadership of Pericles (ca. 461-429 BC). Contemporaries were quick to note that his strategic forethought (*pronoia*) was neither ad hoc nor piecemeal, but carefully planned and systematic in its implementation.

Most famous of later encomia of the foresight of Themistocles was the in-depth assessment of the historian Thucydides who concluded: "To sum up, whether we consider the extent of his natural powers, or the slightness of his application, this extraordinary man must be allowed to have surpassed all others in the faculty of intuitively meeting an emergency" (κράτιστος δὴ οὗτος αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὰ δέοντα ἐγένετο).[50]

We can divide that faculty of "intuitively meeting an emergency" into three areas that also follow chronologically: a) the construction of the Athenian navy (482); b) the decision to privilege naval power during the invasion of Xerxes (480-79) as the chief arm of Athenian defense; and c) the subsequent policy of Athenian fortification, military and civilian evacuation, and the creation of a maritime empire (479). None of these policies would have followed without Themistocles's leadership, and most of them were strongly opposed by rivals at the time. In addition, while Themistoclean foresight helped defeat the Persians and found the Athenian

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[50] Thucydides (1.138.3-4, Crawley translation). Cf. the contemporary appreciation of Themistocles as the father of the Athenian navy and the architect of Athenian maritime hegemony, in J.R. Hale, *Lords of the Sea. The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy* (New York, 2009), pp. 3-14.

Empire, it also led to a radicalization of the Athenian state that contributed to its eventual defeat and impoverishment by Sparta.

From Marathon to the Construction of the Athenian Fleet

The Persian interest in at first punishing, and later annexing, mainland Greece ostensibly originated in the breakaway attempt of the subjugated Greek city-states on the coast of Asia Minor. After the failure of the Ionian Greeks to end their half-century of Persian occupation and to win their freedom from King Darius (494), the Persians sought to punish the Athenians, who had sent aid to their rebellious Ionian cousins across the Aegean. The Persians expected such retribution to be an easy matter given the absence of a credible Athenian fleet.

Despite an initial failure in Northern Greece, Darius struck back directly against Athens in 490. The king dispatched his generals Datis and Artaphernes with a second expeditionary force of some 25,000-30,000 sailors and infantry. This time the expedition headed on a beeline path across the sea to the Greek mainland; the king's force was not large enough to conquer Greece, but felt to be sufficient to occupy and punish the Athenians for the interference in Persian affairs.

After easily conquering the island of Naxos in mid-route, the Persians captured the key city of Eretria on the large island of Euboea across from the Attic mainland. Next, sometime in mid-August 490 BC, the generals landed on the eastern coast of Attica itself at the plain of Marathon, just 26 miles from Athens, in hopes of defeating outnumbered Athenian infantry forces, of marching overland to the city, and of installing a pro-Persian government. Given the

absence of Athenians ships, the Persians felt that they could land in Attica almost anywhere they pleased.

Yet in a set-piece infantry battle, the outnumbered, but more heavily-armed phalanx of the Athenians and Plataeans won a crushing victory over the lighter-clad Persians. The invaders had foolishly advanced into the enclosed plain of Marathon apparently without cavalry support. Though enjoying numerical superiority, the Persians were nonetheless trapped by an Athenian double envelopment that turned a defeat into a rout. Although the Persians may have outnumbered the defenders by three to one, the combined Greek forces still killed over 6,400 of the enemy—at a loss of only 192 Athenians and Plataeans. Heavy armor and columnar tactics had smashed apart the more loosely deployed and lighter-clad invaders. Then, almost immediately the Athenians sent the majority of their infantry back over the mountains to the harbor at Phaleron to prevent the surviving Persian fleet from circling back to land at a relatively undefended Athens. Most Greeks, Spartans especially, who had stayed away from the battle, could not quite fathom how just two Greek city-states had turned back an invasion from the enormous Persian Empire.[51]

Themistocles was in his mid-thirties and fought probably as a hoplite at Marathon. Indeed, he had been elected magistrate, or archon, of the young democracy just three years prior to the battle (493). Yet credit for the victory properly belonged to the more conservative leader Miltiades, commander-in-chief of the Greek infantry generals on the day of battle. Before the fighting began, Miltiades had proved the architect of the winning strategy of weakening the Greek center to draw in and envelop on the wings the charging Persian mass. In a tactical sense, Miltiades had foreseen that Greek hoplites, if pitched battle were offered on their rather narrow

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[51] For the campaign and battle, especially the date, strategy, and the numbers of combatants involved, see the controversies in J. Lazenby, *The Defence of Greece, 490-479 B.C.* (Warminster, 1993), pp. 46-64.

terms and the numerical odds were not too lopsided, were nearly invincible—given their superior armament, shock tactics, cohesion, and discipline.

The clear consensus of the times, then, was that an entire Persian invasion had been thwarted by a single glorious battle of better men in bronze. For each Athenian or Plataean hoplite that fell, 33 Persians perished. Both the infantry victory and the subsequent famous 26-mile march to beat the Persian fleet back to Athens were immortalized as the proper way to defend the city. No walls or ships—or poor people—had been necessary to save Athens from Persian hordes. Courage, more than mere numbers, mattered. That Athenian hoplites had won without the crack troops of Sparta made the victory all the more reassuring. Such iconic status made it difficult over the next decade to question the wisdom of second-guessing the supremacy of the Athenian hoplite.[52]

Yet despite the contemporary Athenian ebullition, Marathon under closer examination soon proved not quite the final victory it had appeared at the time. A worried young Themistocles, almost alone among Athenian leaders, seems to have drawn quite different lessons from the Marathon. He saw no grand Athenian strategy involved in the infantry victory, in which Persian negligence played an unappreciated role. Instead to his mind, Marathon signaled a "beginning of far greater struggles"—given the superior resources of Persia that were still uncommitted to the war against the Greeks, and were hardly even attrited by the humiliating defeat at Marathon. Themistocles immediately tried to warn his fellow Athenians that unfortunately there would be no future Marathons in the face of "events still to come". Yet few Athenians wished to hear that ominous message at this time—perhaps the ancient equivalent of someone admonishing the Americans in January 1991 that their four-day brilliant victory over

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[52] Agrarian conservatives always claimed exclusive credit for Marathon; see V.D. Hanson, *The Other Greeks. The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), pp. 323-7. For the "Marathon men," cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 986.

Saddam Hussein, was the beginning—not the end—of a far longer rivalry with such a determined foe, one that might last for 12 more years.[53]

Themistocles rightly saw that the superior Persian forces had arrived in Attica in 490 BC after conquering both the islands of Naxos and Euboea without much Greek interference. No Athenian naval forces had intercepted the Persians when their transports were most vulnerable at sea. The Persian choice of battle at Marathon was in retrospect unwise, but nevertheless theirs alone. The Persian admirals under their general Datis—without worry about their Greek counterparts—alone had chosen when and where to fight. The Greeks had been reactive, given their limited options, and apparently lucky that the Persians unwisely fought when and how they did.

Despite the Greek victory and the high enemy losses, perhaps over three-fourths of the defeated Persian force had simply sailed away unscathed. Sea-power, Themistocles would soon argue, had enabled the Persians to arrive when and where they wished—and had also allowed thousands of survivors a chance to leave unscathed. In contrast, Athens by 490 still had only a small fleet and thus no comparable maritime lift capability. Only a farseeing, perhaps even contrarian mind—and a willingness to endure ridicule—might appreciate such fundamental strategic Athenian vulnerability at a time of infantry triumphalism.

Themistocles apparently came to a second conclusion. Despite the brilliant Greek infantry victory, the defeated Persians forces, utilizing their control of the sea, had almost outpaced the victorious Athenians back to a nearly defenseless city. In the future, if an Athenian army had to march up and down the coast each time a Persian armada in the Aegean threatened

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[53] On Themistocles's foresight, see Plutarch, *Themistocles* 3.3-4. Most generals tried to best use the resources their societies put at their disposal; Themistocles, in contrast, ensured that his society would have the wisdom and capability to put the right resources at his disposal.

an amphibious attack on the Attic coast, how could the city itself ever be truly safe without fortifications?

Third, the young democracy at Athens was only 17 years old. Most citizens, despite the radical notion of "power to the people," remained poor. At least half did not own land. Current Athenian infantry dominance, based on the property wealth of the hoplite class, did not reflect the demography of the young democracy. To the mind of the radical Themistocles, such a new Athenian experiment in egalitarian politics would never work if the defense—and with it the prestige and wealth of the city—rested only with a minority of conservative property owners who would judge their own interests as the same as those of Athens at large. Was not there a way that Athens still might survive, even should its farmland be overrun? How could the city remain safe against the Persian hordes when thousands of landless Athenians were not fully mobilized for its defense?

Military strategy, in other words, also had to reflect class realities. Wars could be as much about internal politics as they were strictly national defense. Accordingly, using public money to pay thousands of the poor to row in fleet or build fortifications would in addition strengthen the new democracy. With a navy and walled city, the poor would have wages in silver coin and share in the prestige of protecting the city.

But most importantly, given the vast resources of the Persian Empire, the expeditionary force under Datis and Artaphernes in 490—while large in comparison to the Greek resistance—was actually somewhat small. The Persian strike had intended to be merely punitive, concerned more with Euboea and Attica than the whole of the Greek mainland. Yet certainly Darius's empire of some 20,000,000 possessed the means not merely to punish Athens, but more likely to destroy it outright.

If Athens were to be safe, Themistocles therefore further reasoned, the young democracy needed to reinvent itself—and almost immediately so, given the imminent threat of another Persian strike. The Athenians required a large navy. A fleet in turn demanded a protected port and urban fortifications to secure the naval population. In symbiotic fashion, such investments gave work to the poor thetes and taxed the wealthy to pay for civic investment. We do not know the degree to which Themistocles all at once grasped the ramifications of such a complex departure from Athenian hoplite protocol, only that he had deeply embedded his military agenda within his popular politics.

Yet the implementation of these radical ideas demanded rare political skills to warn his countrymen that Marathon was an anomaly rather than a blueprint. Of course, even before Marathon, as archon in 493 BC, Themistocles had sought to change the course of Athenian defense policy. In part, he remembered the lessons of the failed Athenian intervention in Asia Minor during the Ionian revolt; in part, he worried about a future amphibious Persian attack. The result was that even by the time of Marathon the Athenians had already adopted some of Themistocles's proposals in beginning to build walls around their small harbor at Phaleron.[54]

However, to fulfill his strategic vision, Themistocles would have to eliminate his conservative opponents and win the Athenian assembly over to the cause of naval construction and more extensive urban fortifications. As a result, after Marathon, each major traditional political figure that might have challenged Themistocles' new strategic vision found himself fined, ostracized or under public suspicion—Megacles, Miltiades, Xanthippus, and Aristides. This growing infantry and naval divide between Themistocles and his more conservative rivals came to a head in 483 BC—just three years before the arrival of the Persians at Salamis—when

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[54] Almost everything connected with Themistocles archonship—date, actuality, and achievement— is under scholarly dispute. For an introduction to the controversy see, A. Podlecki, *The Life of Themistocles: A Critical Survey of the Literary and Archaeological Evidence* (Montreal, 1975), pp. 45-66.

an unusually rich vein of silver ore was discovered at the state-controlled mines at Laurium in southern Attica. The strike offered an opening for the impatient Themistocles to see his strategic thinking at last become state policy.[55]

Themistocles prevented the distribution of the windfall to the citizens on an equitable basis; instead, the assembly voted to build enough ships to ensure an Athenian fleet of some 200 triremes. Ostensibly the expressed threat was the nearby rival island power of Aegina—although Themistocles understood the real danger was a return of the Persian fleet.[56] The rivalry with Aegina, and the chance strike at Laurium, now gave Themistocles the pretext, public support, and the money to prepare for the existential Persian threat. By late summer 480 BC, the Athenians may have completed 170 triremes. Somewhere around 30,000 trained seamen were ready to protect the city from invasion, which was inevitably to come by both land and sea.[57]

Naval Strategy Against Xerxes

King Xerxes (somewhere in his late thirties) assumed power on the death of his father Darius in 486/5. He determined to draw on the entire resources of the empire to avenge his father's failure. He aimed to annex southern Europe across the Aegean as the westernmost province of the Persia and to end entirely the idea of an independent Greece. Accordingly, by

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[55] On the new silver find at Laureum and the disbursement, see Hale, *Lords of the Sea*, pp. 8-14. Apparently, wealthy private citizens were allotted much of the newly minted silver; they, in turn, would use such public funds to oversee the building of a ship.

[56] Cf. Podlecki, *Life of Themistocles*, 11: "Themistocles' purpose in eliminating his opponents one by one was the realization of a scheme he had cherished at least since his archonship, the transformation of Athens from a second-rate land power to the leading maritime state in Greece."

[57] The so-called Naval Bill of Themistocles rests on good ancient authority (cf. Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 22.7; Herodotus 7.143-44; Plutarch, *Themistocles* 4.1-2; and especially Thucydides 1.14.3). We are not sure whether 100 ships were built in 482 to augment an existing 70-100, or whether up to 200 were ordered from the revenues— only that the Athenian fleet that was ready at Salamis two years later numbered some 180-200 triremes. Cf. Hale, *Lords of the Sea*, pp. 10-15.

autumn 481 BC the Greeks got word that Persian mobilization was in full swing, mostly from its westward base at Sardis. Xerxes might well cross the Hellespont into Europe within a year. Themistocles and his supporters at Athens immediately tried to prepare the Athenians for the existential danger, as the democracy passed various resolutions under his leadership, recalling political exiles and preparing to mobilize the fleet to join a combined Hellenic land and sea expeditionary defense.[58]

Once it was known to the Greek city-states that Xerxes' forces were gathering in the western Persian provinces, their leaders hastily agreed to meet at their own Panhellenic congress at the Isthmus of Corinth. When the generals arrived, the usual bickering and delay characterized the Greek debate. Athens and Aegina needed to end their internecine war, while Athens found itself forced to grant supreme command of the allied resistance to the more esteemed Spartans, despite their having far fewer ships. Spies were to be sent out to obtain more accurate intelligence. The Greeks extended invitations to distant Greek states to contribute resources for a common defense. Yet no concrete action followed.

In early spring, 480 BC, the squabbling Greek states again met. This time, they finally agreed to organize a combined land and sea force to fight as far to the north, and as soon, as possible to keep Xerxes and his Persians away from the bulk of the Greek population. Nevertheless, for the next six months, all attempts of the Panhellenic resistance would result in utter failure.

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[58] See Herodotus 8.79-82. The nature of these various decrees and their relationship to the texts of Herodotus and Plutarch are under dispute. These earlier resolutions probably concerned general contingency efforts and the recall of exiles, while the famous, subsequent "Themistocles' Decree" belonged to late summer 480 BC, and in more precise detail outlined the nature of the evacuation of Attica in August or September. We still do not know whether the decree accurately reflects a preemptory and long-planned Athenian decision to leave the city to fight at Salamis *before* the loss of Thermopylae, or was simply a later compilation of several authentic decrees, and thus is at odds with a more accurate Herodotean account that the evacuation of Athens was an ad hoc, last-ditch effort after Thermopylae was unexpectedly breached.

Sometime in April 480 BC, Xerxes crossed the Hellespont into Europe with a combined force of hundreds of thousands of infantry and seamen. The exact numbers of the Persian muster are unknown and remain hotly debated. But even to man a fleet of over 1,200 triremes would require alone nearly a quarter-million sailors, well apart from cavalry and infantry forces. Most modern estimates put his land forces alone at somewhere between 100,000 to 200,000 combatants and support troops, making Xerxes's grand expedition the largest amphibious invasion of Europe until the Normandy landing more than 2,400 years later. Scholars still do not quite understand how the Persian quartermasters solved the enormous logistical problems of feeding and caring for such a horde.

The allied congress earlier had sent a force of almost 10,000 Greek hoplites and a large enough naval contingent to transport them up to Thessaly. Themistocles was co-commander of this initial Panhellenic expeditionary force. Upon arrival, the position of the Greeks almost immediately became untenable, even before they marshaled their forces for battle. At this early date, the mostly central and southern Greek states had little idea of either the geography of Macedon, or the planned routes of the Persian invasion—or the huge size of Xerxes's forces.

The generals had even less inkling that the proposed line of defense in the Vale of Tempe between Mt. Olympus and Ossa was topographically indefensible in the face of a large invasion. They had also come north unprepared, without sufficient supplies, and too early—and were still under the impression that land forces alone might stop Xerxes in the manner that Marathon had ended Darius's efforts. In utter dejection, the humiliated Greek expeditionary force returned to the Isthmus well before the Persians even arrived, ostensibly to plot a second fallback strategy. But time was running out, morale eroding. By late summer the Persians had swept through the

north and were ready to enter central Greece itself through the narrow pass at Thermopylae. As panic set in, all eyes looked to the Spartans to stop the descent of the massive Persian forces.[59]

Somehow the usually conservative Spartan leadership galvanized the Greek resistance and marshaled an ad hoc second land force of at least 7,000 infantrymen under the Spartan King Leonidas, a little over half the force mustered from the city-states of the Peloponnese. He was to be accompanied and supplied by sea by a combined fleet of nearly 300 ships under the command of his fellow Spartan Eurybiades. Themistocles enjoyed a quasi-autonomous command of the fleet of almost 200 Athenian triremes. He apparently insisted that his Athenians would only serve at sea and not augment the hoplite defense at Thermopylae.

Amid the gripping drama of the heroism at Thermopylae and the gallant sacrifice of Leonidas and the Spartan 300 (along with nearly 1,100 Thespians and Thebans, and several hundred others who perished as well) on the last day of the battle, we may forget that Thermopylae was a terrible defeat. The loss of the pass allowed the victorious Persian army a wide-open path of descent southwards into the wealthiest of the Greek city-states.[60]

The successive three separate naval engagements nearby at Artemisium proved only a nominal Greek victory. Themistocles's aggressive tactics to draw the much larger Persian fleet into the straits of Artemisium, his choice to engage in the unaccustomed late afternoon, and his reliance on speed, maneuver, and ramming, all continued to confound enemy triremes before they could deploy in proper order. By the naval battle's end, the allies had destroyed more

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[59] For discussion of the contradictory numbers in ancient sources, cf. B. Strauss, *The Battle of Salamis. The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece—and Western Civilization* (New York, 2004), p. 42. C. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 345-55, in detailed fashion, reviews the literary evidence, arriving at a low estimate of a Persian army of some 80,000, and naval force of about 600 ships (that would require some 120,000 seamen).

[60] Herodotus (8.25.2) believed that there were 4,000 Greek dead left on the battlefield, which, *if* true, would mean that almost 60 percent of Leonidas's original force perished at the pass. Apparently that figure would have to include large numbers of dead on the first two days of battle from the original force of 7,000, together with all of those (the 400 Thebans, 700 Thespians, 300 Spartans, and some Phocians and helots) left behind to be wiped out with Leonidas.

Persian ships than they lost. Then sudden storms caught the Persian retiring fleet without adequate harborage, and wrecked dozens more of the surviving enemy triremes. Yet for all the damage to the huge Persian armada, in both battle and in rough seas at Artemisium—perhaps 600 triremes lost altogether—it was the Greek fleet that retreated southward. Xerxes's ships followed closely at their rear. How might the Greeks save Athens and the Peloponnese when even a naval victory and providential typhoon proved inadequate to stop the Persian advance— given its vast numbers and constant resupply?[61] That was the dark question that haunted the weary Greeks.

The fighting thus far had now damaged or destroyed half the Greek fleet. As many as a hundred triremes needed repair work. More ominously, most of the Greek city-states north of Athens had already joined the Persians, or were making arrangements to do so. Xerxes's forces were growing again, the allies shrinking, as the king was supplying his forces from the "earth and water" of his northern Greek hosts. The Athenians' desperate appeal to field another Panhellenic army to stop the Persians on its borders with Boiotia was ignored by the Peloponnesian infantry who streamed down in defeat all the way to the Isthmus. Any Greek state not defended by the retreating alliance either was obliterated or joined the Persians. The polygot forces of imperial Persia were now more united than the Greeks who ostensibly shared the same religion, language, and culture.[62]

The Athenians during the Persian descent into Greece had customarily consulted the oracle at Delphi. Their envoys received various responses from the always politically astute Pythia. The last and most famous reply from the priestess offered cryptic advice: first, retreat before the enemy; second, trust in a mysterious 'wooden wall;' and third, put hope in a 'Holy

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[61] Themistocles at Artemisium, cf. Diodorus 11.12.5-6. There is a good account of the battle and its aftermath in Hale, *Lords of the Sea*, pp. 46-54.

[62] Cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles* 9.3. Herodotus 7.33-4.

Salamis' and thereby the promise that the Greeks would at some date "destroy" the Persians. Dispute broke out over the oracle's deliberately ambiguous meaning. For those Athenians who did not wish to fight here at sea—or were too poor to flee the city—the prophesy was, of course, either mere gibberish or even recommended a defense on the Athenian acropolis behind wooden walls of old doors, cast-off furnishing, and logs.

Yet Themistocles persuaded his fellow generals that Delphi's "wooden wall" could only refer to their own fleet of pine and fir planked triremes. Why, after all, would the oracle at Delphi call Athenian-held Salamis "holy," if she did not mean victory was ensured there for the Greeks if they would only dare fight by sea? Whether Themistocles's agents had something to do with cooking up the prophecy, or twisting its interpretation, we do not know. But Themistocles was not going to let the superstitious or pusillanimous thwart his plans to gamble all at Salamis, plans that were based on a decade of reason, not hocus-pocus. If he had pulled off a stalemate at Artemisium, perhaps Themistocles could now defeat a weaker and wounded Persian fleet as it went further south to Athens—and further away from its original bases of support in northern Greece.[63]

The real divide now arose over the proper strategy to defend the Athenians from hundreds of thousands of Persians. The enemy infantry and marine forces had not suffered a single defeat in the five months since their arrival in Europe. Two diametrically opposed defensive strategies now were debated—one among Athenians themselves, whether to protect the city proper or evacuate the population—and a second between the remaining city-states of the alliance over whether to fight by sea in the Bay of Salamis, or to fall back even further.

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[63] Cf. Herodotus 49-50. J.R. Lenardon, *The Saga of Themistocles* (London, 1978), pp. 64-5, discusses the various interpretations of the famous oracular reply.

At least some of these deliberations were cut short when Xerxes arrived in Attica, and quickly stormed Athens, killing all its defenders. The doomed Athenians on the Acropolis proved that the oracle apparently did not mean their futile barricade was any sort of literal 'wooden wall.' Themistocles had just introduced a decree to evacuate the city–a later interpolated version of it on stone was found in 1960. The Athenians hastily scattered among the nearby islands and the northern Argolid. In panic, the city-state's defense was now reduced to those who manned 180 triremes in the bay of Salamis, along with contingents of hoplites, who guarded the refugees or helped to man the ships.

The renegade Spartan ex-King Demaratus, now Persian court advisor, had urged Xerxes to avoid the Greeks. Instead, according to Herodotus, he advised Xerxes to sail around the Peloponnese to occupy the island of Cythera off Sparta. That way, Demaratus argued, the Persians could avoid losses, tie down the Spartan army and raise a helot revolt—perhaps putting Demaratus himself back in power as a puppet king. But with Athens in flames and the Greek fleet trapped in the straits of Salamis, however, such cautious advice seemed passé. Once the outnumbered Greek armada was easily swamped here at Salamis, the Persians could land troops wherever they pleased in the Peloponnese. Then the plan was apparently to pick off the few remaining city-states south of the Isthmos one-by-one.[64]

Other Greek leaders had proposed several complicated alternative strategies before and after the retreat from Thermopylae. Many conservative Athenians, for example, still wished to fight on the Attic plain, not at sea—perhaps in some sort of decisive infantry confrontation that might repeat the verdict of Marathon, and save their city while restoring the prestige of the

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[64] On Demaratus's advice, see Herodotus 7.235.3. For the evacuation and the circumstances around the decree, cf. Lenardon, *Saga of Themistocles*, 69-72. Demaratus's proposal may be telescoped backwards from Herodotus's own time, when in the initial years of the Peloponnesian War, there was much talk of the Athenians using helot revolts as a tool against the Spartans.

hoplite class. But that dream was quickly rejected after the disaster at Thermopylae. The rapidity of the Persian descent, the absence of willing allies, and the fact that Xerxes this time had ten times the number of land forces that his father Darius had sent ten years earlier, all made another Marathon impossible. Athenians at Marathon had been outnumbered three-to-one. But now the Persian land forces were at least ten times larger than the Athenian hoplite force, a far less flexible force than the multifaceted army of Alexander the Great that would sweep into Persia a century-and-a-half later. Only a few isolated pockets of Athenians remained in the Attic countryside.[65]

Another choice was simply for Athenians and the renaming allies to quit and join the Persians. This option was not so far fetched. There were plenty of Athenians furious at the Peloponnesian city-states for abandoning them to the Persians without an infantry fight somewhere to the immediate north in Boeotia that might have prevented the fall of the city. Many now felt their cause was hopeless, and the northern Greek city-states such as Thebes a possible model of accommodation with the Persians. Still, most at Salamis stayed firm. As long as the surviving Greeks had nearly 400 ships, the Athenian population was still safe and the soil of the Peloponnese was still Greek, such surrender seemed premature, even if that now meant camping in the countryside for thousands of Athenians without guaranteed shelter and food.

Most of the remaining allies, in fact, initially preferred yet another option: to retreat south to fight on land behind make-shift ramparts along the six-mile Isthmus, saving what was left of Greece, while engaging the Persian fleet somewhere off the coast of the Peloponnese. The maritime Athenians, remember, earlier had not offered their 10,000 hoplites to fight at

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[65]On the few who stayed behind either in the Attic countryside or at Athens, see P. Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 156-160. A year after the Salamis the Greeks would win a glorious infantry victory at Plataea over Mardonius. But that battle came after careful preparation, was prompted in part by the shameful retreat of King Xerxes and his fleet back to Asia after their defeat at Salamis, and was waged with near equal numbers on both sides.

Thermopylae. In similar fashion, the land-powers of the Peloponnese preferred not to risk any of their own ships in the defense of an evacuated Athenians.

Still, Themistocles, as we learn from Herodotus, wondered whether the Spartans who advocated further retreat were acting even in their own best interests. In theory, what would prevent a Persian amphibious from landing in the Peloponnese behind an Isthmus wall (of the sort the turncoat Demaratus had, in fact, advised Xerxes to do)? Fighting in more open seas off the Peloponnese only gave more advantages to the far larger enemy fleet. And why would the Athenians be willing to sacrifice any hope of recovering their city in order to fight on behalf of Peloponnesians who clearly all along cared only for their own defense?

More immediately, what would the assembled Greeks do about thousands of hungry refuges on Salamis, whose safety depended only on the Greek ships in the harbors of the island? Who could restore morale after four successive withdrawals from the Vale of Tempe in Thessaly, Thermopylae, Artemisium, and now Salamis? An alliance that either loses battles or does not fight them finds it almost impossible to turn on its aggressor and cede no more ground. The squabbling Greeks before Salamis heard yet another alternative—a most bizarre, but apparently serious, threat from Themistocles himself. He warned that the Athenians might pull up stakes entirely. If the Athenians were to be abandoned by their Peloponnesian and island allies, and a general retreat ordered to the south, then Themistocles would round up the city's refugees, sail to distant Sicily and settle perhaps 200,000 of the evacuated Athenian residents near their old colony at Siris—rebirthing Athenian culture in safety 800 miles to the west.[66]

"If you do not do these things [fight at Salamis]," Themistocles threatened his Peloponnesian allies, "then we quite soon will take up our households and sail over to Siris in

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[66] On the Greeks' desire to vacate Salamis, see the synopsis in Diodorus 11.15.4-5. Even if the Athenians had 200 triremes, and an unknown number of merchant ships, it is hard to see how they would have the lift capacity to move their women, children, and slaves to Italy.

Italy, a place which has been ours from ancient times, and at which the oracles inform us that we should plant a colony. And the rest of you without allies such as ourselves, will have reason to remember my words"[67]

The final poor choice from among the far worse alternatives was for the remaining allies to fight a last-ditch, sea-battle at Salamis. That way, the Greeks would cede no more territory. Instead, the admirals would preserve Greek unity, and hope to cripple the Persian fleet—and with it any chance of escape for many of the massive army of Xerxes. Because there were finite supplies at Salamis, and thousands of refugees to feed, there was no time left for talk. The battle had to be joined almost immediately—even if that meant that most of the assembled admirals would have both to concede to Themistocles's threats, and override their original directives from political authorities back home to retreat to a panhellenic defense at the Isthmus. While the Greeks had been beaten by land, they had not yet lost at sea, where the numbers were not so lopsided.[68]

Our ancient sources—the historian Herodotus and the contemporary playwright Aeschylus, along with much later accounts in Plutarch, Diodorus, and Nepos—believed that the Persians outnumbered the reconstituted Greek fleet by three or four to one. In fact, it may have been little more than two to one. There is no information how many reinforcement ships joined the respective fleets after the retreat from Artemisium. But ancient accounts suggest that between Persian replacements and the growing number of 'medizing' Greeks, the enemy might have been at least as large as when it had left Persia months earlier.

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[67] Herodotus, 8.62; cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles* 11. We have no reason to doubt this strange threat, given that it seems to be accepted by most ancient authorities.

[68] See, Green, *Graeco-Persian War*, pp. 159-160, on the degree of operational authority among the Greek generals at Salamis.

If some Greeks quietly slipped away from Salamis and headed southward, most stayed. Even after wear and tear on the fleet, and losses at Artemisium, there may have somewhere between 300 and 370 Greek vessels at Salamis waiting to take on a Persian armada of at least 600 warships—although both Herodotus and Aeschylus record that the enemy fleet had been reinforced to over 1,200 enemies ships, a figure that cannot be entirely discounted. The Greek fleet, still under the nominal overall command of the Spartan Eurybiades, was less experienced than the imperial Persian flotilla. Moreover, Greek triremes were heavier and less maneuverable, their crews greener. On the other hand, the king's armada comprised various veteran contingents from Phoenicia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Cyprus and Greece itself. Most had patrolled the Aegean and Mediterranean for years enforcing the edicts of the Persian Empire. More Greek ships at Salamis would fight on the Persian than on the Hellenic side.[69]

The alliance's best hope according to Themistocles was to draw the Persian into the narrows between Salamis and the Attic mainland. The more numerous, but also lighter, enemy triremes would be vulnerable to the heavier and presumably slower Greek ships. Themistocles reasoned that the invaders might not have enough room to maneuver all their fleet. Without the open seas along the coast, the Persians would lose the some of the advantages of their numbers and superior nautical skill. Surprise—and greater Greek knowledge of currents and contrary winds inside the straits—would also aid the defenders. The unity of the Greeks versus the motley nature of the subject Persian armada, the psychological advantages defenders enjoy over aggressors, the hope that free peoples fight for their own destiny more stoutly than subjects do

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[69] On the numbers of Greek and Persian ships at both Artemisium and Salamis, see again the review of Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, pp. 345-50; cf. Green, *Graeco-Persian War*, pp. 162-3, who conjectures an allied fleet of about 311 triremes, corrected for probable losses from the retreat from Artemisium. Herodotus (8.66) implies that the Persian land and sea forces had made up all the prior losses at Thermopylae and Artemisium and were about the same size as when they had crossed into Europe the prior spring.

amid their subservience—all these advantages, apparently in Themistocles's mind, might still trump Persian numbers.[70]

Various sources also refer to a weird ruse on the part of Themistocles on the eve of the battle. He apparently secretly sent his own slave Sicinnus to Xerxes with a purported warning of a Greek withdrawal. The Persians might well have swallowed that strange story of Themistocles's treachery, given the rumors of Greek infighting and the well-reported Peloponnesian desire to go home. Themistocles's intention with the trick must have been multifold: he wanted to incite the Persians hastily to deploy and prematurely man their ships in the night. Second, he sought to fool them into splitting their larger enemy fleet by persuading them to cover all the potential exits from the straits of Salamis. Third, Persian preemption would force reluctant Greek allies to commit to the sea-battle, forcing them to mobilize immediately in the face of the advancing Persian enemy. Apparently, the agreement to stay at Salamis had strengthened the position of Themistocles. In the few hours before battle, he began to exercise de facto tactical authority despite the nominal overall command of the Spartan admiral Eurybiades.

In response, the Persians without careful planning rushed out into the straits of Salamis, as Themistocles planned. But they advanced not before dispatching parts of their Egyptian squadrons to block the southern and western entrances to the strait. The result was the Persians could not make full use of their numerical superiority inside the narrows of the Salamis straits where the Greek fleet was moored. In short, they had now sent some of their best contingents on a wild goose chase to ambush a Greek retreat that never came.[71]

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[70] Herodotus—writing two generations after the battle—believed that the Greek ships were the "heavier." Scholars usually interpret that he meant that they were water-logged, built of unseasoned, heavier timber, or simply larger and less elegant—and thus less maneuverable—than the Persians' triremes. Whatever the true case, it was clearly in the Greeks' interest not to go out too far to sea where they would be both outnumbered and outmaneuvered, but to stay inside the straits where their ramming would have far greater effect.

[71] Plutarch, *Themistocles* 12.3-5; and cf. Diodorus 11.19. Many scholars doubt the veracity of the Sicinnus ruse, and the idea that the Persians ever diverted a portion of their fleet to cover possible escapes from the Bay of Salamis. But

Xerxes probably attacked just before dawn. The Persian fleet rowed forward in three lines against the Greeks' two. The king's captains worried that they "would lose their heads" should the enemy fleet escape. Quickly the attackers became disorganized due to the Greek ramming and the confusion of having too many ships in too confined waters. Themistocles himself was at the van of the advancing Greek triremes. Xerxes, in contrast, watched his Persians from afar, purportedly perched on his throne atop nearby Mt. Aigelaos on the Attic shore. In the words of the dramatist Aeschylus, "The mass of ships was crowded into the narrows, and none was able to offer help to another."[72]

The sea-battle was fought all day—most likely sometime between 20 and 30 September, 480 BC—perhaps on the morning of 25 September. By nightfall half the Persian fleet was sunk. The rest scattered. The morale of the surviving sailors was shattered—despite their collective fear of the outraged king above. The Persians suffered "utter and complete ruin." Although in theory the surviving defeated enemy still outnumbered the Greek fleet, the Persian armada was no longer battle worthy or eager to reengage the victorious Greek triremes. Over 100,000 imperial sailors were killed, wounded, missing, or dispersed—making Salamis perhaps the largest and also the most lethal one-day naval battle in history, far more bloody than even Lepanto, Trafalgar, Jutland, or Midway. Ancient accounts record the macabre scene of the human carnage where Persian corpses were "battered by the surf, lifeless, tossed here and there in their cloaks." And given that most of the Persians could not swim, we should assume the

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the Sicinnus incident is a mainstay in nearly all ancient descriptions of the battle. See the lively account of the trick in T. Holland, *Persian Fire. The First World Empire and the Battle for the* West (New York, 2005), pp. 312-6.

[72] Aeschylus, *Persians* 371; 412-3; 425-6. Aeschylus, a veteran of the battle, may have meant as well that dozens of Persian ships in the middle of the fleet simply never were able to come into contact at all with the Greeks attacking at the periphery, a sort of naval Cannae in which thousands of combatants were not able to commit to battle for quite some time, if at all.

Greeks speared any survivors clinging to the flotsam and jetsam, knocking them beneath the waves—"hitting and hacking them with broken oars and the wreckage of the ships."[73]

Within weeks of the defeat, a panicky Xerxes left a ruined Athens, and sailed home with survivors of the imperial fleet to the Hellespont, accompanied by a guard of 60,000 infantry. The king left behind his surrogate commander Mardonius with a still considerable landed and cavalry force to continue the struggle the next spring and summer. The remaining Persian land forces quickly retreated northward to winter in the pastures of Boiotia. The Athenian refugees— for a time—got back their burned out city.

Although the Greeks had immediately declared victory after Salamis, a few months later Mardonius returned over the pass from Boeotia to reoccupy Athens. The population again fled, the Persians torching the city a second time—once before Salamis and once after. Then Mardonius sent the Persians back into Boeotia yet a third time in late summer 479 BC to prepare for the expected Greek counter-attack. After the victory and flight of Xerxes, some 70,000 reenergized Greeks now flocked to Plataea near the mountainous Attic border to finish off Mardonius. In a small plain along near the Asopos River on the lower slopes of Mt. Kithairon, the Greeks crushed the Persians, killed Mardonius, and watched the survivors scatter to the north. Themistocles apparently did not take part in the land battle, but was still at sea pursing enemy vessels along the coast of Asia Minor—or, more likely, had suffered some sort of falling out with the Greek high command.

After the storm and losses at Artemisium, and the subsequent naval defeat at Salamis, Xerxes may have lost over 900 triremes. Now with Mardonius's annihilation in Boiotia, perhaps

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[73] Aeschylus, *Persians* 274-6, 282-3. As at Lepanto, there is a likelihood that few prisoners were taken, the Greek idea being that any killed in the waters of Salamis would not fight again the next year. See V. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (New York, 2001), pp. 46-51, for the motif of *eleutheria* (freedom) at Salamis and the role it played in galvanizing the Greeks.

as many as a quarter-million Persian imperial infantry and sailors had in total perished in Greece in little over a year. Rarely in the ancient world had so few killed so many. The cultural result was exultation in Greek freedom, "No longer was there a bridle on the speech of mortals, for the people were set free to say what they wished, once the yoke of power was broken."[74]

The Postwar Foundations of the Athenian Empire

The victory at Salamis, however, was not the capstone of Themistocles's strategic career. Rather, it marked the beginning of an even more radical subsequent agenda that involved transforming Athens itself—and offending most of the city's most powerful landed families. From 479 BC until his exile from Athens in 463, Themistocles—who would die in Persian-held Asia Minor under mysterious circumstances in 459—systematically attempted to transform a once largely agrarian city-state into a trans-Aegean mercantile empire, based on a standing navy of well over 200 triremes.

Following the Persians defeat at Plataea and Mycale, the Greek postwar alliance against Persia no more lasted than did the Soviet-American pact following the common defeat of Nazi Germany. Themistocles's immediate postwar ideas of expanding the fortifications of the city of Athens and enlarging the fleet immediately provoked the rival parochial Spartans, and their sympathizers at home. Especially galling to Themistocles's rich and pro-Spartan countrymen was his ruse of visiting Sparta to agree to a utopian desire for an unwalled Greece. Then, while Themistocles assured the gullible Spartans of Athens' shared wish for Panhellenic cooperation in the new postwar era, the democracy feverishly fortified both the city and harbor. With new walls,

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[74] Aeschylus, *Persians*, 591-4. Aeschylus records (402-5) that the Greeks rowed into battle chanting cries of "Free your children, your wives, the images of your fathers' gods and the tombs of your ancestors."

the urban core of Athens was now mostly immune from traditional infantry attack; and a far better harbor at Piraeus meant the fleet could be more easily and safely moored. That trickery had all at once questioned Spartan hoplite preeminence—at least to the extent that the potentially besieged Athenians might stay inside their walls longer than an invading Spartan army could camp out in Attica. [75]

The city's new defenses reduced the political and economic clout of the traditionally powerful in Attica, who held farmland outside the walls, and were recovering from the Persian devastations. Themistocles's advocacy of postwar fortifications might even mean in conflicts to come that the extramural farmland of the Athenian wealthy could be perennially sacrificed to the enemy, as the landless poor—now the more valuable citizens as rowers in the growing fleet—kept safe inside ramparts.

Fortifications were an even better way of meeting a formidable invasion than in panic evacuating and abandoning the city as had happened before Salamis. What had been ad hoc would now be institutionalized. Urban walls certainly required larger government expenditure and their construction tended to spread the wealth. Fortifications helped to transfer national defense to the fleet—and with it brought the empowerment of the poorer and more numerous rowing cohorts. Sea-defense at Salamis had been the right choice at the time. But in the aftermath of the Persian retreat, Themistocles saw that his strategy could even be improved upon by evacuating only the countryside of its richer landowners into the city—not, as in 480 BC, sending the poor of the city into makeshift hovels on the surrounding islands.

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[75] On the famous Themistoclean ruse of deceiving the Spartans while his countrymen fortified the city, see Diodorus 11.40. While it might take a week to reach Athens and another to return home, it seems incredible that the Spartans had no intelligence concerning Athens' sudden massive wall-building, while Themistocles conducted his deceptive diplomacy.

Conservatives understandably had long resented this decade-long divisive democratic agenda of Themistocles that soon after Salamis insidiously weakened the power of the so-called hoplite landowning heavy infantrymen. In their eyes, he had turned the city from one of "steadfast hoplites into sea-tossed mariners."[76] The conservative philosopher Plato—looking back over a century of radical Athenian history—later wrote that the Athenians would have been better off to have lost sea-fights like those at Salamis even if they had saved Greece, rather than have such Themistoclean victories lead to the establishment of an extremist and unsustainable democracy and the rise of the uncouth to unbridled power. It was Themistocles, Plato also scoffed, who had first "stripped the citizens of their spear and shield, and brought the Athenian people down to the rowing-pad and oar."[77]

As is true of the fate of many Greek visionaries, novel ideas of the time that instantly branded Themistocles a dangerous radical and earned him exile, within decades, would later be institutionalized by Pericles and others as official policy. But, again, that acceptance would come only after his exile and with little acknowledgment of the role of the creator of maritime empire. Themistocles, Plutarch concluded, "increased the power of the common people against the aristocracy, filling them with recklessness, once the control of the state came into the hands of the sailors, boatswains, and captains." Equally important, the fortification of both the city and the new harbor at Piraeus gave the successors of Themistocles the encouragement—by 457 BC three years after his death—to finish two parallel Long Walls that ran the 4.5 miles between city and

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[76] Plato, *Laws*, 4.706; cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles* 4. To conservatives, Marathon was the last time that Athenian infantrymen fought gloriously for their own land—thanks to radicals like Themistocles.

[77] Plato, *Laws* 4.706. Much of Plato's criticism of democracy was predicated on the efforts of low-born demagogues to emasculate the well-born militarily, economically, and politically. In Plato's eyes, the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War was the logic wage of an unfortunate decision to invest in sea-power and the poor largely attributed to Themistocles.

the new harbor, and thus to complete the Themistoclean dream of a maritime city absolutely immune from both being cut off from the sea.[78]

The Strategic Achievement of Themistocles

In four general areas, the strategy of Themistocles proved critical to the salvation of the Greeks and the future of Athens as an unrivaled power, and seems to be so recognized as such by his contemporaries. Themistocles's multifarious strategic achievements hinged on singular diplomacy, politician partisanship, grand strategy, battle tactics, and unabashed cunning. To Thucydides that "foresight" separated Themistocles from most successful Greek military thinkers, who either had no comprehensive view of strategy, or only after success postfacto claimed foreordained knowledge.

1. *A fleet.* Had Themistocles earlier (483 B.C.) not urged the Athenians to build their fleet with the sudden revenues from the silver mines at Laurium, there would probably have been no chance for a credible Greek defense at Salamis. We sometimes forget that Themistocles plowed ahead against the advice of most Athenians, contrary to the received infantry wisdom from the recent victory at Marathon. In early Athenian democracy, most popular leaders would have divvied up the money and distributed it to the people, while their conservative opponents would have never allowed state funds to establish an enormous navy. Themistocles alone saw a third way, at a time when all others were still building monuments to the infantry valor at Marathon.

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[78] Plutarch, *Themistocle*s, 19.3-4. Almost all extant Greek literature is anti-democratic (reflecting the class, learning, and privileges of most authors), at least in the sense of emphasizing the dangers of allowing a majority of citizens to set policy by simple majority vote, without either constitutional restraints or the checks and balances of parallel, but more oligarchial bodies.

2. *Evacuating Athens.* But even the new fleet was not enough to offer Athens some chance of victory. Had Themistocles not convinced the Athenians in September 480 BC to evacuate the Attic countryside, their hoplite land army would have been wiped out in a glorious Thermopylae-like last stand in Attica, as the fleet would have retreated south or westward. Nor earlier did he try to rally the Greek allies to march northward to stop the Persians in the plains of Boeotia. Themistocles had himself fought at Marathon, and co-commanded the failed defense at Tempe in summer 480. He knew by September that hoplites could not overcome ten to one numerical odds. The infantry fight the next year at Plataea was a close-run thing—even after tens of thousands of Persians had been killed at Salamis or retreated home, and only with a massive muster of over 50,000 Greek soldiers.

Themistocles' later postwar efforts to fortify Athens, followed by subsequent measures of Pericles after his death to build two extensive Long Walls connecting the city to the Piraeus, emphasized how determined later generations were *never* to repeat the horror of 480 BC in abandoning the city. The subsequent imperial leader Pericles was a Themistoclean at heart. He argued that the only way to defeat Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431-404) was, as at Salamis, to fight at sea after abandoning the defense of the Athenian countryside against Spartan ravagers. But unlike Themistocles, Pericles advocated such strategy only with the reassurance that the city itself and its port at Piraeus were safe behind walls. Yet there would be problems of hygiene and disease in cramming citizens into a small municipality rather than dispersing them across the surrounding countryside and islands. The subsequent plague of 429 BC and the chronic inability to expel the Spartans from Attica reminded the Athenians of the dangers inherent of Themistocles's legacy of focusing on the fleet and fortifications without a credible land deterrent.

3. *The Tactical Plan at Salamis.* Later Greek tradition credited Themistocles with the decision to "fight in the strait." Although most southern Greeks apparently came to understand at the eleventh hour that Themistocles' logic was in their own interests in providing a forward defense for the Peloponnese, and in keeping the Athenian fleet engaged in the Greek defense, there was still no guarantee that the Peloponnesians would fight at Salamis—given their near completion of a massive wall at the Isthmus. To read Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles* is to collate a list of ancient attacks on both the character and wisdom of Themistocles on the eve of battle. So two further actions of Themistocles were required to guarantee a fight at Salamis and then to achieve victory.[79]

The ruse of Sicinnus persuaded the Persians immediately to embark and thereby to force the wavering non-Athenian Greeks to stay and fight. Scholars are divided over the authenticity of the tale. But there is little reason to doubt the general truth of the ancient account, inasmuch as at the point when the alliance was about to break up, the news was announced to the Greek admirals that the Persians were at sea and the approaches in the Salamis channel were now blocked. Only then did the Greeks discover that they could now no longer retreat to the Isthmus. The choice was either to fight immediately or surrender—or attempt flight amid the Persian fleet[80]

Because Themistocles had in effect persuaded the Persians into committing their ships into the narrow channels, it is probable that the actual plan of the Greek deployment was also his as well, as later Greeks surmised. The secret to the Greek success was to draw the cumbersome enemy fleet further into the narrows, and to ensure it could not utilize its overwhelming numerical advantage. Thus Themistocles had the Greek ships initially backwater. That made the

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[79] The "straits": Thucydides 1.74.1-2; cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 2-6.
[80] On the assessment of the role of Themistocles, the value of his deceptions, and the tactics at Salamis, cf. Diodorus 11.18-9.

Persians row further into the channel, on the assumption that the Greeks were in fact trying to flee as their fifth-column "intelligence" had indicated. When the two fleets collided, the Persians, again as Themistocles had planned, were dispersed and out of order, and thus unable to bring their full strength against the ordered Greek armada.

Controversy surrounds yet another Themistoclean stratagem—the purported postwar second secret message to the defeated Xerxes urging him to sail home while Themistocles magnanimously prevented the Greeks from reaching his bridges at the Hellespont first, and destroying easy entry back into Asia. If this second effort at deception was also true, then it had the added effect of encouraging another split in Persian forces after the battle. That meant at the subsequent battle of Plataea the following August, the enemy forces under Mardonius were not all that much more numerous than the assembled Panhellenic Greek army.

Such machinations, however also came at a cost. When a coalition leader must mislead his own allies, suspicion follows even in victory. After Salamis it was no surprise that Themistocles both repeated his efforts to delude the Spartans, and they in turn became ever more suspicious of his leadership.[81]

4. *Fortifications.* As archon before Marathon, Themistocles had advocated building municipal fornications around the city and the harbor at Phaleron. Even after the victory at Marathon, when such infantry excellence suggested the proper way to defend Athens lay in the shields of its hoplites, Themistocles pressed on to complete the urban fortifications. After the defeat of Xerxes's armada, he continued to advocate for more wall building and finished the urban ramparts and walls around the new, better port at the Piraeus. His successors under

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[81] Herodotus 8.109-111; Diodorus 11.19. Salamis also ensured that Plataea was an existential battle: without a fleet to allow a maritime retreat, a defeated Persian army would be trapped deep within Greek territory with the only avenue of escape a march through hundreds of miles of suddenly hostile Greek territory.

Pericles brought his vision to fruition, shortly after his death with the completion of the Long Walls.

The strategic implications of Themistocles's insistence on fortifications were multifold and symbiotic: a) the city could be assured that a maritime strategy no longer necessitated the upheaval of urban evacuation; b) Athens would not have to predicate its defense choices on the protection of farmland outside the walls that might entail unwise hoplite battles against superior land forces, foreign or Greek; c) the democracy would be strengthened by offering employment for the rowing poor who could be assured of wages, the prestige of shouldering the primary defense of the city, and protection of their homes inside the city; d) with a protected port, and later uninterrupted access to the city proper, Athens was not so dependent on its own agricultural production, farmers, or hoplites, in comparison to a navy and its crews who kept the imperial sea-lanes open and food imported into the Piraeus.

Such autonomy gave the city strategic options entirely lacking before the career of Themistocles—and also sharpened class differences between rich and poor. Later Athenian literature, ranging from the anonymous "Old Oligarch" to the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, attest to rich/poor, oligarchic/democratic, urban/rural, and hoplite/thete divides that sharpened before and during the Peloponnesian War, and were a logical result of Themistoclean strategy—and would eventually tear apart Athens. That said, we must remember that almost all ancient Greek literature that deals with Themistocles, from the history of Thucydides to Plato's dialogues—is written from an aristocratic viewpoint.

The Themistoclean Legacy

Themistocles was the strategic architect of fifth-century Athens. He saved his city-state from the Persians and his vision became the foundation of the Athenian empire and the city's later strategy against Sparta during the Peloponnesian War. Yet just as Themistocles must be credited with making Athens great, so too some ramifications of his strategy led to many of the city's later dilemmas.

He was largely responsible for the growing divide between landowner and landless. Athens under Themistocles abandoned the old centrality of the hoplite-citizen and the idea that a property qualification was as essential to constitutional government as the phalanx had been for the practical and moral defense of the polis. In addition, the risks of evacuating thousands inside the walls would led to the great plague—the greatest loss of Athenian manpower in the history of the city-state. And a maritime alliance that had started out as a pragmatic way to prevent the return of the Persians, by 454 BC, with the transfer of the Delian League treasury to Athens, had become a de facto Athenian imperial empire, fulfilling the origin vision of Themistocles.

In short, ancient assessments of the greatness of Themistocles reflected his singular genius in fostering great power and danger all at once. No one had done more to save Greece, and none more to ensure an eventual showdown between Athens—the ascendant maritime and radically democratic empire—and Sparta, the champion of the traditional Greek landed polis and the primacy of hoplite infantry.

The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire

James Lacey

If nothing else, the Roman Empire had a good run. From Octavian's victory at Actium (31 BC) to its traditional endpoint in 476, it had lasted a solid 500 years -- an impressive number by any standard and fully one-fifth of all recorded history.[82] In fact, the decline and final collapse of the Roman Empire took longer than most other empires even existed. To help place this time span in context: 500 years ago Machiavelli was busily writing *The Prince*, Martin Luther had just received his degree in Theology, Copernicus was putting the finishing touches on a theory that placed the sun at the center of the solar system, and Henry VIII was on the throne of England. Any historian trying to unearth the grand strategy of the Roman Empire must, therefore, always remain cognizant of the fact that he is dealing with a period that covers nearly a fifth of recorded history.

Although the pace of change in the Roman era never approached that of the past 500 years, it was not an empire in stasis. While the visible trappings may have changed little, there were vast differences between the empire of Augustus and that of his successors. Over the centuries the empire's underlying economy, political arrangements, military affairs, and, most importantly, the types of external challenges the empire faced were in constantly changing. In truth, all of the factors that influence grand strategy were in a continuous state of flux, making adaptability to changing circumstances as important to Roman strategists as it is to strategists of the modern era.

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[82] Dating approximately from the published works of Herodotus.

Tackling a subject as complex as Roman grand strategy involves another factor that should give historians pause. If grand strategy is defined to include politics, diplomacy and economics – as it should – along with the application of military power, then there are currently no works on the totality of Roman grand strategy to use as a starting point. In fact, the very idea of a Roman grand strategy did not concern historians until Edward Luttwak wrote *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third*.[83] But even that work only concerned itself with the military aspects of grand strategy and, as we shall see, classical historians have assailed Luttwak's work since its publication.

Did Rome Have a Grand Strategy?

Most historians of the Roman era question whether the Romans possessed a grand strategy, or if its leaders were even capable of thinking in such abstract terms. This general consensus is clearly captured in the most recent edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History*:[84]

> It is probably incorrect to define Roman military policy in terms of long-
> term strategically objectives, which saw the emergence of various systems
> designed to achieve 'scientific' defensible frontiers. For one thing, the
> Romans lacked a high command or government office capable of giving
> coherent direction to overall strategy, which was therefore left to the
> decision of individual emperors and their advisers… Military decisions

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[83] Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore, MD, 1976).

[84] Brian Campbell, "The Army" in Alan K Bowman (Ed.) *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Crisis of Empire*, vol XII, (Cambridge, 2009), p. 114.

were probably ad hoc, as emperors were forced into temporary defensive measures to limit damage and then counter-attacked when circumstances and resources allowed.

… In any case, the Romans lacked the kind of intelligence information necessary to make far-reaching, empire-wide decisions. Indeed they probably did not have a clear-cut view of frontiers, and came slowly to the idea that they should constitute a permanent barrier and a form a delineation of Roman territory.

The above passage is not an original proposition by the author. Rather, it is a condensation of the theories of several prominent historians of the Roman era, particularly of frontier studies. These historians (C. R. Whittaker, Benjamin Isaac, J. C Mann, and to a degree A. Ferrill), in their haste to decimate the interloper's (Luttwak's) scholarship, have made a hash of any reasonable attempts to understand Roman grand strategy.[85] One is always hesitant to sally forth against luminaries in any field. However, although their scholarship on the Roman frontiers may be without parallel, many of their interpretations of the strategic and military rationale for the frontier defy reason. In fact, so much of their analysis of the evidence disregards common sense that one might understandably see malice behind their attacks on Luttwak's work. The only other possibility is the absurd proposition that, despite lifetimes of study, these gentlemen do not know their business.

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[85] See: J. C. Mann, "The Frontiers of the Principate," ANRW 2(1974), pp. 13-35; J. C. Mann, "Power and the Frontiers of the Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 69, 1979, pp. 175-183; C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, MD, 1994); Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, (Oxford, 1990), and Arthur Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (London, 1986). For a more recent and better reasoned view of Roman strategy, as it pertained to the frontiers, see: David J. Breeze, *The Frontiers of Imperial Rome* (Barnsley, UK, 2011).

For instance, at one point, Whitaker shows a picture of Qasr Bshir in Jordan, and asks; "…as there is evidence this building had a civil function, are we too quick to think all frontier buildings were for defense?"[86]

It takes a peculiar way of thinking to look at the pictures of what is obviously a fort, with combat towers and crenellated battlements along the walls, and then dismiss its military purpose.   Of course, just as with any medieval castle, a Roman fort had both civil administrative and military purposes.   It is this inability to see that Roman military installations, and even the legions themselves, had multiple uses that plagues much of the scholarly analysis of Roman strategy.[87]

Thus, according to historians of ancient Rome, the Romans had no conception of frontiers as boundaries requiring defense.[88] Following this logic, one must therefore assume that Roman emperors somehow managed to line up all of their legions along these frontiers by some act of supreme serendipity. For, if Rome possessed no capability for strategic planning and was unable to see distant threats, was not it just as likely to find the legions sunning themselves along

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[86] C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, MD, 1994).

[87] My criticism of Roman historians, in their commentary on Roman strategy, echoes Everett Wheeler's similar critique. See: Everett L. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part I," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 57, no. 1, January 1993), pp. 7-41; and, Everett L. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part II," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 57, no. 2, April 1993, pp. 215-240

[88] See Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, pp. 397-401; and, Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, pp 60-70.

the Mediterranean coast as it was to find them lining up along the Rhine or Danube frontiers, not to mention the desolate wastes of Mesopotamia? At least one noted Roman historian neatly disposes of the problem of the legions' apparent "strategic" positioning, by declaring that conclusions about Rome's ability to think strategically based on the dispositions of the army are nothing but the rankest speculation.[89]

If one takes modern era historians at their word, then Rome had no true idea of the geography of its empire or the world beyond its borders.[90] Given that the Romans conducted trade, built roads, and ran what appears to be an efficient postal service (much used by Pliny to pester the emperor with his constant missives), the evidence is pretty clear that they fully understood the geography within the empire's boundaries. Likewise, numerous examples of Roman plans to assault enemies beyond the frontier with coordinated columns launching from widely divergent points suggests they had a good grasp of what lay beyond their borders, for at least several hundred miles.[91] In fact, a historian who looked deeply into the subject deduced that one of the main duties of the *mensores militum* was the production of military maps.[92] Interestingly, Herodotus tells of an Ionian named Aristogoras, trying to induce Sparta into a war with Persia in 499 BC by producing "a bronze tablet, whereupon the whole circuit of the earth was engraved, with all its seas and rivers."[93] Apparently, according to Roman historians, in the intervening 500 years, governments discontinued the use of maps. As Everett Wheeler points out, "Such territory [the Eastern Empire and beyond] was hardly *terra incognita* and a vast store of geographical information and campaign experience probably circulated within the Roman

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[89] Isaac, The *Limits of Empire*, pp. 33.

[90] See particularly Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkley, CA, 1999), pp. 24- 80; and Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, pp. 401-408; and, Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, pp. 10-30.

[91] For example, Roman plans to overwhelm the Macromanni in 6 AD, when 12 legions were set to march from Rhaetia, Germany, and Illyricum, all along separate routes converging in Bohemia (See: Velleius: 2.108-111).

[92] Sherk, R. K., Roman Geographical Exploration and Military Maps II.1 (ANWR, 1974) 534-562.

[93] Herodotus 5.49.

officer corps."[94] Moreover, every time Roman armies marched deep into Persia to besiege or capture the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, they always found their way there and back. In fact, given the geographical ignorance many ancient historians attribute to the Romans it is remarkable that, to the best of our knowledge, barring disaster enroute, every Roman army ever dispatched seemed to unerringly find their way to the objective.

There is one further element that supposedly made it impossible for Rome to think strategically – the lack of a general staff or its ancient equivalent. Of course, no nation had a general staff or its equivalent until the Prussians invented such an entity in the nineteenth century. Does that mean that Alexander, Gustavus Adolphus, or Napoleon were incapable of strategic thinking? As Everett Wheeler points out, "Should we accept the view that the institution consuming, even on a conservative estimate, 40 to 50 percent of the state's revenues and the most bureaucratized and best documented aspect of Roman government lacked administrative oversight and planning?" In fact, the Romans maintained a huge military administrative apparatus throughout both the Republic and the Empire.[95] How could it have been otherwise? Without such an administrative and planning function, it would be impossible to arm, pay, and feed a far-flung army. Without some degree of strategic forethought, Rome could not fight wars on multiple fronts, as it did many times in its history. As Wheeler rightly points out, "Roman capability in maintaining its army, as well as an emperor's ability to transfer units from one frontier to another and to assemble expeditionary forces for major wars, clearly indicates that general staff work was done, even if the specific mechanisms of higher command and control remain one of the arcane of Roman government."[96]

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[94] Everett L. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part II, p. 237.
[95] See Everett L. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part II, pp. 231-234 for a brief but pointed detailing of the evidence for such an apparatus.
[96] Ibid., p. 232.

In fact, there is clear evidence that the Romans kept excellent military records throughout the centuries of empire. Tacitus relates how one such document was read to the Roman Senate soon after Augustus death (14 AD):

> This contained a description of the resources of the State, of the number of citizens and allies under arms, of the fleets, subject kingdoms, provinces, taxes, direct and indirect, necessary expenses and customary bounties. All these details Augustus had written with his own hand, and had added a counsel, that the empire should be confined to its present limits, either from fear or out of jealousy.[97]

That such records existed is clear from a later section of Tacitus. Considering that nearly one hundred years had passed before Tacitus wrote his account of the period, he must have had extensive records to consult when he outlined the dispositions of the empire's military forces for the year 23 AD. It is also notable that, not only did Tacitus know where the legions and fleets were, he was also keenly aware of their purpose. It certainly appears that someone in 23 AD was thinking in strategic terms and laid out such notions with enough clarity that Tacitus could reiterate them almost a century later:

> Italy on both seas was guarded by fleets, at Misenum and at Ravenna, and the contiguous coast of Gaul by ships of war captured in the victory of Actium, and sent by Augustus powerfully manned to the town of Forojulium. But chief

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[97] Tacitus, Annals, 1.11.7. An earlier version of this inventory was known to exist in 23 BC; see: Suetonius, Augustus 28.1: "…when he went so far as to summon the magistrates and the senate to his house, and submit an account of the general condition of the empire."

strength was on the Rhine, as a defense alike against Germans and Gauls, and numbered eight legions. Spain, lately subjugated, was held by three. Mauretania was king Juba's, who had received it as a gift from the Roman people. The rest of Africa was garrisoned by two legions, and Egypt by the same number. Next, beginning with Syria, all within the entire tract of country stretching as far as the Euphrates, was kept in restraint by four legions, and on this frontier were Iberian, Albanian, and other kings, to whom our greatness was a protection against any foreign power. Thrace was held by Rhoemetalces and the children of Cotys; the bank of the Danube by two legions in Pannonia, two in Moesia, and two also were stationed in Dalmatia, which, from the situation of the country, were in the rear of the other four, and, should Italy suddenly require aid, not too distant to be summoned. But the capital was garrisoned by its own special soldiery, three city, nine praetorian cohorts, levied for the most part in Etruria and Umbria, or ancient Latium and the old Roman colonies. There were besides, in commanding positions in the provinces, allied fleets, cavalry and light infantry, of but little inferior strength. But any detailed account of them would be misleading, since they moved from place to place as circumstances required, and had their numbers increased and sometimes diminished.[98]

This passage by Tacitus also lays low another one of Isaac's key claims, that if the Romans had any conception of modern strategic principles "they kept quiet about it." But here is clear evidence of a Roman specifically thinking in terms of a mobile defense at the strategic level. As Tacitus states, the eight legions on the Rhine were responsible for two crucial

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[98] *Annals*, 4.5.

missions; to defend against the Germans and handle any trouble that might arise in recently pacified Gaul, while the Dalmatian Legions are tasked to both support the four legions on the Danube, or, if required march to the aid of Italy. As James Thorne has pointed out, "This is a strategy of mobile defense, if anything is."[99]

And then, almost 400 years later, there is the *Notitia Dignitatum.* This remarkable work, one of the few documents from the Roman chanceries to survive into the modern era, contains a complete accounting of the Western Roman Empire in the 420s and the Eastern Roman Empire in the 400s. It lists all court officials, as well as vicars and provincial governors, arranged by praetorian prefecture, and diocese. Moreover, it lists by name all military commanders ((*magistri militum*, *comites rei militaris* and *duces)*, along with their stations and the military units under their control. In short, it is a complete record of the military formations of the Empire, along with their locations.[100] In between these periods we have numerous references to censuses and other strategic assessments. As Wheeler has notes, "If emperors kept detailed records on military strengths and location of troops, did they then fail to ponder their use?"

David Cherry, in a recent work, captures these beliefs in all of their inanity:[101] "It is unclear, however, whether the Romans themselves ever understood the frontiers to have behaved, militarily or administratively, as zones, or indeed as any other kind of territorially defined unit." If this was the case it is a true wonder to find that Rome invested so much time and treasure constructing a line of fortifications, watchtowers, and administrative posts − the *limes* or *limitanei* - all along these frontiers they supposedly did not know knew existed. Cherry

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[99] James Thorne, "Battle, Tactics, and the Limites in the West," Paul Erdkamp, "The Companion to the Roman Army (London, 2007), p. 229.

[100] Interestingly the *Notitia Dignitatum*, records a number of forts as in barbarian territory and outside of the empire. This is rather clear evidence that the Romans possessed an excellent idea of where their frontiers ended and where barbarism began.

[101] David Cherry*, "*The Frontier Zones," in Walter Schiedel*,*, et. al., eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 721.

continues: "There is also little reason to believe that the Romans believed it to be their duty to protect provincial populations against those who lived beyond the frontiers."

To believe this one has to whisk away a truly overwhelming amount of direct evidence. Why else place all of the legions along the frontier or within frontier provinces? As there was no great clamoring of folks trying to escape the empire for the barbarian hinterlands, it is reasonable to assume that the legions were placed along the frontier to keep someone out. Cherry continues: And even if the imperial government had wanted to develop a coherent system of defensive barriers and fortifications, it is unlikely that it could have overcome the delay in communications and transportation that were a necessary consequence which separated the frontiers from the capital, and from each other."

Of course overcoming such distances was a primary factor in the selection of the frontier zones. The availability of the Rhine and the Danube greatly eased both transport and communication. Moreover, where the seas and rivers ended, Roman roads began. For centuries Rome constructed and improved upon a system that appears designed primarily for military purposes, for if the roads had been for trade they would have made them wide enough for two carts to pass alongside each other. Why go through the effort of extending the road system from the capital to the edge of the frontier if not to conquer the tyranny of distance? Furthermore, as many recent archeological finds show, even soldiers at the most distant edges of the Empire, such as along Hadrian's Wall (The Vindolanda Tablets), were accustomed to a significant degree of specialized Mediterranean foodstuffs and certain other Roman luxuries. If the transport system was capable of delivering these comfort goods from the center, to the very edge of the empire, it could certainly handle the transport of military necessities. As for communications,

Pliny's unceasing prattle, forwarded in numerous letters to the emperor, stands in testament to the efficiency of the imperial communication system.

If much of the above appears as too harsh a critique of a number of historians, it must be remembered that they, in their haste to undermine Luttwak's admittedly overly-schematized construction of Roman grand strategy, put forth conclusions unsupported by the evidence. In the process they have inflicted severe damage on the entire field of Roman historical studies, particularly its military aspects. It is therefore important to stipulate certain points up front:

- Roman leaders had a strong understanding of the geography of the empire and for possibly 500 miles or more beyond the empire's borders;

- There was an organized body serving the emperor, which was responsible for military administration, and capable of forward planning.

- The purpose of the legions was to defend the empire, either through holding the border or through launching offensives against Rome's enemies (often moving the border). When not involved in their primary duty these legions were available to help maintain internal stability, or to help make one of their generals emperor of Rome.

- Roman leaders had a good mental conception of its frontier zones, primarily consisting of the Rhine and Danube Rivers in Europe, the Saharan desert in North Africa, and the barren wastes of Mesopotamia in the East (although this last was elastic).

- they took war seriously and devoted a substantial portion of their mental energies to pondering war. In short, they were capable of strategic thought, and often partook in such thinking.

Roman Grand Strategy – an Overview

Approaching the subject of Roman grand strategy is hampered by the lack of surviving records that allude to strategic thinking. Ammianus, who provides almost the only contemporary history of the later empire, explains why he and other ancient historians failed to cover the ideas behind Roman actions: "Such details are beneath the dignity of history."[102] Still, an historian can glean sufficient information from various histories and the archeological record to demonstrate that Rome possessed and adhered to a grand strategy, even if it may never have been articulated as such. If one were to examine first principles, any emperor's foremost concern had to be the security and stability of the Empire. In practice, this meant securing the frontiers against external enemies, while limiting the causes for and presenting as few opportunities as possible for internal revolt. To accomplish this overarching task, Roman emperors continuously adapted their strategies and methods, as they confronted a dynamic and changing threat. Along the way there were failures and setbacks, as not every emperor was mindful of the fact that his first duty was the security of the empire. Moreover, many of those who acknowledged this responsibility adopted policies that risked more than any possible gain. Others were so beset by troubles that they were precluded from adopting a strategy that did not have their own personal survival at its core. Strategic failures cannot, therefore, be interpreted as

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[102] Bresse, *The Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, p. 27. See: Ammianus, 26.1.1.

proof that the Romans were devoid of a conception of strategic design. In fact, examination of the movements of the legions underlines that Roman leaders never lost sight of where the permanent threats to the empire resided, or what it took to keep them at bay.[103] It is rather remarkable, in fact, that whenever Rome denuded the frontiers of troops (usually to partake in a civil war or an invasion of Parthia), emperors returned those legions back to the frontier at the earliest opportunity. Unfortunately, there were often gaps of several years between the legions' departure and their return, time for an ambitious chieftain to gather warriors for a destructive raid or lengthy invasion on the interior of the empire.

The Economics of Empire

At the center there was Rome, which maintained itself through taxes drawn from the wealth and productive capacity of the rest of the empire.[104] As Keith Hopkins has pointed out, the Roman Empire had three distinct segments:[105]

1. The outer ring of the frontier provinces in which the defensive armies were stationed

2. An inner ring of rich, tax exporting provinces (Gaul, Spain, Egypt, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Syria)

3. The center, Rome, later joined by Constantinople.

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[103] For an excellent history of the legions and their movements over the centuries, see Stephen Dando-Collins: *The Legions of Rome* (London, 2010).

[104] One should note that the evidence used for determining the size, structure, and development of the Roman economy is rather thin and patchy. What is presented here is the best analysis possible condensed from a number of scholars who have spent decades piecing together Roman economic history from scant original source material.

[105] Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC- AD 400)," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 70, 1980, pp. 101-125

The crucial element of Rome's long-term survival, therefore, rested on keeping the tax exporting provinces secure and stable. Only by doing so could the Roman elites maintain themselves in luxury, while still feeding approximately one-quarter million Roman citizens free of charge. Moreover, by the time of the empire, neither Rome nor the Italian peninsula produced sufficient excess wealth to sustain itself, and neither could pay even a small fraction of the cost of a large professional army. Therefore, it fell to the provinces to fund the frontier armies, on which their safety and prosperity depended. Even at the time, however, Rome recognized that the frontier provinces or zones would never produce enough wealth to sustain the troops stationed there. Cicero, who never confronted the expense of empire, was known to complain that many provinces were barely able to pay anything in their own defense.[106] Strabo, who wrote prior to Rome's invasion of Britain, did not believe that future province would be able to support the cost of a single legion.[107] And yet, throughout much of the empire's existence at least four legions were continuously stationed on the island.

As Keith Hopkins points out the process of building the empire paid for itself: "conquest by the Romans disrupted established patterns even in economically advanced regions: Romans plundered the stored reserves of generations, from towns, temples and from rich individuals treasure chests. They siphoned off skilled and unskilled labor as slaves; they gave loans to oppressed landowners and then distrained upon their estates, when they were unable to pay extortionate rates of interest."[108]

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[106] Richard Duncan-Jones, *Structure and Scale of the Roman Economy*, (Cambridge, 2002), p. 30.
[107] Ibid., p. 30. Here Duncan-Jones is relying on Appian, 5;7 and Dio 75.3.3.
[108] Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC- AD 400)," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 70, 1980, pp. 101-125.

As the empire ceased its expansion, this source of funding dried up and had to rely on its own internal resources to support its strategic policies.[109] Anyone trying to grasp the full range of strategic options available to Rome must first comprehend the extent of this resource base. Using recent estimates, Raymond W. Goldsmith places the Roman government's expenditures during the Augustan era at between 600 and 825,000,000 sesterces.[110] This amounts to between 3 and 4 percent of the empire's total national product. While Rome may have been able to raise a few percent more during times of crisis or civil war, such spending could not be long sustained.[111] Given the practical economic limits placed on Roman expenditures, how much of a military force could the empire bear? Through the first three centuries of the empire, Rome, on average, spent approximately 450 million (perhaps as high as 500 million) sesterces annually on the maintenance of its military forces. This represents about half of total imperial expenditures during the early empire. [112] For this the empire received a military establishment of 150,000 legionaries, 150,000 auxiliaries, a Praetorian Guard, transport, and a navy.[113] Interestingly, the amount Rome spent on its military represented only a fraction of the revenues and expenditures of the Roman elite, which were several times higher than that received each ear by the empire's

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[109] The author recognizes that the offensive impulse towards conquest was not extinguished for at least several centuries. Still, it is clear that the great conquests were over by the time Tiberius assumed the purple. Any conquest from that point on typically failed to recoup the cost of the invasion. Exceptions, such as the influx of gold after Trajan's conquest of Dacia, or various conquests in the east eventually also proved such a drain on the empire's resources that they were abandoned.

[110] Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 48 For an analysis of Goldsmith's conclusions that led to further adjustments to Roman GDP and expenditures, see: Angus Maddison, *Contours of the World Economy 1-2030 AD: Essays in Macro-Economic History* (Oxford, 2007) , pp. 11-62. Maddison places the average per-capita GDP within the empire at $540 (1990 G-K dollars), as compared to England during the Glorious Revolution (1688) of 1,411.

[111] See, Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire" for a discussion of Rome's capability to raise taxes by installing a much larger administrative infrastructure, akin to that of China at the time, within the empire. Whether such an infrastructure could have been installed or tolerated amongst such diverse populations as made up the empire is open to doubt. In any event, there is a good likelihood the administrative infrastructure would have captured most of the additional revenues for its own purposes, as eventually happened in China.

[112] Jongman, "The Early Roman Empire: Consumption," p. 611

[113] In an appendix to "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire," Hopkins presents calculations for the size of the Roman military establishment that are accepted here. However, Hopkins only accounts for the cost of pay. He leaves out the costs of such things as supplies, armaments, military fortifications, ships, ports, and many other items necessary. These costs are unquantifiable, at present, but they were certainly substantial.

treasury. This disparity likely increased in the later empire, as private fortunes grew while the empire was having trouble maintaining its tax base. Rome's inability, or unwillingness, to tax the accumulated wealth of its elites was a crucial handicap when the funds necessary to secure the empire ran short. Nero may not have fiddled as Rome burned, but many of its richest citizens were leading the high-life even as the Goths, Vandals, and Franks poured across the frontiers.

GDP Per Capita In	Goldsmith	Hopkins	Scheidel	Lo Cascio	Maddison
	(14 AD)	(14 AD)	(150 AD)	(150 AD)	(14 AD)
Sesterces	HS 380	HS 225	HS 260	HS 380	HS 380
Wheat	843 kg	491 kg	680 kg	855 kg	843 kg
1990 International Dollars			$620	$940	$570

Figure 1 – Roman Per Capita GDP as given by the main references for this section[114]

Evidence indicates that Roman policy makers were aware of these limits. As Elio Lo Cascio states: "What we know of the *ratonarium*, which was published regularly by Augustus and his successors, and the *breviarium totius imperii* left by Augustus at his death, shows that state

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[114] This table is built from a paper by Elio Lo Cascio and Paolo Malanima, which provides an excellent summary of the various estimates for Roman GDP and the methodologies used to achieve them. See: Elio Lo Cascio and Paolo Malanima, "Ancient and Pre-Modern Economies: GDP in the Roman Empire and Early Modern Europe (Venice, 2011). A copy can be found at: http://www.paolomalanima.it/default_file/Papers/ANCIENT-PRE-MODERN-ECONOMIES.pdf (accessed 5 March 2012).

authorities kept track of the various elements of income and expenditure."[115] The pains Augustus took to reorganize the taxation system of the Principate further attests to this knowledge.

During the empire's early years a "uniform, if not universal, criteria for counting subjects and assessing their wealth were extended first of all to the *provvciae Caesaris,* the provinces under the direct control of the emperor, and later to the *provinciae populi* as well."[116] Numerous documents found in Egypt, as well as a fragment from the Severan age jurist and praetorian prefect, Ulpian, verify that this system remained in place for at least the first two centuries of the empire and demonstrate that formal censuses (*forma censualis*) remained a regular feature of provincial administration.

Rome may have been what most historians call a "low tax state," and most of the evidence does seem to indicate that the Roman yoke was not particularly harsh. Still, these historians are examining Roman tax rates from a modern standpoint, where collecting under 5 percent of GDP in annual taxes does indeed appear miniscule. In relation to other pre-industrial subsistence economies, however, the Romans were as good as any, and better than most, when it came to revenue collection. Only Egypt and the Persian Empire of Darius, where wealth was far more concentrated on a per-capita basis, did better. In later centuries, Western European rulers did not approach Roman levels of revenue collection until the early modern era. By creating a taxation infrastructure capable of drawing substantial revenue towards the center Rome made up for a GDP per-capita that was probably only half that of Western Europe in the late medieval era.

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[115] Elio Lo Casico, "The Early Roman Empire: The State and the Economy," in Schiedel, *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 623.
[116] Ibid., p. 631.

Population and Tax Revenues 350 BC to 1200 AD[117]			
	Population (Millions)	Revenues (Tons of Silver)	Revenues Per Head (Grams of Silver)
Persia (350 BC)	17	697	41
Egypt (250 BC)	7	384	55
Rome (1 AD)	50	825	17
Rome (150 AD)	50	1,050	21
Byzantium (850 BC)	10	150	15
Abbasids (800 AD)	26	1,260	48
Tang (850 AD)	50	2,145	43
France (1221 AD)	8.5	20.3	2.4
England (1203 AD)	2.5	11.5	4.6

Figure 2

However, when it comes to military power, the amount of national wealth is secondary to a nation's ability to mobilize whatever wealth is available. For this reason, a strategist cannot examine Roman revenues in isolation. Wealth and the ability to draw on such wealth for military purposes must always be weighed against enemy capabilities. In this regard, Rome had a distinct advantage through the first few centuries of the empire, particularly in Western Europe. According to Angus Maddison, the barbarian region (in the early empire) was only half as

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[117] This graph and the information in the preceding paragraph can be found in: James MacDonald. *A Free Nation Deep in Debt*, (New York, 2003), pp. 65 and 109.

populous as the Roman Empire and had a per-capita GDP of $400.[118] Such a level is just barely enough for survival and leaves little excess for a centralized authority to build the structures of a functioning state. This alone, accounts for the fragmentation of the barbarian tribes through the first two centuries of the empire, a situation that changed as the tribes grew richer in succeeding centuries.

On Rome's eastern front, the Parthian Empire was much richer and had the infrastructure to collect substantial funds and deploy them for military purposes. In fact Parthia proved quite capable of defending itself against Roman incursions (Crassus' defeat at Carrhae and Mark Anthony's disastrous invasion in 37 BC) despite periodic setbacks, such as those inflicted by the emperors Trajan and Severus. When facing Rome, however, Parthia was almost always on the defensive. Pressed by barbarians on its own northern and eastern borders, along with continuous upheavals within the ruling dynasty, Parthia was never able to mount a formidable challenge to Roman power. This dramatically changed, however, when the Sassanid Persians overthrew the Parthian Empire in 226 AD. This new Persian dynasty was highly centralized and determined to reconquer all of the lands that formally made up the great Persian Achaemenid Empire, which included the bulk of the Eastern Roman Empire. For the next several centuries, until the Arab invasions in the early seventh century, the Sassanids remained a mortal threat to the empire.

In summary, the Roman Empire possessed vast, but not unlimited riches. Given the character of the economy, its low growth rate in the early centuries followed by a declining economic situation from at least the Antonine Plague (165-180 AD) forward, the size of the Roman military establishment likely represented the greatest possible sustained effort the empire was capable of maintaining. As long as its enemies were fragmented and/or weak, this was sufficient to guard the frontiers and maintain internal stability. However, as Rome's economic

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[118] Maddison, *The Contours of the World Economy*, p. 54.

fortunes declined and its enemies grew in wealth and strength, the empire was hard pressed to maintain frontier integrity. Compounding this was a corrupted political order, particularly after the period of the "good emperors" that increasingly damaged the empire's internal stability and denuded the frontier of legionary protection just when most needed. *Still, as long as Rome was able to protect and make use of its core central tax base it had the wherewithal to survive, counterattack, and restore its fortunes.* Nowhere is this better displayed then by Rome's recovery from the crisis of the third century.   However, when the Western Empire's "tax spine" was broken, as it was in the fifth century, Rome and its empire in the West were doomed.

Grand Strategy – Its Practical Application

Throughout its five centuries of existence, the Roman Empire had the same singular fixed purpose of any other state – survival. During the early years of the Principate, when the expansionary impulse of the Republic was still a driving political and intellectual force, Romans considered that the continued survival and integrity of the empire was best achieved through conquest. The destruction of Varus' three legions (XVII, XVIII, XIX) at Teutoburger Wald (9 AD) and the near mortal threat presented by the Pannonian revolt (6-9 AD) established in Roman minds that the Rhine and the Danube were the practical limits of empire. Although the embers of this "impulse to conquest" would flare-up repeatedly during next few centuries, these great events brought with them the realization that Rome had reached the limits of empire, where the cost of further conquests were beyond the Empire's fiscal capacity to support them.   It is important to note that these rivers did not demarcate a specific linear border. Rather, they are best thought of as zones under Roman control and always under the wary eye of its legions.

There is no doubt, however, that for most Romans true civilization ended at the edges of the Rhine and the Danube, and what lay beyond was barbarism.

The situation was vastly different on Rome's eastern borders. Here, advanced and thriving civilizations existed for two eons before the Romans arrived. Rome also had to contend with a Parthian state potentially as militarily powerful as itself. On this frontier, what played out was typical of any two great powers in close geographical contact with one another. There was a constant push-and-pull, as each side sought local advantages. Still, beset by enemies on its own frontiers and by continuous internal instability, Parthia was never an existential threat to the Roman Empire, a circumstance that was radically altered when the more dynamic Sassanid's overthrew the Parthian Empire in 226 AD..

On the long African frontier, the threats were all relatively "low-intensity." Berbers and other such nomadic tribes could conduct raids, but there was no serious danger of them allying and forming a force large enough to seriously threaten Roman control. Moreover, the great desert expanse, with its concomitant lack of water, tended to canalize any movement or raid along easily predictable routes. This frontier, therefore, never required a large force of legionnaires, as small numbers of legionnaires could control wide swathes of territory just by garrisoning water points and patrolling the routes between them.

Many historians examining the multiple defensive methods Rome employed on its various frontiers view this as proof that there was no existing concept of grand strategy in the Roman mind.

One of the main difficulties about the 'grand strategy' thesis is, as its opponents have demonstrated, that the Roman frontiers seem to lack any kind of uniformity,

even where there were visual similarities. Hadrian's Wall in Britain, for example, was manned by thousands of forward troops, always auxiliaries; the African *clausurae* in Tripolitania were apparently maintained by small detachments drawn from a single legion and not before the late second century; Mauretania Tingitana never seems to have possessed a linear structure of frontier at all; in Arabia the frontier was a trunk road.[119]

This entirely misses the point that the creation of a strategy is always and everywhere the matching of ends, ways, and means to a specific threat or objective. By this measure, what some see as randomness in the Roman defensive scheme is, in reality, a clear demonstration of Roman understanding of the various threats surrounding the empire, as well as a clear demonstration of the imperial administrations' ability to implement the most cost efficient way of handling each.

Geography is only one part of building a coherent grand strategy. A more important element, obvious to the Romans, if not to later historians, is the requirement for a thorough threat assessment, as well as a calculation of available resources to underpin strategic and operational decisions. Where the Romans determined that the threat was great enough to build a wall, they built a wall. Where they judged that a zone needed only an access road to allow rapid reinforcement, it built a road. Such discrimination is the essence of strategy. Moreover, as conditions changed, both outside and within the empire, Rome's strategic approach changed.

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[119] C. R. Whitaker, "Frontiers," Alan Bowman, et. al., The *Cambridge Ancient History: The High Empire, A.D. 70-192* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 312.

At the root of any Roman defensive strategy was the legion. As noted, Roman means were always limited to 5 percent of GDP, out of which all of the expenses of government had to be paid, including providing for an army. Fiscal limits, therefore, placed an almost inviolable constraint on the size of the legionary forces. Augustus set this the number at 28 legions, and it was little changed until the reign of Diocletian almost 300 years later. The challenge of raising new legions is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the three legions lost at Teutoburger Wald were not replaced until Nero's reign 50 years later. By 215 AD Rome had 33 legions, but by 395 AD the *Notitia Dignitatum* records only 24 legions, all of them stationary for 180 years.

No emperor could ever lose track of a single crucial fact, his rule and the defense of the Empire rested on only 150,000 legionnaires along with a similar number of auxiliaries. In other words less than 0.5 percent of the Empire's total population was responsible for the security of the remaining 99.5 percent. This is a surprisingly small number considering the size and ferocity of the external, and occasionally internal, threats. The success of any Roman strategy rested on the professionalism and military capacity of the legions. As Gibbon stated in his magisterial *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "… The empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valor."[120] For over 250 years the legions met the challenge. Still, no large military organization is ever disciplined or valorous unless it benefits from a training program to instill such noble traits of military character and to ingrain the habit of obedience even under the most brutal of battlefield conditions. In doing so, the Romans stood second to none. As Flavius Josephus related:

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[120] Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, (New York, 1995), p. 1.

For it is not actual war that gives them the first lesson in arms; nor at the call of necessity alone do they move their hands, having ceased to use them in time of peace: but, as if they had grown with their weapons they have no truce with exercises, no waiting for occasions. These trainings differ in nothing from the veritable efforts of combat; every soldier kept in daily practice and acting with energy of those really engaged in war. Hence the perfect ease with which they sustain the conflict. For no confusion displaces them from their accustomed order: no panic disturbs; no labor exhausts. It follows therefore, as a certain result that they inevitably conquer those not similarly trained: nor would he err, who would style *their exercises bloodless conflicts and their conflicts bloody exercises*.[121]

The Romans well knew the character of their enemies and the advantages their training and discipline brought in battle. This is visible in a speech given by Titus on the eve of battle against a numerically superior foe, again related by Josephus:

… I fear lest any of you should be inspired with secret alarm by the multitude of our foes. Let such a one reflect who he is against, and against whom he is arrayed; and that the Jew though undaunted, and reckless in life, are nevertheless

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[121] Josephus 3.5.1 Flavius Josephus, trans. Rev. Robert Traill, *The Jewish War: A New Translation* (Boston, 1958), p. 282. Another translation of is available, see: Flavius Josephus, trans. William Winston, *Josephus: The Complete Works* (New York, 1998), p. 770.

ill disciplined and unskilled in war, and may rather be styled a rabble than an
army.

… Again, it is not the multitude of men, however soldier-like they may be, that
ensures victory in the field; but fortitude, though only a few. For such, indeed,
are easily marshaled and brought up to each other's support; whilst unwieldy
masses are more injured by themselves than by the enemy. The Jews are led on
by temerity and self-confidence, affections of mere madness, and, though highly
efficient in success, extinguished by the slightest mischance.[122]

Nowhere is this Roman military superiority over barbarian hordes on better display then
when the reinforced XIV Gemina Legion, approximately 10,000 strong, annihilated upwards of
70,000 Britons at the Battle of Watling Street.[123] Before going into battle their commander,
Suetonius Paulinus, encouraged his men:

'There,' he said, 'you see more women than warriors. Unwarlike, unarmed, they
will give way the moment they have recognized that sword and courage of their
conquerors, which have so often routed them… Only close up the ranks, and
having discharged your javelins, then with shields and swords continue the work
of bloodshed and destruction, without a thought of plunder. When once the
victory has been won, everything will be in your power.'[124]

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[122] Josephus 3.10.3. Trail,, trans., *The Jewish War*, p. 315.
[123] This is a modern estimate for the forces engaged. Tacitus claims 100,000 and Dio a spectacular 230,000
barbarians, see Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 62.8.2.
[124] Tacitus, *Annals,* XIV, 36.

For as long as the legions were capable of delivering victories everything was within Rome's power -- at least within the frontiers of the empire. Outside of the frontiers things rapidly became more problematic, for Rome was pushing the edge of what any pre-modern state was capable. As the Persians discovered while fighting Greece, despite their overwhelming size and military superiority, the further an army moves from the center of empire, the less force it can muster.[125] On all fronts, Rome was at the limits of empire. Any further expansion could only be attained by one of two ways. The first was to expand the military establishment, so as to provide additional legions for conquest. As we have already seen, however, Rome's subsistence economy was already pushed to the brink and incapable of sustaining a larger military force for more than a limited duration.

The second method was to denude portions of the frontier, so as to assemble a mass of legions for an offensive. During the early years of empire this could be accomplished without serious risk such as during the Claudian invasion of Britain and Trajan's invasions of Mesopotamia and Dacia. However, even these conquests put enormous strain on the Empire's resources. Although other emperors (Severus and Julian) repeated the Mesopotamian invasion, the legions were soon recalled and more-or-less restored to their positions along the original borders of the Empire. As for Dacia and Britain, when troubles mounted they were the first provinces abandoned, as there were better uses elsewhere for the troops and other resources their maintenance required.

C. R. Whittaker makes the case that the limits of empire were ordained by the lack of any economic wealth on the other side of the Roman zone. In this he is half right, although his thesis

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[125] At Marathon, a Persian army at least as large as Rome's was capable of mustering a mere 30,000 troops. When Xerxes led a much larger force into Greece ten years later he required years of preparation and silent borders on all of Persia's other military fronts. Even then he was unable to sustain more than a fraction for more than a single fighting season.

is difficult to maintain when one considers the riches of the Parthian Empire that were seemingly within Rome's grasp. Moreover, over its long history, Rome never failed to launch a war of conquest just because the territory in dispute was economically marginal. If this was sufficient cause to halt the march of Roman arms, then most of Gaul, at least half of Spain, and all of Britain should have remained outside the empire. There must have been something else in the equation. And that something was also economic: Rome's inability to financially or logistically sustain forces sizeable enough to pacify new regions far from the center of the empire.

Rome possessed one other tremendous strategic advantage – domination of the Mediterranean. What the Romans referred to as mare nostrum (our sea) had been a Roman lake since Pompey had finished the conquest of the east and defeated the pirate menace in the Republic's final decades. Rome's Mediterranean dominance, along with its massive economic benefits, gave the city interior lines of movement that hugely sped up communications and military movements throughout the Empire. As long as Rome maintained this dominance, it was able to rapidly move troops from one threatened point to another. Even when the troops moved overland, sea dominance greatly eased the logistical burdens. When the Romans temporarily lost their naval dominance of the eastern Mediterranean, the result was catastrophe, as the Goths took to the sea to raid deep into the Empire. Despite this warning the Romans again lost control of the sea lanes when during the empire's death throes, they allowed the Vandals to capture their main cargo fleet. In short, naval dominance was a critical element of Roman strategic superiority – once lost, the defeat undermined Rome's ability to confront the threats closing in on its borders.

Strategy through the Centuries

As noted earlier, one of the most remarkable elements of the Roman Empire was the sheer timescale of its existence. In comparison to the modern era, there was an undeniable degree of stasis in the ancient world. Still, even relatively glacial rates of change will, over the course of centuries, create major shifts in the strategic environment. The Roman Empire could not have survived five centuries without a capacity to recognize and adapt to these changes. Therefore, anyone trying to comprehend Roman strategic conceptions must appreciate that Rome, while it maintained a single grand strategy (*the security of the Empire's core tax-producing provinces*), developed multiple strategies to deal with the changing threats.

The First Century AD – Empire without Bounds

In the early years of the first century AD, while Augustus was still alive, there are no indications that the expansionary impulses of the Republic had yet run its course. On the contrary, after waging prolonged campaigns to secure the empire's internal stability, Augustus attempted to expand the empire farther. Despite the historical evidence and his own writings -- the *Res Gestae* -- many historians still argue that Augustus did not favor expansion of the empire. This outlook rests on his supposed final testament to his successors, advising them to "be satisfied with present possessions and in no way seek to increase the area of empire."[126] Whether or not Augustus actually bequeathed such advice remains a matter of historical debate.[127] What is certain is that Augustus himself never followed such a policy.[128] One look at

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[126] Dio 56.33

[127] For an excellent outline of the debate see: Josiah Ober, "Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte," vol. 31, no. 3, 3rd qtr., 1982, pp. 306-328. It is more recently discussed in David J. Breeze's *The Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, pp. 14-19.

[128] Modern historians have followed P. A. Brunt's lead, and it is now generally accepted that Dio created a fiction that Augustus was always oriented towards peaceful solutions. Dio, who was always opposed to expansion, was

Res Gestae makes it clear that Augustus saw himself as conqueror in the same mold as his uncle and adopted father, Julius Caesar.[129] Eight of *Res Gestae's* 35 pages are dedicated to his conquests and military accomplishments. In fact, some historians believe that Augustus, based on a mistaken notion of geographic distance, was intent on conquering the entire world.[130] After all, if Caesar could conquer Gaul in ten years with only a fraction of Rome's resources behind him, what could Augustus do with the entire wealth and might of the empire behind him?[131] J. C. Mann goes as far as to conclude:

> There seems little doubt that Augustus saw that the security of the empire demanded above all the conquest of Germany. The Elbe would only have formed a temporary frontier. Was the further aim to envelop the lands beyond the Danube, and even beyond the Black Sea, thus securing the vulnerable left flank for an ultimate advance into Iran? Such plans need not have seemed wildly unrealistic to the Rome of Augustus. At the foundation of the republic, who could have foreseen that one day Rome would control all Italy? Even with all of Italy under Roman control, who would have forecast that one day she would control the whole Mediterranean basin? It is necessary to try to imagine the state of mind of the Roman of the Augustan period. With such a history of unparalleled divine

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perfectly willing to create a pacific Augustus as an exemplar for future emperors. See: P. A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 96-109.

[129] Alison Cooley, *Res Gestae divi Augusti*, *edition with introduction, translation, and commentary* (Cambridge, 2009).

[130] Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes*. Although the author has argued that the Romans had a clear idea of the geography of the empire and beyond the frontier for several hundred miles (much farther in the east). They certainly did not, however, have any idea how much further the world extended beyond that zone, making it feasible that Augustus, and others, believed that with on great push beyond the existing frontiers they could occupy the world.

[131] C. M. Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford, 1972).

benevolence, how could he fail to conclude that it was Rome's destiny to conquer?

The preamble to the Res Gestae makes the view plain.[132]

For Mann, the Roman frontier was an accident, drawn at the limits of Rome's ability to project power any farther. In this interpretation, Rome did not halt its expansion as matter of policy, but as a result of exhaustion. Unfortunately, too many historians still cling to the idea that Augustus only fought wars of necessity, allowing them to overlook the simple fact that for the Roman Republic and during the early decades of empire, expansion and conquest were a necessity, if at times, only a political one. Still, for the most part, the path established by Gibbon on the first page of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, remains the dominant historical theme:

> The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the Republic: and the
> emperors for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which
> had been acquired by policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and
> the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a
> rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the
> ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of
> moderation into pubic councils.[133]

Although this interpretation of Augustan policy was waning by mid-twentieth century, particularly in regards to Germany, it has never disappeared. The reality is that the Roman

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[132] J.C. Mann, "Power, Force, and the Frontiers of the Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies,* vol. 69, 1979, p. 179.
[133] Edward Gibbon (author) and David P. Womersley (editor), *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol.* 1, (New York, 1996), pp. 1-2.

Empire of the Julio-Claudian era was not hunkered down behind a series of fortified lines – the *limes* – or looking for protection though the creation of buffer states surrounding the empire. Whatever truth this position may hold during the later empire, it is certainly without validity during the early Principate. As C. M. Wells points out, "There is no trace at this period of *limes* such as developed under the Flavians. The Augustan commanders did not have the Maginot Line mentality. They were not thinking about keeping the barbarians out, but of going out themselves to conquer the barbarians."[134]

Augustus never viewed either the Rhine or the Danube as settled frontiers. It was always his intention to conquer Germany, at least as far as the Elbe River. While various interpretations of ancient writers might appear to make this arguable, the actual actions of Roman armies during the period make Rome's intent clear. From 12 BC and for several years after the Varian disaster in the Teutoburg Wald, Roman armies campaigned across the Rhine, and at least until 9 AD they were building the infrastructure of empire. For Rome, the words of Virgil were part of the ingrained national consciousness: *Romane, memento (hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem, parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (Remember, Roman, you rule nations with your power (these will be your talents) and impose law and order, spare the conquered, and to beat down the arrogant.)

During the first century AD such a strategy made sense, as there were no external enemies capable of reaching deep into the core areas of the empire. This is particularly true after Rome crushed the Pannonian revolt in 9 AD. Moreover, given the economic conditions within the empire, any limited penetration of the frontier was unlikely to strike anything of significance. There were agricultural settlements along the frontiers, but these were of limited economic consequence. Moreover, the Romans could quickly repair damage to these primitive settlements.

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[134] Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus*, p. 246.

Finally, since barbarian bands were rarely able to move fast, there was always time to concentrate legionary forces to crush them long before they could enter the empire's heart.

Conditions were somewhat different in the east. Here, the Parthian menace loomed. In the first century, however, this threat was manageable. Client states in Judea, Cappadocia, and Armenia provided a buffer, as well as substantial forces, to counter Parthian incursions. Still, if, as periodically happened, a client state switched allegiances, it would open up the heart of the empire to attack. Similarly, if a Parthian Army approached Syria out of Mesopotamia, it was in a position to attack some of the empire's richest provinces. To counter the threat, many of the eastern cities were walled and capable of stout resistance until help arrived.

Roman legionary dispositions during this time reflect strategic realities. The preclusive defense seen in the next century is rarely noticeable in the Julio-Claudian era. Rather, the legions concentrated in crucial locations. In Gaul, this translated into concentrations along the major invasion routes into Germany. From here the legions could easily march to contain any incursion, while also maintaining the ability to launch preemptive or punitive attacks into Germany. Along the Danube, the legions maintained much the same stance, with the added element of hostile elements within the empire's borders that required watching. In the east, Rome concentrated the legions well back from the actual frontier. This made them easier to supply and also kept them available for major military operations. Such operations could range from internal stability (crushing a Jewish revolt), annexing client states (Cappadocia, Judea, and later Armenia), or fighting wars with Parthia (54-63 AD over the right to Armenian succession).

At this point, Rome's enemies presented only a sporadic threat along the frontier. Moreover, these fragmented enemies were incapable of coordinating their activities. As such, it was always possible for Rome to concentrate a large percentage of its army whenever an

offensive opportunity presented itself and defend the empire from internal or external enemies. During this period, the Romans possessed an advantage in strategic mobility (on land and particularly by sea) that both ensured the empire's integrity, and left open the option for expansion. Nowhere is this better exemplified then in the 6 AD, when 12 of Rome's' 28 legions massed along three fronts to invade Bohemia and destroy the power of the Macromanni. The assault was barely underway when the Pannonian revolt erupted. Rome's leaders immediately called off the offensive and marched the 12 legions, plus a like number of auxiliaries, into Illyricum. Crushing the revolt still took three years, and required reinforcements from throughout the empire. It did, however, display the basic element of Roman grand strategy at the time: the ability to rapidly move superior forces to any point of the frontier seriously threatened with the near-certain knowledge that no major threats would develop elsewhere.

That the Romans were well aware of the strategic realities of the age is evidenced by the speed with which the disposition of the legions returned to their previous pattern soon after the disruptive exigencies of the moment. For instance, during his war of conquest in Britain , Claudius, despite needing several legions for its completion, did not alter frontier arrangements in anything more than minimal fashion. Even more tellingly, in 69AD, after the turmoil of civil war and four emperors in a single year, the victor, Vespasian, immediately ordered his forces back to their original frontier zones.

The Second Century – The Limits of Empire

At the beginning of the second century, Rome's impulse towards expansion was still in evidence. Trajan, a true soldier-emperor, led his legions into Dacia, adding this gold rich region

to the empire in 106 AD. A decade later when the Armenian settlement with Parthia broke down, Trajan launched an invasion of Armenia and Mesopotamia. By 117 AD his legions had taken Parthia's richest provinces and sacked its capital, Ctesiphon. For Rome, this represented a high-water mark.[135] A revolt within the empire, coupled with a spirited Parthian counterattack, soon had Trajan and most of his army racing homeward. He did not survive the march. His successor, Hadrian, held on to Dacia, but rapidly divested the empire of Mesopotamia.

After Trajan's reign, much of expansionary drive that had marked Roman strategic culture since the conquest of Latium disappeared. David Breeze relates an oration by Ionian Greek Aelius Aristides to Antoninus Pius, in which he acknowledges the army protected the empire's frontiers, allowing the demilitarization of the core provinces.[136] Continuing he relates:

> To place the walls around the city itself as if you were hiding or fleeing from your
>
> subjects you considered ignoble and inconsistent with the rest of your concept, as
>
> if the master were to show fear of his slaves. Nevertheless, you did not forget
>
> walls, but these you placed around the Empire, not the city. And you erected
>
> walls, splendid and worthy of you, as far away as possible, visible to those within
>
> the circuit, but, for one starting from the city, an outward journey of months and
>
> years if he wished to see them. Beyond the outermost ring of the civilized world,
>
> you drew a second line, quite as one does in walling a town, another circle, more
>
> widely curved and more easily guarded. Here you built walls to defend you. …
>
> An encamped army, like a rampart, encloses the civilized world in a ring. … Such
>
> are the parallel harmonies or systems of defense which curve around you, the

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[135] Future emperors would gain as much, but they too soon found empire's resources overextended and were forced to abandon hard won gains.

[136] Breeze, *The Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, p. 19.

circle of fortifications at individual points, and that ring of those who keep watch over the whole world.[137]

Apian of Alexandria, a Roman historian and a tutor for the young Marcus Aurelius, seconded Aristides observations in his *History of Rome*.

The emperors… in general possessing the best part of the earth and sea they have, on the whole, aimed to preserve their Empire by the exercise of prudence, rather than to extend their sway indefinitely over the poverty stricken and profitless tribes of the barbarians... They surround the Empire with a great circle of camps and guard so great an area of land and sea like an estate.[138]

Such statements from Greek writers may not reflect the sentiments of the emperors or the Roman elite, but they most certainly described the reality of most of the second century. On all fronts, Rome had ceased its expansion. Moreover, most of the legions now dispersed along the frontiers. Only in the east, where the Parthian threat persisted, did they remain concentrated. But even here, there was substantially more dispersion then in the previous century, while numerous forts were established deep into the frontier zone. However, it is along the Rhine and the Danube where the biggest shifts are seen. During this period the *limes* become much more than a road network designed to enhance army mobility. In the second century the Romans developed fortified frontier zones, as the physical definition of the frontiers that had remained fluid through the Julio-Claudian era now became more fixed. The frontiers still, for the most

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[137] Ibid., pp. 19-20. See Aristides, *Roman Orations* 26, 80-4. Translation by J. H. Oliver.
[138] Ibid., p. 20. See Appian, History of Rome, Preface 7.0. Translation by H. White.

part, remain more a zone than an established line, but there is no mistaking where the fortifications end and barbarism begins.

Establishing and maintaining such a preclusive strategy is only accomplished at huge expense. Even where there is not an extensive wall to equal what Hadrian constructed in northern Britain, the *limes* are quite extensive. New road networks were built, forts, large and small were constructed, and in between were hundreds of signaling towers, and palisaded ditches, sometimes running over 200 miles. All of this activity and expense was borne as a result of the necessity to adapt to a changing strategic situation. The barbarians on the other side of the Rhine and Danube were becoming more powerful and concentrated. Moreover, on the Roman side of the frontier, development had been steady. The conquered territories, all the way to the frontier, had made good use of the extended Roman peace to cultivate substantially more land than was the case in the early empire. At the same time, other investments in the frontier provinces were significantly changing the economic character of the empire, particularly in the areas adjacent to the frontier zone, which had previously been of marginal value. As regions became richer they naturally demanded greater security, and as their political power grew in lock-step with their increased wealth, Rome met their demands. In summary, there were now stronger enemies on the barbarian side of the frontier, and they were threatening provinces that had much more to lose than in the previous century.

The changing nature of the threat coupled with Roman economic growth and expansion meant that the Julio-Claudian strategy, which allowed small enemy forces to penetrate the border, was no longer feasible. In the second century it became necessary to stop attackers before they penetrated the frontier. As Rome could not recruit or maintain much more than the 30 legions in existence, the only remaining option was fortifying the frontier. It is worth noting

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that this change in strategy did not involve the adoption of a "Maginot Line" mentality by the Romans. Often forts were pushed far beyond the frothier zone, and Rome always maintained constant diplomatic and economic interest beyond the frontiers. Moreover, the Romans were rarely hesitant to send the legions deep into barbarian territory to break up dangerous concentrations, or punish tribes that failed to toe the Roman line.   Although pressure occurred on several occasions, the line held until stressed beyond endurance starting in about 160 AD.

The Third Century – Crisis and Recovery

In 160 AD the empire suffered its first major assault on the frontiers, by the Macromanni along the Danube. The legions of Marcus Aurelius only repulsed the attack with considerable difficulty. Close upon the repulse of this invasion, a strategic wild card struck the empire – The Antonine Plague. By the time the plague had run its course, some areas of the empire had lost a third of their population. Even worse, the army was amongst the groups hardest hit by the plague with some legions decimated.[139] Among the casualties was the emperor himself. His death also broke a succession tradition that had served the empire well. Rather than adopt a qualified successor, Marcus had allowed Commodus, his vicious son, to succeed to the purple. A dozen years later, Commodus' murder initiated a long period of instability at the top as Rome endured a succession of short-lived emperors. At one point, the Praetorian Guard sold the Empire to the highest bidder, who did not last a year. The longest serving Emperor of the period, Septimius Severus, took the throne by force, and then spent five years fighting civil wars to hold

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[139] Other plagues during the third century were almost as destructive, and particularly damaging to the army. These include a plague that broke out in Egypt in 251 AD and was still raging in 270 AD, when it killed the emperor Claudius Gothicus. See: 21 Zosimus, *New History* I, 26, 37 and 46.

it. After his death in 211 there followed 24 emperors – the so-called barracks emperors - and as many or more usurpers over the next 70 years. As Luttwak noted of the period:

> Most were short-lived, but some usurpers ruled substantial parts of the empire for several years. In fact the longest reign of the period was that of a usurper, Postumus, who controlled Gaul for nine years. The average reign of the 'legitimate' emperors was only three years. One emperor, Decius (249-51) died in battle fighting the Goths; another, Valerian (253-260), was captured by the Persians and died in captivity; Claudius II (268-270) died of the plague. All other emperors and most usurpers were murdered of perished in civil war.[140]

Such turmoil within the empire could not have come at a worse time. The federation of tribes, that was already apparent in the previous century, continued growing throughout this period. Where Roman diplomacy, threats and minimal military action were once sufficient against the fragmented tribes beyond the Rhine and the Danube, such efforts were less effective against the larger federations of the third century. Moreover, new more powerful, and less Romanized tribes, such as the Goths, were pressing up against the Roman frontier. As if this were not enough, in 224 AD the Persian Sassanids toppled and replaced the weak Arsacid Parthian Empire. From this point forward, Rome, and later Byzantium, would be locked in a death struggle of increasing intensity with the Sassanid Empire.

During the third century crisis the empire verged on collapse. Despite still possessing a workable strategy, conditions rarely permitted Roman leaders to stay on the strategically sensible course. Emperors were too concerned with survival to give thought to the empire's strategic

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[140] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, p. 128.

needs. Moreover, incessant civil wars and the need to crush usurpers exhausted and undermined the morale of the army. As disciplined declined, so, inevitably, did training. The crucial element underpinning Roman strategy – the battlefield superiority of the legions – slowly withered.

Rome's enemies, sensing weakness, pounced. Throughout the middle decades of the century barbarians launched devastating raids across the border. Many of these raids reached deep into the core of the empire, wrecking provinces that had not felt the cruel hand of war in over two centuries. In one such raid the Goths and Heruli attacked Byzantium with 500 ships. After the Roman navy repelled them, the raiders retreated into the Aegean Sea, sacking many of the great cities of Greece: Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Argos. The emperor Gallienus eventually halted that invasion, but was assassinated soon thereafter. His death opened the door for a much larger Gothic seaborne invasion. Various sizes are given for this fleet, ranging from 2,000 to an incredible 6,000 ships. Whatever the number, this was a massive invasion, and as it was moving by sea, it could strike the empire's unguarded inner-core. The Goths sacked Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus, and retreated only after receiving news that a large army was approaching. Plundering as they withdrew, the Goths left the empire and took with them a huge amount of booty.

As these seaborne assaults were reaching their heights, the Rhine and Danubian frontiers crumbled. Worse, the Sassanids also took the offensive. After invading Goths killed the Emperor Decius and destroyed his army, the floodgates opened. As Luttwak relates:

In the next four years came the deluge: Dacia was submerged by invaders, the Goths reached Salonika, sea raiders ravaged the coasts, and Shapur's [the Sassanid ruler] armies conquered territory as far away as Antioch, while in the West, Franks and Alamanni were subjecting the entire Rhine frontiers and upper

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Danube to almost constant pressure. The attacks in the West culminated in 260 –
the years of Valerian's disaster, when Shapur's advance threatened even Cilicia
and Cappadocia.[141]

Under such relentless pressure the empire began to disintegrate. At one point, it split into
three major parts. In 258, Britain, Gaul, and Hispania broke off to form the Gallic Empire under
the former governor of Germania Superior and Inferior, Postumus. Two years later, the eastern
governor, Septimius Oldaenathus, created his own Palmyrene Empire out of the provinces of
Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. However, he died soon thereafter, leaving his son Vaballathus, a

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weakling who was thoroughly controlled by his mother Zenobia, to lead the eastern legions in a war of conquest into Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon.

As bad as this fragmentation was, the true damage to the empire's prospects was the economic changes that were occurring almost unnoticed against the backdrop of military crisis. As widespread unrest made safe travel for merchants impossible, the vast Roman trading network broke down. This breakdown hugely exacerbated a financial crisis that began when Rome needed to find new funds to defend the Empire, and grew worse as various provinces were devastated or broke away. As a result, cities and large landowners began establishing autarkic economic zones. This was a profound economic change, as wide swathes of the Empire stopped exporting or importing goods. From this point on, these regions would look only to themselves for subsistence crops, as well as many manufactures. At the same time, many cities, no longer confident that legions could hold the frontier lines, looked to their own defenses. These changes to the empire's basic fabric would make themselves felt in the following century. By then local leaders, despairing of support from Rome, rather than fight and see their property ravaged, began finding it advisable to come to terms with invading barbarians.[142]

Michael Grant argues "[t]hat the survival of the Empire, in the face of intolerable odds, is something of a miracle, and one of the most remarkable phenomena in human history."[143] While saving the empire was remarkable, it was not a miracle, for the empire, even in this dark hour, still possessed formidable strength. As a result of invasions and revolts, its leaders found themselves forced back on its core provinces, and here they found salvation. Despite everything

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[142] Over the past two decades a number of scholars have fundamentally redefined our knowledge of these events and the era. For the best summaries of this recent scholarship see Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford, 2006); Peter Heather *Empires and Barbarians*, (Oxford, 2010); Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000* (New York, 2009); Adrian Goldsworthy, How Rome Fell (New Haven, CT, 2009); and, Bryan War-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome: And the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2006).
[143] Michael Grant, *The Collapse and Recovery of the roman Empire* (London, 1999), p. 67.

that had gone wrong, the core of the empire (Byzantium and Anatolia, Italy, Spain and most importantly, North Africa) remained wealthy enough for one great effort. All that was required was leadership, which, when it was most needed, was found in the emperors Gallienus, Aurelian (the self declared restorer of the empire), and Diocletian. In a series of lightning campaigns these emperors reunited the empire, restored the borders (except for Dacia, which was abandoned), and damaged the Sassanids sufficiently to negotiate a 30-year peace.

Restoration of the empire allowed Rome to immediately reinstate the strategy that had served it well for three centuries. Almost from the start of his reign, Diocletian's first priority was strengthening the frontiers and turning back the clock on the structural underpinnings of the empire's military security.

> If Diocletian had a policy, it was to hold the limits of Roman territory, prevent
> barbarian incursions, and attack where appropriate. This looked back to the days
> of Hadrian and the Antonines. The differences between Diocletian and his
> predecessors of the mid-third century should not be exaggerated. What he
> achieved was doubtless the ambition of all emperors, but circumstances, not
> policy of doctrine prevented them. Diocletian was in control of the whole empire,
> and the creation of the tetrarchy [Diocletian's political arrangement, which
> divided the empire into east and west] temporarily ended the disruption of civil
> war and ensured responsibility for the military affairs of the empire was shared.[144]

After the breakdown of Diocletian's political arrangements and another period of instability, Constantine, through force of arms, seized control of the empire in the early fourth

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[144] Campbell, T*he Cambridge Ancient History*, vol XII, p. 125.

century. He kept many of the military arrangements of Diocletian, but made one important change. He reduced the status of the frontier troops – the *limitanei* – in favor of enhancing the Empire's field army – the *comitatenses* – which still existed after the campaigns that restored the Empire.. Zosimous, writing a century later, strongly disapproved of Constantine's actions, stating:

> Constantine likewise took another measure, which gave the barbarians unhindered access into the lands subject to the Romans. For the Roman Empire, by the foresight of Diocletian, everywhere protected on its frontiers,… by towns and fortresses and towers, in which the entire army was stationed; it was thus impossible for the barbarians to cross over, there being everywhere sufficient opposing force to repel their inroads. But Constantine destroyed that security by removing the greater part of the soldiers from the frontiers and stationing them in cities that did not require protection; thus he stripped those of protection who were harassed by the barbarians and brought ruin to peaceful cities at the hands of the soldiers…. He likewise softened the soldiers by exposing them to shows and luxuries. To speak plainly, he was the first to sow the seeds of the ruinous state of affairs that has lasted up to the present time.[145]

Zosimus, a witness to the devastation of the Western Roman Empire, may have been too harsh in his judgment of Constantine' military reforms. As David Breeze notes: " Diocletian may have renewed the frontiers, but he did not create them, nor did Constantine remove all the

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[145] Quoted in: Breeze, *The Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, p. 23. See; Zosimus 2.34. Translation by N. Lewis and M. Reinhold.

soldiers; rather, he built on Diocletian's creations, including the field armies." The fact of the matter is that the empire was facing enemies far more dangerous than ever before. On no front, except Africa, were the *limes* sufficiently strong to hold back a determined assault. Moreover, once a large force did penetrate the *limes* the troops stationed along these thousands of miles of frontiers became useless. The large forces enemies could throw against the empire in the fourth century could wreck several entire provinces before the *limitanei* could concentrate in sufficient numbers. The need to gather sufficient legions to attack large enemy force had erased Rome's earlier advantage in strategic mobility. Moreover, constant duty along the *limes* eroded much of the army's ability to fight set-piece battles as part of a trained and disciplined legion.

In fact, in the decades after Constantine's death, the new permanent field armies performed well. Constantine II used one to defeat the Alemanni in 338 AD, and then the Persians at the Battle of Singara a decade later. Later, in 357 AD, the Emperor Julian used a field army to inflict a severe defeat on Franks at the Battle of Strasbourg. It was only after Julian was defeated by the Sassanids in 363 AD, coupled with the loss of the eastern field army to a Gothic force at Adrianople, in 378, that the Roman world began its final decent.

For four centuries the overarching Roman strategy, built around precluding enemies from penetrating the core economic zones of the empire, was remarkably successful. Constructed around the matchless capabilities of the legions, Rome's strategy of adaptive- preclusion allowed the empire to prosper. In turn, prosperity underwrote the vast expenses of the large military establishment. Despite periodic setbacks, usually the result of an unstable internal political system, Rome for as long as its energies were focused on the frontier remained a successful enterprise. In fact, Rome relentless defense of its frontiers produced the singularly most

successful strategy in global history. To date, no other empire or nation has come close to matching the longevity and effectiveness of Rome's grand strategic conceptions.

Giraldus Cambrensis, Edward I, and the Conquest of Wales

In 1063, Harold Godwineson, King of the English, launched a major invasion of Wales. His forces spread fire and slaughter as they advanced through the rough Welsh terrain, killing so many men, Gerald of Wales tells us, that he "left not one that pisseth against a wall."[146] Large-scale campaigns of devastation such as this were typical of medieval warfare, and the result was also fairly typical, at least for the Early and High Middle Ages: the numerous Welsh "princes" who independently governed their own mini-states "submitted" to the English king, acknowledging his overlordship in a loose way, and Harold and his men went home with their booty (mostly cattle, no doubt), confident that the Welsh had been both weakened and taught a lesson, so that they would make little trouble for years to come. Harold did not, so far as our limited sources let us know, annex any territory to England, or depose and replace any Welsh ruler, or hold and garrison any outpost within Wales.

Having succeeded well, by the standards of his day, in the role of invader, within the next three years Harold found himself on the defensive, in England, against two foreign attackers, Harald Hardrada and then William of Normandy. Against the Norwegians, who fought in the same style as the English, he won a decisive battle, but the Normans then defeated him at Hastings. The result was the Norman Conquest of England, an extremely thorough occupation and domination that was vastly different from the loose subordination which Harold had imposed on Wales. A French-speaking aristocracy of knights, barons, and counts largely supplanted the thegns and ealdormen who had been the principal landholders and the political elite of the

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[146] Gerald of Wales, *Description of Wales,* in *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales,* tr. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1978), p. 266. Further citations to the *Description* are to this translation unless noted otherwise.

Anglo-Saxon realm.   French replaced English as the language of the royal court and of law-courts, and as the second language (after Latin) for writing history or literary works. Although some elements of the old system were retained, broad aspects of Norman military and political organization arrived with the conquerors. The dominant arm of Anglo-Norman armies was, for more than two centuries thereafter, the armored cavalry, rather than the heavy infantry.[147]

Throughout that period, the Anglo-Norman kings of England fought intermittently with the Welsh, but the patterns of these conflicts resembled Harold Godwineson's expeditions rather than William the Bastard's conquest of England. This is in some ways surprising, for in this period the Normans showed an astounding capacity for conquest, with various Norman warlords seizing control over substantial portions of Ireland, the southern half of the Italian peninsula, the island of Sicily, and even far-flung Antioch. Anglo-Norman "Marcher" barons, whose English estates bordered on Wales, did also make their own conquests within Wales, mainly along the southern coast, where they built towns and brought in England and Flemish settlers to populate the conquests. Yet William the Conqueror and his successors, with the huge resources of England, Normandy, Maine, and later Aquitaine at their disposal, did not push over the negligible barrier of Offa's Dyke to bring the 2-300,000 inhabitants of the rest of Wales under their direct rule—not until the wars of 1277 and 1282-3, when Edward I did just that, with consequences for the Welsh comparable to the effect of 1066 on the English.[148]

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[147] This assertion is one that by no means all scholars would accept, because of a fundamental disagreement about the importance of cavalry in medieval warfare generally. For the degree of divergence in current scholarly opinion, contrast J. F. Verbruggen, "The Role of the Cavalry in Medieval Warfare," *Journal of Medieval Military History,* 3, 2005, with Bernard Bachrach, "Verbruggen's 'Cavalry' and the Lyon-Thesis," *Journal of Medieval Military History*, 4, 2006. My own view, which I have presented in several scholarly forums and am currently working to refine into a journal article, favors the decisive importance of cavalry until the fourteenth century.

[148] A Scotsman of the next century referred to Edward I as having "reduced [Wales] to such serfdom." John Barbour, *The Bruce*, ed. A. A. M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 50. Since this article is intended mainly for an audience of military historians and strategists rather than medievalists, I have generally cited English translations of the source material rather than the Latin originals, when such translations exist. I have also cited older public domain editions (available for reference on the internet) in preference to superior recent editions unless the older

A principal reason for this is simply that the Welsh, for all their relative poverty and their small numbers, were not easy to defeat. William the Conqueror managed to impose fealty and tribute on the Welsh princes by invading the country in 1081, but his son William Rufus accomplished nothing by his costly invasions of 1095 and 1097.[149] Henry I, by opening his treasury and spending liberally on his invasions of 1114 and 1121, was able to extract hostages and submission from the Welsh generally, and imposed heavy indemnities on the princes of Gwynedd and Powys, but left the native rulers in possession of their lands.[150] In the troubled reign of King Stephen, the Welsh largely threw off even nominal subordination to the English crown.[151] In his first major expedition into Wales, Edward I's great-grandfather Henry II (who was flatteringly described by Jordan Fantosme as the greatest conqueror since Charlemagne) restored English overlordship. However, his second campaign, reportedly aimed at actual conquest, failed completely.[152]

The Offensives of Henry II

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edition is problematic at the specific point referenced. An exception is the text of Gerald's *Description of Wales*, for which I have generally cited the Penguin edition rather than the public domain Forester translation.

[149]Frederick C. Suppe, *Military Institutions on the Welsh Marches: Shropshire, A.D. 1066-1300* (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 13-14; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* [s.a. 1097]; *The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester*, tr. Thomas Forester (London, 1854), 198, 201 ("he was scarcely able to take or kill one of them, while he lost some of his own troops and many horses"); *History of Gruffydd ap Cynan*, ed. and tr. Arthur Jones (Manchester, 1910), pp. 141-3 ("He did not take with him any kind of profit or gain except one cow. He lost a great part of the knights and esquires and servants and horses and many other possessions….Gruffydd, and his host with him, were now before, now behind, now on the right, now on the left of them, preventing them from doing any injury in his kingdom.")

[150] *History of Gruffydd ap Cynan,* pp. 86-7, 151-3.

[151]The *Acts of King Stephen* notes that Stephen's first effort to restore his lordship in the area after a widespread rebellion involved great expense for horsemen and archers, but nonetheless his paid troops, "after many of their number were slain fighting gloriously, the rest, shrinking to encounter the ferocious enemy, retreated in disgrace after fruitless toil and expense." He then sent a second force which was checked by the Welsh and ultimately "withdrew in poverty and disgrace." Stephen then concluded "that he was struggling in vain, and throwing away his money in attempting to reduce them." *Acts of King Stephen*, in *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntington…also, the Acts of Stephen*, tr. and ed. Thomas Forester (London, 1853), pp. 329-333.

[152] Jordan Fantosme, *Chronicle of the War between the English and the Scots in 1173 and 1174,* ed. and tr. Francisque Michel (London, 1840), vol. 2, pp. 112-114. For the following paragraph, see John D. Hosler, "Henry II's Military Campaigns in Wales, 1157 and 1165," in the *Journal of Medieval Military History,* 2, 1994, pp. 53-71.

In 1157, Prince Owain of Gwynedd—whose principality in north and north-west Wales was one of the three main native-ruled regions, along with Deheubarth in the south and Powys in between—drove out his brothers, occupied their territories in Powys, and attacked the English royal castle of Tegeingl in the north-east corner of Wales. In response, King Henry II collected a substantial army and fleet and advanced into Powys by the Dee valley.[153] About a dozen miles into Welsh territory, Owain blocked Henry's advance with an entrenched position and offered battle, an unusual choice for a Welsh ruler. The English king ordered his main force towards the Welsh lines, but led a detachment through the woods in an outflanking maneuver. His men, who seem to have been mostly light troops, stumbled into an ambush force led by Owain's sons, resulting in an "extremely sharp fight," in which the Welsh killed the constable (the top military officer) of the great Marcher earldom of Chester. Henry himself escaped with difficulty and was briefly thought to have been killed in the melee.[154]

Quitting while he was ahead, Owain withdrew from his entrenchments and returned to traditional Welsh guerilla tactics. Henry turned north, towards the coast, and proceeded to Rhuddlan, where he began the construction of a castle, and send his fleet to attack the large island of Anglesey. Here too the Welsh chose to stand and fight, and here too they won, inflicting a "great slaughter" on the disembarked English, killing among others Henry FitzHenry, King Henry's own half-Welsh uncle.[155] If he ever had ambitions of significant conquests, Henry II gave them up after this second setback. Instead he accepted Owain's offer of fealty, backed up by the provision of hostages. Owain also restored the lands he had confiscated from his brother

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[153] This was described by Robert of Torigni as "an extremely large invasion force," including one third of all the knights in England. *The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni,* in Richard Howlett, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, vol. 4 (London, 1889), p. 193.

[154] Hosler, "Military Campaigns," 64; quotation from *Annales Cambriae*, ed. John Williams ab Ithel (London, 1860) 46 (*acerrimo certamine*).

[155] Ibid., 47 (where FitzHenry is given the name FitzGerald after his step-father, Gerald FitzWalter). FitzHenry's mother was Nest, daughter of the last king of Deheubarth, Rhys ap Tewdwr, and thus he was an uncle of both Gerald of Wales, who was 12 years old at the time of FitzHenry's death, and of King Henry II (Henry I's grandson).

Cadwaladr, whose call for assistance from Henry had prompted the campaign. Henry could thus count the campaign as a success, but not an easy, cheap, or one-sided victory. Indeed, less than a decade later, apparently in response to Henry's efforts to convert his acknowledged overlordship into a more strictly defined feudal homage, Owain's son Dafydd was ready to lead the Welsh in a bid to "throw off the rule of the French." Henry, in return, launched another major invasion in 1165. The Welsh, at least, believed that this time the English, frustrated by the repeated pattern of nominal Welsh submission followed by prompt "rebellion," intended to destroy their nation entirely, or at least drive them from their homes.[156]

Once again the English advance was blocked by a Welsh army relying on a strong defensive position in a wooded valley where Henry could not use his cavalry effectively. After a period of stalemate, the invaders tried chopping down the trees to clear their way against the Welsh, but the latter made a brash attack on Henry's men to stop the process. Welsh sources indicate the fighting was a tactical draw, with heavy casualties on both sides. From a strategic perspective the combat was a clear defeat for the English, who were prevented from advancing and who took a serious blow to their martial prestige when they failed to beat the Welshmen in an open fight. The failure was compounded by the subsequent events: Henry turned onto a different route, which took him into even more difficult terrain, where his troops suffered heavily from bad weather and lack of supplies. "Seeing that he could not at all arrange things according to his will," wrote the author of the *Annales Cambriae*, Henry killed or mutilated the Welsh

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[156] Hosler, "Military Campaigns," 68n; *Annales Cambriae*, 50 ("planning the overthrow or destruction [*excidium*] of all the Welsh"); R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 76-7.

hostages he held, then dismissed his army and "returned in shame into England."[157] An English

chronicler admits that he had lost "many of his nobles, barons, and men."[158]

Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales) and the Strategic Problem

It was after and with full cognizance of these events—and also with a detailed knowledge

of the more successful conquest of a good chunk of Ireland by his own FitzGerald cousins—that

the distinguished cleric Gerald of Wales, Archdeacon of Brecknock, the youngest son of a

powerful Marcher lord and the grandson of a Welsh princess, wrote his famous *Description of

Wales* (1194). This text culminates with a chapter entitled "How This Nation May Be

Conquered." To the best of my knowledge, this is the earliest prospective strategic documents—

that is, written plans for how to win a war, prepared in advance—extant in any medieval

source.[159] Remarkably, considering its originality, Gerald's text is very sophisticated in its

approach.

Gerald, as Robert Bartlett makes clear, was one of the most significant thinkers and

writers of a period of remarkable intellectual efflorescence, often referred to as the "Renaissance

of the twelfth century." Like most of the other important men of letters of his day, he studied at

the undisputed center of advanced education in Latin Christendom, the University of Paris. This

was the home of "scholastic" education, which focused on honing students' logical thinking and

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[157] *Annales Cambriae,* p. 50. According to Hoveden, Henry blinded the boys and cut off the noses and ears of the girls. Roger of Hoveden, *The Annals*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (London, 1853), p. 278.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Gerald's slightly earlier *The History of the Conquest of Ireland* does include a short prospective chapter entitled "In What Manner Ireland is to Be Completely Conquered," but its contents are almost entirely about what sort of troops should be used, rather than what they should do. Its concluding paragraph is more strategic in nature, but too brief and general for me to count it as a "plan" in the same sense as the comparable chapter in *The Description of Wales.* In *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, tr. Thomas Forester and Sir Richard Cold Hoare, ed. Thomas Wright (London 1894), pp. 320-22.

rhetorical skills through competitive, public debates. In these battles of the mind it was crucially

important to see both sides of a question, for it was difficult to dispute effectively an argument

one had not anticipated and reflected on. This training was excellent preparation for the study of

the law, which Gerald also learned and taught in Paris, and ultimately also for the formulation of

strategy. He mastered the discipline of rhetoric—the core of which was the ability to form a

coherent, logical argument and to express it clearly—so well that he lectured on the subject to

packed halls.[160]

Having come from a warlike knightly family, Gerald was both interested in and well

informed about military affairs generally. As the "kinsman of all the princes and great men in

Wales," and one of the chief ecclesiastical officers of the region, he had free access to the best

sources of information.[161]   All of these elements of his background contributed to the high

quality of his *Description of Wales,* which Robert Bartlett rightly describes not only as "the high

point of twelfth-century ethnography," but also extremely innovative in conception.[162] Bartlett

emphasizes the exceptional quality of Gerald's work as a cohesive anthropological study, but

unfortunately neglects the equally extraordinary and well-conceived nature of the strategic plan

contained within the same work.

Gerald, in devising his plan for the conquest of Wales, expressly takes into account the

lessons of history—he wisely notes that anyone "who is really prudent and provident must find

out what pitfalls are to be avoided by taking note of the disasters which have befallen others in

the same position. It costs nothing to learn from other people's experience."[163] He also draws

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[160] Gerald of Wales, *The Autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. and tr. H. E. Butler (London, 1937), p. 37. He also taught the other two elements of the *trivium*: Latin grammar and, significantly, logic.
[161] Ibid., p. 60.
[162] Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 175-182.
[163] *Description,* p. 272. Gerald's remark is reminiscent of the *bon mot* attributed to Bismarck, that "fools say that to learn, one must pay with mistakes…. I, however, have always striven to learn from the mistakes of others," [loosely translating the French version, from which later "quotations" seem to derive: "les sots prétendent qu'on n'apprend

on his own deep knowledge both of Wales and of recent, parallel events in other places. He considers English strengths and weaknesses, Welsh advantages and disadvantages, and situational factors. He takes into account military, political, cultural, topographical, and economic considerations. Rather than taking force structure as a given, he reflects on what sorts of troops would be best suited to accomplish the mission, and implicitly recommends changes to recruitment, tactics, and equipment to reflect the task at hand.

Perhaps most impressively, especially in light of events of our own recent memory, after describing how to conquer Wales he adds a second chapter on how to rule it after its conquest. As the cherry on the sundae, he concludes with yet another strategic chapter, this one on how the Welsh might best resist English conquest. This he pitches as being for the benefit of the Welsh, a sort of testimony to his own intellectual impartiality.[164] Whether it is intended so or not, however, it is really a rounding out of his strategic analysis for an English audience, since any good planner—like any good rhetorician--- must reflect on and appreciate what the enemy's most effective parry and riposte would be.

Gerald was something of a celebrity; he premiered his *Topography of Ireland* with a three-day public reading at the University of Oxford in 1188, and he was an important figure in the courts of Henry II, Richard I, and John. Although I cannot prove it to be so, I feel confident that Edward I, whose military career began with fighting in Wales a quarter-century after Gerald's death, was familiar with the *Description of Wales*, and indeed I think it likely that he had studied it with great care. He was far from averse to learning about warfare from books:

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qu'à ses dépens…. J'ai toujours tâché d'apprendre aux dépens des autres."] Comte Emile Kérartry, *Le Dernier des Napoléon* (Paris, 1872), p. 240.

[164] It would be natural to think this was part of his program of portraying himself as someone favorable to Welsh interests, as part of his campaign to become bishop of St. David's, the chief primate of Wales. However, the timing does not fit that interpretation, as the *Description of Wales* was written at a time when he seems to have been interested only in a rich English bishopric and not a Welsh see. Bartlett, *Gerald*, p. 48.

before his coronation, while he was on crusade in the Holy Land, he had commissioned the first known translation of Vegetius' *De re militari* into the vernacular.[165] If he did not himself study Gerald's work, it seems his advisors must have. In any case, it is certainly true that when King Edward decided to undertake the complete conquest of Wales, he followed Gerald's strategic prescriptions quite exactly. Edward clearly understood the strategic problems involved in a conquest of Wales, as Gerald had described them.

"He can never hope," Gerald wrote, "to conquer in one single battle a people which will never draw up its forces to engage an enemy army in the field, and will never allow itself to be besieged inside fortified strong-points."[166] The Welsh had no major towns, no fixed economic hubs that could be threatened in order to force them to fight. Even if an invader did somehow manage to come to grips with and crush a Welsh army, the Welsh "do not lose heart when things go wrong, and after one defeat they are always ready to fight again."[167] That meant it was practically impossible to beat them in a quick war. But in a long war too "they are difficult to conquer…for they are not troubled by hunger or cold, [and] fighting does not seem to tire them." It is not easy to employ a strategy of exhaustion against a people who are fierce, agile, courageous, highly mobile, "passionately devoted to their freedom and to the defense of their country," and who, far from dreading the rigors of conflict, "in peace…dream of war, and prepare themselves for battle" by exercising constantly with their weapons and hunting and mountain-climbing.[168]

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[165] The miniature embellishing the manuscript "shows Vegetius, the philosopher, inviting a group of young knights to come to him with the words… 'come to me, lord knights who wish to have the honor of chivalry.'" Christopher Allmand, "The *De re militari* of Vegetius in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," in Corinne Saunders, Françoise le Saux and Neil Thomas, eds., *Writing War. Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare* (Cambridge, 2004).

[166] *Description*, p. 267.

[167] Ibid., p. 260.

[168] Ibid., pp. 233-4, 236.

The inherent difficulty of that proposition was redoubled by three principal synergistic advantages enjoyed by the Welsh. First, their countryside was covered with woods, marshes and mountains, terrain "where foot-soldiers have the advantage over cavalry" and where the standard Norman battle tactics were "no good at all."[169] Second, they had lots of soldiers relative to their small population, because (unlike in England) "the entire nation, both leaders and the common people, are trained in the use of arms."[170] Thanks to their constant internecine fighting, which like contemporary Irish warfare focused on cattle-raiding, the Welsh warriors were especially skilled in ambushes, night attacks, and hit-and-run raids. Thus, they were, on their home ground, ideal troops for executing a "Vegetian" defensive strategy aimed at defeating an invading army by harassing it, depriving it of forage and profit—both of which were relatively scarce in Wales anyway—and ultimately exhausting it. Third, while the Welsh could hardly have more pressing concerns than dealing with an invasion of their homeland (a cause for which they would "willingly sacrifice, suffer, or die") England was a great power with more important strategic interests in Scotland, Normandy, and Aquitaine. All of these frequently required both the attention and the military resources of the government, with a higher priority than Wales.[171]

The roster of difficulties facing an English strategist planning for the conquest of Wales would, as the reader will appreciate, not have required too much modification for application by an English commander during the American Revolution, an American officer of the Seminole Wars, or a Soviet planner during the Afghan War. Some of the principal English advantages over the Welsh would also fit with these analogies: larger numbers of well-equipped, paid soldiers; general superiority in open battle; and far greater economic and fiscal resources. However, as suggested by the failure of two of the three would-be conquerors just noted, and the

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[169] Ibid., p. 269.
[170] *Description*, tr. Forester, p. 490.
[171] *Description*, pp. 233, 267.

great difficulties encountered by the third, that match-up of advantages against disadvantages did not suffice to guarantee success for the English, and Gerald recognized that.[172]

Gerald did think England's superior wealth and manpower could bring victory, but only if used properly for a sustained effort: a king who wanted to conquer Wales, he insisted, "must be determined to apply a diligent and constant attention to this purpose for at least one year" without being distracted by other business in England, France, or elsewhere. The king would also have to be prepared for heavy losses of men and large expenditures, equal to many times the annual revenues that could be expected from the province.[173] And he would have to follow a sound strategic plan to make the best use of his superior resources.

Gerald's Plan for the Conquest of Wales

Well before the start of an invasion, Gerald suggested, economic sanctions should be employed to prepare the way for military victory: the English should prevent the Welsh from importing the grain, cloth, and salt (for preserving meat and fish) that they usually brought in from England. Both garrison forces patrolling the land-border and ships patrolling the coast enforce a blockade. Next, an army should invade the coastal lowlands, where the English could take advantage of their naval superiority and receive supplies by sea, forcing the Welsh to take refuge in the highlands of Snowdonia. Third, this area should be ringed by infantry, drawn as much as possible from the Anglo-Welsh border zone known as the Marches, and equipped with light armor, so that they would be better protected than the normally unarmored Welsh, but still agile enough for fighting in difficult terrain. These men should prevent the Welsh from

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[172] R. R. Davies refers to the war of 1276-7 as a struggle between David and Goliath, seemingly forgetting who won that Biblical combat. *Age of Conquest*, p. 335.
[173] *Description,* p. 270.

collecting any additional supplies. Once winter set in and the trees had lost their leaves, English troops should constantly push into the forests to probe and harass the Welsh. Reinforcements should steadily replace casualties and allow exhausted troops to pull back and recuperate. Thus the English army, drawing from their larger population, would be kept up to strength, while the limited Welsh manpower would have difficulty in replacing losses.

All this military action, in Gerald's scheme, was to be accompanied by a culturally sensitive political offensive. Three long-standing customs of the Welsh aristocracy, Gerald argued, severely weakened the Welsh nation. First, their inheritance customs involved dividing patrimonial lands among brothers, including illegitimate ones, instead of conferring them all on the eldest son. Second, Welsh noble youths were generally raised by foster families, with parents sending each of their sons to a different lord to establish bonds between the several families—which, however, weakened the bonds of affection between the brothers who would later have to agree on the division of the family lands, or to fight over them. Third, the Welsh princes refused to subordinate themselves to a single king (who, if he had existed, might have resolved many inheritance disputes by law rather than force).

These three things contributed to continual family feuding over inheritances, in which there were winners and losers, and the losers often went looking for someone to help them recover what they saw as their rights. This meant there were always opportunities for the English to divide and conquer; Gerald's exact advice was to "stir the Welsh up to internecine feuds by bribery and by granting away each man's land to someone else." "They will quarrel bitterly with each other," our strategist predicted, "and assassinations will become an everyday occurrence." Although Gerald did not quite say so, he suggests that these bloody internal struggles would not only deprive the Welsh of the unity and strength necessary for effective

resistance, they would also leave them disheartened and, in some cases, eager for the return of law and order, even if it had to be imposed by a foreign power. "In a short time," he concluded, "they will be forced to surrender."[174]

Between Gerald and Edward

In the 82 years between the writing of Gerald's plan and its execution, there was no lack of warfare between Wales and England. A review of the history of the conflicts of this period both reveals the soundness of his judgment and supports the conclusion that the ultimate defeat of the Welsh was indeed the result of implementation of a sound strategic conception, and not simply the inexorable consequence of England's superior resources.

In Henry II's day, the principality of Gwynedd in North Wales had been the rock on which his two invasions had broken, and it long remained the seat of Welsh ambitions for some degree of autonomy from England. When Edward I launched his conquest of "Wales," it was principally a conquest of Gwynedd, whose ruler had recently acquired the more sweeping title of "Prince of Wales." In South Wales the Norman Marcher Lords and the creation of English and Flemish towns on the coast had long since begun the process of undermining the power of the princes of Deheubarth, but it was the death of Lord Rhys in 1197 that left South Wales unable to mount the independent resistance to English domination that Gwynedd could. The basic reason was one Gerald had emphasized: the Welsh practice of partible inheritance. With 15 of Rhys' sons competing for their share of his estates, fragmentation and weakness were inevitable. In Powys, the main principality of central Wales, the same problem emerged, though not so dramatically. In 1160 it was split between two heirs; the chances of heredity thereafter allowed

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[174] *Description*, p. 272.

the southern half to remain united under the dynasty that later became English earls as de la Poles, but in 1236 northern Powys was divided among five brothers, with the share of each amounting to no more than a minor barony.[175]

If the Welsh had been left to their own devices, the centripetal tendencies of their system of inheritance might have been counteracted by the power of warfare to unite: it was this possibility, after all, that led to much of the internecine warfare that Gerald noted. But the English did not want that to happen, and Welsh law, along with their status as suzerains of the Welsh princes, enabled English kings to wrap themselves in the mantle of justice as they stepped in to serve their own self-interest by supporting the weak against the strong, thereby perpetuating disunity among the Welsh.   Thus, after Llywelyn ap Iorwerth had led his cousins against his uncles to gain power in Gwynedd, the natural tendency of English policy would have been to begin to undermine him, but in 1205 he made an astute marriage to Joan, the illegitimate eldest daughter of King John. For once the Welsh tradition of treating natural-born children as the equals of those born in wedlock proved advantageous, since Llywelyn could give John the benefit of a princely marriage for his favorite daughter without shaming himself.

Nonetheless, when Llywelyn, having consolidated his power in Gwynedd, occupied the former kingdom of Ceredigion in western Wales, and took control of southern Powys, John recognized the threat. If Lelwelyn could solidify his control of those regions, he would be so greatly superior to the other Welsh princes that even with English support they would not be able to serve as effective foils to the power of Gwynedd, as both Powys and Deheubarth (including Ceredigion) had served for Henry II. Llywelyn would be in a position to become *de facto* Prince of Wales, rather than merely of North Wales (a title he actually used), a dangerous prospect. In 1209, John aided the attempts by several Welsh lords to recover lands and lordships which had

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[175] *David Walker, Medieval Wales* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 90-92.

fallen to Llywelyn, most importantly including southern Powys. The prince of Gwynedd, unwilling to accept this, struck back the next year. John, according to the *Brut y Tywysogion,* "became enraged, and formed a design of entirely divesting Llywelyn of his dominion." For the purpose he led a "vast army," including six Welsh *tywysogion* ("princes," or "leaders"), against Gwynedd.[176]

The result, however, was almost a replay of 1165. By the time the English army reached Deganwy, "the army was in so great a want of provisions, that an egg was sold for [three quarters of an English foot soldier's daily wage]; and it was a delicious feast to them to get horse flesh." John returned to England in shame, having lost many men.[177] This was an intolerable result, and he quickly raised an even larger army and, with better logistical preparations, was more successful, capturing Bangor and building 14 or more castles (doubtless of timber, not stone) to secure his gains. Llywelyn sued for peace, agreeing to give up significant portions of his lands, help secure the capitulation of the other Welsh lords, and pay a large indemnity in cattle, horses, hounds and hawks.[178] This was accounted a great success at the time, and modern historians have generally seen it in the same way, but it is important to recognize that—assuming the *Brut y Tywysogion* is correct in describing John's initial war-aims—the effort to conquer Gwynedd, rather than simply securing the subordination of its leader, had once again failed.[179]

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[176] *Brut y Tywysogion,* ed. and tr. John Williams ab Ithel (London, 1860) [hereafter *ByT*], p. 267.

[177] Ibid., pp. 267-9; *Annales Cambriae*, p. 67. The whole expedition seems to have taken place during May. John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2d ed. (London, 1912), vol. 2, pp. 634-5.

[178] *Annales Cambriae*, pp. 67-8; 67n. This was from July to August. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, vol. 2, p.635.

[179] I would thus say that R. R. Davies overstates the situation when he characterizes the campaign as bringing Llywelyn to "the most abject surrender," and showing that conquest "was well within the king of England's reach." *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300,* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 79. The fact that John planned another campaign in 1212, and failed to launch it for causes that were at least partly the result of the strain the 1211 campaign had placed on his relations with his magnates, shows that a complete conquest of Wales was a more difficult prospect than Davies implies.

The extent of the difference was made clear in the following year, when John, evidently intending to secure his gains and bridle Llywelyn's freedom of maneuver, ordered the construction of numerous castles inside Wales. From the new castle at Aberconway, the king's men pushed their authority to the point that Llywelyn "could not brook the many insults done to him." Once again he rallied the other Welsh lords against the English occupation, and within two years captured all the castles in the territories just ceded to John.[180] Llywelyn then cooperated with the English barons who had risen in rebellion against John's tyrannical rule, gaining even further territory in the ensuing conflict, occupying southern Powys again and greatly strengthening his position in western and southern Wales with the capture of Cardigan, Carmarthen, and even Swansea, among other places. He even carried the war into England, seizing Shrewsbury and joining the rebels at the battle of Lincoln. However, the royalist victory in that battle, along with the death of John and the accession of the young Henry III, led many English magnates to make peace with the crown, and Llywelyn followed suit. The treaty of Worcester in 1218 left him in a far stronger position than he had been before John attacked him in 1211, and Wales more effectively united that it had ever been. The Welsh princes still did homage to Henry III, but they did so with Llywelyn's permission.[181]

This settlement endured until 1223, when the earl of Pembroke led an offensive to regain his and the crown's lost lands in south-west Wales and regained Cardigan and Carmarthen, as well as Montgomery in the middle March. Henry's government tried to follow up this success with a more ambitious royal expedition in 1228. Yet again the crown was said to aim "to subjugate Llywelyn, son of Iorwerth, and all the Welsh princes." But the English offensive, which did not begin until late September, ground to a halt in Ceri, near the border, where

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[180] *ByT*, pp. 271-279.
[181] Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 242-3.

Llywyeln seems to have won a small battlefield victory. The great Marcher baron William de Braose was captured, later to be exchanged for the important castle of Builth.[182] The normal result followed: the English king returned to England without any success more concrete than receiving the fealty of the Welsh *tywysogion*. Neither Llywelyn nor Wales was "subjugated" except in the loosest sense, which is much less than what Henry seems to have intended. Another spate of conflict broke out from 1231-1234, with Llywelyn again coming out on top.[183]

"If their princes could come to an agreement and unite to defend their country," Gerald had warned, "or better still, if they had only one prince and he a good one… no one could ever beat them."[184] The career of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, later known as Llywelyn Fawr (Llywelyn the Great) seemed to bear out his prediction. Llywelyn himself clearly appreciated the importance of Welsh unity under a single strong leader, and went to great effort to ensure that his principality would pass intact to his legitimate son Dafydd, rather than being split with Dafydd's elder brother Gruffydd, as Welsh tradition and law demanded. King Henry's government, however, issued letters forbidding Dafydd to receive the homages of the nobles of Gwynedd and Powys who ought to hold of the king in chief, thereby sabotaging Llywelyn's effort.[185]

The Welsh prince apparently could not bring himself to take the only step that would have prevented Henry III from playing the two brothers off against each other to weaken Wales—executing Gruffydd for treason, which he did have opportunities to do. The result was that after the prince's death in 1240, Gruffydd was a pawn of the English, and Dafydd's position

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[182] *ByT*, p. 317; *Calendar of Close Rolls*, *1227-31*, p. 115 (military summons issued on 3 September)

[183] In 1231 an English army advanced to Painscastle and covered the reconstruction of the fortification in mortared stone. In 1233 he sided with various Marcher barons against the king and destroyed the town of Brecon. In 1234 he and his allies secured a peace which left him in secure control of all his territories. Lloyd, *History of Wales,* vol. 2, pp. 675-81.

[184] *Description*, p. 273.

[185] Thomas Rymer, ed., *Foedera, conventions, literae,* etc. (Hague edition), I:1:132.

was consequently weak. [186] This, combined Dafydd's lack of Welsh allies and sheer bad luck—an extraordinarily dry summer made the marshes and rivers that usually played such a large role in defending the region easily passable -- made Henry's invasion of Gwynedd in 1241 unusually successful. To buy peace, Dafydd had to give up all his father's gains since 1216 (mostly to Welsh princes, not the crown), pay an indemnity to cover the costs of Henry's offensive (a debt subsequently discharged by the surrender of Deganwy), and, most gallingly, accept the judgment of the English court as to what share of Llywelyn's inheritance his brother Gruffydd should receive.[187] Nonetheless, this was still part of the usual pattern of Anglo-Welsh warfare, similar to John's second invasion of 1211, and a long way from the "conquest" of Gwynedd.

The death of Gruffydd in 1244 freed Dafydd to launch the counterstroke against the English, which he did immediately. Most of the leading men of Wales joined him, and by the end of the year he had forced the three hold-outs to do the same. Within Wales, the countryside was his; the power of the English hardly extended beyond the walls of the castles they garrisoned.[188] Welsh raiders came "swarming from their lurking places, like bees," carrying fire and sword into England and ambushing English forces sent to check their incursions.[189]

Henry III's counterattack of 1245 followed the path of 1165 and the first campaign of 1211; as the Welsh chronicle summarizes it, "Henry assembled the power of England and Ireland, with the intention of subjecting all Wales to him, and came to Dyganwy. And after fortifying the castle, and leaving knights in it, he returned to England, having left an immense number of his army dead and unburied, some having been slain and others drowned."[190] This

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[186] Matthew Paris, *English History, from the Year 1235-1273,* tr. J. A. Giles, 3 vols. (London, 1852-1854), vol., p. 372.
[187] Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2:697-8; *Fodera,* I:1:138-9.
[188] *ByT*, p. 331.
[189] Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, pp. 27-8, 45-7.
[190] This is not simply Welsh propaganda. A newsletter from a noble in the English army notes four "knights" (including a Gascon crossbowman) and about a hundred of their retainers killed, aside from an uncertain number

was not a good result for the English monarch, but the campaign had also been hard on the Gwynedd. The Welsh had themselves destroyed any crops within reach of the English army, as part of their logistical strategy, and troops from Ireland had ravaged the island of Anglesey, the bread-basket of Wales.[191] This step was particularly effective because the agrarian sector of the Welsh economy was increasing markedly in this period.[192] In addition, the English cut off the livestock-for-grain trade that was important for feeding the Welsh even when their own crops were left intact.[193]

The next spring, moreover, Dafydd died of natural causes. Two of his four nephews, Llywelyn and Owain ap Gruffydd, divided the portions of his lands still under native control between them. Without a single dominant figure, Welsh unity fractured further, with two minor *tywysogion* siding with the English to dispossess two others. Llywelyn and Owain and their allies were temporarily driven into the mountains and the wilderness. But Henry faced serious troubles in France and England, and the previous year's campaign had demonstrated that it would be no light matter to continue to campaign in Wales, so the English chose to accept Dafydd's nephews' proffers of peace. By the Treaty of Woodstock in 1247 they ceded the portion of Gwynedd east of the Conwy—nearly half the principality—to King Henry, marking a new low-point for the fortunes of native Wales.[194] It has rarely been appreciated, however, that this was a compromise peace rather than a complete English victory. By the terms of the

who drowned, during just one skirmish over a supply-ship that grounded on the wrong side of the river separating the English and Welsh forces. Matthew Paris, *English History,* vol. 2, pp. 109-10. Henry entered Wales on 21 August, reached Deganwy on the 26th, and stayed there, fortifying the position, for two months. Ibid., and Lloyd, *History of Wales,* vol. 2, pp. 703-5. Davies, *Domination*, 83, sees a royal campaign of 1245-6 [sic] as demonstrating that Henry III "had the military means to reduce the prince of Gwynedd to his knees." But Dafydd was still on his feet after the 1245 campaign, and the Welsh collapse in 1246 was partly due to his death by natural causes, and partly due to the *economic* measures taken against the Welsh, which—though at great cost to England—seem to have been more effective than the military invasions.

[191] Gerald notes an old proverb that Anglesey "is the mother of Wales," and could provide enough grain to feed all the Welsh. *Description,* 230; *Journey through Wales* (tr. Thorpe), p. 187.

[192] Suppe, *Military Institutions*, p. 15.

[193] *Foedera*, I:1:155; Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, pp. 114-15, 244.

[194] Davies, *Age of Conquest,* pp. 302-304; *Foedera,* I:1:156.

agreement of 1241, Henry had a double right to take all of Gwynedd into his own hands, both since Dafydd had not left an heir of his body, and because of his rebellion.[195] Instead the majority of the principality, including its most valuable parts (Anglesey and Snowdonia), was left under native Welsh rule.

Prince Edward and Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

The great difference between a humbled principality of Gwynedd and a completely conquered one was driven home a decade later, just as it had been in 1245. Once again the Welsh were able to make an effective counter-attack, when they united behind a single one of the heirs of Llywelyn the Great: in this case, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Dafydd's nephew, who in 1255 defeated two of his brothers in battle, imprisoned them, and thereby gained control of all the principality except the portion that had been ceded to England in 1247.

King Henry III's son and heir, the future Edward I, had recently been granted the border earldom of Chester and all the royal lands in Wales as part of his appanage. In 1256, perhaps anticipating trouble as a result of Llywelyn's defeat of his brothers, 15-year-old Edward paid an unusual visit to his new lordship of eastern Gwynedd. Gerald's strategic plan, as noted above, had included a section on how to occupy and govern Wales once it was conquered. He advised that the land should be governed by a firm and just official who would obey the laws and exercise moderation towards those who accepted royal rule, and in particular flatter the Welsh lords with honors, which they craved above all else.[196] King Henry had not heeded this sage

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[195] *Littere Wallie, Preserved in Liber A in the Public Record Office*, ed. J. Goronwy Edwards (Aberystwyth, UK, 1940), no. 8.
[196] *Description,* 2p. 21.

counsel; on the contrary, he sold the right to extract revenue from his Welsh lands to the highest bidder, first to John de Grey and then to Alan de la Zouche. Since the latter paid 1,100 marks for the fee-farm, more than double the amount offered by the former, it should have been obvious to Henry that he would have to squeeze the Welsh population immoderately and bend or break their laws in order to recoup his costs.[197] Moreover, de la Zouche publicly boasted how he had brought the Welsh to submit to *English* laws, in place of their quite different traditional codes.[198] When Edward received control of the area from his father, rather than ameliorating the situation he left the administration in the hands of Sir Geoffrey Langley, a *parvenu* royal official already infamous for his rapacity and oppression of the king's English subject, who was working to extend the English structure of shire government into occupied Gwynedd.[199]

Moreover, far from being honored, the Welsh under Edward's control were treated in what they considered high-handed and demeaning ways. Such indignities would have been bad enough coming from King Henry himself, whom they had however unwillingly accepted as their lord, and worse from young Prince Edward. For men who viewed their status as deriving principally from their distinguished lineages rather than their land or wealth,[200] slights coming from a mere *officer* of relatively low birth (such as Geoffrey Langley) were doubly humiliating.[201] The English did little better with regard to another of Gerald's suggestions, to be

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[197] *Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History: Comprising the History of England from the Descent of the Saxons to A.D. 1235*, Tr. J. A. Giles, (London, 1849), vol. 2, pp. 435, 486. A different way to look at this is that 1,100 marks was not an immoderately large revenue to expect from a territory of that size *by English standards*. It may not even have been, by those same standards, an unreasonable expectation *per capita*. But the economy of Wales was less developed and the people were not accustomed to paying as much as Englishmen in rents, taxes, or fines. Prince Edward's entire revenues from the lordships of Aquitaine and Ireland, the county of Chester, and his various estates in England, were on the order of 15,000 marks. *Foedera,* I:1:177-8.

[198] Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History,* vol. 2, pp. 486.

[199] Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, p. 200; *Annales monastici*, 3:200-1.

[200] *Description*, tr. Forester, p. 505.

[201] Sir Geoffrey Langley, for example, though he had become wealthy and powerful in the service of Henry III, was the son of a "modestly endowed Gloucestershire knight," who had inherited only one manor, and gained one more by marriage. P. R. Coss, "Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class in Thirteenth-Century

sure to reward well those Welsh who assisted in the king's conquest instead of fighting against it.[202] The princes of Deheubarth had hoped to use England's might to throw off the loose subordination to Gwynedd they had experienced under Llywelyn the Great, and were disappointed to find themselves under the stricter tutelage of a lord who made not the slightest pretense of respecting their independence.

It is a sign of the dissatisfaction with the English crown's management of Welsh affairs that by 1251, Owain and Llywelyn of Gwynedd had brought three of the other main Welsh princes into a secret sworn brotherhood clearly aimed at resisting further erosion of native Welsh power.[203] The greater part of Wales united behind Llywelyn ap Gruffydd when, in late 1256, his former subjects in eastern Gwynedd came before him to announce "that they would rather be killed in war for their liberty, than suffer themselves to be trodden down by strangers in bondage."[204] Within a short time, eastern Gwynedd, Deheubarth, Ceredigion, and Builth were all under the control of Llywelyn and his allies.

Prince Edward, despite his extensive possessions, had neither the cash nor the men to put up effective resistance. He went to his father for aid; Henry dismissed him, saying his coffers

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England," in T. H. Aston, ed., *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 167, 168n10.

[202] In 1246, King Henry had sent two of the three main princes of southern Wales, Maredudd ap Owain and Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, to dispossess their cousin, Maelgwyn Fychan, an ally of Gwynedd who controlled much of south-west Wales. But later in the year Maelgwyn was allowed to make peace with the crown and recover part of his estates. The remainder, significantly, was retained by the crown rather than being shared out to the two Maredudds. Maredudd ap Owain, moreover, was foiled in his desire to acquire Dinefwr, the traditional capital of Deheubarth, when King Henry delivered it instead to Maredudd's nephew Rhys Fychan. Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, for his part, was brusquely informed that he was subject to the jurisdiction of the royal court at Carmarthen, and that its rulings, rather than political negotiations, would determine future divisions of his family's lands. *ByT,* p. 333; Davies, *Age of Conquest,* pp. 225, 228. Lloyd, *History of Wales,* vol. 2, pp. 710-11.

[203] *Littere Wallie* nos. 261 (between Llywelyn and Gruffydd of North Powys), 284 (between Llywelyn and Owain on the one hand and the two Rhyses on the other: *in conseruando ius suum et acquirendo quod iniuste ablatum est pro loco et tempore iuuabit alium et manutenebit contra omnes viuentes ac si essemus fratres conterini*). Technically Gruffydd was not bound to the Rhyses, but by transitivity he was, in effect.

[204] Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, Rhys Fychan, and the prince of northern Powys. *ByT,* 341, 343. By this point, however, Maredudd ap Owain had replaced Rhys Fychan in the alliance; they could not both be accommodated because their territorial claims were incompatible.

were empty and that he had more pressing business of his own to attend to. Edward's uncle loaned him 4,000 marks, but that was a drop against the tide. The Marches suffered heavily from Welsh raiding. A substantial English force led by John Lestrange, Rhys Fychan, and Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn, and marching under Prince Edward's banner, was routed near Montgomery; an even larger army was crushed at Cymerau, reportedly with the loss of 3,000 men.[205] Numerous castles held by the English or their allies were captured or destroyed. Anticipating that this would provoke a large-scale response, the Welsh took precautions that were probably the normal ones, though they are rarely spelled out in the sources: they "prudently sent away their wives, children, and flocks into the interior of the country, about Snowdon and other mountainous places inaccessible to the English, ploughed up their fields, destroyed the mills in the road which the English would take, carried away all kinds of provisions, broke down the bridges, and rendered the fords impassable by digging holes, in order that, if the enemy attempted to cross, they might be drowned."[206]

Because a large portion of the Welsh economy was based animal husbandry rather than farming, and the slopes of Snowdon offered excellent pasturage, these steps were not as painful as the equivalent would have been for the English, especially since the war allowed them to recoup some of their losses by plundering the goods of Englishmen in raids.[207] The rainy season made any English reprisals difficult, since it rendered the roads through the wetlands impassable for the invaders, though the locals could make still make their way through.[208] According to Matthew Paris, though Edward threatened to "crush them like a clay pot," the Welsh "only

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[205] In addition, two smaller defeats elsewhere cost the English 194 and 130 soldiers, respectively. *Annales Cambriae*, pp. 92-5; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, vol. 2, p. 720. Two more minor Welsh victories followed in 1258. *Annales Cambriae*, pp. 95-6.

[206] Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, p. 238.

[207] *Description*, 233; Matthew Paris, *English History*, 2:243, 267, 269.

[208] Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, pp. 204, 217.

laughed at…and ridiculed" his efforts until the English prince, seeing how little he could accomplish, was tempted to give up Wales and the Welsh as untameable, while King Henry was "overcome with grief…at the slaughter of so many of his liege subjects."[209]

Eventually rallying himself, the king summoned large numbers of troops from all his lands, and meanwhile took the drastic step of destroying the harvests in the fields of the border-lands, to prevent the Welsh from gaining access to the crops, by force or by commerce. This caused serious shortages in his army, as well as for the population. Between his actions, the Welsh raids, and the end of the normal cross-border trade, the economy of the Marches was badly disrupted, to the point of causing a serious famine in the region. Henry's army, once assembled, was able to advance as far as Diserth and Deganwy, the only two fortresses within Gwynedd still under his control, to break Llywelyn's sieges of them and resupply them. But without accomplishing anything else, Henry had to dismiss his forces and return to London, with Welsh warriors nipping at his heels and killing any stragglers.[210] By the end of the year, the three main Welsh *tywysogion* who had not immediately joined the rebellion had either fallen in line or (in the case of Gruffud ap Gwenwynwyn) been driven into exile in England.

When Henry began to prepare a new campaign, his knights protested at the prospect of another costly and useless campaign, and a parliament took the extremely unusual step of refusing a grant of taxation.[211] Many Englishmen were in some respects sympathetic towards the Welsh cause, since they too felt abused and oppressed by royal ill-government and the greed of the king's officials and foreign relatives. The combination of Henry's inability to wage effective military operations combined with many other grievances to provoke what soon turned into a

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[209] Ibid., p. 238 [trans. modified], 241.
[210] Ibid., pp. 245-7, 269, 291; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 721-2. The army left Chester on 19 August, and seems to have begun the march back to England as soon as 4 September.
[211] Ibid., pp. 267-9, 273.

full-scale rebellion led by the earl of Leicester, Simon de Montfort. The disunity that had so often plagued Wales now struck England in full measure, and Llywelyn was not slow to seize the opportunity. He allied with Earl Simon and the barons, just as his grandfather had done with the opposition to King John, and ultimately with even greater success. The Treaty of Montgomery in 1267 conceded to Llywelyn both the title of "Prince of Wales" and the feudal status that it implied: henceforth the other leading men of Wales, and not just Gwynedd, would do homage to him, rather than directly to the king of England.[212] Llywelyn, in turn, would do homage to the English king.

The Importance of Strategy

Perhaps influenced too much by the eventual outcome, historians have tended to view the later English conquest of Wales as inevitable, or nearly so.[213] The argument is essentially that the general path of development of European concepts of monarchy and sovereignty ensured that the English crown would seek a more thorough-going control of Wales; that the large disparity of resources between the two countries gave England the strength for the task; and that the loss of most of England's Continental possessions allowed for those resources to be focused on military efforts within Britain. In this view, John's campaigns of 1211-12 "had laid the ground-plans of a military conquest and settlement of the country which it only remained for Edward I to copy and put fully into operation." John had failed because of political miscalculations and lack

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[212]Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 314-15; *Littere Wallie*, no. 1. Llywelyn's possession of various lands he had conquered was also confirmed, and on the other hand one lone Welsh prince, Maredudd ap Rhys, was allowed to remain a tenant-in-chief of the crown, but these were minor considerations in comparison to the creation of a real principality of Wales. This was a reversal of the agreement of 1241, by which Dafydd conceded to Henry III the homage of all the nobles of Wales. *Littere Wallie*, no. 4.

[213] E.g. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p. 330.

of patience, but nonetheless had demonstrated "that the native Welsh kingdoms had little chance of withstanding the military might of the English state."[214] The author of those words, R. R. Davies, was the greatest historian of medieval Wales of his generation, but he was not a military historian, and like most people had a somewhat exaggerated view of what the simple application of resources and conventional military power can accomplish.

In reality, the humiliations of Gwynedd in 1211-2, 1241 and 1247 no more show that Wales was ultimately doomed than the English disasters of 1218, 1256-7, and 1257 prove the opposite. When the Welsh were divided amongst themselves, the English had the advantage; when the English were distracted by civil strife or foreign wars, the Welsh made gains. Even when a king of England made a determined effort to apply his realm's military might towards the conquest of Wales, he could be stymied entirely, or limited to minor gains such as the construction of a single new castle (all that was accomplished in 1157, 1165, 1228, and 1245). It would take a large number of such campaigns to subdue Wales, and each expedition involved "heavy and quite alarming expenses."[215]

Indeed, since the Welsh could capture or destroy several castles in a single campaigning season with less effort and expense than it took the English to build one new one, this sort of offensive could lead to a regression rather than an advance in English territorial control. In 1231, for example, the Dunstaple annals record that Llywelyn Fawr destroyed ten castles of the March while Henry III's army remained immobilized for the purpose of rebuilding just one.[216] Moreover, even when much of the manpower was paid for by feudal service or the shield-tax levied on knights who chose not to muster, extracting the manpower he needed for an unpleasant and unprofitable campaign drained the king's political capital. The point is best illustrated by

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[214] Davies, *Age of Conquest,* pp. 292-3, 297, 295.
[215] *Description,* p. 270 ("as much as is levied in taxes from the Welsh over a whole series of years").
[216] *Annales monastici,* vol. 4, p. 127.

King Henry III's campaign of 1245. "His majesty the king is staying with his army at Gannock [Deganwy]," wrote a nobleman in the army,

for the purpose of fortifying a castle which is now built in a most strong position there; and we are dwelling round it in tents, employed in watchings, fastings, and prayers, and amidst cold and nakedness. In watchings, through fear of the Welsh suddenly attacking us by night; in fastings, on account of a deficiency of provisions, for a farthing loaf now costs five pence; in prayers, that we may soon return home safe and uninjured; and we are oppressed by cold and nakedness, because our houses are of canvas, and we are without winter clothing…. Whilst we have continued here with the army, being in need of many things, we have often sallied forth armed, and exposed ourselves to many and great dangers, in order to procure necessaries, encountering many and various ambuscades and attacks from the Welsh, suffering much… There was such a scarcity of all provisions, and such want of all necessaries, that we incurred an irremediable loss both of men and horses. There was a time, indeed, when there was no wine…amongst the whole army, except one cask only; a measure of corn cost twenty shillings [four months of wages for a footsoldier], a pasture ox three or four marks [160 or 240 days' wages], and a hen was sold for eightpence [four days' wages]. Men and horses consequently pined away, and numbers perished from want.[217]

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[217] Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, p.113

When the army returned to England after ten weeks, the king's coffers were empty—indeed, he had been compelled to impose on his brother for a loan of 3,000 marks, which the latter secured by pawning his jewels-- the army had suffered substantial losses, the soldiers had gained no plunder or glory, and, as Matthew Paris notes, Henry was "*unable*, as well as unwilling, to make any longer stay" [emphasis added].[218] The English chronicler nonetheless claimed that the king returned "crowned with good fortune," convinced that the devastation wrought by his forces had brought the Welsh to the edge of ruin, and planning to return in the spring to finish the job. This, however, seems to be a distortion of hindsight, since the king's subsequent actions bespeak more desperation than confidence:

> in order that the Welsh might not obtain provisions from the neighbouring [English] provinces… he caused the inhabitants of that country, and those in subjection to him, to be impoverished, and especially deprived of food, so much so, that, in Cheshire and other neighbouring provinces, famine prevailed to such a degree, that the inhabitants had scarcely sufficient means left to prolong a wretched existence.[219]

This action fits better with the perspective of the Welsh chronicle, which depicts Henry's campaign as a costly failure, and by implication attributes the subsequent collapse of Gwynedd's fortunes instead to the death of Dafydd and the consequent defection of Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg and other Welsh princes.[220]

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[218] Ibid., p. 114.
[219] Ibid.
[220] *ByT*, pp. 331, 333.

The resources of kings of England were large, but their territories were much smaller at the start of Edward I's reign than they had been in Henry II's day, due to the loss of most of the wealthy Angevin lands in France. Llywelyn ap Gruffud, on the other hand, controlled a much larger portion of Wales than Owain had in 1157 or 1165, and the Welsh had in the meantime adopted elements of the Anglo-Norman style of war—adding barded cavalry to their forces, developing sophisticated siege methods for taking castles by assault, and building their own castles in substantial numbers to strengthen their defensive capabilities—without losing the advantages of their native martial tradition.[221] For Edward to achieve greater success than his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, or great-great-great-grandfather had managed, against a stronger foe, he would have to conduct his war more not just with greater determination than they had, but also with a better plan.

As Clausewitz points out, an offensive that culminates and halts before it renders the enemy incapable of counter-attack leaves the initial attacker in a dangerous position: until his gains can be fully consolidated, he continues to suffer the disadvantages of being on the offensive (logistical difficulties, long lines of communication, the great disadvantage in information that comes from operating in the midst of a hostile populace) without benefitting

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[221]Gerald says one of the things that would contribute to making the Welsh nation unconquerable would be if they "were more commonly accustomed to the Gallic mode of arming, and depended more on steady fighting than on their agility." By his time the nobles had become good horsemen, but were still not numerous and remained light-armored, typically with small coats of mail (*loricis minoribus*). *Description*, tr. Forester, pp. 521, 491; *Opera*, ed. James F. Dimock, vol. 6 (London, 1868), p. 190. By 1245, according to Matthew Paris' probably exaggerated report, the Welsh fielded 500 well-armed knights on iron-clad horses (along with 30,000 footmen). *English History*, vol. 3, p. 217. Although the sources give little tactical detail, Welsh victories in six consecutive clashes of 1257-8 indicate a high level of tactical proficiency had been achieved. *Annales Cambriae*, pp. 92-6. The Welsh had also made progress in siege warfare. The *Brut y Tywysogion* has an isolated (and possibly anachronistic) mention of the use of "engines" for breaching castles by the Welsh as early as 1113, but common reference to the use of "engines" in siege warfare begins in 1196. *ByT,* pp. 113, 243, 253, 277, 321 (in 1231an army led by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, among others, "broke the castle" of Cardigan [Aberteivi] with engines). Miners are noted as used against the Welsh in 1196, and by a mixed Anglo-Welsh army in 1214. Ibid., pp. 243, 277.

from its advantages (concentration and initiative).[222] Moreover, an invader seeking to hold on to any substantial territory he has occupied suffers from the principal disadvantage of the operational-level defense: if he wants to control the countryside and exploit its resources, he must disperse his forces, but scattered troops are vulnerable to defeat in detail. Therefore, a good offensive strategic plan aimed at the complete defeat of the enemy has two requirements. First, it should identify physical targets that, if captured or destroyed, will either break the *will* of the enemy to continue, or effectively eliminate his *ability* to do so. Second, it should ensure that the attacker has enough strength and staying-power to hit those centers of gravity before the toll of campaigning drains his ability to continue the offensive.

In most cases, the strength of the enemy's will to keep fighting depends on the cost of making peace: a defender resisting a genocidal invader can be expected to keep fighting to the last, regardless of defeats suffered, whereas an effort to hold on to a disputed border castle may be abandoned relatively easily when things begin to go badly. A defender also considers the attacker's situation and his own: if the defender can see that the attacker is nearly exhausted, he has a favorable negotiating position and is likely to limit the concessions he is willing to make accordingly. Until the reign of Edward I, as we have seen, some English invasions of Wales were so ineffective that they failed to impel the defenders to offer any concessions for peace; others gained the English a forward position or induced the Welsh leaders to renew the homage that they in any case generally acknowledged that they owed to the English king; only a few persuaded the princes of Gwynedd to surrender any territory.

Indeed, since the capitulation of 1247 followed the death of Dafydd rather than being a direct result of the prior campaign, it could be said that only the invasions of 1211 and 1241

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[222] This is a major and under-appreciated theme in Carl von Clausewitz *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1976). See particularly Books VII.5 and VIII.4, and cf. VIII.7.

clearly had that last result, and in both cases only briefly. In any case, it is clear that not one of the English attacks left the Welsh so badly defeated, from a military standpoint, that they would not have been *able* to continue the war. In no case were the invaders able to engage and destroy the army of Gwynedd or to occupy Snowdonia, and there was no other center of gravity so vital to the Welsh that they could not continue past its loss.

It would be fair to say that until 1276, the strategy of the English kings who had aimed at the conquest of Wales reflected too much concern with how best to use what they *had*, rather than how to get what they *needed*. To force the complete surrender of Gwynedd, as Gerald had made clear, required pushing the Welsh into their mountain refuges and keeping up the pressure on them for a full year, so that they could be worn away by attrition and ultimately by hunger. Anything less allowed the defenders to wait out the offensive, then counterattack to recover any territory given up, destroy castles held by the English, or at least launch raids on enemy territory in order to resupply themselves and encourage the enemy to accept a compromise peace. Yet English king after English king had begun a campaign in the summer or even the fall, and gone home before winter. John, unusually, had begun his campaigning early and returned for a second attack in the same year, and that was one reason for his greater success. In most cases, however, not only had the English failed to sustain the offensive in the winter, they had also declined or failed to mount a new attack in the spring.

The basic reason for that was simple: because it was *difficult and expensive* to do what Gerald's plan required, namely to sustain an offensive effort to the point where the Welsh had to choose among starvation, complete surrender, or an attempt to restore their situation with a near-hopeless effort to crush the invaders in direct fighting.[223] The English military system of the

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[223] Modern historians have tended to downplay these issues, emphasizing instead that the English kings were generally satisfied to leave their Welsh vassals in power, provided they offered due fealty. This was doubtless true

thirteenth century, like that of all contemporary Western powers, was geared towards mounting a big push over the summer months, spearheaded by armored cavalrymen who owed service at their own expense for a relatively short period—40 days, in England. It was possible to bring feudal contingents into operation in rotation, but even England's resources were not so disproportionately great that one-eleventh of her strength could be counted upon to defeat a counterattack by the concentrated forces of the princes of Gwynedd and their allies—who could draw on the martial ardor and skill of a large portion of their population, not just its upper stratum-- and in any case English knights had little enthusiasm for the rigors of camping in the cold and rain of the Welsh winter, under constant harassment. Knights and footmen willing to do what was needed could nonetheless be found in sufficient numbers, provided that money was available to pay them, but that would require straining the fiscal system to its limits, as only a strong king could do, and then only if he could avoid dividing the proceeds between the conquest of Wales and some other war.

Even a king who raised huge sums and was willing to devote them all to Welsh matters, however, would likely not have had much success had he spent the money, say, to keep twice as many armored horsemen in his employ all the way from July through October, and to ensure they had adequate supplies to keep the field for that period. In fact, although we do not have specific figures from the earlier campaigns to compare them to, by later standards Edward I's highly successful campaign of 1276-7 was not exorbitantly expensive; the expenditures he made

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in some instances, but especially given the frequent chroniclers' assertions of more ambitious aims, and indeed common sense, it seems likely that in some other years the English monarchs would happily have dismembered the principality of Gwynedd entirely, or indeed depopulated it entirely, if they thought it could be done easily or cheaply. It may be true—though the chronicles say otherwise—that, as R. R. Davies puts it, "for much of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the kings of England seemed neither capable nor anxious to deliver the *coup de grâce,*" but then, there is little point in being anxious to do what one is not capable of doing. *Domination and Conquest*, p. 24.

would have been within the reach of Henry I, John or Henry II, for example.[224] The success of

Edward's conquest of Wales between 1276 and 1282 did owe something to favorable

circumstances and the strength of his kingship, but it was also the result of his application of a

better strategy—which, in all key respects, was the strategy Gerald of Wales had outlined almost

a century earlier, but that none of his predecessors had implemented.

The War of 1276-1277

Gerald's principal recommendations, as already noted, were:

1. Divide the Welsh, especially by taking advantage of the family feuds that arose from the practice of partible inheritance, promising some lords the lands of others.

2. Use economic warfare, preparing the ground for conquest but cutting off all imports.

3. Invade by the coastal lowlands, ensuring the possibility of supply by sea.

4. Employ light-armed troops drawn from the Marches and from within Wales, led by locals who knew the terrain and how to deal with Welsh tactics, and were hardier and more accustomed to the rigors of campaigning in wilderness areas than were other Anglo-Norman soldiers. Use them to ring Snowdonia, apply "patient and unremitting pressure," and wear down the Welsh with probes, raids, and skirmishes, and by preventing them from getting food. Bring up fresh troops as necessary.

5. Keep the king's attention focused on Wales for a full year, without becoming distracted by strife elsewhere.

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[224] The total cost of the war was somewhere around £23,000—well less than the amount raised by the war-tax granted by Parliament to pay for it. Morris, *Welsh Wars,* pp. 140-2.   The war of 1282, by comparison, cost £120,000 or more. Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), p. 200.

It was part of England's standard repertoire for Welsh wars to execute steps 1 and 3, and in Henry III's reign the value of step 2 had been well appreciated, though in 1245 the most stringent measures along these lines had been taken only after the end of the main army's campaign. English kings had also made substantial use at times of Marcher troops and Welsh allies, though not in the ways Gerald called for. As we have seen, however, most military offensives against Wales were begun in late summer and done by early fall. In John's two-stage invasion of 1211 the second phase was merely an ad-hoc response to the embarrassment of the first, and even so the two campaigns combined lasted only from May to August. By contrast, Edward I opened his first war as king in November of 1276, and finished it in November of 1277, requiring just three days less than the one year Gerald said would be needed.[225]

Most historians see the war of 1276-1277 as arising from arrogance and intransigence on the part of both principals. Edward gave shelter to Llywelyn's younger brother Dafydd and to Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn of Southern Powys after the two of them plotted to assassinate Llywelyn, made difficulties about Llywelyn's rights to certain disputed lands, and supported the bishop of St. Asaph against Llywelyn in a case over the latter's encroachments on some of the bishopric's revenues. Llywelyn, feeling that Edward was not acting in good faith, tried to bring diplomatic pressure to bear by declining to give the new king the homage he was due, as well as withholding installments of the large sum he owed to the crown by the terms of the Treaty of Montgomery.[226] This was poor policy, however: although Llywelyn had reason to be dissatisfied, nothing Edward did should have been an unbearable affront, or as painful as what

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[225] Thus even if we consider only the operations of King Edward's own army, from July through November, the campaign was not "brief" compared to previous efforts. Certainly the war as a whole should not be interpreted as a mere "military promenade, followed by successful negotiations." Cf. Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 182.
[226] See Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 320-330 for a clear discussion.

war could be expected to bring, whereas Llywelyn's refusal to do homage was a challenge Edward simply could not permit to stand.

In 1275, both parties could see war coming. Edward was urged by a group of Irish "kings" to aid them in suppressing a rebellion against his authority in Ulster and was asked by the king of Castile to resume the war against the Saracens, but he declined to be distracted. He relied on peaceful diplomacy to pursue his step-mother's claim to the county of Agen and to resolve other sources of tension between England and France.[227] At the end of the year, Edward discovered that Llywelyn had, by proxy, married Eleanor de Montfort, daughter of the Earl of Leicester who had so severely challenged royal authority in the reign of Henry III, and sister of Simon and Guy de Montfort, who had recently murdered Edward's own cousin, Henry of Almain, who had been sent to them as a peace envoy. Under the circumstances, Edward interpreted the betrothal as a provocation, even a threat. When he captured Eleanor as she sailed to Wales, he imprisoned her, which Llywelyn naturally considered a hostile act.[228] In the spring and summer of 1276, both sides complained of raids and border skirmishes.[229] In October, defensive preparations were ordered in Montgomery and Oswestry on the Welsh border.[230]

The next month, Edward decided that Llywelyn had already been given enough opportunities to deliver his homage, declared him a rebel, and opened the war against him.[231] Llywelyn would gladly have continued to put off the conflict, or avoided it altogether, so this

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[227] *Foedera*, I:4:76-7; I:2:147-153.

[228] Edward seems to have been convinced, as he wrote at the time, that Eleanor was inspired by the desire to use her new husband's power to revive the Montfortian program of resistance to royal tyranny. Smith, *Llywelyn,* pp. 391-99, 402.

[229] Ibid., pp. 402-6.

[230] *Calendar of Close Rolls*, *1272-9* [hereafter *CCR*], p. 315.

[231] *CCR*, pp. 359-61.

was Edward's choice.[232]   The English king initially set the date for the feudal muster as midsummer 1277;[233] he could have done the same even if he had allowed the diplomatic process to continue through mid-spring.   The early declaration of war, however, gave him the opportunity to begin the war over the winter, something none of his predecessors had ever shown the slightest sign of wanting to do, but an action that made good sense in terms of Gerald's strategic plan.   By opening hostilities at an unexpected time, Edward forestalled the Welsh from laying in supplies in anticipation of the war, supporting the economic/logistic aspects of his (and Gerald's) strategy.   Already in the declaration of war itself, the king forbade all communication between his subjects and Llywelyn's men, "and that no one shall take into [Llywelyn's] land, or permit to be taken thither through their land or power, by land or by sea, victuals, horses, or other things that may be useful to men in any way."[234]

Within a week of the declaration of war, the king appointed three magnates as his lieutenants for the conduct of the war over the winter, each based in a royal fortress: the Earl of Warwick in Chester in the north, closest to Gwynedd; Roger Mortimer at Montgomery in the middle March, opposite Southern Powys; and Pain de Chaworth in the south, at Carmarthen. Each was a Lord Marcher, who well understood the land and the enemy, just as Gerald had advised.[235]   They were provided with moderate-sized strike-forces of cavalry at royal wages, and

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[232] In early 1277 Llywelyn was pleading to be given the king's grace and proclaiming his willingness to do homage and to pay a substantial cash indemnity in exchange for a peace of goodwill (including the release of Eleanor). Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 410-11.

[233] Ibid., p.360. The writs of summons were issued 12 December. *CCR,* 410. On 24 January, several dozen men received letters of protection for service through midsummer as they were "going" on service in Wales; from 3 March additional letters were mostly for those who had "gone." *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, *1272-81* [hereafter *CPR*], pp. 189-92.

[234] *CCR*, p. 361. Cf. the orders of 12 Dec. 1276 and 3 January 1277 to prevent "corn [grain], wine, honey, salt, iron, arms," or other goods from moving into Wales. Ibid., pp. 410, 366.

[235] John E. Morris untangles the narrative in *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), an outstanding book, especially considering its age. However, especially since his approach is mainly from the English perspective, his work should be read in conjunction with Smith, *Llywelyn*. Chaworth had under royal pay both infantry and 100 cavalry under John de Beauchamp, custodian of Carmarthen and Cardigan castles. Smith, *Llywelyn*, p. 419n. He also had substantial contingents of cavalry provided by the Marcher lords, who did not receive royal pay.

given direction over the feudal contingents and arrayed infantry of regional landholders as needed. Each captain, in pursuance of the divide-and-conquer strategy advocated by Gerald, was given authority to receive into the king's peace any Welshmen who were willing to submit.[236] All sorts of other preparations were initiated: collecting a tax granted by Parliament, taking loans from Italian bankers, purchasing and stockpiling grain, importation of warhorses, summons for Gascon crossbowmen, repairs to border fortresses, purchase of large numbers of crossbow quarrels, and so on.[237] On 10 February, Llywelyn was excommunicated by the archbishop of Canterbury on the basis of his failure to fulfill his oaths to his lord. His followers were subjected to the same sanction if they did not leave his service within a month. This made it possible to the war against the Welsh prince to be presented as a holy war, and gave any Welshman who was considering defecting to the English a convenient excuse for doing so.[238]

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[236] *CPR*, 186 (Mortimer); *Foedera,* Hague ed., I:2:158 (Chaworth); it is scarcely conceivable that Warwick was not given the same authority. Dafydd ap Gruffydd and the justiciar of Chester were given similar but more limited powers. *CPR*; see also pp. 201, 219. A petition of Trahaern ap Madog from this period refers to his coming into the peace of Bohun [the Earl of Hereford] and the king. *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales,* ed. W. Rees (Cardiff, 1975), p. 468; Smith, *Llywelyn*, p. 417n.

[237] *Welsh Wars*, p. 115; *CPR*, pp. 193, 195-6.

[238] Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 407-9, 412-13, 428 [*expediccione votiva*].   It is interesting to note that Gerald did not mention this step in his strategic plan, perhaps because he was unwilling to advocate the use of the Church as a tool of the crown.
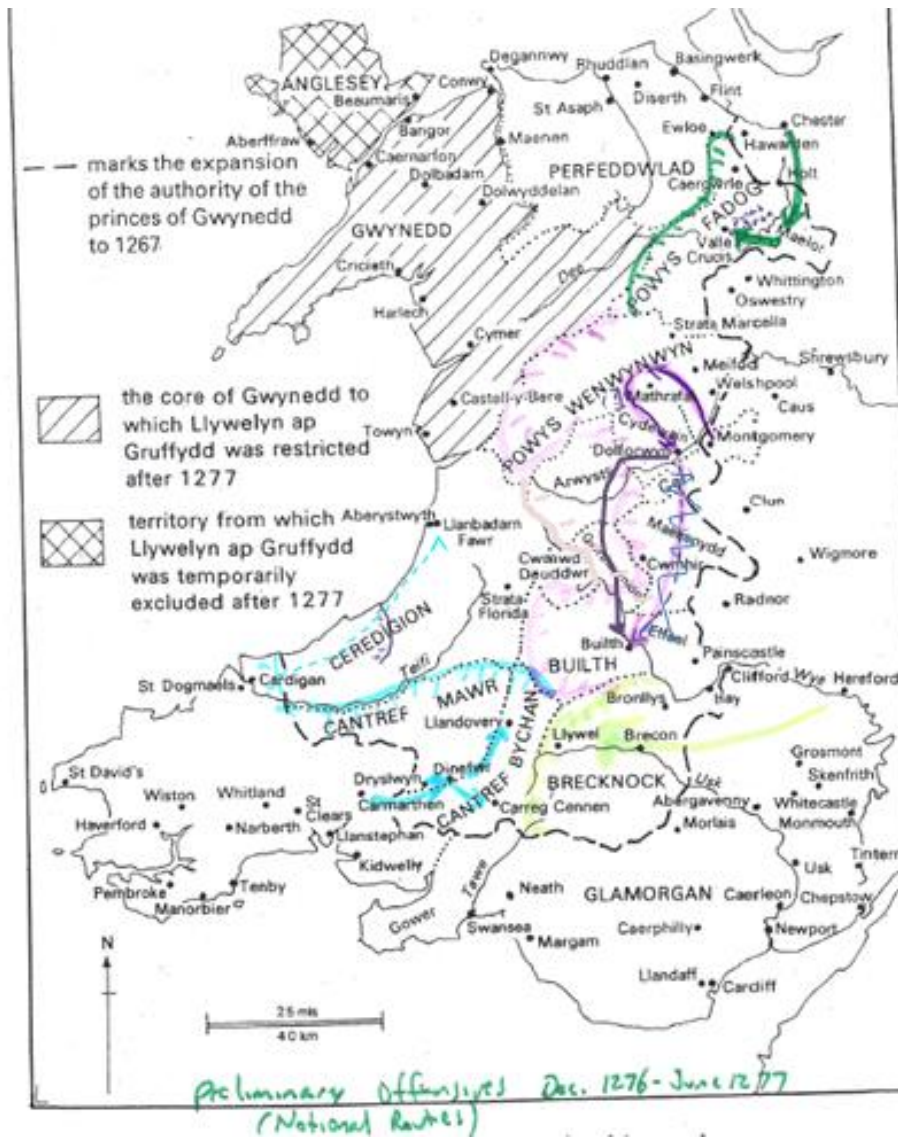
The winter weather was not allowed to delay the initiation of active campaigning against

the outer ring of Llywelyn's dominions. Each of Edward's three field forces was strong enough

to be secure against anything but a full-scale attack by Llywelyn, and even that was not much of

a threat, because the requirements of mobilization for a major counterattack would have ruined

any real chance of surprise, enabling the target to retreat to its fortifications. In any case, the

English could afford whatever losses fighting might entail, whereas the Welsh could not, so

Llywelyn ordered his men to avoid any major clashes. The force operating from Chester, which

included Llywelyn's brother Dafydd, seems to have occupied the neighboring district of Maelor

or Bromfield in northern Powys before the end of the year.[239] The lord of that region was turned against his brother, Madog ap Gruffudd, who also surrendered to avoid losing all his lands. Dinas Brân, one of the strongest castles in Wales, had come into English hands by early May.[240] Mortimer's detachment in the middle March was opposed by Llywelyn in person in December, but before 5 February 1277 the prince had been driven out of the region with the help of the earl of Lincoln and the men of Shropshire and Hereford, and Southern Powys was largely under control by the English and most loyal of the Welsh *tywysogion*, Gruffud ap Gwenwynwyn.[241] Dolforwyn castle, recently constructed by Llywelyn to block the route up the Severn, fell to Mortimer's men on 8 April after a short siege. The same force quickly asserted control over Cydewain, Ceri and Gwertheyrnion. Before the end of the month they occupied the ruins of Builth castle and dominated that district as well.[242]

Pain de Chaworth, meanwhile, employed a combination of military pressure and negotiations to secure the submission of Llywelyn's ally-by-compulsion, Rhys ap Maredudd. Rhys had a claim to the great castle of Dinefwr, the traditional capital of Deheubarth, and the surrounding district, then held by his cousin Rhys Wyndod— Prince Llywelyn's nephew. In accordance with Gerald's advice to divide the Welsh by promising one man the lands of another, Chaworth promised, or at least strongly implied, that once Edward conquered Dinefwr and the surrounding area, he would ensure Rhys ap Maredudd received his due rights to those lands, or that if Edward chose to keep them as royal lands, he would compensate Rhys ap Maredudd for his loss.

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[239] The power given on 26 December to Dafydd and to the justiciar of Chester to receive the submission of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd of Maelor and all his men seems clearly to have been the result of a negotiation with the *tywysog*, not merely an anticipatory tool. *CPR*, p. 186.

[240] Smith, *Llywelyn*, 423-4; [*CAC*, 83]; *CCR*, pp. 398-9.

[241] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 120-121; *CPR*, p. 192.

[242] *ByT*, p. 365. Refortification of the castle of Builth had begun by 3 May. Smith, *Llywelyn*, p. 418.

In exchange, Rhys put his castles and men at Chaworth's disposal.[243] Gruffydd ap Maredudd, the principal Welsh lord in Ceredigion, also entered the king's peace.[244] The three *tywysigion* combined might have been a fair match for royal forces in the Tywi valley, but with two of them in English service and Llywelyn in no position to lend him effective assistance, Rhys Wyndod had little choice but to surrender. By the first week of June his castles of Dinefwr, Llandovery and Caercynan were in Chaworth's hands as royal property, and work was immediately begun to strengthen their fortifications.[245] The remaining Welsh nobles of Deheubarth soon also came into the king's peace, generally losing some of their lands and keeping others, just as Llywelyn ultimately would.[246] Meanwhile the Earl of Hereford used a combination of his own resources and royal assistance to make good his claim to the three cantrefs of Brycheiniog (Brecknock), securing the rear of Mortimer's and Chaworth's advances.[247]

The wage bills for the winter and spring operations of the three royal advance forces amounted to nearly three thousand pounds sterling—a far from trivial sum, but nonetheless an excellent bargain, considering the extent to which they had weakened Llywelyn and prepared the way for the main push in the summer.[248] Not only had Llywelyn lost lands and access to the men, money, and supplies they contained, he had had to commit his forces to the field in winter, which despite the legendary disdain of the Welsh for difficult conditions must have begun the

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[243] Smith, *Llywelyn*, p. 419-21; *Foedera* (Hague), 1:2:158. The language is a bit ambiguous: it could be interpreted to leave the king room to decide that Rhys did not have the right to Dinefwr in the first place, in which case Edwards' retention of the castle would not involve his "demanding" Rhys's rights ["ius suum deposcet"], and therefore would not require "restitution." Rhys agreed to do homage to Edward, and Edward agreed that he would never alienate Rhys's homage to another, except by the latter's free will—i.e. Rhys would not be subjected again to Llywelyn.

[244] Smith, *Llywelyn*, p. 421; [*CAC*, pp. 55-6, 71-2.]

[245] *CPR*, p. 212. Pain de Chaworth was in charge of all three castles. £285 10*s.* were disbursed for the strengthening of the "king's castles" of Dinefwr and Caercynan. TNA E101/3/20.

[246] Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 421-2.

[247] *ByT*, 365; Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 123; Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 416-8.

[248] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, pp. 118, 141.

process of wearing his men down. The same was true, no doubt, for those of the king's men who participated in these preliminary actions, but they, unlike the Welsh, were about to be joined by large contingents of fresh troops.

The feudal host had been summoned for 1 July. Most joined the king at Chester, from where the English army would follow the traditional invasion route along the northern coast, while a few hundred more troopers, now under the king's brother Edmund, advanced to Aberystwyth and began a large new castle at Llanbadarn, from which they could control the country right up to the southern border of Gwynedd, at the river Dyfi.

The main army at Chester, under Edward himself, had about 1,000 heavy cavalry—more than enough to ensure superiority in any open battle with the Welsh, but no more than one third what kingdom could have supplied.[249] Edward had also provided himself, however, with a much larger force of foot soldiers, as well as carters, craftsmen and laborers by the thousands.[250] Gerald had called for the English to hold Wales after its conquest by building castles, and ensuring access to them by clearing wide paths through the woods to hinder ambushes along the roads. Edward decided to begin the process during the campaign itself, but (unlike most English kings before him, though on the scanty evidence available John may have done the same in 1211) neither to settle for construction a short distance into Wales, nor to drive in deep without a secure line of communications behind him.

Instead, during his advance he would stop each 15 miles or so, quickly begin the construction of a fortress, and start by digging large ditches to protect a camp. As soon as the

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[249] Ibid., p. 127. Edward III mustered some 3,000 men-at-arms for the 1346 campaign, and a similar number for 1359-60, even though these were overseas campaigns and, in the latter instance, after the Black Death. Clifford J. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327-1360* (Woodbridge, 2000), Appendix 1.

[250] Morris, *Welsh Wars,* pp. 127-32, 139. The abbot of St. Werburg's in Chester sent 100 laborers for the construction at Flint at his own expense; if others of the king's men did similarly, the total of workmen may have been substantially larger even than the pay records indicate. *CPR*, p. 226.

defensive works were sufficient to prevent the camp from being overrun by a sudden assault, he would garrison them with infantry and a detachment of cavalry. Meanwhile, the main strength of the army would keep Llywelyn at bay and cover a large force of axe men—over 1,500 men during August-- as they burned and cut down the forests to create an "extremely broad" open

way to the next destination, advancing at a rate of something like half a mile per day.[251]

Once the way was clear, the army advanced to Flint. Despite the huge quantity of wood

made available by the forest-clearing, Edward had masses of prepared timber brought in by sea,

allowing for construction of more lasting works and, probably more importantly, speeding up the

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[251]Morris, *Welsh Wars*, pp. 131-135. Wykes' chronicle, in *Annales monastici,* 4:273 (quotation); Osney annals, in *Annales monastici,* 4:272 (burning).

process. With over 500 skilled carpenters and masons on hand, the labor went quickly.[252] Still, it had taken until 26 July for the army to reach Flint, and the 40 days' unpaid service owed by the feudal cavalry was finished before the army was ready to advance from Flint to Rhuddlan on 20 August. The earls, who in this period still usually brought their retinues to the army at their own expense, all stayed with Edward nonetheless. With their men, around 125 volunteers from the feudal contingents retained at pay, and the king's own household, we can figure the strength of the cavalry at somewhere around 500 men, still probably at least double what Llywelyn (deprived of his allies) could muster in numbers, and better equipped as well.

The mass of Edward's army at Rhuddlan, however, was made up of infantry (bowmen, spearmen, and a few crossbowmen) whom he had recruited in unprecedented numbers for the campaign. Of these around 3,000 came from Lancashire, Derbyshire and Rutland, but the great majority, as Gerald had recommended, were drawn were from Wales (9,000) and the English Marches (3,500).[253] A good portion of the English infantry would have had light or medium armor (a quilted gambeson or a short mail shirt and a metal helmet), as Gerald had called for.[254] Another 2,000 or so soldiers, perhaps 10 percent cavalry and the rest infantry, patrolled the roads from bases at Chester and Flint. In addition, over 700 sailors manning 26 ships were on station

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[252] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, pp. 130, 138-9. This required substantial advance planning. At the start of May a knight of the royal household was sent to supervise the taking of oaks from the forest of Chester for the construction at Flint (which the king would not reach until July). TNA, E101/3/15. Royal officials had been sent to diverse parts of England as early as mid-June, specifically to collect masons and carpenters, "as many as [they] can get, and in whosesoever works or service they may be." When the clerks brought in one contingent, they were sent back out to gather more workers. *CPR,* p. 213; TNA, E101/3/16. Thomas Wykes' chronicle says both Flint and Rhuddlan were strengthened so well they became impregnable. *Annales monastici*, vol. 4, p. 273.

[253] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 131-133.

[254] The Assize of Arms promulgated by Henry III in 1252 required lesser gentry with freeholders with 5 to 10 pounds of land revenues to own a purpoint and iron helmet; those with 10 to 15 pounds were to have a mail haubergeon and a helmet; but only those with more than 15 pounds had to maintain a horse. William Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 8th ed., (Oxford, 1905), pp. 371-2. Even earlier, in 1231, a levy of infantry from Gloucestershire for a Welsh campaign was limited to those with metal armor. Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages. The English Experience* (New Haven, CT, 1996), p. 122.

to support the army.[255] In later wars, Edward seems to have used the royal right of purveyance (forced purchase of goods at fixed, moderate prices) to acquire supplies for entire armies,[256] but in 1277 he seems to have used it only for his own household troops, relying on profit-seeking merchants to keep the rest of his men fed.[257] This appears to have served the purpose well enough: there are no reports of shortages, starving soldiers, or the butchering of prized horses for food on this expedition.[258]

While the work of fortification and road-clearing proceeded, Edward's soldiers made frequent raids into Welsh territory. This was doubtless done partly to collect supplies and partly to keep the troops occupied, but Thomas Wykes' chronicle notes that Edward's purpose was to leave the Welsh destitute and to use hunger to push them into their final refuge on Snowdonia, until they gave up all thought of rebellion or resistance.[259]

The political aspects of the war were not ignored while military operations were being conducted. Llywelyn's brother Dafydd was in Edward's army, with 20 horsemen and 200 infantry at English pay.[260] In a document sealed at Flint on 23 August, Edward promised to provide him, and his brother Owain (whom Llywelyn held imprisoned), with the share of Gwynedd they were due under Welsh law. This was a classic example of Gerald's

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[255] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, pp. 128, 132-3.
[256] Ibid., pp. 84, 197.
[257] This is indicated by the relatively small expenditures recorded on the relevant account roll—just £416 17s. 10d. ob., including the clerks' expenses—even though the heading of the document says the sums were spent on supplies to sustain the king's *army* (*"exercitus"*) in the Welsh War. The National Archives, Kew, UK [hereafter TNA], E101/3/16. Numerous letters of protection were issued to merchants bringing food to the army. *CPR,* 224, 226, 227, 230.
[258] In September the king was prepared to order that any goods taken from the priory of Daventry should be restored to the monks, and a whole group of similar orders was made as late as 16 October, which shows that the supply situation was still far from desperate. (Ibid., 228-9, 232; note also the various protections "notwithstanding the need of the king and the others in the army of Wales," ibid.) Cf. Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 181. That a messenger was sent in September to hasten the collection of supplies by royal purveyance does indicate some concern, but not necessarily actual "difficulties," of which there are no mentions in the chronicles or letters (in sharp contrast to most previous expeditions).
[259] *Annales monastici*, vol. 4, p. 274; cf. Gerald, *Description*, p. 268.
[260] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 128.

recommendation to divide the Welsh by promising to one man what was held by another. However, the document also laid the groundwork for post-combat occupation policy, making it clear that all Wales was to be considered forfeited to the crown, so that the lands provided to Dafydd and Owain would be held by them as fiefs graciously provided by the king and carrying with them the same obligations connected to English fiefs, including attendance at Edward's parliaments. Moreover, the agreement included the proviso that Edward could retain for himself Anglesey and parts of Snowdonia, so that future rebellions would be impossible, or at least impractical.[261] Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn of Southern Powys and Madog ap Llywelyn ap Maredudd, exiled claimant to the lordship of Meirionydd (held by Prince Llywelyn since 1256), were also in Edward's service.[262]

At the end of August the army advanced the next stage, to Deganwy on the Conwy river, the border between western and eastern Gwynedd. The ring around Snowdonia had been tightened from both the east and the south. The Conwy was a difficult barrier, but Llywelyn could not both defend it and protect the isle of Anglesey in his rear. After reducing his logistical burdens by dismissing the troops in surplus of his needs (mainly Welsh infantry), Edward sent roughly half his remaining force by sea to Anglesey. Along with the soldiers went 360 harvesters with scythes and sickles to collect the grain of the island. The wheat that Llywelyn was surely counting on to sustain his people through the winter would instead be available to feed the English garrisons occupying eastern Gwynedd and Ceredigion.[263]

Normally, if they succeeded in continuing their resistance until the hungry invaders retreated for the winter, the Welsh would "burst out like rats from their holes" to raid the

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[261] *Littere Wallie*, pp. 103-4 ("pro securitate nostra et pacis populi seruande").
[262] Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 425-6. So also, it would appear from the letters of protection they received in October on departing the army, were Rhys Fychan and Cynan ap Mareduddd. *CPR,* 229.
[263] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 134-5.

marches or otherwise obtain provisions "as they would commonly do, even in time of war, either by purchase, or by robbery, through friendship, relationship, or kindred."[264] With all of Wales except Gwynedd under English control, and King Edward's men holding Deganwy, Rhuddlan, Flint, Ruthin, and Llanbadarn, and also Anglesey, it would be practically impossible to bring in significant quantities of food. Rhuddlan and Flint, moreover, were being built on a scale that "outshadow[ed] anything that had gone before," and on the water so that they could be supplied and reinforced by sea.[265] The principal route towards England would be blocked securely.

So far Edward had followed Gerald's strategy practically to the letter. The next phase described in the archdeacon's plan for the conquest of Wales was to wait for the leaves to fall, then, send detachments of Marchers and friendly Welsh to harry the refugees on in the hills until they were forced to surrender. For the first time in the long history of Anglo-Norman wars against Wales, the English seem to have been in a position to do just that. By 20 September, the king had decided against further major field operations for the winter.[266] Even after Edward had disbanded much of his army, however, he kept enough troops in the castles encircling Llywelyn's remaining dominions to "besiege Snowdon," as the contemporary chronicler Bartholomew Cotton put it, and to harry the Welsh with continued raids.[267] Edward was even bringing in relays of fresh troops to replace worn-out soldiers, as Gerald had advised: 1,930 infantry joined the army as late as 23 September.[268] A few days before that, two merchants were

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[264] Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*, vol. 2, p.539; Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 2, p. 114, translation modified.

[265] Norman J. G. Pounds, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales: A Political and Social History* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 169. At Rhuddlan a canal was dug to facilitate supply by water.

[266] He sent his tents back to the Tower of London on 20 September. *CPR,* 229.

[267] Bartholomew Cotton, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London, 1859), p. 155. Another contemporary similarly described "Wales encircled and besieged." *Opus chronicorum*, in *Chronica monasterii S. Albani. Johannis de Trokelowe*, etc., ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1866), p. 38.

[268] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 136. These troops only stayed one week, probably because they were deemed unnecessary and a logistical burden.

given letters of protection to bring food in to the army, lasting until Christmas.[269] An extension

of the campaign into the winter proved unnecessary, however, since by early November

Llywelyn was ready to capitulate.

The Settlement of 1277

It is universally recognized that Treaty of Aberconwy, sealed on 9 November 1277,

represented a disastrous defeat for Llywelyn and a clear victory for Edward. The prevailing

view, however, is that it nonetheless was a "negotiated settlement" rather than a "total

submission" by the Welsh prince, and that Edward was prepared to make concessions to

Llywelyn due to difficulties he was already facing, and to avoid the costs and dangers of

continuing the war until Gwynedd was completely overrun.[270] The evidence is not sufficient to

determine with complete confidence if this is correct, but my own judgment is that the treaty was

indeed for all practical purposes a "total submission": perhaps a "negotiated *surrender*," but not

a mere "negotiated *settlement*."[271] Indeed, Edward seems to have designed the terms of the treaty

specifically to make it clear that it was *not* the result of a compromise imposed on him by

Llywelyn's continued resistance. Rather, the treaty of Aberconwy was intended by King Edward

to reflect the status of Wales as a conquered land, his to dispose of however he wished.

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[269] *CPR*, 230; cf. also 222 for protections from September and October to last until Easter.

[270] Smith, *Llywelyn,* p. 434; Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp. 181-2.

[271] I thus disagree with the view that Wales was "not conquered" in 1277. Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 182. In evaluating the Treaty of Aberconwy it should be remembered that during the course of the war of 1276-7 Edward gave similar terms to lesser Welsh *tywysigion* who sought to enter his peace, even when he clearly had the ability to dispossess them completely if he chose. A lord who had learned the price of rebellion through defeat and partial confiscation, but who on the other hand still retained enough land to be a useful servant, and one with something to lose if he rebelled again, could be an ideal vassal. Llywelyn had argued, in his last-ditch effort to avoid the war of 1276-7, that "he would be of greater service to the king than those who, even though they waged the king's war, sought their own advantage rather than the king's honour." (Smith's paraphrase, *Llywelyn*, p. 410). This did not carry much weight when the prince was unwilling to do homage, but once he had fully admitted his subordination to the English crown, it might well be persuasive.

By its terms, Llywelyn was to retain the possession of the lands he still controlled, and even to regain Anglesey, but the island was to be held by him only as a life grant, for which an annual fee would be paid to the royal treasury.[272] On the prince's death, if he had legitimate children, they were to receive part of Anglesey, the rest falling to Edward, and part of Western Gwynnedd, the rest going to Dafydd. If, as seemed likely, Llywelyn died without heirs of his body, all his lands would revert to the crown, rather than his next of kin. Llywelyn's elder brother Owain Goch was to be freed from prison and settled on suitable lands, which were to come out of Llywelyn's remaining possessions. Eastern Gwynedd and Ceredigion were to be retained by the king, as were Builth, Cydewain, Ceri, and Dinefwr and the other castles of the Tywi valley, and whatever else he or his men had occupied during the war. Although the Welsh were to retain their own law, Edward and his judges were to be supreme in the interpretation of that law, with even cases arising inside Gwynedd subject to appeal to the king. The homages of all the major Welsh princes, which under the treaty of Montgomery had been due to Llywelyn as Prince of Wales, were now to be rendered directly to Edward.[273]

On the other hand, Llywelyn was allowed to retain the title of "Prince of Wales" and the homages of five minor *tywysogion* of distinguished lineages but little territory, "since," as contemporary summary of the text explains, "he could not call himself 'prince' if he had no barons under him."[274] These concessions, however, were personal and would lapse with Llywelyn's death. The prince was also allowed to complete his already-contracted marriage to Edward's first cousin, Eleanor de Montfort, a grand-daughter of Henry II. In evaluating the

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[272] This was to make a point that they were held by the king's grace; once the point was made by inclusion in the treaty, Edward immediately granted that the sum need not be paid. *Calendar of the Welsh Rolls* [hereafter *CWR*], in *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls : Supplementary Close Rolls, Welsh Rolls, Scutage Rolls* (London, 1912), p. 158.

[273] *Littere Wallie,* 118-122 for the Latin; *Annales monastici*, 4:272-274, for an interesting summary in French. Related documents are summarized in *CWR*, 158-9.

[274] From the French summary of the agreement, *Annales monastici*, 4:273. For the small practical value of this concession, see Smith, *Llywelyn,* p. 443.

significance of these sops to the prince's dignity, we should remember Gerald's admonitions that the subjected Welsh rulers should be treated magnanimously after their surrender, that they valued honors above all else, and that they especially treasured the opportunity to marry into illustrious bloodlines.[275]

Still, apparently to ensure that neither Llywelyn nor anyone else would conclude that these concessions reflected any strength of the Welsh prince's negotiating position, or any weakness in Edward's military situation, Llywelyn was also compelled to agree to an immense payment of £50,000 as a fine for his "disobedience." Since he could not possibly pay that sum, he could only ask for the king's "grace and pity" regarding it. The debt was promptly forgiven to him by the king, but the point was made: Edward had the right to take for himself everything Llywelyn possessed. If he did not do so, it was only by his own choice, his "grace and mercy" shown to a prostrate foe.[276]

Even within the portion of Gwynedd retained by Llywelyn, moreover, his lordship over his own men would be expressly subordinated to the loyalty they owed the crown of England. Ten of the most noble of Llywelyn's followers, delivered to Edward as hostages, were brought to Chester to swear fealty to Edward on the fragment of the True Cross there—a relic for which the Welsh were known to have particular veneration. They had to promise that they would never bear arms against the king or in any way oppose him, and that if Llywelyn or other Welsh leaders should ever again rebel, they would serve the king with all their strength in putting down the rebellion.[277] Even more gallingly, 20 leading men from each cantref remaining to Llywelyn

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[275] *Description,* 271; 251 ("The Welsh value distinguished birth and noble descent more than anything else in the world. They would rather marry into a noble family than a rich one."), p. 263.

[276] "En la grace e la pite del rey" in the French summary of the treaty (*Annales monastici,* 4:272-3); "graciam et misericordiam" in the Latin (*Littere Wallie,* 119).

[277] *CWR,* 169; *Littere Wallie,* p. 121. In 1279, the bailiff of Ruthin was ordered by Edward to allow four Welsh lords to remain in Llywelyn's service "for so long as it shall please the king, saving the king's faith." *CCR,* 564.

were to make a similar oath *every year*, for an indefinite period.[278] These provisions only reinforced the point already implicit in the territorial terms of the treaty: everything Llywelyn retained, he owed to Edward I's munificence, not his own hereditary rights or power of continued resistance. He was not to be allowed to doubt that Wales had indeed been conquered, and that his dream of a semi-autonomous native state united under a Welsh prince had been broken "like a clay pot," as young Prince Edward had once threatened. Except for the privileged areas held by English Marcher Lords, all of Wales was subject to the authority of the crown just as thoroughly and directly as the counties of England were, and moreover a much larger portion of Wales than of England was also under the immediate lordship of the king, rather than his vassals.[279]

Epilogue

Edward had subdued Wales by following the strategic plan laid out long before by Gerald of Wales, but he was somewhat less attentive to the archdeacon's advice for post-combat occupation policy. As suggested in the last section, he did, by his own lights if not by those of the conquered, take into account Gerald's observation that the Welsh "want more than anything else to be honoured," and his advice that "once they have paid the penalty for their wrongdoing and are at peace again, their revolt should be forgotten as long as they behave properly, and they should be restored to their former position of security and respect, for 'The quarrel over, it is wrong to bear a grudge.'"[280] For example, in addition to allowing Llywelyn to marry into the

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[278] *Littere Wallie*, p. 121.
[279] Especially after Edward in November 1279 acquired Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire from his brother Edmund, who was given English estates in compensation.
[280] *Description,* p. 271.

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royal family, Edward himself gave away the bride and, what is more, paid for the cost of the wedding. He also almost immediately allowed Llywelyn's hostages to go home once they had sworn fealty to him, explicitly as an expression of Edward's faith that Llywelyn would remain faithful to his obligations thereafter -- probably not at all what they had expected when delivered to English custody![281]

Even before the end of the war, as we have seen, he had begun to implement Gerald's recommendation to "build castles, [and] widen the trackways through the woodlands," and indeed he did more in these respects than Gerald could probably have imagined. He vigorously continued to build up Flint, Rhuddlan, Builth, and Llanbadarn outside Aberystwyth, creating royal boroughs attached to each, and retaining and strengthening Dinefwr, Carreg Cennen and Llanymddyfri (Landovery) in Deheubarth. More was spent on these massive works, over a period of five years, than on the conduct of the war itself.[282] Although Edward did make use of some Welsh officers, the castles, as Gerald had recommended, were always kept under the control of English captains and garrisons.[283] In addition to clearing the road from Chester to the Conwy during the war, after the peace treaty Edward ordered Marcher barons and native rulers alike "that the passes through the woods in diverse places in Wales should be enlarged and widened, so that access might be more open to those travelling through"; commissioners were sent to ensure that it was done, and all royal subjects ordered to assist them.[284]

However, though Edward himself might have disagreed, a modern historian cannot say that the conquered lands kept under royal control were ruled "with great moderation." Like

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[281] *CWR*, 169. Remember the Welsh hostages executed or mutilated by John and Henry II when their lords or family-member rebelled.

[282] Rhuddlan alone ultimately cost some £11,000, almost half the cost of the 1276-7 war. Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 145. Edward's expenditures on his Welsh castles over the course of his reign amounted to around £80,000. Very full details can be found in *The History of the King's Works;* the relevant sections have been published separately as Arnold Taylor, *The Welsh Castles of Edward I* (London, 1986).

[283] *Description*, p. 271.

[284] *CWR*, 164, 168, 171, 173, 188.

many military theorists of later days, Gerald emphasized the importance of dealing justly with the subject population. "The governor appointed must be a man of firm and uncompromising character," he wrote. "In times of peace he will observe the laws, and never refuse to obey them; he will respect his terms of appointment and do all in his power to keep his government firm and stable." Gerald noted how easy it is for officers in such situations to "turn a blind eye to lawlessness, allow themselves to be influenced by flattery…rob the civilian population in time of peace, [and] despoil those who can offer no resistance."[285] The problem started at the top. Although Edward presented himself as the fount of justice, and is remembered in history as "the English Justinian," for his huge contributions to the development of English jurisprudence, in the case of his first major dispute with Llywelyn, over lordship of the district of Arwystli, he "made a mockery of justice by turning the law into an instrument of his own power."[286] As R. R. Davies puts it, "high-handed and tyrannical officials" in the newly occupied royal territories were given "too free a hand to bully native society into submission." All too often, even where the treaty of Aberconwy had guaranteed the natives their ancient liberties and customs, these promises were not upheld.[287]

The result was a great rebellion, launched in March 1282 by Dafydd ap Gruffydd and several other Welsh princes, but soon enough coming under Llywelyn's leadership.[288] This required a second conquest of Wales, employing the same methods as the first one but on an even larger scale, and pressed to the bitter end. Once again three military commands were created to begin operations in the north, the Middle March, and the south-west. These forces restored royal control in Ceredigion and the Tywi valley, and kept the Welsh in check in Powys.

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[285] *Description*, p. 271.
[286] Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 345-7, quotation at p. 346.
[287] Ibid., p. 348
[288] As with the war of 1276-7, this war can best be understood by reading Morris' *Welsh Wars* in conjunction with Simth's *Llywelyn.*

An even bigger force of infantry was deployed than in 1277, supported by an even bigger fleet, for the main operations in the north. Dafydd's castles of Ruthin and Denbigh were captured, and eastern Gwynedd secured. Anglesey was again subdued by a large amphibious force. This detachment suffered a minor disaster when the head of the column crossing the Menai straits by a pontoon bridge was attacked and defeated, but the English retained control of the island. Warm clothing was provided for the troops, and the war was continued into the winter without remission.

It was December when Llywelyn himself was killed in a skirmish near Builth. Dafydd continued the struggle in his place, but in January Edward's main force crossed the Conwy and moved into Snowdonia to capture Dolwyddelan. The troops on Anglesey crossed over and moved into the mountains from the west. By April all of Snowdonia had fallen, and the fortress of Castell-y-Bere in Merionydd, Dafydd's last stronghold, surrendered to the king's mercy. In June Dafydd and his entire family were captured. Dafydd was hanged, drawn, and quartered, and his niece (Llywelen's daughter) and children were not permitted to marry, so that the line of Llewelyn Fawr was practically extinguished. Anglesey, western Gwynedd (renamed Caernarfonshire) and Merionthshire became direct royal lordships, secured by massive and architecturally state-of-the-art castles at Beaumaris, Cricieth, Harlech, and Castell-y-Bere. The Welsh rulers of Powys, the Middle March, and Deheubarth were largely dispossessed, except for two *tywysogion* who had remained loyal to the Crown. "For the native dynasties of Wales," as R. R. Davies observes, "the disinheritance of 1282-3…was as traumatic as were the events of 1066-70 for the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy."[289]

There would be other revolts, under Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's distant cousin Madog ap Llywelyn in 1294-5, and Owain Glyndwr in 1400-1412, but they were doomed from the start.

[289] Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p. 361.

The experiences of 1276-7 and 1282-3 had demonstrated that the resources of the crown of England, when mobilized by a determined ruler and *applied in accordance with a sound strategy*, were sufficient to overcome even the difficult problems posed by a warlike people skilled in guerilla tactics, fighting to defend a region fortified by nature with formidable swamps, great forests, and rugged hills, and inspired by "the sheer joy of being free."[290]

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[290] *Description*, p. 270.

Creating the British Way of War:
English Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession

Over the course of the seventeenth century, England had emerged from a peripheral second-rate power to a core partner in a European-wide coalition united against Louis XIV's France. Its participation in the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1712) would cement the country's status as one of Europe's great powers.[291] The island nation's military victories were critical to this transition, and the strategies that directed its forces led to a peace shaped by English concerns. Unlike the rest of Europe, England was in the fortunate position to have real strategic options, its geographical location allowing it to draw upon two distinct schools of strategic thought: a focus on the mainland territories of a European foe (a continental strategy), or instead casting its eyes towards the unfolding vista of overseas territories and the trade they brought back to Europe (a "blue water" strategy).[292]

The conduct of the Nine Years' War (1688-1697) inaugurated an uneasy amalgamation of these two traditions, but it required the War of Spanish Succession to turn the island nation's strategy into a fully 'English' strategy. England's decision to enter the war as a major participant of a grand coalition, to wage a full-scale war against France's armies and navies in multiple theaters while simultaneously targeting the French economy, to sustain such a massive effort by

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[291] Any investigation of England's efforts during the Spanish Succession must start with John Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy* (New York, 1987). The most balanced account of the war in English remains A.J. Veenendaal, Sr., "The War of the Spanish Succession in Europe," in J.S. Bromley, ed., *The New Cambridge Modern History vol. VI: The Rise of Great Britain and Russia 1688-1725* (Cambridge, 1970). John Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667-1714* (New York, 1999) remains the only modern overview in English from a French perspective.

[292] England and Scotland were united in the person of the joint monarch from 1603, the two countries formally uniting with the 1707 Act of Union. Since English and Scottish interests differed significantly even after the Union, and since English interests always dominated, I will retain this distinction by referring to "English" strategy throughout, confining "British" for later in the eighteenth century.

mobilizing the resources of a broad coalition, and to end the war on its own terms all help explain England's ultimate success. In addition to providing the stepping stones for future British success, the strategic decisions made in the War of the Spanish Succession also helped establish a model for future British strategy: a distinctive British way of war that took advantage of its fiscal strength and jealously maintained its independence of action.[293]

The Williamite Strategic Revolution

Like any country, geography shaped England's strategic choices. The dominant power on an island on the periphery of Western Europe, England enjoyed the Channel's protection from land-borne invasion, while its isolation from the center of Europe fed a maritime culture. Thus, while earlier Tudor and Stuart monarchs had dabbled in land wars on the continent, it was William III's invasion of England that forced the country into an unprecedented commitment against Louis XIV's France, which in turn required the English to pursue war both at land and at sea on a geographical scale and with a level of commitment not seen since the Hundred Years' War.[294] Henry VIII had conducted occasional expeditionary campaigns across the Channel, several English monarchs had launched haphazard naval descents along the Continental littoral, and defended their home island against the rare invasion attempts - most famously Spain's Grand Armada of 1588. Elizabeth had provided English forces to serve the Dutch Republic during its war for independence and Charles II had similarly sent English subsidy regiments to fight under Marshal Turenne during the Dutch War. Britain exported mercenary swordsmen for service abroad throughout the century. Yet these engagements with the continent were decidedly tepid.

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[293] For the modern debate, see B.H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (New York, 1933); Michael Howard's response in "The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal," in Howard, ed., *The Causes of War and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA, 1983); and David French, *The British Way in Warfare, 1688-2000* (New York, 1990).

[294] William Maltby, "The Origins of a Global Strategy: England from 1559 to 1713," in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rules, States, and War* (New York, 1994), pp. 151-177.

England could, and did, quickly retreat back behind its moat. As a result, strategic discussions repeated classical adages on battle versus siege, while explicit discussion of English grand strategy tended to focus on the main strategic challenge for an isolationist island nation: how to defend the isle from foreign invasion.[295]

Forcing England to abandon its isolationist tendencies, William was the first monarch to fully incorporate the country into a massive coalition, a sustained war against Louis XIV waged on land and at sea across several European theaters.[296] This Dutch-born king invaded England in 1688, forced it into the war, and then made the most important strategic decisions.[297] As a result, his defense of his home country led to widespread resentment that English interests were being sacrificed for allied benefit. But opposition required formulating an alternative strategy, one that conceived of England as a coalition partner, as well as balancing national and allied objectives while coordinating operations in multiple theaters. Over the course of William's war, a blue water alternative to massive land commitments was fleshed out.[298] Both strategies were contingent on England's ability to develop an adequate fiscal apparatus, another step in the gradual development of a British fiscal-military state.[299] Taxes were increased, including the introduction of a four-shilling-to-the-pound land tax. William further strengthened the royal treasury by establishing the Bank of England in 1694, an instrument based off of the Bank of

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[295] Thomas Digges, *England's Defence; A Treatise Concerning Invasion; or, A brief discourse of what orders were best for repulsing of foreign forces if at any time they should invade us by sea in Kent or elsewhere...* (London, 1680). That Englishmen were repeating Francis Drake's arguments a century after they were written is indicative of the state of debate.

[296] Roger B. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms: The Origins of the British Army 1585-1702* (Oxford, 2006); John Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army, 1688-1697: The Operations in the Low Countries* (Manchester, 1991).

[297] Stephen Baxter, *William III and the Defense of European Liberty, 1650-1702* (New York, 1966); Wout Troost, *William III, The Stadholder-king: A Political Biography* (Sussex, 2005).

[298] Required reading is T.J. Denman, "The Political Debate Over War Strategy 1689-1712," Ph.D. diss. (University of Cambridge, 1984). Various pamphlets, particularly those by Edward Littleton, served to provide a public justification for a naval war.

[299] D.W. Jones, *War and the Economy in the Age of William III and Marlborough* (New York, 1988); John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York, 1989).

Amsterdam which allowed the crown to mobilize the resources of investors through the financing of a public debt - some £6.8 million over the course of the war. Yet despite such innovations, the war's attritional campaigns pushed the Treasury's finances to the limit. The system almost collapsed in 1696, and it was only through an emergency recoinage that royal finances stabilized. William had kept England in the war for nine years, but by 1697 exhaustion on all sides led to the peace of Rijswijk (Ryswick).

Interwar: 1698-1700

Even with the war concluded, a vigorous debate over the management of the 'foreign-run' war raged on. The increasing costs of the war and the indecisiveness of the Flanders campaigns became a key political issue. The Tories, defenders of the rural landed interests, complained of the heavy burden imposed by the land tax and the concomitant enrichment of the financial interests of London at the expense of the country squires. Many Tories and some Whigs were also uneasy with the expansion of the army and the corrupting influence of William's foreign advisors in both the army and at court. According to ancient and contemporary experience, large standing armies were indicative of tyranny and absolutist rule – not only for the heavy taxes they required, but also for the despots they defended. Rome's praetorians, Cromwell's New Model Army, as well as James II's more recent attempt to 'Catholicize' the army all highlighted its dangers. When royal troops were not being used to trample English liberties, Tories accused their commanders of intentionally extending the wars the better to line their pockets with taxpayer gold. As a result, Parliament forced William to reduce his requested

30,000-man peacetime army to a mere 7,000 men – his most experienced regiments were either shifted to the Scottish and Irish establishments, or sent into Dutch service.[300]

With a weakened hand, the Stadholder-King turned to diplomacy to prevent future conflict over the looming issue of the Spanish Succession. The criminally-inbred and feeble Spanish Habsburg King Carlos II had failed to produce an heir, leaving European rulers to decide how to deal with the succession upon his death. In the first Grand Alliance of 1689 William had pledged to support the Austrian claim to the Spanish throne upon Carlos II's demise; by the end of the Nine Years' War William abandoned this avenue and sought rather to peacefully divide the Spanish inheritance with France.[301] William agreed to a partition treaty in 1698, although this quickly collapsed as the Bavarian compromise candidate for the Spanish throne died. A second partition treaty was signed by early 1700, but its implementation was always in doubt: not only were the English and Dutch worried that Louis would honor the terms, but Louis was equally skeptical that the Austrians would accept any partition.[302]

Principal or Auxiliary?

Contemporaries did not have long to wait. Carlos II died in November 1700, and in a blow to moderation, his will insisted on an intact Spanish empire. The entirety of Spain was first offered to Louis' grandson Philippe, Duke of Anjou. If the French declined to agree to the terms of the will, the Spanish ambassador was instructed to offer the crown of the Spanish Empire to Archduke Charles of Austria instead. After a day's deliberation, Louis accepted the will on the behalf of his grandson. The Pyrenees were declared to no longer exist, and Philippe of Anjou

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[300] L.G. Schwoerer, *'No Standing Armies': The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (Baltimore, MD, 1974), pp. 155-187; John Childs, *The British Army of William III, 1689-1702* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 184-208.
[301] A.D. Francis, "The Grand Alliance in 1698," *The Historical Journal,* 10, 1967, pp. 352-360.
[302] David Onnekink, "Anglo-French negotiations on the Spanish Partition Treaties (1698-1700): A Re-evaluation," in G. Richardson, ed., *The Contending Kingdoms: France and England, 1430-1700* (Burlington, VT, 2008).

was crowned Felipe V of Spain, first of its Bourbon kings. Louis quickly moved to occupy Spanish territories along his border in order to secure them for his grandson. The apparent union of France and Spain in the hands of two Bourbon kings plunged Europe into another war – Austria and France came to blows over northern Italy in June 1701 over lands included in Carlos II's will.

Yet England's role in the conflict was unclear, as the Nine Years' War had left English strategists still confronting three fundamental and interrelated questions in this new conflict. How involved should England be in a new war against France? In which theaters would English forces best be utilized? What military strategies should they use to defeat Bourbon France? William's war had not ended with a convincing victory, leaving these questions unresolved in many English minds. As the issue of the Spanish Succession forced itself to the fore, English leaders had first to address the broadest strategic question of whether to limit their efforts to the sea, or to wage war on land as well. William desired a forceful response to this Bourbon challenge to the European balance of power. But the rest of England – with the Channel for a moat, the Royal Navy its "wooden walls," and with a quiescent northern border – felt it could afford to take time deliberating whether or not to go to war and what that commitment, if made, should look like. Technically, declaring war was a royal prerogative. Yet the Glorious Revolution settlement had illustrated the need for parliamentary acquiescence in foreign affairs. While the monarch could declare war, the crown could only fight with the funds granted by consent of parliament.[303] William had accepted this constraint in order to mobilize English resources, and it would become a truism throughout the eighteenth century.

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[303] On 1688 from a continental perspective, see Jonathan Israel, *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact* (Cambridge, 1991); and Mordechai Feingold and Dale Hoak, eds., *The World of William and Mary: Anglo-Dutch Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688-89* (Stanford, CA, 1996). A recent Anglo-centric perspective can be found in Steven Pincus, *1688: the First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009).

Growing English concern over French actions enabled William to begin rearmament in case of war. By 1701 a public relations campaign was in full swing, reminding the English of Louis' treachery and deceit, of his hegemonic aspirations, and of his desire to enslave England by placing a Catholic tyrant on the throne.[304] A series of poorly-timed French decisions removed any doubt. In February 1701 French forces occupied the Spanish Netherlands on behalf of Philippe, placing French troops uncomfortably close to the English coast. Louis then proceeded to pour salt onto the open wound of England's Protestant succession by recognizing James 'III' as king of England upon his father's death.[305]

The timing could not have been worse, since a successional void had recently led parliament to pass a controversial Act of Settlement, which was to bring in a Hanoverian Protestant to continue the line of monarchs after the future Queen Anne's demise. Louis' willingness to interfere yet again with the English succession confirmed William's anti-French propaganda. Nor would Louis allow Philippe to renounce his claim to the French throne, reinforcing the fear of a united Franco-Spanish monarchy. Finally, Louis proceeded to alienate another pacifistic English interest group when he declared a French monopoly on trade with Spain's colonies, including the *asiento* (the right to trade slaves). In the span of a year Louis managed to menace England's political, religious and commercial interests; these measures eliminated the anti-war sentiment of all but the most isolationist Englishmen.[306] In September 1701 the representatives of the Holy Roman Empire (led by the Austrian Habsburg emperor), the

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[304] William had relied heavily on Protestantism to consolidate his legitimacy in the wake of the Glorious Revolution and buttress the war against France. Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996).

[305] Mark Thomas, "The Safeguarding of the Protestant Succession, 1702-18," in J.S. Bromley, ed., *William III and Louis XIV: Essays 1680-1720 by and for Mark A. Thomson* (Liverpool, 1968).

[306] Earlier anti-French explanations for the war have been challenged in Mark Thomson, "Louis XIV and the Origins of the War of the Spanish Succession," in J.S. Bromley, ed., *William III and Louis XIV: Essays 1680-1720 by and for Mark A. Thomson* (Liverpool, 1968).

Netherlands, and England signed a second Grand Alliance.[307] The second Grand Alliance formally declared war in May 1702.

Behind this sequence of events was a heated debate among English policy-makers over the nature of any future war effort.[308] Whigs who had been the Continental strategy's strongest supporters in the previous war naturally supported a rapid, vigorous response. But Tories and country Whigs were hesitant to abandon diplomacy with France and then cautioned restraint after Louis' provocations. Behind this was a shared distrust of William and his foreign advisors, as well as the London financiers and court Whigs who profited from the land campaigns. This mistrust of their political foes was combined with a deep cynicism towards their potential allies, whether Dutch or Imperial. As a result, they argued for a limited role, for England to serve as an 'auxiliary' rather than a 'principal' in the war.

Such a distinction rested on the land-sea dichotomy debated in the prior war – let the allies bear the costs of an expensive land war while the English freed themselves to wage war against French trade at sea. These same naval vessels could protect and expand English commerce in peacetime as well as in times of war, and posed little threat to parliamentary rule, unlike a standing army. William and his Whig supporters argued that a blue water strategy could never by itself defeat a land-based power like France, while the Tories interpreted a continental war of sieges and maneuver as a waste of English treasure and lives. In their minds, the resulting blood and expenses benefitted allied, rather than English, interests.[309] Even many pro-war

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[307] The treaty has been reprinted various times. Charles Jenkinson, *A collection of all the treaties of peace, alliance and commerce between Great-Britain and other powers: from the treaty signed at Munster in 1648, to the treaties signed at Paris in 1783....* (London, 1785), vol. 1, pp. 326-331.

[308] Denman, "The Political Debate," pp. 128ff.

[309] Edward Littleton, *The management of the present war against France consider'd. In a letter to a noble lord. By a person of quality* (London, 1690). See also Craig Rose, *England in the 1690's: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 117ff.

pamphlets of 1701 promised a quick victory by promoting a cheap naval war against Bourbon seaborne trade.

To the extent that land campaigns were necessary to neutralize naval power, the Tories resurrected the traditional amphibious strategy of naval descents to attack French coastal ports.[310] This alternative to a major land commitment had served as a rallying point around which Tory opposition to William could coalesce in the Nine Years' War, and would continue to serve as an alternative to the Low Countries in the Spanish Succession. Nor were descents a uniquely Tory contrivance: even Continentalist Whigs would occasionally propose or support such descents, as William had done previously, although he saw such operations as secondary in importance to the Flanders theater, which might also serve as diversions to open up the Low Countries for further offensives.[311] This tension over where to direct English resources would persist.

England's Expanding Strategic Commitments

The decision to enter into a second Grand Alliance in late 1701 and declare war on France in early 1702 required a concerted effort to convince the English public and overcome Tory opposition in the Commons. Even more controversial were the related strategic questions of how and when to fight, as well as determining when England's (and the alliance's) strategic objectives had been achieved. The English consensus that emerged over the course of the War of Spanish Succession drew from the Williamite experience, and became the basis for a British way

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[310] On the English love affair with descents, see Denman, "The Political Debate," pp. 16-17, 61-76; John Childs, "Secondary Operations of the British Army during the Nine Years' War, 1688-1697," *The Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 73, 1995, pp. 73-98; Keith A.J. McLay, "Combined Operations and the European Theatre during the Nine Years War, 1688-1697," *Historical Research* 78, 2005, pp. 506-539; John Stapleton, "The Blue-Water Dimension of King William's War: Amphibious Operations and Allied Strategy during the Nine Years' War, 1688-1697," in M.C. Fissell, ed., *Amphibious Warfare 1000-1700: Commerce, State Formation and European Expansion* (Leiden, 2006): 315-356; and Robert McJimsey, "England's 'Descent' on France and the Origins of Blue-water Strategy," in Michael S. Neiberg, ed., *Arms and the Man: Military History Essays in Honor of Dennis Showalter* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 243-257.
[311] Stapleton, "The Blue-Water Dimension of King William's War," pp. 337ff; McJimsey, "England's 'Descent' on France," p. 247.

of war. Fundamentally it consisted of a strategic compromise necessitated by political divisions and facilitated by fiscal strength. In each theater of operations, English strategic choices led to specific challenges. The extent to which England could overcome these challenges would help determine the outcome of the war.

The second Grand Alliance treaty itself kept the participants' goals vague. The overarching objective was to prevent the union of France and Spain lest they "easily assume... dominion over all Europe" (preamble). For the English, the agreement specified protecting and expanding its free trade within the Spanish dominions – a later addendum would add recognition of the Protestant English succession. The Dutch were promised similar access to Spanish markets, as well as a barrier of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, to be garrisoned by Dutch troops and paid for by the southern Netherlands.[312] For his part the emperor was to receive an "equitable and reasonable" satisfaction for his claim to the Spanish throne. After William died in March 1702 Anne quickly sent her Captain-General John Churchill, the earl of Marlborough, to assure her allies of England's intent to abide by the terms of the treaty.[313]

The grand strategy to achieve these objectives would be developed over the next several years, and the English played a major role in defining the contours left amorphous by the treaty itself. Spain's territories ranged across Europe, from Spain proper to the Spanish Netherlands (modern-day Belgium) to Milan, and the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. The king of Spain also claimed sovereignty over the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia and the Balearics and a vast empire overseas, especially in the New World but also in the Philippines. Conducting operations across the entirety of the Spanish empire was potentially a world-wide-ranging affair. Emperor

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[312] A recent accessible overview is Olaf van Nimwegen, "The Dutch Barrier: its Origins, Creation, and Importance for the Dutch Republic, 1697-1718," in J.A.F. de Jongste, ed., *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688-1720. Politics, Finance and War* (The Hague, 2002), pp. 147-175.

[313] Beatrice Curtis Brown, ed., *The letters and diplomatic instructions of Queen Anne* (London, 1935), pp. 76-80; Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (London, 1980).

Leopold of Austria had a predictable commitment to his border areas first and foremost – Italy, and Hungary once a Hungarian rebellion under Ferenc Rákóczi ignited. The German states of the Holy Roman Empire provided a buffer between Austria and France, but the princes of the Empire had the ability to do little more than provide mercenaries to the allied powers and campaign ineffectively along the Rhine, while keeping a wary eye on the contemporaneous Great Northern War being waged by Sweden, Saxony-Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and Denmark. The Maritime powers coordinated their naval efforts at sea, with England taking the lead. On land, the only specific Dutch objective in the treaty was combating Louis in the Low Countries, as French troops encamped menacingly on its southern border. On the periphery, England alone enjoyed the ability to choose where to fight.

England's Strategy-Making Process

As the principal-auxiliary debate suggests, the choice of theaters was neither a simple decision made by one or two figures, nor one determined at a single point in time. As John Hattendorf has emphasized, the common claim that England's Spanish Succession strategy was the singular genius of Marlborough ignores the broader, collective process of English strategy making.[314] Strategic decisions were made most directly by the crown through the monarch and his or her ministers, as well as the generals and diplomats operating in distant theaters of war. Anne's predecessor had been a true warrior-king, manipulating parliament to acquire the necessary funds, while personally leading his armies in the field and on the parade ground until his death in March 1702. Yet the new queen hesitated to take an active lead in the war effort,

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[314] Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, pp. 21-51. Hattendorf provides an informative overview of the dispersed British decision-making leading to the attack on Port Mahon (1708) in "The Machinery for the Planning and Execution of English Grand Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1713," in R. Love, ed., *Changing Interpretations and New Sources in Naval History: Papers from the Third United States Naval Academy History Symposium* (New York, 1980), pp 89-91.

while her inept husband Prince George of Denmark held the empty title of Generalissimo and was only nominally in charge of the Royal Navy as Lord High Admiral.

Although the queen attended almost all council meetings and ultimately assented to all decisions, the detailed management of the war fell to her ministers in the cabinet, the "Lords of the Committee."[315] From 1702-1710, this meant foremost the duumvirs Lord Treasurer Sidney Godolphin and Captain-General Marlborough, Churchill's wife Sarah being a close friend of the queen. Yet these two were not all-powerful, for they had to coordinate their plans and actions with the rest of the cabinet – the broader Privy Council left most details to the inner cabinet.[316] Diplomatically, the secretaries of state for the Southern and Northern Departments controlled their respective spheres of influence, while English diplomats were often given an unprecedented independence of action when it came to treaty negotiations.[317] The southern secretaries of state in particular had significant leeway – Marlborough had little control beyond the Low Countries and Germany more generally, and was abroad for seven or more months out of every year in any case. There was further input from the various royal administrative departments, such as the Admiralty, as well as advice and proposal from England's allies. In short, no one person designed and implemented English strategy during the war, though Godolphin came closest, given his long tenure as Lord Treasurer.[318]

The queen's reliance on her cabinet further opened the formulation of strategy up to the political process, since the Lords of the Committee, the speaker of the house, and the crown's officers relied not only upon her good graces but on parliamentary support as well – in some

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[315] Detailed analysis of the debates can be found in Denman, "The Political Debate," pp. 152-305.

[316] Henry Snyder, "The Formulation of Foreign and Domestic Policy in the Reign of Queen Anne," *The Historical Journal*, 11, 1968, pp. 144-160.

[317] Onnekink, "Anglo-French negotiations on the Spanish Partition Treaties (1698-1700)."

[318] William Calvin Dickinson, *Sidney Godolphin, Lord Treasurer, 1702-1710* (Lewiston, NY, 1990); Roy Sundstrom, *Sidney Godolphin: Servant of the State* (Newark, DE, 1992).

cases formally, and in every case through the influence of patronage networks. Even in the monarch's purview of foreign policy, strategic choices could be hamstrung by funding levels determined by the House of Commons, as William experienced throughout his reign.[319] The composition of Anne's cabinet shifted, therefore, depending on a combination of her assertiveness and which party held sway in parliament. Ministers ultimately served at the behest of the monarch, but every ruler had to be sensitive to the direction of the political winds. Frequent shifts in the parliamentary majority presented the crown with an increasingly-difficult situation to manage, given the charged political atmosphere driven by the partisan struggle between Whig and Tory – a rivalry only enhanced by the legal requirement to hold parliamentary elections every three years.[320]

Anne's personal preference for Tory ministers competed with her desire to have a mixed ministry that would put her above the control of either party. The moderate Godolphin managed to retain his position as Lord Treasurer until late 1710, whereas the secretaries of state followed the partisan alternations in the House of Commons more closely. In Anne's early cabinets Tory politicians such as the earls of Rochester and Nottingham (as Secretary of State for the South) outnumbered the Whigs, but as the latter gained political strength, she was forced to jettison her Tory minsters. Marlborough's centrality to the English war effort also gave him leverage, for example, when he pressured the queen to bring his son-in-law, and extreme Whig, the earl of Sunderland, into her cabinet in 1706. By 1708 a new Whig majority in parliament and the death of Anne's beloved consort allowed the Whigs to dominate her cabinet and adopt an uncompromising position in peace negotiations. This Whig ascendancy would, in turn, be

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[319] David Onnekink, "Anglo-French Negotiations on the Spanish Partition Treaties (1698-1700)" argues that parliament's demobilization emboldened Louis to dismiss any threat from England when deciding for war.
[320] The politics of the period are best approached in Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London, 1987) and W.A. Speck, *Birth of Britain: A New Nation, 1700-1710* (Cambridge, MA, 1994).

upended by Anne's increasing weariness of Whig stridency, facilitated by a Tory landslide in the parliamentary election of 1710. It would be this new Tory ministry, led by Robert Harley and Henry St. John, which would negotiate an end to the war.

Parliament pressed its own strategic conceptions in various forums: in debates over wartime funding bills, when investigating English defeats, when giving thanks to a successful general, or even when 134 Tories attempted to 'tack' a controversial religious proposal onto a war funding bill.[321] All these discussions indirectly influenced those who formulated and implemented the royal will. Both crown and parliament were also influenced by the politically-active public. By 1700 England's public sphere had grown to be one of the most sophisticated in Europe, fed by an explosion of information on current affairs debated in dozens of newspapers and pamphlets and in innumerable coffeehouses. While the initiative remained with the Queen, her cabinet, her commanders and her diplomats, political considerations necessarily influenced the strategic options available to them, as well as how long they could continue particular strategies. The longer the war lasted, the more influence public expectations had on the broad outlines of English strategy.

Italy

The commencement of hostilities between Austria and France in 1701 allowed England little input over how these operations were fought.[322] At the same time, the first region to see fighting was also the least relevant to English interests, beyond a desire to 'encircle' France and

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[321] D.H. Wollman, "Parliament and Foreign Affairs, 1697-1714," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970.
[322] As with the Flanders and German theaters, details on the Italian operations can be found in Vault, *Mémoires militaires relatifs à la succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1836-1842); Kriegsarchiv, *Feldzüge des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen: nach den Feldacten und anderen authentischen Quellen*, vols. 3-15 (Vienna, 1876-1891); and J.W. Wijn, *Het Staatsche Leger: Het Tijdperk van de Spaanse Successieoorlog, 1702-1715*, 3 vols. (The Hague, 1956-1964).

pressure Louis on multiple fronts.[323] London traders, included those invested in the Levant

Company, were interested in northern Italy and the Mediterranean more generally. For Tories

such as the Southern Secretary of State Nottingham, Savoy offered an opportunity to enhance

English commerce while drawing attention away from the Flanders theater, where he expected to

see fighting similar to that conducted by William. Starting in late 1702 English diplomacy

seconded Habsburg discussions to turn Louis' ally the Duke of Savoy Victor Amadeus II.[324] Yet

the 1703 addition of Savoy to the Grand Alliance was less crucial than English leaders had

hoped: ironically, it even placed new burdens on the allies. Inauspiciously, Louis' intelligence on

Victor Amadeus' betrayal led him to imprison most of the veteran Savoyard troops before they

even had a chance to rise up. The next several years witnessed French armies reconquering

Piedmont fortress after fortress, while the Imperial-Savoyard army looked on. Regardless of the

results, England contributed the same £640,000 to subsidize Savoy's efforts each year. By mid-

1706 Victor Amadeus' capital of Turin was itself under siege. But Prince Eugene's relief of the

fortresses smashed the French army and reversed the situation entirely: the French evacuated all

of northern Italy.

Even in victory, however, allied actions did not meet English expectations. The Austrians

allowed the remaining French garrisons to freely evacuate rather than attempt to imprison them.

Nor was Turin the beginning of a major offensive into southeastern France. Many English had

envisioned a killing stroke into the heart of France accompanied by an uprising of its Huguenot

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[323] In addition to Hattendorf's monograph, English grand strategy is summarized in his "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, 1992), pp. 11-28.

[324] W. Blackley, ed., *The diplomatic correspondance of the Right Hon. Richard Hill... envoy extraordinary from the court of St. James to the duke of Savoy in the reign of Queen Anne: from July 1703 to May 1706*, 2 vols. (London, 1845). For modern discussions: Geoffrey Symcox, *Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard State, 1675-1730* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983); Christopher Storrs, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy 1690-1720* (Cambridge, 1999); Onnekink, "Anglo-Dutch Diplomatic Cooperation during the Opening Years of the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1704," p. 57.

population. Yet the last major operation in the region was the failed siege of Toulon in 1707, an operation that had required a drawdown of allied troops in the Low Countries and the deflection of the Royal Navy from other tasks in the Mediterranean.[325] The year 1708 was the last to see operations of any note – Savoy and Eugene had fallen out over Toulon, and Victor Amadeus felt little need to push his campaigning further now that allied armies had eliminated the French threat. Austria used the lull to secure Naples, completing its occupation of all the Spanish Italian territories under dispute. The theater had essentially been eliminated from contention, but the result was Austrian domination of the Italian peninsula, while Louis reinforced his troops in the remaining theaters, inflating the strength of French armies confronting English soldiers. England found that its diplomacy could entice an enemy to switch sides, but that it was much harder to direct their behavior toward English-defined goals.[326]

Low Countries

Unlike Italy, the area of the Low Countries was central to English interests on the Continent. The proximity of Flanders necessitated cooperating with the Dutch: it served as a potential jumping off point for any invader, while its ports served as profitable entrées into the mainland's trade networks, and its population served as a potential market. The extent of England's military commitment to the theater, however, was reopened after William's death. The proposal of the earl of Rochester to limit England's troop contribution to 10,000 men failed in Anne's Privy Council, and a 40,000-man army was authorized for service alongside the Dutch. With this army, led by Marlborough, the first five years of the war achieved what William's campaigns had failed to: the conquest of almost the entirety of the Spanish Netherlands, by siege

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[325] Ciro Paoletti, "Prince Eugene of Savoy, the Toulon Expedition of 1707, and the English Historians - A Dissenting View," *The Journal of Military History,* 70, 2006, pp. 939-962.

[326] Geoffrey Symcox, "Britain and Victor Amadeus II: or, The Use and Abuse of Allies," in Stephen Baxter, ed., *England's Rise to Greatness, 1660-1763* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 151-184.

and maneuver in 1702-1703 and 1705, and by battle and siege in 1706.[327] Yet this was hardly a succession of triumphs: the first several years of the war passed uncomfortably as English designs to force the French into a decisive battle were opposed by the more cautious Dutch. For Tories, this reinforced their distrust of the Dutch and encouraged them to push for more vigorous military operations in other theaters. Even the Whigs and Marlborough's supporters grew impatient, pressuring the United Provinces' Grand Pensionary Anthonie Heinsius and the States-General to give Marlborough the freedom to fight at will. The result of this pressure was the battlefield victory at Ramillies in 1706 – a two-week pursuit followed by four successive sieges which secured the Spanish Netherlands, administered by a joint Anglo-Dutch condominium.

This would be the high point of the Flanders war. By 1708, Vauban's fortified *pré carré* halted Marlborough's advance, and English strategists were unable to avoid the expensive, time-consuming war of sieges they had railed against for the past 20 years; fully 60 percent of Marlborough's last four campaigns (1708-1711) were spent in the trenches. Just as disconcerting were battle's diminishing returns. The 1708 encounter engagement at Oudenaarde was a complete rout of one-half of the French army, but the other half escaped, leaving the allies little do but turn to the siege of Lille. Desperate to avoid further sieges, Marlborough hoped to somehow turn the flank, relying on the Royal Navy to supply his forces as they skirted along the coast. With his allies unwilling to attempt such a risky maneuver, Marlborough pushed for an augmentation of the Anglo-Dutch forces by another 20,000 men. Consequently, 100,000-man armies faced off against each other the next year, operating in the confined and heavily-fortified space along the French border. The bloodbath of Malplaquet was the result: some 10-12,000 French losses bought at the price of 20-24,000 Allied casualties. Immediately after this slaughter,

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[327] Jamel Ostwald, "The 'Decisive' Battle of Ramillies, 1706: Prerequisites for Decisiveness in Early Modern Warfare," *Journal of Military History,* 64, 2000, pp. 649-677; Jamel Ostwald, *Vauban under Siege: Engineering Efficiency and Martial Vigor in the War of the Spanish Succession* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 92ff.

English believers in decisive battle predicted a rapid French collapse, but objective observers could see even before Malplaquet that Marlborough's battle-seeking strategy had achieved all the results it could hope to. Yet Louis refused to submit to the Allies' escalating terms and the war of attrition continued. The Whigs, now in control of both the cabinet and parliament, insisted on continuing the war until Spain was in Charles' hands, which required them to venture further into the thicket of French fortresses. By the end of 1711 the English public had become exhausted with both the war and Whig policies. A backlash enabled a new Tory ministry to end the war, illustrating the limitations of a battle-seeking strategy.

Germany

Like Italy, Germany was initially of secondary importance to English strategy. Although William had pressured Leopold to campaign along the Rhine, the region served primarily as a recruiting ground for England.[328] The theater became directly relevant when the two Wittelsbach siblings Maximilian Emmanuel (Duke and Elector of Bavaria) and Joseph-Clement (Elector of Cologne and Archbishop of Liège) declared for Louis in late 1702. Max Emmanuel went on to capture a number of towns in southern Germany which risked intimidating several Imperial Circles into neutrality.[329] At the same time, French reinforcements sought to link up with the Italian theater, transferring the war into the heart of the Empire. This pressure within the empire was heightened by the outbreak of the Rákóczi rebellion in 1703; Hungarian kuruc raiders burned the suburbs of Vienna and Austria consequently withdrew forces from Italy to counter the Bavarian threat and pacify their recently-acquired Hungarian lands.[330]

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[328] Susan Spens, *George Stepney, 1663-1707: Diplomat and Poet* (Cambridge, 1997).

[329] John Hattendorf, "English Grand Strategy and the Blenheim Campaign of 1704," *International History Review,* 5 1983, pp. 3-19.

[330] John Hattendorf, "The Rákóczi Insurrection in English War Policy, 1703-1711," *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies,* 7, 1980, pp. 91-102; William Slottman, *Ferenc II Rákóczi and the great powers* (Boulder, CO, 1997); Lothar Höbelt, "The Impact of the Rákóczi Rebellion on Habsburg Strategy: Incentives and Opportunity

Pressed on two sides, the Viennese court appealed to the Maritime allies for assistance. The English encouraged the Austrians to resolve the Bavarian matter peacefully (as was their hope for Hungary), for they desired greater pressure on France in Italy, and perhaps even to bring Bavarian troops into the Grand Alliance. The emperor, however, dismissed English suggestions that he cede some of his Italian territories to the Elector, and the Habsburg insistence on a military resolution finally carried the day. For many it was a relief to abandon the Low Countries, since the previous two campaigns in Flanders had been spent arguing with the Dutch over the need for a field engagement. The resulting campaign of 1704 included storming the Schellenberg heights, negotiations interspersed with the devastation of Bavaria, and Marlborough and Eugene's famous victory at Blenheim in August. The battle was followed up by several sieges, eliminating Bavaria (though not its ruler) from the war.

The year 1704 saw a French army destroyed, a French ally neutralized, and a theater eliminated from contention. Yet the result was the same as would occur in Italy in 1706: Louis would rebuild his armies, and his French forces would be even more concentrated on their fortified frontiers. The next year reinforced the lesson of Blenheim, and reminded the allies once again that there was a reason Louis spent so much effort fortifying his open northern border. The inability of the German princes to support an attack into 'undefended' Lorraine forced Marlborough to abandon his campaign on the Moselle and return to the Meuse to forestall a French offensive. 1705 dashed English hopes of an alternate route to penetrate into the bowels of France just as 1707 would do in Provence – smashing successes in one year were quickly followed by the inevitability of further Flanders campaigns. Predictably, the fortified Rhine theater would see back-and-forth campaigning for the rest of the war. England's limited German

Costs," *War in History,* 13, 2006, pp. 2-15. See also the various chapters in Béla Király and János Bak, eds., *War and Society in Eastern Central Europe*, vol. 3, *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary* (Brooklyn, NY, 1982).

experience had shown that battlefield success was possible, but that its Imperial allies were unable or unwilling to follow them up with constant pressure on France's border. Neither the empire nor the Savoyards acquiesced to English insistence that they adopt English strategies if it required abandoning their own.

Iberia

Although the war revolved around the question of who would become the next king of Spain, the Iberian Peninsula was not an obvious theater of operations.[331] Philippe had established himself in Spain in 1701, while Louis' diplomats signed a treaty of friendship with Portugal's King Pedro II. With no base from which to operate, William found it expedient to recognize Philippe's claim to the throne. Even the Grand Alliance treaty made no reference to Charles ascending the Spanish throne in Madrid; in fact, article five only identified Imperial pretensions to Spain's Italian and Netherlands possessions. The Habsburg court focused on the Italian holdings, and although the Dutch were interested in Mediterranean trade, they were more concerned about other theaters diverting attention from the defense of their southern border.

The Allied decision to commit to a 'No Peace without Spain' policy was, therefore, made by the English, a decision encouraged by their naval strength. England's goals in the Mediterranean and Iberia were numerous: to protect its Levant trade, to threaten Spain's incoming trade from the Americas, to neutralize France's Levant fleet based at Toulon, to buttress its Austrian allies in Italy, to encourage the defection of France's allies (Portugal and Savoy), and to support uprisings in Bourbon-held territories (Naples, Catalonia, the Balearics

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[331] David Francis, *The First Peninsular War, 1701-1713* (London, 1975); J.A.C. Hugill, *No Peace without Spain* (Oxford, 1991); Henry Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain, 1700-1715* (Bloomington. IN, 1969).

and the Cevennes in particular). The Whig Lords had already concluded in 1701 that the only acceptable peace was one that saw Charles sitting on the throne in Madrid.[332]

This maximalist goal would be implicitly accepted for much of the war by both sides, until a new Tory ministry reconsidered the military situation in more realistic terms. The first attempt to open the theater was a repeat of previous English strategy: an Anglo-Dutch fleet landed forces to capture the Andalusian port of Cadiz in September 1702, hoping to establish a naval base and threaten the colonial trade off-loaded at Seville. Repulsed, they attacked a Spanish bullion fleet that had anchored at Vigo on the Galician coast. The capture of several French men-of-war excited the public back home and illustrated the strategic flexibility of the Royal Navy. The victory, nonetheless, had far less effect on the overall Bourbon war effort, at least in direct attritional terms.[333] Most important was the encouragement it gave Pedro to join the Grand Alliance. The resulting Methuen treaty of 1703 inaugurated an Iberian land war, committing the English and Dutch, as well as their Austrian ally, to a terrestrial war to capture Spain.[334] The father-and-son diplomatic team negotiated with Portugal in secret and intentionally excluded the Dutch envoy until the details had already been decided, terms which obligated the English and Dutch to a far larger Iberian commitment than the Dutch had envisioned.[335] A few months after the treaty of alliance was completed, an Anglo-Portuguese commercial treaty was signed which promised the English preferential trade with Portugal.

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[332] Denman, "The Political Debate," pp. 126-127ff. A few Whig pamphleteers did express their concerns about the impact of such terms on the balance of power.

[333] On Vigo's results: Francis, *The First Peninsular War, 1701-1713*, pp. 53-55; Hugill, *No Peace without Spain*, p. 46.

[334] For a general view, see A.D. Francis, *The Methuens and Portugal 1691-1708* (Cambridge, 1966). One of the terms of the Methuen treaty was the Portuguese insistence that Charles personally campaign in Iberia, leading the English to pressure Austria to send troops to the theater.

[335] Onnekink, "Anglo-Dutch Diplomatic Cooperation during the Opening Years of the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1704," pp. 55-56. A secret article promised Spanish territory to Portugal, presumably at the expense of Charles.

The Portuguese were, however, an unreliable ally. Most towns along the Hispano-Portuguese border were difficult to besiege, and foreign witnesses expressed their amazement at the heat and barrenness of the region. The Spanish nevertheless managed to capture several Portuguese fortresses in 1704 while a strong Anglo-Dutch-Portuguese response was hindered by command disputes and undermanned regiments. The allies would manage to take several back in 1705, and even march to Madrid in 1706, but for the rest of the war the Portuguese front degenerated into inconclusive operations. These early setbacks encouraged England to look for other fronts from which to attack Philippe – a strategy perfectly suited against a Spanish enemy that in 1703 boasted a negligible navy and a mere 20,000 troops to defend a territory 16 times the size of the Spanish Netherlands with 3,000 miles of coastline.[336] As a result, an August 1704 attack on the poorly-prepared town of Gibraltar captured the port within three days. The newly installed garrison, with the support of the Anglo-Dutch fleet, then resisted a subsequent eight-month siege and blockade. The English pillaging of both Port St. Mary (near Cadiz) and Gibraltar, however, poisoned relations with the Andalusians and made it impossible for the Allies to support an offensive from their Gibraltar base.[337] The year 1704 thus saw a further Allied naval attempt to open yet another front by landing 1,600 marines at Barcelona, an area once governed by the allied commander (Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt) and conveniently situated close to both hard-pressed Savoy and rebellious Camisards in southeastern France. Their first effort would miscarry, but the next year 10,000 troops captured the Catalonian capital after a siege in form. Now Charles controlled an independent Spanish base supported by the Catalan people, and this reinvigorated English hopes for an alternative to the Low Countries.[338] By the

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[336] Spanish army sizes: Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain*, pp. 59-61.
[337] Francis, *The First Peninsular War*, pp. 49, 115.
[338] Denman, "The Political Debate," p. 188.

end of 1705 the uprising against Philippe had spread to Aragon and Valencia, allowing the allies to garrison a series of fortresses along Spain's eastern coast.

In April 1706 the Bourbons returned to the offensive, besieging Barcelona and drawing supplies from their fleet. After Admiral Leake's flotilla chased off the French observation fleet, Philippe was forced to withdraw, with Charles slowly pursuing him back to Madrid. The lack of fortresses and logistical difficulties in Aragon and Castile meant that possession of Madrid was left to those who could gain the support of the Castilian people. Madrid was briefly held by an allied army, but the popular resistance to the presence of heretical northerners, Portuguese foes, Catalan separatists and plundering troops soon forced the allied army from Castile. In the aftermath, the Duke of Berwick's army began the slow reconquest of Valencia and Murcia. In early 1707 the Bourbon advantage was magnified by their battlefield victory at Almansa. This forced the allied field army back to Catalonia, and inaugurated the slow Gallispan reconquest of Valencia and Aragon, successes facilitated by the absence of allied fleets which were busy transporting troops or making new conquests. By the beginning of 1710 Charles and his motley polyglot forces found themselves holed up in Catalonia. But two allied victories, precipitated by Louis' withdrawal of French troops from the peninsula, allowed the allies to march again on Madrid and occupy it. Once again, however, the Castilian populace resisted the foreign claimant, and on the retreat back to Catalonia the entire English contingent was captured at Brihuega. Suffering from whiplash, the new Tory ministry would gradually abandon its commitment to the theater, seeking to secure its bases at Gibraltar and Port Mahon. The Iberian theater, expected to deliver a quick victory in contrast with the Low Countries, turned into almost as deep a quagmire as Flanders, with much worse results.

Naval Commitments

England's natural maritime orientation necessitated a strong naval component to its wartime strategy.[339] The island straddled the main European trade routes into and out of Europe, and was replete with both private and royal shipyards and spacious ports, all closely linked to the capital and metropole of London. The major ports of London, Bristol, Liverpool, Dover and a host of others provided a ready supply of sailors available for impressment in the Royal Navy, as well as the facilities with which to unload England's sprawling overseas trade. No surprise then that the English spent almost as much on their navy as on their land forces. The average estimated naval war expenditures hovered around £2 million per year, although the actual costs were much higher.[340] Even without significant growth, such funds far outstripped what France could afford to spend on its fleet. In the middle of the Nine Years' War, Louis had recognized his inability to sustain a major land war against half of Europe and still maintain a large French fleet capable of meeting and defeating Allied flotillas at sea.[341] He consequently slashed naval funding and shifted to a *guerre de course*, a strategy of attacking Allied merchant shipping with a mixture of royal and privateer ships.[342]

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[339] The standard works on naval aspects of the period are Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State-Building in Europe and America, 1500-1860* (Stockholm, 1993); Richard Harding, *Seapower and Naval Warfare, 1650-1830* (New York, 1999); and N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2004). Works focusing on the Royal Navy during the Spanish Succession include J.H. Owen, *War at Sea under Queen Anne, 1702-1708* (Cambridge, 2010 reprint of 1938 orig.); R.D. Merriman, *Queen Anne's Navy: Documents concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714* (London 1961); and significant portions of Hattendorf's *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*. For a contemporary view, see Josiah Burchett, *A complete history of the most remarkable transactions at sea: from the earliest accounts of time to the conclusion of the last war with France...* (London, 1720), pp. 575-800.

[340] Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, pp. 130-133, 138-141, and Appendix B, including its many caveats. The year was reckoned from 30 September to 29 September; 1711-12 was an exceptional year.

[341] On the many French naval disadvantages, see Daniel Dessert, *La Royale: Vaisseaux et marins du Roi Soleil* (Paris, 1996), pp. 103ff.

[342] The classic work is Geoffrey Symcox, *The Crisis of French Naval Power, 1688-1697* (The Hague, 1974).

The *de facto* union of French and Spanish forces in 1701 further stretched Louis' navy throughout the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Spain's sprawling colonial empire.[343] After the indecisive naval battle off Málaga in 1704, it once again became evident that France could not afford to fight a major land war in four theaters against a European-wide coalition while still engaging the enemy at sea. The *guerre de course* again became a matter of course, while Louis' ships focused on defending French and Spanish merchantmen. The sea power of England's Dutch allies also dwindled along with France's. They found it increasingly difficult to conduct an expensive land war along its border and also outfit the increasing number of vessels that the English demanded, setting the stage for even greater English domination at sea.[344] This led to bitter recriminations from the English, but the Dutch could only respond that English naval demands overwhelmed their ability. England thus found itself unchallenged at sea, and used the navy's preeminence to assist the land war while defending its commercial maritime lifeline.

Descents

The Iberian theater highlights the importance of descents to the Royal Navy. Almost a third of the English fleet operated in the western Mediterranean, exposing Spain's entire coastline to attack. But this strategic flexibility also tempted English strategists to disperse their efforts rather than concentrate. The number of vessels in the Royal Navy remained constant at approximately 225 vessels, while the Dutch contribution declined by half. Yet England's Mediterranean fleet, peaking at 73 ships in 1706, was stretched from Gibraltar to Valencia to the Balearics to Barcelona to Toulon to Genoa to Naples. Moreover, it had to sail back home every winter until Port Mahon was captured in 1708. English ships patrolled sea-lanes and escorted

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[343] There is little detail on the Spanish navy of the period.
[344] Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, pp. 156-160; John Hattendorf, "'To Aid and Assist the Other': Anglo-Dutch Cooperation in Coalition Warfare at Sea, 1689-1714,' in Jan de Jongste, ed., *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688-1720. Politics, Finance and War* (The Hagues, 2002), pp. 178ff.

convoys, supplied troops in coastal garrisons, escorted allied contingents from Italy to Spain, as well as carrying out various offensive landings. Such constant activity across a wide arc, combined with a halving of vessels sent to the theater from 1708 onward, made it impossible to support besieged garrisons on the Iberian coast, much less project power inland to hold Madrid. Naval power's amphibious capacity was best used offensively, and was less suited to support defending land forces.

The strategy of descents was also resurrected elsewhere. A dozen projects proposed landing troops along the French littoral from Normandy to Bordeaux to Provence, all in the hopes of establishing a base for Protestant rebellion, landing an invading army to march to Paris, or at least diverting troops from other theaters.[345] For most Tories these early projects served primarily as an alternative to Flanders. Godolphin, Nottingham and St. John were particularly enthusiastic about their use, but even Marlborough approved of several ventures when his own momentum became bogged down among the Flanders fortresses. Only one of these projects was actually carried through to its successful conclusion, the inconsequentially-brief occupation of the two Languedoc towns of Sète and Adge in 1710.[346] Article six of the Grand Alliance treaty also allowed England to keep any West Indies colonies it captured. Reflecting the English maritime mindset, early pro-war pamphlets proposed various Caribbean schemes, and such projects would appear throughout the war.[347] Attempted landings were made in the Caribbean (San Domingo 1706) and in Canada (Port Royal 1707 and 1710, Quebec 1711). There were some successes, but the overall results were as disappointing as during the Nine Years' War.

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[345] Owen, *War at Sea under Queen Anne*, pp. 50-54; Denman, "The Political Debate," pp. 162ff; Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, 150-155. For a typology of amphibious tactics (landings, raids, and bombardments), see Stapleton, "The Blue-Water Dimension of King William's War," pp. 319-320.

[346] British Library, Additional Manuscripts, vol. 61,pp. 314, ff. 79ff.

[347] For one example, see *Europa Libera: Or, a Probable Expedient (the Like Scarce Ever to Be Hop'd for Again) to Restore and Secure the Publick Peace of Europe, for this and Future Ages. Humbly Submitted to the Consideration of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty; and Both the Honourable Houses of Parliament* (London, 1703).

Naval Commerce

In contrast with the Nine Years' War, the War of Spanish Succession would see no major fleet actions: the largest was an indecisive engagement between 50 Bourbon ships and 53 allied vessels off of Gibraltar at Málaga. The Royal Navy's most significant setbacks stemmed rather from accidents inherent in the medium. The damage caused by the Great Storm of 1703, and the wreck of Admiral Shovell's fleet off the Scilly islands in 1707, each cost the lives of more than 1,000 sailors; the 1711 foundering of Walker's flotilla in the St. Lawrence River similarly drowned 900.[348] The Royal Navy overcame such disasters to maintain its dominance and had little difficulty defending the homeland or protecting communication with the Continent. The only threat to English soil was an aborted Jacobite landing at the Firth of Forth in 1708.[349]

A little over half of the Royal Navy was dedicated to England's final naval strategy: attacking Franco-Spanish trade and protecting its own.[350] Particularly enticing were the silver fleets transporting bullion from South America to Iberia. The Royal Navy dedicated dozens of ships to capturing these specie-laden prizes, but there were only two significant successes. The most notable was Wager's Action in June 1708, off Cartagena in modern-day Colombia, where the Spanish merchantmen escaped but its flagship the *San José* blew up, taking several million pesos to the bottom of the sea.[351] Such incidents, however, were exceptional. More often convoys escaped while their escorts indecisively battled with the raiders; most frequent of all, no action was to be had, given the difficulties of acting on timely intelligence and locating ships at sea.

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[348] Gerald Graham, ed., *The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711* (London, 1953).

[349] John Gibson, *Playing the Scottish Card: The Franco-Jacobite Invasion of 1708* (Edinburgh, 1988).

[350] See Jones, *War and Economy in the Age of William and Marlborough*; Brewer, *The Sinews of War*.

[351] Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Treasure of the San José: Death at Sea in the War of the Spanish Succession* (Baltimore, MD, 2007).

Smaller-scale English privateering was also encouraged from the conflict's outset.[352] Opportunistic merchantmen received license to steal, letters of marque authorizing attack on enemy shipping in exchange for a small cut of the spoils. Sallying from London, Bristol and particularly the Channel Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, some 1,380 ships were granted such letters, although only a few hundred managed to capture prizes.[353] Yet all these English privateering ravages (some 2,239 prizes) were less significant than many English contemporaries believed or hoped – early dreams of cutting off France's maritime commerce and forcing Louis to peace in a year or two failed to recognize that this French trade consisted mostly of luxury items that contributed little to French strength.[354] This low-level conflict raged throughout the war and damaged coastal communities, but it had minimal impact.

More critical to the English war effort was protecting its sea trade. Newspapers and reports to the secretaries of state noted every report of vessels taken by privateers, applying steady pressure on decision-makers to attend to trade protection. As the French shifted to a less expensive *guerre de course*, English losses continued to mount. By 1708 public pressure prompted parliament to pass a Cruisers and Convoy act earmarking the construction of 43 new vessels designed for trade protection.[355] As the waters around Britain became more crowded with English patrols, French privateers increasingly targeted the less-well protected Dutch and

[352] G.N. Clark, "War Trade and Trade War, 1701-1713," *Economic History Review,* 1, 1928, pp. 262-280; W. Meyer, "English Privateering in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1713," *Mariner's Mirror,* 69, 1983, pp.435-446; and Hattendorf, pp. 161-166 for a summary discussion, as well as Appendix F.

[353] J.S. Bromley, "The Channel Island Privateers in the War of the Spanish Succession," in Bromley, ed., *Corsairs and Navies, 1660-1706* (London, 1986), pp. 339-388.

[354] Meyer, "English Privateering," pp. 436, 445; Jean Meyer, "Stratégies navales et terrestres: domaines complémentaires ou indépendants? Le cas de l'Ancien Régime," in Pierre Chaunu, ed., *Le soldat, la stratégie, la mort: mélanges André Corvisier* (Paris, 1989), p. 74.

[355] On convoys, see Merriman, *Queen Anne's Navy*, pp. 338-353; and Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, pp. 159-160. The act itself is excerpted in Owen, *War at Sea under Queen Anne*, Appendix F.

Portuguese merchants in the North Sea and the Atlantic.[356] By late in the war this retasking along with construction of faster vessels, allowed the English to withstand French commerce raiding.

Overall, the Royal Navy served two primary purposes in the War of Spanish Succession. Its flexibility allowed the allies to expand the war into the Mediterranean, even if it could not project that power far inland or maintain forces there indefinitely. More importantly, the many naval activities kept England in the war by protecting its maritime trade and by illustrating to those unenthusiastic Englishmen that there was an alternative to the war in Flanders.

Economic Warfare

England's final strategy dovetailed with its commerce raiding: an attempt to weaken the French economy by enforcing an embargo on enemy goods. Yet this effort to damage French trade was only half-hearted. At this time any close blockade of French ports was out of the question, and the trade ban was challenged not only by smugglers, but it was filled with legal exceptions for privateer prizes, Scottish, and neutral merchants, and for all trade with Spain.[357] France and Spain reciprocated the trade bans, and since no power had a monopoly on critical resources, the effects on the belligerents' economies appear to have been a wash. The strategy of economic attrition also extended to pressuring its allies to cut their own trade with Louis. This was most contentious with regard to the Dutch, a commercial competitor with the English, and one already in economic decline.[358] Any embargo would hurt the Netherlands as much as the French, for the Dutch war effort was largely based on its taxes from trade and its financial industry. In 1703 the English forced the United Provinces to cut off all its trade with France by

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[356] J.S. Bromley, "The Importance of Dunkirk Reconsidered, 1688-1713," p. 84; Bromley, "The French Privateering War," p. 220; Bromley, "The North Sea in Wartime," p. 77, all in Bromley, ed., *Corsairs and Navies, 1660-1760* (London, 1987). Also Clark, "War, Trade, and Trade War, 1701-1713," p. 264.
[357] Generally, see Clark, "War Trade and Trade War," 268ff; and G.N. Clark, "Neutral Commerce in the War of the Spanish Succession and the Treaty of Utrecht," *British Yearbook of International Law,* 9, 1928/9, pp. 69-83.
[358] Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995).

linking any augmentation of troops to the issue – even postal communication was included, since this was the medium by which Paris could order bills of exchange from Amsterdam, to pay French troops in other theaters.[359]

The one-year embargo appears to have been so financially painful (to the Dutch at least) that even Marlborough, who had earlier insisted on Dutch compliance, argued against its renewal.[360] Not only was an already-weakened Dutch economy losing money needed to support their own war effort, but both Maritime Powers were seeing their market share of the French trade eroded by neutral merchants. Hence the governments reverted to their standard reliance on tariffs and prohibitions filled with loopholes, while merchant communities continued their time-tested strategies of bribery, smuggling, and collusion with foreign merchants. Economic warfare was popular with the English public and fit England's strategic objectives, but its impact was necessarily limited by its effect on its allies, and by England's own stated goal of increasing trade with Spain.

Resource Mobilization

To wage war across multiple theaters required an unprecedented mobilization of allied resources, with England bearing close to a majority share of the allied war effort. This nation of 5,000,000 managed this by efficiently mobilizing its own economic resources, as well as drawing on the wealth, manpower, and expertise of its allies. In 1701 prowar pamphlets naively promised a quick victory over Louis, but as the war dragged on, England's wartime expenditures grew.[361]

[359] For a contemporary explanation of financial transactions, see *A general treatise of monies and exchanges in which those of all trading nations are particularly describ'd and consider'd* (London, 1707).
[360] Clark, "War Trade and Trade War," pp. 270-273.
[361] The standard work on English finances is P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756* (London, 1967). The detailed financial records are found in William Shaw and Joseph Reddington, eds., *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers 1702-1712, Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office* (London, 1871-1947), vols. 2-4.

The first wartime budget year (October 1702-September 1703) saw parliament voting £3,000,000 for the overall war effort; as new theaters and allies were added and army sizes increased, it doubled to £7,000,000 by 1710-11.[362] The need to refinance past military debt and make good on naval arrears made expenditures skyrocket to £12,600,000 in 1711-12, before returning back down to £4,700,000 as the Tory government wound down the war effort. In total, the 11 years of warfare cost the crown and its tax payers £55-£62,000,000, a many-fold increase over its expenses in the previous Nine Years War. From estimates based on other methods, of the £25,000,000 spent in the four main theaters of war, 90 percent went to the Low Countries (£13,600,000, 54 percent) or Iberia (£8,900,000, 36 percent). Other numbers allow us to estimate that half of all the English military expenditures (£26,000,000) was spent on the army, with the other half (£27,100,000) dedicated to the navy.[363] Although the estimates differ, all agree that England spent a fortune combating Louis XIV's France.

England's ability to raise such vast amounts was predicated on its efficient tax base and its creditworthiness. With an estimated net income of £50,000,000 per year, parliamentary approval legitimized the crown's efforts to raise £1.8-2,600,000 in taxes every year, £21,000,000 over Anne's reign.[364] Yet due to military expenditures England's ordinary income lagged behind by £29,000,000.[365] Making war feed war through contributions in theater provided some relief in an emergency, but with occupied territories were simply unable to supply the advance funds necessary to sustain campaigning with military establishments numbering 100,000 men or more, every belligerent had to have recourse to borrowing. England was in the privileged position of

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[362] These figures come from Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, Appendix B. Dickson, "Sword of Gold" provides slightly different numbers.
[363] Theater expenditures from Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, Appendix C; Army-Navy expenses from Appendix B. The various groups of figures do not necessarily correspond with one another, for reasons mentioned by Hattendorf.
[364] These figures come from Dickinson, "Sword of Gold."
[365] Dickson, *Financial Revolution*, p. 10.

being able to use its large economic base as collateral for loans at advantageous terms. The man most responsible for maintaining England's credit-worthiness was Anne's experienced Lord Treasurer Godolphin. With his efforts, England's growing economy was able to sell annuities and lotteries backed by its future tax revenues, an astounding £28,800,000 between 1704 and 1712, or £3,200,000 per year on average. This compares favorably with its borrowing during the previous war, which totaled only £6,800,000 at much higher interest rates. England achieved this feat in part by balancing its import and export of specie due to growing economic trade.[366] The growing empire and naval preeminence fueled its wars, while the concessions gained from the wars expanded its markets.

The government further benefited from its close relationship with several important economic players. Godolphin not only attended to the creditworthiness of the English crown by deftly prioritizing payments, but as one of the Bank of England's early supporters and an important shareholder, his personal connections allowed him to call directly on wealthy corporations to loan additional money.[367] This close relationship, along with the crown's power to extend the bank's charter (which was scheduled to expire in 1708), facilitated close cooperation between the two. As the war dragged on, the Lord Treasurer could return again and again to the bank for financial assistance, acquiring £6,500,000 in loans over the span of just four years. By 1709 the treasury even began to refinance its higher-interest debt at lower, longer-term rates. Godolphin could also call upon other corporations when necessary: in 1708 the crown negotiated a similar £1,200,000 loan with the East India Company.

After Godolphin and the Whigs fell from power in 1710, the Whig-leaning directors of the Bank of England refused to loan additional funds to the new Tory ministry – no surprise,

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[366] Jones, *War and the Economy in the Age of William III and Marlborough*.
[367] Dickinson, "Sword of Gold."

given that Tories had attacked the Whigs for more than two decades for redistributing wealth away from the landed gentry via the land tax and into the hands of the London merchant/financier class represented by the bank.[368] Yet the new Lord Treasurer Harley resolved the crisis by creating an entirely new South Sea Company, whose goal was to establish English colonies near South American gold and silver mines.[369] Holders of government debt were issued stock in the new company, which resulted in a budgetary windfall of over £9,000,000 in 1711 -- much of this amount was used to refinance previous government debt. The next year the bank shed its partisan stance, running a lottery to raise additional funds for the crown. This combination of commercial wealth, a willingness among investors to purchase government-backed debt, public-private partnerships cemented by personal connections between ministers and investor elites, and the government's ability to revise charters reinforced whatever patriotic motivations and self-interest directors might have had in assisting the English war effort.

Combined with other ordinary sources of revenue which facilitated this public debt, these resources gave England an ability not only to directly tap the country's growing commercial wealth, but even allowed the government to help finance the war effort of its allies. Together the English and Dutch subsidized eight allied countries to the tune of some £8,000,000 over the course of the war, with England paying two-thirds of this amount.[370] In addition to such subsidies, allies were occasionally allowed to acquire their own loans from the cosmopolitan London credit markets, Austria for example acquiring £340,000 late in the war.[371] England was better at raising more credit, more quickly, and more cheaply than the other combatants,

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[368] Dickson, *Financial Revolution*, pp. 62-75 on the transition from Godolphin to Harley.
[369] Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley, Speaker, Secretary of State, and Premier Minister* (New Haven, CT, 1988).
[370] Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, pp. 132-133; for the amount, see Dickson, "War Finance, 1688-1714," p. 285.
[371] Dickson, *Financial Revolution*, p. 333.

including its allies.[372] As William Maltby has argued, the fiscal instruments described above gave England enough money to support a whole range of strategies in order to combat France.[373] English gold fed English credit, which in turn fed allied success, and by the end of the war England had risen to become the most powerful commercial power in Europe.

Mobilizing Allied Resources

Yet England did not win the war by itself. Without the Grand Alliance, there would have been no war for England. This too was an important part of the evolving British way of war, the ability to marshal the resources of a European-wide coalition and manipulate them as needed. Most important was England's ability to open up multiple fronts against a common foe and their ability to acquire foreign soldiers that would fight for British gold.

The number and composition of the armies in which English troops fought illustrate the importance of this coalition context. Even in the theaters most important to the English, their contributions were subsumed with larger allied efforts. The original September 1701 agreement determining troop contributions stipulated 90,000 to be fielded by the Emperor, a 40,000-man English army, and a 102,000-man States (i.e. Dutch) army.[374] In the case of the Low Countries theater, the Anglo-Dutch contingents that took the field in what became Marlborough's army were set at two-fifths English and three-fifths Dutch. The Dutch provided almost 80,000 of their own men, with another 34,000 German mercenaries in Dutch pay. With Dutch coaxing, an augmentation of 20,000 troops was agreed to by the Maritime nations in 1703, with the costs of

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[372] J. Aalbers, "Holland's Financial Problems (1713-1733) and the Wars against Louis XIV," in A.C. Duke, ed., *Britain and the Netherlands, volume 4: War and Society. Papers delivered to the Sixth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference* (The Hague, 1977), pp. 79-93. For a general comparison between English, Dutch, French, and Austrian finances, see Dickson, "War Finance, 1688-1714."

[373] Maltby, "The Origins of a Global Strategy."

[374] Godfrey Davies, "Recruiting in the Reign of Queen Anne," *The Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research,* 28, 1950, pp. 146-159. Also Childs, *The British Army of William III, 1689-1702*, pp. 102-103.

almost all of the regiments split equally.[375] Another Anglo-Dutch augmentation in 1709 added an additional 20,000 troops, this time two-thirds in British pay and one-third in Dutch.[376] Neither Maritime power could fill the increasing demand for troops from native reserves, and therefore both relied heavily on German mercenaries, employing 97,000 at their peak in 1711.[377] The 1703 Methuen treaty committed the Portuguese to provide a regular army of 15,000 and another 13,000 auxiliaries that would be supported by the Maritime allies, while the Anglo-Dutch troops were to number some 12,000 in total. A similar number of British troops served under Charles in Catalonia. Overall the English sent 60-80,000 men to Iberia, with the Dutch contributing a third of that number.[378] Wherever English forces fought, they fought alongside coalition partners.

A less recognized but equally important component to English success was the expertise that their Dutch allies provided to Marlborough's armies in particular.[379] The States-General, in addition to providing the majority of troops and experienced officers for Marlborough's armies, also provided the necessary logistical and engineering expertise.[380] English troops in the Low Countries relied on the efficient Dutch supply system built from William's connections with a cosmopolitan network of Jewish merchants and financiers (Medina, Machado, Van der Kaa, and

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[375] Wijn, *Het Staatsche Leger*, 3, p.338 lists the costs and number of regiments. See also 1, 678-682, which goes from 1707 to 1709, and 3, p. 339-343. Douglas Coombs shows the Dutch initiation of this troop increase, and how it was hijacked by English politicians, in "The Augmentation of 1709: A Study in the Workings of the Anglo-Dutch Alliance," *English Historical Review,* 72, 1957, pp. 643-646 for the 1703 augmentation.

[376] Coombs, "The Augmentation of 1709."

[377] Peter H. Wilson, *German Armies: War and German Society, 1648-1806* (London, 1998), *pp.* 105-109. Davies, "Recruiting," esp. 157 for England's recruiting problems starting in 1708 – over 11,000 were needed to replace the losses from the Spanish loss at Almanza.

[378] Davies, "Recruiting," 153. Wijn, *Het Staatsche Leger*, 3, pp.364-367 – including 15,000 Portuguese, 33,400 Imperials, 5,000 Italians and 6,000 Spanish. See also 3, pp. 356-358; 2:791; as well as a comparison of the scattered figures presented in Francis, *The First Peninsular War* and Hugill, *No Peace without Spain*.

[379] Douglas Coombs, *The Conduct of the Dutch: British Opinion and the Dutch Alliance during the War of the Spanish Succession* (The Hague, 1958).

[380] For a discussion of Marlborough's early inexperience in Flanders campaigning, see John Stapleton, "'By thes difficultys you may see the great disadvantage a confederat army has": Marlborough, the Allies, and the Campaigns in the Low Countries, 1702-1706,' in John Hattendorf, ed., *Marlborough: Soldier and Diplomat* (Rotterdam, 2012).

Castaño...), civilian contractors who were able to use their financial networks and business connections with local merchants to provide bread and fodder.[381] The hated Dutch field deputies played a pivotal role providing bread for Marlborough's armies, not only in the Low Countries, but even on the Allied march to the Danube.[382] It was also the Dutch who facilitated Marlborough's advances after his Flanders battles by providing the personnel, expertise and supplies needed for siege craft.[383] The chief engineer at every one of "Marlborough's" sieges was in Dutch pay, either Menno van Coehoorn or one of several Huguenots, who found employment in the States' service. The siege trains were similarly provided by the Dutch, while the onerous duty of siege service was similarly borne on the backs of the Dutch soldier: English regiments provided 14 percent of the average siege army's manpower, and no more than 20 percent for the larger sieges later in the war. Since the main Dutch objective was to gain their barrier fortresses and the English detested siege craft, the English were more than willing to have the Dutch pay the extraordinary costs of sieges. English strategists could retain their battle-centric outlook only because they relied upon their allies to perform the other necessary tasks.

War Exhaustion and a Separate Peace

Even with English gold and battlefield success, the war lasted longer than its proponents had expected. The most controversial English decision by far was the decision to end it. Allied military successes from 1702-1706, along with constant English pressure, enabled them to present a united front against Louis. The increasingly-desperate Sun King began to send out private peace feelers to the Dutch as early as August 1705, and offered at least nine different

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[381] Jones, *War and Economy*.

[382] Olaf van Nimwegen, *De subsitentie van het leger: Logistiek en strategie van het Geallieerde en met name het Staatse leger tijdens de Spaanse Successieoorlog in de Nederlanden en het Heilige Roomse Rijk (1701-1712)* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 132ff and 369 n8 for the Dutch supply of Marlborough's march to the Danube.

[383] Jamel Ostwald, "Marlborough and Siege Warfare," in Hattendorf, ed., *Marlborough: Soldier and Diplomat*.

concrete proposals for terms over the period 1705-1710, each one more advantageous to the allies than the last, and each dismissed by the English cabinet as insincere.[384] Through all his proposals, Louis attempted to split off the Dutch and achieve a partition of Spain while giving both maritime powers something they wanted – some sort of barrier for the Dutch, and recognition of Anne (but only at the signing of the final peace), as well as commercial concessions. Concerned about alienating a powerful English ally, Heinsius was careful to include Marlborough and Godolphin in all such discussions; in the end the Dutch would pay heavily for their unreciprocated loyalty to the maritime alliance.

The allies summarily rejected Louis' earliest proposals. The military reverses of 1706 added more urgency to Louis' discussions: two more French proposals to partition Spain were rejected that year. The result was a defeat for the war-ending decisive battle ideal: three considerable battlefield victories (Blenheim, Ramillies and Turin) had failed to force Louis to his knees after seven years of war, at least on terms acceptable to the allies. Two more offers were rejected the next year as Louis stiffened his terms in the wake of the multiple Allied disappointments of 1707.

By 1709 Louis' France was clearly in decline: Allied advances from battle and siege pressed Louis on all sides, and the French treasury was in a shambles.[385] On top of all this, January 1709 saw the beginning of one of the worst winters and attendant famines France had seen in a generation.[386] While these setbacks made peace more critical for France, they also made the allies even more obdurate. In early 1709 the most serious French offer for peace yet

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[384] With the exception of 1707. Mark Thomson, "Louis XIV and the Grand Alliance, 1705-10," in R. Hatton, ed., *Wiliam III and Louis XIV: Essays 1680-1720* (Liverpool, 1968), PP. 190-212. A Dutch perspective is in Stork-Penning, "The Ordeal of the States: Some Remarks on Dutch Politics during the War of the Spanish Succession," *Acta Historiae Neerlandica,* 2, 1967, pp. 120-121.

[385] The Sun King was reduced to replacing his Controller-General of Finances Chamillart with Nicolas Desmaretz in June 1708 to try to replenish his empty coffers: Gary McCollim, *Louis XIV's Assault on Privilege: Nicolas Desmaretz and the Tax on Wealth* (Rochester, NY, 2012).

[386] M. Lachiver, *Les années de misère: La famine au temps du Grand Roi* (Paris, 1991).

was rejected, in part because the French negotiators could not sufficiently assure the allies that Philippe would abide by the terms.[387] The three allies crafted a unified peace proposal for Louis to accept: the 40 articles of the Preliminaries of The Hague demanded that within two months France raze and evacuate its Rhine fortifications as well as Dunkirk, evacuate all French troops from Spain, force Philippe to abandon the Spanish throne without any guarantee of compensation elsewhere, and turn over additional places of surety for a Dutch barrier. Most insulting was the demand in article 37 that Louis contribute French troops to evict his own grandson from the Spanish throne, if Philippe refused to abdicate. Only after accepting all these terms would Louis then be allowed to actually negotiate the terms of the real peace. Pushed into a corner, Louis chose to reject the preliminaries and appealed directly to the French people to defend their country from the enemy's outrageous demands. As his diplomatic agent Polignac noted, Louis would agree to a peace, but not one that required him to "[part] with fortresses, [abandon a] kingdom, [dismantle] Dunkirk ... only to gain a truce for two or three months."[388]

Unaware of how much they had overestimated their strategic advantage, most Englishmen judged the rejection yet another example of Ludovician duplicity, even as a few privately reconsidered the severity of their terms.[389] In March 1710 Louis once again sent representatives to meet with Dutch envoys at the town of Geertruijdenberg in the hopes of compromising on article 37. However, the British refused to make any concessions, and the Dutch had no territory to offer Philippe in exchange for Spain since the Austrians were unwilling to abandon any of their Italian possessions. Many Whigs believed that France would be quickly

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[387]   John Rule, "France and the Preliminaries to the Gertruydenberg Conference, September 1709 to March 1710," in M.S. Anderson, ed., *Studies in Diplomatic History: Essays in memory of David Bayne Horn* (London, 1970), pp. 97-115; John Rule, "King and Minister: Louis XIV and Colbert de Torcy," in R. Hatton, ed., *William III and Louis XIV: essays 1680-1720* (Liverpool, 1968); Thomson, "Louis XIV and the Grand Alliance, 1705-10;" Stork-Penning, "Ordeal of the States," pp. 120ff.
[388] Quote in Rule, "France and the Preliminaries to the Gertruydenberg Conference," p. 106.
[389] Thomson, "Louis XIV and the Grand Alliance, 1705-1710," pp. 207-208.

forced to accept even these terms, but the 1710 Castilian uprising against the Habsburg candidate illustrated how poorly their demands fit the Spanish reality. As outraged as Louis might be by article 37, he was so desperate for a French peace that as a last concession he offered a compromise to subsidize the allied war in Spain at 500,000 *livres* per month. Even this was rejected – "No Peace without [all of] Spain" on allied terms was the only obstacle to a peace. Thus, the war continued into its tenth year as the allies continued their slow advance in the Low Countries while Philippe resolutely continued to chip away at the remaining Habsburg possessions in Catalonia, thus ensuring a partitioned Spanish empire.

Just as England had played a key role in preventing peace in 1709-10, it too played the pivotal part in ending the war on English terms. Anne began abandoning her extreme Whig ministers in 1710 and soon after a new peace-seeking Tory ministry took power, leading to the possibility of a separate peace with Britain. In 1711, while Marlborough conducted his last campaign under increasing partisan attack, a few months of London negotiations led to the outline of an agreement.[390] The new ministry had finally recognized that a strategy of decisive battle would deliver neither Spain nor the rest of Vauban's pré carré, and a continuation of the war just to achieve "No Peace without Spain" was not worth the cost, particularly after Charles inherited the mantle of Holy Roman Emperor.

It was much easier for the two linchpin countries to present a *fait accompli* peace to the rest than to coordinate terms among four or more different parties. Harley's minimal territorial demands were easy for France to accept once England recognized Philippe's position in Spain, while Dutch participation would only hamper England's efforts to maximize its own commercial advantages. The resulting London Preliminaries further gave most Englishmen what they wanted

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[390] On Harley's management of these negotiations, see A.D. MacLachlan, "The Road to Peace 1710-1713," in Geoffrey Holmes, ed., *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714* (London, 1969), pp. 206-208.

from Spain all along: trade. The British were given the *asiento* as well as some limited trade status within the Spanish empire, the promised destruction of the fortifications at Dunkirk, as well as confirmation of their holdings in Gibraltar, Minorca, and Newfoundland. With this outline, the British and French had only to convince the other allies to attend the peace congress, which was not difficult. The Dutch had always tied their terms to England's, hence their decision to agree to the rejection of Louis' 1709 terms even when they found them acceptable.[391] No amount of concessions appeared likely to placate the Austrians, yet they feared being left out of any talks.

The congress of Utrecht thus opened on 29 January 1712, with representatives from 18 belligerents and 12 neutrals in attendance. Neither the betrayed Dutch nor the stubborn Austrian participants were initially willing to accept the Anglo-French terms, but the Dutch hand was forced in the field after British troops abandoned them in July and Villars managed to halt the Austro-Dutch advance and go on the offensive. On 11-12 April 1713, the final peace treaties were signed by all parties with the exception of the Habsburgs, who would fight on until the treaties of Rastatt (with Austria, signed 7 March 1714) and Baden (with the Empire, signed 7 September 1714) officially ended their conflict with France. Even at Rastatt Charles refused to accept Philippe's claim to the Spanish throne. By its end, England had adopted a variety of strategies in its attempts to defeat France. Their proponents all promised a quick victory, but whether by battle, by siege, by descent or by fleet, the attritional war was won only when the electoral system placed English policy-makers into office who were willing to abandon past demands and satisfy themselves with the original terms in the second Grand Alliance treaty.

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[391] The one non-negotiable position for the Dutch was that there be a joint peace agreed to by the two Maritime powers; since they were unable to convince the English to accept a partition, they stuck to England's 'entire Spanish monarchy' position. Stork-Penning, "The Ordeal of the States," pp. 114, 122.

Peace of Utrecht

The treaties of Utrecht and Baden-Rastatt, like England's wartime strategy, were a compromise. As often happened in the early modern period, every participant received something at the peace. If one strictly measures success by the name of the war, it was a Bourbon victory with Philippe V retaining the Spanish throne. Spain lost to the extent that it failed to maintain its territorial integrity beyond Iberia. The Austrian House of Habsburg gained Spain's other European territories: the southern (now Austrian) Netherlands, Milan, Sardinia, and Naples. The Dutch received the barrier fortresses along the southern Netherlands border as a buffer against future French aggressions, although the towns promised to the Dutch were half the number pledged in the 1709 Anglo-Dutch barrier treaty. Victor Amadeus maintained his independence and would eventually (in 1720) expand his holdings to include Sardinia and Naples. Frederick III of Brandenburg-Prussia had already received the title of "King *in* Prussia" in exchange for his participation, and temporarily gained possession of Gelderland. Maximilian Emmanuel of Bavaria regained his electorate.

England gained little territory, but was careful to insist on those lands that furthered its commercial interests: Gibraltar and Minorca in the Mediterranean, as well as Newfoundland and St. Kitts in the Americas. The *asiento* provided the English with a monopoly on the slave trade to the Spanish colonies, and they negotiated preferential commercial terms at the expense of their allies. The expensive war had further weakened England's commercial competitors on the mainland, while reestablishing a balance of power by partitioning Spain's European holdings. All these successes were significant, but their worth would depend on the extent to which later British strategists took advantage of them. The maximalist Whigs judged the terms an outrageous sell-out, impeaching Harley and St. John for their treasonous peace when they returned to power

in 1715. In retrospect it would gradually become clear that the Utrecht settlement launched Britain's ascent to a world power. But a decidedly Whiggish view of the war's strategy would also come to dominate – an interpretation which emphasized the possibility for Marlborough's battles to end the war, a potential that remained unrealized due to obstructionist allies and the 1710 Tory stab-in-the-back.[392] The politicized strategic debates of the age became ossified in the historical literature, with the continental battle-seeking strategy declared the victor.

Conclusion

William's 1688 invasion ushered in a sea change in English grand strategy. No longer able to sit on the sidelines, England was increasingly drawn into Europe's continental wars in order to maintain a balance of power while defending and expanding its overseas commerce and territories. The War of the Spanish Succession created a native version of William's continental strategy, Marlborough's "English" battlefield victories leading his supporters to laud the return of English courage in the field. The duke's striking successes placed serious strains on Louis, yet they too often blind historians to the wide-ranging strategies that beleaguered France. Tory and Whig, court and country politicians promoted competing continental and naval strategies in multiple theaters which, thanks to England's ability to fund them all, ended up complimenting one another. English policy-makers clearly made significant strategic mistakes: initial English expectations of a quick war – whether by economic strangulation or decisive battle – were frustrated by 1707, and persistent expectations of an imminent French collapse extended the war for several unnecessary years, ironically increasing the likelihood of a negotiated peace. But the combination of assault by land and sea eventually wore down the French juggernaut.

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[392] This is the tone taken by almost all of the dozen biographies of Marlborough. Notable examples include Winston Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 2002 reprint of 1933 orig.) and David Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander* (New York, 2000 reprint of 1973 orig.).

English acquisitions at Utrecht laid the groundwork for later British success, but it was even more successful in providing a model of British expeditionary warfare. England was able to create a successful formula for mobilizing its growing financial power in order to harness continental allies and manpower to its own goals – the "British way in warfare." The legacy of the great duke as victor of Blenheim and the disgust with his 'obstructionist' allies lasts to this day, as does British possession of Gibraltar. But Britain's real success in the War of the Spanish Succession was to create a grand strategic formula that would allow it to win the future wars of the eighteenth century even more decisively.

Failed, Broken, or Galvanized?

Prussia and 1806

Prussia's experience is sui generis in the context of this project. All the other contributions feature discussions of strategies with positive starting points. Prussia's strategy of recovery involved the reconstitution of -- if not a "failed state" in the contemporary sense of that term -- then arguably a broken state. A military system considered formidable even after the French Revolution's innovations found itself overthrown in a single campaign. Its disintegration in the aftermath of the Battle of Jena–Auerstedt was comprehensive and immediate, almost literally a matter of the marching speeds of French armies. As Joachim Murat allegedly reported to Napoleon, the fighting was over because there was no enemy left to round up.

Prussia's collapse was humiliating. Fifty-one of the 60 infantry regiments that were the army's backbone, many with over a century of victory and endurance to their names, disappeared, never to be reconstituted.   Strongly-garrisoned, well-provisioned fortresses surrendered at the first challenge. With no hope of relief from a broken field army, resistance was arguably futile and pointless. The few last stands and holdouts nevertheless only seemed to highlight a wasteland of senescence and incompetence. The familiar jest that Prussia was an army that had its own country became grim reality as the social and political fabric of the state unraveled. The royal family fled Berlin, leaving their capital open to French occupation and looting. The Berliners for their part greeted their French conquers with applause, while other Prussian cities greeted the French with wine and flowers. What remained of the army attached

itself to a Russian ally more embarrassed than gratified by the connection.[393] Prussia's power

had vanished like soap bubbles.

King Frederick William III focused on the surrenders when denouncing humiliations

"without precedent" in his first public pronouncement after the collapse. He concluded by

declaring that, in the future, any soldier who distinguished himself was to be made an officer

regardless of his social standing. On one hand this represented a revolutionary announcement; on

the other it carried forward ideas current in both state and army well before 1806.[394] From either

perspective the king's words highlighted the nature of what came to be called the Prussian

Reform Movement.

Origins of the Recovery

Prussia's recovery was not a matter of adjustment, but of reconstruction, whose projected

scope was as comprehensive as the catastrophe that focused it. The reform movement's genesis,

purpose, and method were to strengthen the Prussian state—but not merely in the immediate

context of enhancing its military power and diplomatic influence. Reform in its developed

version was grand strategy in the highest sense; a synergy of approaches designed to transform

not merely policy but mentality. Nor was reform a specific response to a particular catastrophe.

Its taproot was a German Aufklaerung that fostered the development of a common culture, and

advocated the development of a public sphere affirming unity in diversity. Formal philosophy

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[393] As perceptive as it is concise is Peter Paret, *The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia 1806* (Princeton, 2009). Cf. Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War* (Lawrence, KS, 2009), pp. 109-122. Cf. Ludger Hermann, "Die Schlachten von Jena und Auerstedt und die Genese der politischen Oeffentlichkeit in Preussen," in *Umbruch im Schatten Napoleons, Die Schlachten von Jena und Auerstedt und ihre Folge*, ed. G. Fesser and R.Jonscher (Jena, 1998), pp. 39-52.
[394] See generally Georg Hwbbelmann, "Das preussische 'offizierkorps' im 18. Jahrhundeert: Analyse der Sozialstruktur einer Funktionselite. " Dissertation, Muenster, 1999).

also addressed questions of identity in contexts of community. Immanuel Kant's emphasis on individual consciousness as the fulcrum for universal principles was developed by G. W. F. Hegel into a process that synthesized the individual and the collective, the particular and the general. The Aufklaerung emphatically rejected what it considered the limited, artificial values of the French Enlightenment. Literature, philosophy, and art were provinces of reason and domains of human endeavor.[395]

That held true for law as well. The Allgemeines Landrecht fuer die Preussischen Staaten., completed in 1794, was the product of four decades of discussion among lawyers and bureaucrats. In over 19,000 sections, it addressed what seemed every possible permutation of interaction among Prussians that might involve a matter of law. Its complexity simultaneously acknowledged tradition and innovation. The Allgemeines Landrecht , in short, epitomized the relation between Aufklaerung and state.[396]

Prussia's version of the German Aufklaerung has been accurately described as being "about conversation," open, public, civil dialogue among subjects of a state of laws and a state of rights.[397] That identity with the state reflected Frederick the Great's championship of enlightened values and practices. It reflected the dominance of public servants, broadly defined, in Aufklaerung's ranks, as well as their nature. Officials, attorneys, pastors, teachers, even officers, held their posts because of educational qualifications. Since 1770, for example, all higher

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[395] Cf. H. B. Nisbet, "'Was ist Aufklaerung?' The Concept of Enlightenment in 18th Century Germany," *Journal of European Studies*, 12 (1982), 77-95; Horst Moeller, *Vernunft und Kritik. Deutsche Aufklaerung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 1986); Thomas Saine, *The Problem of Being Modern: or, The German Pursuit of Enlightenment from Leibniz to the French Revolution* (Detroit, 1997); Hans Erich Boedeker, "Aufklaerung und Kommunikationsprozess," *Aufklaerung,* 2, (1987), 89-112; and T. Yasukata, *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment* (New York, 2002).

[396] Cf. Hermann Conrad, *Die geistigen Grundlagen des Allgemeinen Landrrechts fuer die preussischen Staaten von 1794* (Koeln, 1956); and more comprehensively Reinhard Koselleck, *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht,Vverwaltung und soziale Bewegungne von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart, 1976).

[397] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600-1947* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), p. 247.

government positions required a state examination. The result was a heterogeneous mix of backgrounds and personalities that, to accomplish anything worthwhile had to work together at least during office hours.

That development reflected and reinforced a strong consultative element in Prussian government at all levels, from the collegial structure of the General Directory to the unofficial interactions among government officials and men of affairs that underwrote and shaped local policy. Aufklaerung as a concept was closely linked in Prussia to established social interests and political patterns. For progressives, the state was not merely acceptable but desirable as a participant in the process of change—particularly when it came to practical projects. [398]

Kant argued eloquently for the synergy between public power as vested in the monarchy and the refinement of civil rights and broadly defined liberties. [399]The ideas of enlightened activists, developed through observation and analysis, could be worked through on personal levels, incorporated into government institutions, and translated into public policy. The process was hardly linear. Directly it involved a spectrum of events from the status of Jews to the censorship of the press to the issue of religious tolerance. More fundamental questions; land reform, serfdom, developed as subtexts. A new generation of officials was making its mark combining persuasion, coercion, and an ability to stimulate efficiency by challenging traditional practices and privileges. A good few were non-Prussians, attracted by the prospects of not merely careers open to talent, but the opportunity to make significant contributions on large scales.

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[398] Rolf Straubel, *Beamte und Personenpolitik im alttpreussischen Staat.: sozial Rekrutierung, Karrierenverlauef, Entscheidungsprozesse)1763-1806* (Potsdam, 1998), is a valuable overview. Cf. also Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany*, (Ithaca, NY, 1999).

[399] Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage 'Was ist Aufklaerung?' originally published in Berliner Monatsschrift, Sept. 10, 17844, reprinted in *Derliner Monatsschrift (1783-1796)*, Leipzig, 1986), pp.89-96.

Men like Nassau Baron Karl Friedrich vom und zu Stein and the Hanoverian. Karl August von Hardenberg, had both studied at Goettingen, Germany's leading training ground for aspiring public administrators. Even before the French Revolution, they and their counterparts were beginning to establish institutional matrices for change. Frederick William III, who succeeded to the throne in 1797, also systematically addressed controversial questions, including taxation of the nobles, prison reform, and servile labor on crown lands from the beginning of his reign. Christopher Clark aptly calls the result of all this push towards progress a "two-headed state." He emphasizes the polarity between tradition and innovation. Participants were more likely to perceive an affirmative dialectic between status and change—a dialectic taking Prussia in a positive direction with a minimum of fog and friction. [400]

In that context, to speak of the primacy of either foreign or domestic policy is to apply a neologism. Prussia's hard-won position in Europe and Germany was as a rational actor whose pursuit of limited goals credible armed force backed. That credibility in turn depended on the effectiveness of the state and the support of society for systems of military financing and military recruitment; traits generally accepted as essential elements of the Prussian social contract. [401]

The Prussian variant of the German Aufklaerung had a significant impact on military thought between the Rhine and the Vistula. Carl von Clausewitz was anything but exceptional in considering it natural and necessary to incorporate emotional factors into the analysis of war. Aesthetics influenced and shaped the contents and the forms of his theories. Much like its counterparts in cultural and intellectual spheres, the new generation of military theorists was also less concerned with establishing abstract scientific systems than with broadening and

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[400] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, pp. 267-283.
[401] Dennis Showalter, "Hubertusberg to Auerstaedt: The Prussian Army in Decline?," *German History*, 12 (1994), pp. 308-333.

disseminating practical knowledge. [402] In Prussia the death of Frederick the Great opened something like a window of opportunity. The more extreme forms of physical punishment unofficially introduced in Frederick's later years were officially banned. Regimental schools with state of the art curricula emerged everywhere in Prussia, encouraging fathers to remain with their families–and with the colors. Family allowances were introduced for children under 13. Soldiers' homes offered superannuated veterans a respectable alternative to the begging bowl, and to state sinecures like schoolmastering that were not always available. [403]

Limited as they were, these innovations were sufficient to keep desertion rates moderate even during the 1790s, despite the appeal of French propaganda stressing the advantages of coat-turning in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity. French revolutionary armies, especially their attitudes and behavior in the Rhineland, gave a particular lie to claims of universal fraternity. It nevertheless grew increasingly clear to Prussia's military professionals that the standards of warfare were now being set by France. It was equally clear that French human and material resources exponentially exceeded anything Prussia could hope to match. The fundamental problem confronting Prussia's leaders was how was such an adversary best confronted? It is a common cliche that the French military system was a direct product of the social and political changes generated by the French Revolution. [404] If, as critics like Gneisenau suggested, armies were inseparable from their social values, then logic suggested comprehensively remodeling Prussia on French lines. But if this path were taken, why bother to fight France in the first place? What if Prussia met the enemy and it was her?

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[402] See the contributions to *Enlightened War. German Theories and Cultures of War from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz*, ed. E. Kramer and P.A. Simpson (Rochester, NY, 2011)

[403] John E. Stine, "King Frederick William II and the Decline of the Prussian Army, 1786-1797," (Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1980).

[404] Michael Sikora, ", Die Freanzoezische Revolution der Heeresverfassung," *Die preussische Armee zwiasschen Ancien Regime und Reichsgruendung,* ed. P. Baumgart, B. Koerner, H Stuebig (Paderborn, 2008), pp. 135-163, is a good overview.

That question had particular resonance in a Prussia where war and Aufklaerung combined to reinforce develop an increasingly defined, comprehensive sense of Prussian patriotism. Since the era of the Great Elector, a social contract of protection and security in exchange for loyalty and service had permeated Prussian identity. It reached perihelion during the Seven Years War, when it was stressed to the limit on both sides and not found wanting . A major part of Frederick the Great's mystique reflected not his heroic mastery of the battlefield in the style of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar, but the fatigues and hardships he shared with his soldiers: the aging man in the snuff-spotted coat who could crack a dialect joke on a hard march and reward a regiment's performance with uniform braid bought from his own pocket.

An aristocracy which bled itself white in the king's service had come to understand and value the men it led as well as commanded—less in a sentimental, pre-Romantic sense than as sharing a common enterprise and a common sacrifice. Spilled blood and torn flesh were the same colors. And the rank and file had proven to be anything but driven automata more frightened of their officers than their enemies. Religion-based sense of duty combined with pride in unit and pride of craft to produce soldiers that could think and act as well as endure. Structured by obedience to authority, the army nevertheless offered a basis for identity with the state. [405]

As early as 1763 Lessing's Minna von Barnhelm depicted the bonds of honor existing between an officer and his sergeant and provided the king a central role in resolving the drama's crisis. In 1781 Schiller's "The Robbers" put a civilian spin on male bonding in an atmosphere of violence: the outlawed Karl Moor is loyal to the honorable commoners who follow him. The dawn of 1798 saw the first public performance of "Wallenstein's Camp," with no less a

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[405] Cf. Dennis Showalter, "Roi-Connetable und Feldherr: Frederick the Grreat and His Times," unpublished paper; and Sascha Moebius, *Mehr Angst vor dem Offizier als vor dem Feind? Ein mentalitaetsgeschichtliche Studien zur preussischen Taktik im Siebenjaehrigeen Krieg* (Saarbruecken, 2007).

personage than Goethe directing. The bulk of the play deals with high-level intrigue. "Camp," the most familiar and the best read in German or translation, brings to center stage the common soldiers who come from everywhere in Europe to serve under Wallenstein's banner. Their multicultural affirmation of freedom offered a counterpoint and challenge to contemporary events across the Rhine—and highlighted a changing image of the peasant "from pariah to patriot."[406]

The modified Prussian Army's performance in limited contexts during the early 1790s had on the whole been satisfactory, and better than that. Valmy emerged as a specific problem of command rather than a general indication of institutional decline. Inexperienced troops facing strong positions in bad weather seldom achieve glory, and Brunswick himself showed to better advantage in the next campaigning season. Prussian line battalions committed against the French Republic combined well-controlled volleys and well-regulated local counterattacks that matched, if they did not always surpass, French élan and cran. Prussian light infantry proved formidable opponents against French raiders and foragers, teaching sharp lessons in skirmishing and marksmanship to their opponents.[407]

Applied Aufklaerung offered a matrix for further changes. The answer, articulated by military intellectuals like Friedrich von der Decken, was that Prussia required a "quality army," able to counter French mass and skill with even greater fighting power of its own. The military qualities admired in the French Army could be replicated by institutional reform, underpinned by social changes well short of revolution [408]

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[406] John Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot: The Changing Image of the German Peasant, 1770-1840* (Lexington, Ky., 1960).

[407] Dennis Showalter, "Instrument of Policy: The Prussian Army in the French Revolutionary Wars"—Forthcoming in an anthology on military effectiveness in the French Revolutionary period, edited by Frederick Schneid.

[408] Friedrich von der Decken, *Betrachtungen ueber das Verhaeltniss des Kriegstand zu dem Zwecke der Staaten* (Hannover, 1800).

Gerhard von Scharnhorst, another high-profile immigrant, had emerged as a leading German military theorist during his years in Hanoverian service, before transferring to the Prussian army in 1801. Initially working through the newly-established Berlin Militaerische Gesellschaft, Scharnhorst proposed to introduce, a few at a time, a new generation of leaders with a common background. These new leaders would advise their official superiors in commanding the kind of army Scharnhorst saw necessary for Prussia's survival.[409] This was the essence of the Prussian general staff system. It was also a long term project.

In the years immediately prior to officers and administrators favoring change concentrated on three specific reforms. The first was administration. Regulations were simplified. Baggage, supply, and ammunition trains were reduced. The logistical system was overhauled. The Prussian Army that took the field for the Jena campaign was a good deal leaner than it had been since the Seven Years' War.[410] It was also better articulated—at least on paper. Scharnhorst argued since his arrival for introducing the divisional system of the French into the Prussian Army. Not until the 1806 campaign was actually under way, however, was a divisional system introduced. And at that late, it is not surprising that, apart from the normal problems inherent in improvised formations with inexperienced commanders, the divisions were badly balanced; deficient alike in fire power and shock power. At least the divisions were in place.

The third subject of reform, tactical doctrine, remained a subject of debate. Enthusiasts like Adam Heinrich von Buelow advocated the infusion of formal training with appeals to the good will and natural enthusiasm of the individual soldier–supplemented when necessary by

[409] Charles White, *The Enlightened Soldier: Scharnhorst and the Militaerische Gesellschaft in Berlin, 1801–1805* (New York, 1989).

[410] Hans Heifritz, *Geschichte der Preussischen Heeresverwaltung (*Berlin,1938), pp. 173fff.; W.O. Shanahan, *Prussian Military Reforms 1786–1813* (New York, 1945) p. 84.

[410] E. von Conrady, *Leben and Werken des Generals der Innfanterie… Carl von Grolman*, 3 vols. (Berlin:, 1894), vol. 1, pp. 45–6, and Max Lehmann, *Scharnhorst*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1886–7), vol. 2, pp. 412–13.

issues of alcohol.[411] Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and a junior officer beginning to make his mark, Clausewitz, favored synthesizing the open-order tactics of the revolution with the linear formations that had continued to prove their worth when appropriately handled. The declaration of war made the argument temporarily moot. Jena-Auerstaedt made it temporarily irrelevant. [412]

The Prussian Army of 1806 can reasonably be described as well into the process of adapting to the new ways of war-making developed in the previous decade. In comparative terms, it was about where the Austrians stood three years later at Wagram. Not until at least 1810 would Britain's principal field army reach the structural and administrative levels at which the Prussian Army stood immediately before Jena-Auerstedt. Nor did the army disgrace itself at the sharp end. For all their shortcomings in planning, command, and tactics, the Prussians gave their enemy more than a few bad quarters of an hour at Jena. At Auerstedt, a single French corps shattered more than twice its numbers in a single long day. But that was also probably the finest tactical performance of the entire Napoleonic era, by one of the finest fighting formations ever to take the field: the Grande Armee's III Corps of Louis Nicolas Davout. [413]

Since 1763 the Prussian army had developed as a deterrent force in the context of a multipolar state system. By 1805 it was required to wage all-out war against a hegemonic empire with an army possessing extraordinary combat effectiveness, commanded by one of history's greatest captains at the peak of his powers. Prussia's foreign policy for over a decade, however, had been designed to avoid exactly that contingency. Opportunistic neutrality had served the state well since the Peace of Bale in 1793. When asked in 1805 to join the Third Coalition forming against France, Frederick William and his advisors reasoned that the prospective

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[411] S.D.H von Buelow, *Neue Taktik der Neueren, wiie sie seyn sollte* (Leipzig, 1805).

[412] Heinz Sruwbig, "Berenhorst, Buelow und Scharnhorst als Kritiker der Preussischen Heeeres der nachffriderizianisch Epoche," in *Preussische Armee zwischen Ancien Regime und Reichsgruendung,* pp. 96-120.

[413] See the analysis in Pierre Charrier, *Le Marechal Davout* (Paris, 2005), pp. 165-208.

adversaries seemed evenly enough matched to wear down each other, as they had regularly done for over 15 years. Instead the Austerlitz campaign left Prussia confronting an imperium that suddenly abandoned any pretenses of conciliation. Prussia went to war in September 1806 — not unilaterally, but as a necessary gesture of good faith to an embryonic Fourth Coalition that would include Russia, Britain, and Sweden.

Just enough time seemed to remain in the normal campaigning season for one major battle. And even there the Prussian Army had to do no more than bloody Napoleon's nose, buying time for British guineas and Russian bayonets to bring to bear their respective influences. This was not an optimal situation, but neither did it seem obviously beyond the capacities of Prussia's military establishment. The war hawks of 1806 included men of the caliber of Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Clausewitz, who did not see themselves from the beginning as engaging in a forlorn hope.[414]

The campaign of 1806 and its aftermath, culminating in the Peace of Tilsit, cost Prussia its great power status and concentrated its official mind. Prussia's immediate fate, much resembled what Austria had sought to impose on it during the Seven Years' War. Napoleon's aims in Germany were as concrete as his grand strategy was boundless. He wanted men and money. .He wanted Austria kept out and discontent kept down.[415] To those ends, massive territorial losses and a huge indemnity were accompanied by limiting the Prussian Army's size during the next ten years to 42,000 men without reserve or militia systems and by requiring its presence when summoned by the Imperium. That Vienna retained its place at the head diplomatic table, albeit for the Emperor's convenience, only salted wounds in Berlin.

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[414] Frederick R. Kagan, *The End of the Old Order: Napoleon and Europe, 1801-1805* (New York, 2006); and Brendan Simms*., The Impact of Napoleon: Prussian High Politics and the Creation of the Executive* (Cambridge, 1997).

[415] See the excellent contributions to *The Bee and the Eagle: Napoleonic France and the End of the Holy Roman Empire 1806,* ed. A. Forrest and P. Wilson (New York, 2009)

Prussia's response to this new German order differed significantly from that of the mediatizing elites elsewhere in middle Germany.[416] The multiple disasters of 1806 did not discredit the mentality that for two decades previously had sought through administration to strengthen both the Prussian state and Prussian society. The initial emphasis of what developed from individual policies to a synergized movement was not, however, directly preparing for a second round with the French. Prussia's immediate challenge was to reestablish the state as an effective part of Napoleon's European order. Above all that involved restoring the Prussian Army as a force simultaneously effective and non-threatening. The first steps in that process involved escaping clientage by the French conquerors and establishing Prussia as an intermediate power, if only in a German/Central European context. After that, much would depend on events beyond Prussia's direct control.[417]

In July 1807 Frederick William established a military reorganization commission with a general brief: determine the structure of the new Prussian army. This was a committee in fact as well as name. Scharnhorst was its head, but it included a spectrum of positions, from committed reformers like Gneisenau and Clausewitz to more measured types like Christian von Massenbach and Hans David Yorck. In its composition and behavior it embodied the essence of the Prussian reform movement. It was not a strategy based on emergency responses, or of an emergency recovery guided by a small cabal or a single dominant figure. Instead it built on over a quarter-century of Aufklaerung, of rational discourse bringing together divergent, often sharply conflicting opinions. The resulting synergy was in practice a negative consensus, based as much on defeating a common enemy as on planning for a reconfigured Prussia. The resulting

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[416] Cf. P. Nolte, *Staatsbildung als Gesellschaftsreform. Politische Reformen in Preussen und den sueddeutschen Staaten 1800-1820* (Frankfurt, 1990); and Matthew Leviunger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (New York, 2000).

[417] Still useful in this context is Heinz Stuebig, *Armee und Nation. Die Paedagogisch-politischen Motive der preussischen Heeresreform, 18071814* (Frankfurt, 1971).

compromises would not endure much past the emergency that generated them. But they lasted long enough to accomplish their initial goal, and leave bits and pieces that would in future be incorporated into the Second Reich—and the Third.

Civil and Military Reform

The September 1808 Convention of Paris rigidly defined the army's post-Jena institutional framework. According to its terms the Prussian Army was recruited by conscription, but limited to a total strength of 42,000 men. It prohibited any kind of reserve or second-line force. Foreign enlistment had been abolished in November 1807—as much from a shortage of candidates as from principled determination to rely on Prussia's own Landeskinder. The historic canton system, with its elaborate structure of exemptions and limited annual periods of uniformed service, gave way to universal liability, with those conscripted serving officially for three or four years. The often-cited Kruemper system of creating a reserve by more or less clandestinely replacing trained men with recruits, though never systematically implemented, was another significant element in changing Prussia's historic pattern of long service.

No less important was an emphasis on structural and institutional flexibility, initially reflected by an organization of six combined-arms brigades, eventually to be embodied in a new set of drill regulations. More important still was the abolition of social qualifications for an officer's commission. After August 1808, every man in Prussian uniform had "the same duties and the same rights"-- at least in principle. Corporal punishment was also abolished except under extreme circumstances on active service.

The ultimate intention of these and related innovations was less to inculcate specifically military skill sets than to strengthen commitment and confidence. The military reform commission called for nurturing a sense of involvement that would actualize the latent loyalty Prussians felt for state and crown. Since the days of Frederick the Great, its members agreed, patriotism had been strong among the native peasants and townsmen who filled the army's ranks, and who perceived Prussia as something more than the faceless authority behind tax collectors and conscription officials. The aim was to nurture and focus that attitude by a network of top-down reforms based on universal military service. For conservatives the new-model Prussian soldier must become an active subject of a revitalized state. For reformers the effective soldier ultimately had to be a citizen whose military service epitomized his active membership in a political community. The fundamental difference between those positions, eventually significant after Napoleon's downfall, seemed sufficiently abstract in the months after Jena to be tabled—at least at the discussion level.[418]

More significant for the construction of even the constricted system permitted by the Convention of Paris was its financing. Paying the draconian indemnity levied by Napoleon as part of the Treaty of Tilsit was even more urgent. Nothing like sufficient ready cash was available to cover initial installments, and the treaty's terms put Prussia's sovereignty at stake, if the state failed to meet the payments. The indemnity itself was 120 million francs. The real cost of defeat, however, lay in paying the expenses of a French occupation that lasted from August 1807 to December 1808—over 200,000,000 thalers for a state the income of which was not to exceed 30,000,000 until 1816.

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[418] Dierk Walter, *Preussische Heeresreformen 1807-1870. Militaerische Innovation und der Mythos der Roonschen Reformen (*Paderborn, 2003), pp. 235-324; and Michael Sykora, "Militriaierung und Zivilizierung. Die Preussische Heeresreform und ihre Ambivalenzen,, " un Preussische *Armee zwischen Ancien Regime und Reichsgruending, 164-175,* combine for the most up to date perception of the military reforms,

The king's senior financial advisors saw two alternatives. One involved mortgaging and selling Prussian crown land. The other was to institute a comprehensive income tax. Implementing either required agreement of the provincial estates. For one man, at least, the situation offered an opportunity. Frederick William had dismissed Baron vom Stein in spring 1807, as "refractory, insolent, obstinate, and disobedient. " In October the king had to recall him in spite of these qualities—or perhaps because of them.[419] His first aim was to use the existing financial crisis as leverage to reform the estates as a first step towards a Prussian representative institution.

In January 1808 the East Prussian Diet was summoned as a test bed and trial balloon. With its structure and its functions expanded from strictly financial matters to general consultation on public affairs, it even approved an income tax. But attempts to extend the tax to other provinces foundered. To civil administrators formed by the theories of mercantilism, Prussia's economy was at best a fragile thing, requiring comprehensive state management and efficient participation by the state's subjects. Bringing the truncated kingdom's finances into order and under control left little room for drastically overhauling the social and economic distinctions under which the state had previously prospered. [420]

What might have become a Gordian knot was loosened by the government's policy of "flight forward" by implementing land reform. Prussia's commercial and industrial capacities, limited before 1806, were further affected now by the developing British blockade of the continent. On an intellectual level, the French physiocracy's support for government intervention in an agricultural sector that was the ultimate source of surplus wealth interacted with Adam

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[419] Hans Duchwardt, *Stein. Eine Biographie* ((Muenster, 2007), is the most recent and comprehensive work on the great reformer.
[420] Bernd Muenchow-Pohl, *Zwischen Reform und Krieg. Untersuchungen zur Bewusstseinslage in Preussen, 1807-1812* (Goettingen, 1987), pp. 03 ff. See also the documents in *Preussische Finanzpolitik1806-1810: Quellen zur Verwaltung die Ministerien Stein und Altenstein*, ed. E.Kehr, H.Schissler, H-U Wehler (Goettingen 1984).

Smith's discussions application of free market principles to agricultural development. Prussia's rural order was unraveling. Rapid population growth after the Seven Years' war had sufficiently increased both the supply of labor and the demand for grain. Landowners were finding it easier to hire workers as needed than to maintain increasingly complex systems of labor service. Well off rural communities, even individuals, were acquiring enough surplus cash either to fight obnoxious feudal obligations in court, or simply to hire substitutes to report to the manor as required.

Comprehensive dissatisfaction thus underwrote the Edict of 9 October 1807. It included three specific provisions. By ending restrictions on the sale of noble-owned land, it created a de facto free market on land. The act created a similar free market in labor, opening occupations to all social classes and abolishing all forms of serfdom. The Edict was in many ways a preliminary document. It did not address the question of who exactly owned peasant land, or settle the issue of whether labor services as a form of rent remained enforceable. It took almost a decade to iron out these and similar details, in the kind of debates characteristic of the bureaucratic Aufklaerung.[421]

The free marked in labor also addressed a military question. Official figures had listed over 2,300,000 cantonists available in 1805. Even should all the existing legal exemptions have been continued, over 300,000 men could be conscripted in a given year without summoning the unfit, the middle-aging and the less physically capable. Under universal service the number

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[421] The best contextualization of land reform in any language is William W. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg junkers and Villagers, 1500-1840* Cambridge, 2002). More specific is Hartmut Harnisch, "Vom Oktoberedikt des Jahres 1807zur Deklaration von 1816: Problematik und charackterr der preussische Agrarreformgesetzgebung zwischen 1807 und 1816," Jahrbuch fuer Wirtschaftsgeschcihte, Sonderband (1978), pp. 231-293.

could readily be doubled, and no one in the Prussian government seriously expected the artificially truncated post-Jena force structure to endure. [422]

Stein's eventual successor as Chancellor, Karl von Hardenberg, had no better success when he sought to get landowners and bankers to cooperate informally in liquidating the state's debts through a national bank. His finance edict of October 1810 was a statist response, proclaiming the goals of equalizing tax burdens and creating freedom of occupation. A second edict a month later allowed anyone to practice any enterprise by paying an annual tax. Like Stein, Hardenberg reasoned that financial engagement would encourage political participation, which in turn would lead to the ultimate goal of parliamentary institutions encouraging public harmony through institutionalized patriotism. Like Stein, however, he encountered a Prussia that at its roots remained more of a geographical expression than the state-level innovators were willing to recognize. Jena and Tilsit by themselves were not enough to shake loose a network of local and regional traditions and behaviors, where informal behavior shaped formal structures, where law and custom interfaced, where contemporary facilitator's flow charts and wire diagrams rapidly collapsed into incomprehensibility.[423]

State authority offered a possible shortcut. The efflorescently collegial nature of the Prussian cabinet system was widely described as a major factor in the disaster of 1806. Two centuries of ad hoc adaptations had created a structure where diffused and confused responsibility was replaced for practical purposes by government through influence: getting and

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[422].Cf. Jürgen Kloosterhuis, ed., *Bauern, Buerger und Soldaten: Quellen zur Sozialisation des Militärsystems im preußischen Westfalen 1713– 1803,* 2 vols. (Münster,, 1992); Dierk Walter,"Meeting the French Challenge: Conscription in Prussia, 1807-1815," in *Conscription in the Naopleonic Era. A Revolution in Military Affairs?,* ed. D. Stoker, F. Schneid, H, Blanton (London, 2009), pp. 24-45; Ute Frevert, "Das jakobinische Modell: Allgemeine Wehrpflicht und Nationsbildung in preussen-deutschland," in *Militaer und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundetrs,* ed. U. Frevert, (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 18-27.

[423] Cf. Ernst Klein, *Von der Reform zur Restauration. Finanzreform und Reformgesetzgebung des preussischen Staatskanzlers Karl August von Harfenberg* (Berlin, 1067); and Barbara Vogel, *Allgemeine Gewerrbefreiheit.: die Reformepolitik des preussischen StaatskanzlersHardenberg (1810-1820)* (Goettingen, 1983).

attempts to keep the king's attention. Frederick William III had not only consistently failed to impose his will on his advisors; he had regularly ascribed his own indecision to the conflicting pressures of grayer, presumably wiser, heads. It was a position sufficiently comfortable that it took a deal of persuasion, some of it spousal, before in November 1808 the king approved a streamlined structure.

As finally reorganized, the Prussian cabinet included five ministries, each with a defined set of functions, each with the right of direct access to the monarch. Expected to encourage direct discussion of policy issues at the expense of behind the scenes manipulation, expected to facilitate rapid, coherent decision-making, the new system was an improvement over its predecessor but nevertheless remained essentially collegial rather than authoritarian. [424]

Thus, Prussia's post-Jena, post-Tilsit state strategy would have to rest on the synergistic reform of four secondary structures reforms: military, financial, occupational, and administrative. All four generated widespread, bitter opposition based on other powerful synergies of principle and interest. Patrimonial powers and jurisdictions generated legal protests and civil disobedience from nobility and peasantry alike. The reformers themselves, moreover, were significantly divided on questions of details on one hand, implications on the other. An Aufklaerung dominated by intellectuals and officials had not generated a mentality of urgency. There had always seemed time for discussion and persuasion, time for ideas to churn and settle, time for opponents to find a middle ground. Prussia's ability to apply direct force to domestic opposition was sorely limited in any case. Forty thousand men could not maintain armed control indefinitely. And Prussia's only chance to recover its status under the conditions prevailing after

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[424] Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy , Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1669-1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1958) and Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann, *Koenig in Preussens grosser Zeit. Friedrich William III., der Melancholikerr auf dem Thron* (Berlin, 1992, pp. 340 ff.

1807 involved presenting a united front that at the same time seemed unthreatening. Persistent civil disorder was an open invitation to French intervention.

Evaluating the initial achievements of Prussia's initial institutional reforms is in good part a question of perspective. Are they best judged by what was done, or by what remained to do? Once again Christopher Clark offers a solution in a mot juste. He describes the reforms as "acts of communication" presented in "plebescitary rhetoric." [425] To take effect such rhetoric could not be presented in a vacuum.. A comprehensive program of education reform, initiated in 1808 structured and guided by Wilhelm von Humboldt, promised wonders: "new Prussian men" developed in schools that taught them how to think for themselves. As early as eighteen he had begun designing a comprehensive system ranging from state-run elementary schools through secondary gymnasiums for the classical and practical education of the elite, to the new University of Berlin. Results, however, were at best years and decades away. [426]

In immediate and emotional contexts, reformers and conservatives found particular common ground in a sense of unique victimization. After 1806 an increasing body of emotion insisted Prussia was suffering tribulations that merited special recognition. Conservatives developed systematic depictions and defenses of "old Prussian" virtues threatened by Napoleon, and by those Germans who believed the best way to beat the French was to become so like them that no one could tell the difference—or would want to. [427] Reformers made no secret of their conviction that this revitalized Prussia would become a lodestone and a magnet for the rest of Germany. The legends that grew up around Frederick the Great had already generated a sense --

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[425] Clark, *Iron Kingdom,* p. 342.
[426] Clemens Menze, *Die Bildungsreform Wilhelm von Humboldts (Dortmund, 1975).; and Tillman Bosche, Wilhelm von Humboldt* (Munich, 1990).
[427] See particularly Robert Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility: The Development of a Conservative Ideology 1770-1848* (Princeton, 1988).

at least among Protestants -- that Prussia was special, different from both the universalist Austrian Empire and the parish-pump principalities of the west and south. [428]

The German "nation of the self," based on individual consciousness, was a product of the late eighteenth century. Before its existence there was an external "Germany of the senses:" sight, space and sound, a physical way of understanding the world.[429] In that latter context, post-Jena Prussia emerged as a monarchical nation, integrating its ethnic and religious communities into a wider community that epitomized a German nation whose unity was based both on a shared history, language and culture and a common acceptance of this community: heritage and ascription synergizing in a reborn state community.[430]

Popular nationalism, was essentially an urban, Protestant, literate, bourgeois phenomenon. At a time of social and economic uncertainty, geographic mobility was increasingly common among soldiers, officials, and clergymen. Degrees from Halle, Goettingen, and Berlin were universal currency between the Rhine and the Vistula. Expanding public employment opportunities attracted underemployed and marginally employed, willing to seek opportunities anywhere their linguistic and educational profiles offered. Wanderers between worlds, they were simultaneously engaged by the concepts of meritocratic egalitarianism and community solidarity

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[428] Cf. in particular Tr homas Stamm-Kuhlmann, " 'Man vertraue doch der Administration!' Staatsverstaendnis und Regierungshandeln des preussiscnen Staatskanzlers Karl von Hardenberg," *Historische Zeitschrift,* 264 (1997), pp. 613-654; Joerg Echterkamp, *Der Aufstieg der deutschen Nationalismus* (Frankfurt, 1997).; and Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*.(New York, 2000).

[429] Helga Schultz, "Mythos und Aufklaerung: Fruehformen des Nationalaaismus in Deutschland," *Historische Zeitschrift,* 263 (1996), pp. 31-67. Cf. Hagen Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat: Die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgruendung* (Munich, 1985); and Hans-Maartin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland. Die deutsche Nation im 18.Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 2000).

[430] Manfred Harnisch, "Nationalisierung der Dynastie oder Monarchisierung der Nation? Zum Verhaeltnis von Monarchie und Nation in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Buergertum, Adel und Monarchie. Zum Wandlr der Lebensform im Zeitalter der buergerlichen Nationalstaat*, ed. A. Birke etaAl. (Munich, 1989), pp. 71-92.

This mind-set was reinforced by a German intelligentsia that after 1800 had increasingly discovered the appeals of political community and as yet possessed little immunity to its negatives. "Nation," "people," "fatherland" were used interchangeably, in Prussian and in German contexts. Fichte's Reden an die Deutsche Nation (Speeches to the German Nation) were delivered in Berlin. Friedrich Schleiermacher issued his call for a Germany combining cultural identity and political patriotism from Prussia's capital. Professors and clergymen extolled the German fatherland from Prussian lecture halls and pulpits. That did not mean unreflecting endorsement of the Prussian model. Fichte, for example, eloquently denounced the contributions of Frederick William III to the catastrophe of 1806. Not for the last time, however, advocates of a German vision transcending state boundaries and state loyalties saw Prussia as a fulcrum in spite of itself. [431]

The cultural and intellectual mobilization nurtured by the reform movement fostered significant changes in gender identity as well. Middle-class males needed encouragement to accept a military service which that community on the whole rejected. Aufklaerung/Pietist/bourgeois ideals of family-oriented "gentle masculinity" attached little value to physical courage or prowess. Abstract promises of political rights in return for military service was likely to generate abstract responses among men who on an everyday basis had more obviously appealing things to do with their lives than risk them in battle. The process of modification involved a general redefinition of masculinity. Its previous foci had been intellectual, religious, and cultural achievements, increasingly in domestic environments: "hearth and home." Friedrich Wilhelm Jahn, "the Father of Gymnastics," began by asserting that

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[431] Karen Hagemann, "Federkrieg. Patriotische Meinungsmobilisierung im Preussen in der Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Krieges," : in *Kommunikation und Medien in Preussen vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts,* ed. B. .Soesemann (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 281-302; and Otto W. Johnson, *The Myth of a Nation:Literature and Poitics in Prussia Under Napoleon* (Columbia, S.C., 1989).

recovering Germany's language and culture could only be achieved by a reassertion of physicality in broad public contexts, from "power walking" to competitive games.[432]

The concept has its clearest resonance among the bourgeoisie, but its popularity with young men transcended social class. Physicality's relationship to military service developed quickly in the years prior to the Wars of Liberation, in the context of the corresponding development of a general ideology of revenge on France discussed below. Male courage and male duty were expressed in terms of service under arms. [433] This pattern permeated a Jewish community where numbers of acculturated, urban young men volunteered for service despite a persistent hostility depicting them as "outsiders" to the wider Prussian and German national communities. For 60 years afterward Prussian Jews furnished sons to the draft as proof of acculturation in a society where normality was a moving target.[434]

The connection of masculinity with soldiering found literary expression as well. Goethe's Young Werther had been for a quarter-century the archetype of the labile male who defines himself by his paralyzingly exquisite sensitivity, to a point where suicide is preferable to action. That model was increasingly challenged and displaced by action-focused prototypes, best illustrated in the works of Theodor Koerner. Born in Dresden, his literary achievements secured him a place as court poet in Austria. In 1813 he joined the war against Napoleon in a volunteer unit, the Luetzow Freikorps, whose men swore allegiance to Germany.[435] His patriotic poetry depicted war as a means of self-realization and self-fulfillment through sacrifice for a great

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[432] Gerhard Stoecker, *Volkserziehung ind Turnen:Wuntersuchung der Grundlagen des Turnen von Fr. L. Jah*n (Schondorf, 1971).

[433]Cf. Karen Hagemann, *"Mannlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre." Nation, Militaer und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preussens* (Paderborn, 2002, p. 255 ff.; and Anne Charlott-Trepp, *Sanfte Maennlichkeit:und selbststaendige Weiblichkeit* (Goettingen, 1996).

[434] Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Heer. In Preussin im fruehen 19. Jahrhunde*rt *Tuebingen, 1968).

[435] Cf. Peter Brandt, "Einstellungen, Motiven und Ziele von Kriegsfreiwilligen 1813/14: Das Freikorps Luetzow, " in *Kriegssbererritschaft und Friedensordnung in Deutscakand:1800-1814,* ed. J. Duelffer (Muenster, 1995), pp.21-33.

cause: "the soldier not as citizen but as artist"—with himself the subject. Koerner's own heroism, culminating in his death in combat, made him a model for the "heroic youth" of the middle classes who became the archetype of the *Befreiungskrieg* [war of liberty]. [436]

That archetype was further refined by its expression in familial contexts. In France the soldier's familial role was an aspect of defending *la patrie*, whether republic or empire. Its popular portrayals emphasized collective contexts: recruits leaving home as a preliminary to their integration into the army. In Prussia that imagery was reversed. German popular representations were domestic and patriarchal, centering on the father blessing his son or sons as they depart for war. The mother wears an expression of mixed pride and concern. In various backgrounds grandparents look on approvingly. Younger brothers look on admiringly. Teenage sisters busy themselves with presumably supportive needlework. The bible is on the table; patriotic artifacts ordain the walls. Unlike their French counterparts these young men will not be entering a community of arms. They will create that community by their service and their sacrifice. [437]

The image is strongly gendered, but not gender-exclusive.   It assigned aristocratic and middle-class women in particular proactive, public roles heretofore discouraged by religion and culture alike. In general these were extensions of maternal, supportive functions: knitting items of personal clothing; cutting back domestic expenses; donating jewelry; collecting money; performing auxiliary nursing duties; seeing to the welfare of the families mobilized artisans and peasants left behind. The general emphasis of these contributions was maternal: Prussian womanhood collectively nurturing their sons. But public support of men marching to war was

[436] Reic C. Kollman, *Theodor Korener. Militaer u. Politik* (Munich, 1973).
[437] Karen Hagemann, "The Military and Masculinity: Gendering the History of the Revolutionary and Napoleonoic Wars," in *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775-1816,* ed. R. Chickering, S. Foerster (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 331-352.

also a major element, especially in towns with garrisons and located on marching routes. A flower or a kiss freely given did not mean automatic social derogation. [438]

The Makings of Revolt

Political or cultural, the reform initiatives did not take place in a vacuum. Though formal French occupation ended with the Treaty of Tilsit, actual withdrawal of the troops took time. Even then Prussia was literally surrounded by French clients and satellites, including the particularly unwelcome Grand Duchy of Warsaw, created at Tilsit. Nor was the concept of recovering status by cooperating with France an obviously forlorn hope. For at least a decade before 1806, the dominant French position had been that Prussia was better conciliated than fought. Prussia for its part remained cool, neither closing doors nor walking through them. Neutrality was rewarded in 1802 at the Peace of Lunéville by extensive territorial gains in northern Germany When French troops overran the Electorate of Hanover in 1803, French diplomats followed established precedent in suggesting that Prussian patience would be well rewarded. And in fact Prussian troops occupied Hanover in October, 1805, as the French withdrew expeditiously.[439]

Hopes of at least moving towards something approximating the pre-Jena war relationship were shaken from the beginning by the nature of the French occupation. Suffice it to say that behaviors and attitudes from the Emperor down to unit quartermasters were those of long-term conquerors, not potential allies. The views of the rank and file were summarized in the aphorism

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[438] Karen Hagemann, ," Female Patriots: Women, War and the Nation in the Period of the Prusssian-German Anti-Napoleonic Wars," *Gender & History,* 16 (2004), pp. 296-424.
[439] Philip G. Dwyer, "Politics of Prussian Neutrality," *German History*, 12 (1994), pp. 251-272.

"want-take-have"—a pattern exacerbated as Prussia even in the post-Tilsit years remained a highway for soldiers moving across the Empire.

Any remaining optimists considering a French connection had only to consult statistics. The Treaty of Tilsit reduced Prussia's territory by half, its population from 10,000,000 to a little over 4,500,000. In an era when land and people were the touchstones of prosperity and power, Napoleon's intentions could hardly have been more obvious. Should believers still exist, the growing numbers of officials unpaid or dismissed, the growing numbers of bankrupt businesses and estates, suggested not temporary crisis but permanent catastrophe—if allowed to continue. [440]

The reforms initiated in 1807-8 did little either to focus French suspicion or to alleviate public malaise. Anti-French sentiment was high, but essentially verbal and increasingly routine in the minds of the French agents omnipresent in what remained of Prussia. The state-initiated changes, by adding financial burdens and challenging traditional values, only enhanced popular angst and alienation. In such contexts any thoughts of a general uprising in the short term were pure abstractions. [441]

In spring 1809, Austrian Foreign Minister Philipp Stadion transformed his long-nurtured project of a vengeance war against France into military action. From Stein and Scharnhorst downwards, influential ministers and generals coalesced into an active war party. But Stein's exhortation that "it is more glorious…to fall with weapons in hand than patiently to allow

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[440] Karen Hagemann, 'Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography." *Central European History*, 39 (2006), 589-592. For the growing antagonism generated on Baden, Wuerttemberg, and Bavaria by Napoleon's state of permanent occupation see cf. Uthe Planert, *Der Mythos vom Befreiungskrieg. Frankreichs Kriege und der deutschenSueden: Alltag-Wahrnehmung-Deutung 1792-1841* (Paderborn, 2007).

[441] Echterkamp, *Aufstieg der deutschen Nationalismus)* pp. 167 ff.

ourselves to be clapped in chains" was outweighed by Frederick William's dry observation that "a political existence, be it ever so small, is better than none" The force of Stein's rhetoric was further diminished by its delivery from exile in Austria, where he had fled after being declared an enemy of France by Napoleon, At the time the emperor, completing what seemed the conquest of Spain, barely considered Prussia as a potential nuisance. [442]

Not surprisingly, Frederick William concluded that to sit tight was the best option. Prussia remained neutral. A few unofficial outbursts culminated when Major Ferdinand von Schill took his hussars on a "long ride" from history into myth and legend in a vain attempt to incite a rebellion that never happened. Schill died fighting. Eleven of the officers who followed him faced firing squads. For reformers and resisters Schill's expedition to nowhere was a warning and an encouragement: next time systematic, comprehensive preparation would be necessary. The conciliators for their part were able to derive only the negative comfort that things could always get worse. [443]

That prospect came true as Napoleon prepared his apocalyptic invasion of Russia.[444] Well before the campaign began Prussia became a concentration zone for an army whose collective behavior reflected the worst of a hardened *soldateska* on one hand and poorly trained, ill-disciplined levies on the other. Seed grain disappeared into *Grande Armee* haversacks. Where horses were not forthcoming, peasants were harnessed in their stead. On 24 February 1812, Frederick William concluded, at diplomatic pistol-point, one of history's more one-sided alliances with France. Napoleon required Prussia to furnish 30,000 men, and that was only the

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[442] Allen Vann, "Habsburg Policy and the Austrian War of 1809," *Central European History*, 7 (1874), pp. 219-310; Stamm-Kuhlmann, *Melancholiker auf dem Thron* ppp. 304.

[443] Sam A. Mustafa, *The Long Ride of Major von Schill. A Journey Through German History and Memory* (New York, 2008).

[444] ' The following narrative is based on Hagemann,, "Occupation," pp. 593-694; Bernd von Muenchenow-Poehl, *Preussen Zwischen Reform und Krieg,pp.* 94-ff. ; and Ibbeken, *Preussen 1807-1813*, pp. 376 ff. Cf. Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussioan Reform, 1807-1815* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 155 passim.; and Theodor Schiemann, "Die Wuerdigung der Konvention von Tauroggen," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 84 (1900), pp. 210-243.

beginning. Over 700,000 tons of flour, well over 1,000,000 tons of forage, 6,000.000 bushels of oats, 15,000 horses,44,000 oxen, and not least 2,000,000 bottles of beer and the same amount of brandy was the material price of the French connection. The moral and political price was whatever shreds of credibility and honor remained to a kingdom whose very title had become a joke and a reproach.

Reports of French defeats were received with corresponding enthusiasm. When the remnants of the invasion force straggled into East Prussia, a peasantry left with "nothing but eyes to weep" took revenge with flails and scythes. Tavern brawls spread into the streets as fists and clubs gave way to knives. Napoleon's response was to request more men and supplies from the Prussian government. Despite increasing pressure from within the administration to denounce the alliance, Frederick William favored great-power negotiations at least as an interim approach. The royal hand was forced, however, when the commander of the Prussian auxiliary corps serving under French colors negotiated an armistice allowing Russian troops to enter Prussian territory. The go-between was none other than Clausewitz, who like a number of other Prussian officers had chosen Russia's side against Napoleon.

The Prussian contingent had fought well on the northern flank of Napoleon's drive on Moscow. It had also distinguished itself by refusing to cheer the emperor when he inspected them. Disaffection among the officers was rife, and it metastasized among the rank and file when a French retreat left the Prussians isolated. Hans David von Yorck, commander of the Prussian contingent, was identified with the reform movement as a tactical progressive. He was also socially conservative to his fingertips and correspondingly loyal to the concept of the monarchy. And in the waning days of December 1812 he faced a choice: seek to break through to the west, or negotiate with the Russians for the sake of his men—and for a wider cause as well.

The Convention of Tauroggen was an act of mutiny and treason justified it by appealing, cautiously and in circumlocutions, to the authority of the Prussian "nation" – and by challenging Frederick William to "breathe life and enthusiasm back into everything" by allowing Yorck to engage "the true enemy."[445] Frederick William reacted by relieving Yorck of his command—but the Russians blocled the missive's delivery. Yorck remained a central figure as in Tauroggen's aftermath East Prussia slipped into de facto insurrection. This time words were underwritten with the raising of a local militia based on universal service—Jews included.

Despite his enduring fear of Napoleon, despite his visceral desire to remain on good terms with France, Frederick William also began moving in the direction of resistance. He left Potsdam for Breslau in response to rumors the French intended his arrest. He recalled Scharnhorst from retirement. He authorized raising volunteer "free corps." Not until the end of February, however, did Prussia's king finally commit to changing sides--in return for Russian guarantees of the approximate restoration of the 1806 frontiers, and compensation for originally-Polish territory to be included in Russia's new client Kingdom of Poland. Prussia declared war on Napoleon on 16 March. The royal address "To My People" on 17 March simultaneously defended the previous policies of caution and called for a general uprising against the French. Frederick William went even further in his 25 March Proclamation of Kalisch, in which he joined Tsar Alexander of Russia in proclaiming support for a united Germany.

These and similar, lesser bridge-burning gestures reflected Frederick William's growing fear of Russia, whose troops were flowing into East Prussia in ever greater numbers. They were a response as well to William's no less significant fear of being swamped by an apparently irresistible tide of enthusiasm from below. But how was the general uprising proclaimed with such apparent boldness to be conducted and constructed? The "Order on the Organization of the

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[445] The letter is reprinted in Schiemann, pp. 229-232.

Landwehr," also issued on 17 March, made service in this new force obligatory for every male between 17 and 40. A month later a second edict established a home guard, the Landsturm-- whose officers were to be elected, albeit from selected social and professional groups. Put together the two documents offered at least the potential matrix for a movement that might, in the pattern of revolutionary France, sweep away what remained of Prussia's old order and its still-embryonic structure of reforms. A "war of books" began as a tide of patriotic, nationalist, warmongering publications, long dammed by censorship, flooded Prussia – with the full support of authority and authority figures. Poems, songs, and sermons underwrote the call to arms. [446]

Prussia's actual strategy was far more measured. Its essence, as the Sixth Coalition against Napoleon emerged and the campaigning season approached in spring 1813, was to position Prussia to best advantage in the coalition. This in turn involved striking balances on two levels. One was between the rhetoric and reality of Prussia as the focal point of a war of German liberation and a participant in an alliance of monarchies committed ideologically to quenching that kind of popular enthusiasm. The other involved establishing Prussia as a fulcrum between the new coalition's principal players: a Russia whose ruler had his own semi-hegemonic ambitions and considered Prussia a junior partner bought and paid for; an Austria that came on side slowly and reluctantly, and trusted Prussia not at all; and a collection of small German states, recent allies of Napoleon, who trusted Prussia even less because the compensation Russia offered Prussia for its lost Polish territory was — the kingdom of Saxony. And if one of Napoleon's erstwhile German allies was to be thus sacrificed to Tsar Alexander's New European Order, what might the rest expect once the fighting ended?[447]

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[446] Cf. Dorothea Schmidt., *Die preussische Landwehr. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Allgemeine Wehrpflicht in Preussen, zweischen 1813 and 1830* (Berlin [DDR], 1981); Hagemann,, *Maennlicher Muth*, pp. 396 ff.
[447] The literature on the military and diplomatic aspects of the campaigns of 1813-1814 is vast and still growing. Best in English among t of the new overviews are Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon* (New York, 2009), pp.

Key to the policy aspects of this compound conundrum was Kark von Hardenberg. Prussia's Chancellor since 1810. His initial focus had been on domestic issues. But he retained his connection to the reform movement, and played a significant behind-the–scenes role in Frederick William's decision to switch sides. For the next two years he would prove a no less astute diplomat,   Austria's formal accession to the coalition in August 1813 represented a welcome reinforcement, albeit still a potential one of troops and funds. It also established a counterweight to Alexander in the person of Foreign Minister Clemens Mettrnich. As the two worked to outmaneuver each other in a conflict that became as much personal as political, Hardebnerg feared both becoming a Russian client and an Austrian catspaw, brokered, shifted, and juggled to secure Prussia's role as makeweight — a suitably compensated make weight. The prize of Saxony never left his mind. Achieving it at minimal diplomatic cost was the rub.

Frederick William, whose congenital caution quickly reasserted itself, was even less willing to be caught between Russian and Austrian millstones, even at the price of a negotiated peace with Napoleon. The king and the chancellor, however, agreed on Prussia's best card in the diplomatic game. That was the Prussian Army. Throughout the campaign of 1813-1814, it proved both a formidable instrument of war, and sufficiently institutionally flexible to keep from bursting at the seams. The concept of a "people's rising," a Volkserhebung, had never been popular among the soldiers. After Schill's fiasco, it seemed mere fustian and bombast. A people's army, a Volksheer, was another matter. The images of the new-model Prussian soldier developed in 1807-08 had been increasingly translated into realities.   Half of each Prussian infantry regiment was trained as light infantry — the highest proportion of any army in Europe.

285-520: and Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars. An international History, 1803-1815* New York, 2007), pp. 490-530. Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-184*8 (Oxford, 1994), is superb in presenting and contextualizing the diplomacy of the period. Enno E. Krahe, *Metternich's German Policy,* vol. I, *The Contest With Napoleon, 1799-1814 (* Princeton, 1963) is solid for details from its protagonist's perspective.

As embodied in the new drill regulations for all arms issued in 1812, Prussian tactics were now based on the close coordination of skirmishers to wear down an enemy by extended fire-fights and small, flexible columns that sought out weak spots and developed opportunities for a final combined-arms thrust. [448]

These were tactics fill-suited for striking decisive, independent blows in the context of the increasingly-massive forces that marched and fought across Germany and into France. Leipzig, "the Battle of the Nations," on 16-19 October 1813, involved over 600,000 men. Not until World War I would that number be exceeded. The army corps was increasingly giving way to the field army as the basic unit of combat and maneuver.[449] Only first-rate troops, moreover, could be trusted to display the shaping intelligence evoked by the reformers: to deploy as skirmishers, withdraw, rally, and return now in line and now in column, as the tactical situation changed. Partial mobilizations beginning in January 1813 brought Prussia's active army to a strength of approximately 65,000 in March: serving soldiers, reservists of all kinds, and some volunteers. These were the state's main contribution to the spring campaign that ended in an armistice on 4 June. They made a consistently favorable impression on friend and foe alike with their skill in skirmishing and marksmanship, particularly in the hard-fought early engagements of Luetzen and Bautzen.[450] But there were relatively few of them, and they were a wasting asset.

By the time hostilities resumed in autumn each active regiment had formed a duplicate reserve regiment. The bulk of Prussia's contribution, however, came from the 113,000 Landwehr more or less ready for field service. In the "core provinces" of Old Prussia, Neumark, Kurmark,

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[448] Walter, *Preussische Heeresreformen 1807-1870*. pp. 271-143-166 235-324, is state of the art in scholarship and reasoning. Dennis E. Showalter, 'The Prussian Landwehr and its Critics, 1813-1819," *Central European History* 4 (1971), 3-33, remains useful. Underlying the academic analysis is the mine of detailed institutional information in Grosser Generalstab, *Der preussische Armee der Befreiungskrieg,* 2 vols. (Berlin, 1912-1920).

[449] On this point see Robert M, Epstein, "Patterns of Change and Continuity in Nineteenth-Century Warfare," *The Journal of Military History*, 56 (1992),375-388.

[450] Cf. George Naaziger, *Luetzen and Bautzwn. Napoleon's Spring Campaign of 1813* (Chicago, 1992); and Peter Hofsschroer, *Luetzzen and Bautzen 1813: The Turning Point* (Oxford, 2001).

Pomerania, East Prussia, enrolling Landwehr had faced few difficulties. Between the Vistula River and the Russian border, where the French presence had been most oppressive, almost half the men between 16 and 45 entered service in the first ten months. Elsewhere enthusiasm was less marked. Ethnic and religious differences in Silesia and West Prussia made willingness to serve so low that it was frequently inspired at bayonet point.

The regional differences were sufficient that most Landwehr recruits were chosen by lot. That method had been used to implement the cantonal system, and was correspondingly familiar and acceptable. Particularly in rural areas, moreover, enough behind-the-scenes finagling took place to ensure that high proportions of the men selected were socially expendable: young, poor, and restless enough to see the army as, if not a means of liberty, at least as a new form of servitude.

Once sworn in, Prussia's new defenders accepted their situation with a minimum of overt complaint despite a general lack of everything from boots to muskets. Acculturation was facilitated by a system of local recruiting that as far as possible kept men with friends, neighbors, and relatives and placed local officials, landowners, and professional men in immediate command. It may be reasonably suggested that the war propaganda intended for the bourgeoisie had some secondary effect among the peasants and artisans of the Landwehr. Even more likely is that the religious sentiments noted as present in the Seven Years' War were invoked in this later conflict both to underwrite endurance and to inspire bloodthirstiness. [451] Certainly the evidence indicates that despite a lack of training the Landwehr demonstrated in the war's early fighting a level of ferocity that at times shocked the older professional officers who exercised its company and battalion commands.

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[451] Cf. Mebius, 106 ff.; Hagemann, *Maennlicher Muth*,, 271 ff.

The rapid numerical expansion after the summer Armistice of Plaeswitz, nevertheless diminished operational effectiveness. Units themselves, often newly raised, were milked for cadres for even less experienced formations, then brought back to strength .by officers and men untrained in the new methods, and often in any methods at all. The increasing tendency towards mass that characterized Prussian tactics as the Wars of Liberation progressed in good part because of limited ability at brigade and battalion levels to execute the sophisticated combination punches of a tactical concept originally designed to maximize the effectiveness of a numerically limited force.[452]

Nor was the command structure exactly a band of brothers. There had been neither time nor opportunity to produce a new cadre of general officers. Most corps and brigades were led by men in the post-Frederician mold: Friedrich von Buelow, Boguslav von Tauentzien, and Yorck himself. Fundamentally they saw the cause of Prussia's defeat, at in 1806 as the result less of structural problems than specific defects, and were increasingly critical of the more committed reformers' ideas of recreating state and society from the ground up. The stresses of campaign and battle periodically transformed tensions to flash points, and absorbed will and thought better focused on Napoleon. [453]

Considered in a comparative perspective, however, the picture looks different. Austria was consistently unwilling to commit its forces to high-risk operations. The Russian contingent was tough and willing, but was far from home, short of replacements and supplies, and on the

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[452] Andrew Uffindell and Andrew Roberts, *The Eagle's Last Triumph: Napoleon's Victory at Ligny, June 1815*, new ed. (London, 2006) is an excellent case study of the Prussian army in action from an opponent's perspective and demonstrates the point. It should be noted that the Lanswehr veterans of 1813-1814 were not required to serve in 1815.
[453] Michael Leggiere, *Napoleon and Berlin:The Franco-Prussian War in North Germany* (Norman, OK., 2002); and *The Fall of Napoleon, 1813-1814*, vol. I, *The Invasion of France* (Cambridge, 2007), contextualize the Prussian Army's operational effectiveness. I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Leggiere's courtesy in allowing me to read a prepublication draft of the forthcoming second volume, *The Eagle and the Cross. Napoleon and Prussia: The Struggle for Germay in 181*3, an outstanding work focusing on the Prussian army's structure and performance during the1813 campaign.

edge of being fought out. Troops from German states recently part of the French imperium were uncertain just where best to point their guns. In operational matters the Allied high command was consistently divided and indecisive. [454]

The Prussian Army might not been as formidable as its Frederician predecessor. Operating within a coalition held together by the lowest common denominator of defeating Napoleon, however, it was at the cutting edge of effectiveness and fighting spirit. Its tone was set in Allied councils by Marshal Gebhardt von Bluecher, a fierce old soldier whose character and behavior harked back to the Thirty Years' War and prefigured the Erwin Rommels and Walther Models of a later century. [455] No one ever accused Bluecher of having any more social polish or strategic insight than he actually needed, but he led from the front. "Marshal Forward's" rough tongue, his unfailing courage, and his straightforward sense of honor inspired the inexperienced conscripts who filled the ranks of both the army's line regiments and the Landwehr that became the line's stablemate as the war went on.

Bluecher knew only one way of making war: fight without letup. This mind-set was shared by Gneisenau, his chef of staff–an early and defining example of the kind of intergenerational collaboration Scharnhorst had sought to generate. Neither was popular with their allied counterparts. The Austrian chief of staff, the future Field Marshal Joseph von Radetzky, described Gneisenau as being in the pay if foreign powers. [456] Even Frederick William considered him dangerously reckless. But by the turn of the year, with Allied troops poised to strike into France, both the King and Hardenberg had been sufficiently impressed by the semi-

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[454] See Robert M. Epstein, ""Aspects of Military and Operational Effectiveness of the Armies of France, Austria, Russia and Prussia in 1813," in *The Projection and Limitations of Imperial Powers, 1618-1850*, ed. F. C. Schneid (Leiden, 2012), pp. 122-148.

[455] Roger Parkinson, *The Hussar General. :Life of Bluecher, Man of Waterloo* (London, 1975), has no scholarly pretensions but compensated by generally reliable data.

[456] Leggiere, *Fall of Napoleon*,vol. 1, 29.

reformed army's performance that they agreed on it as Prussia's trump card. That Hardenberg was more willing than his monarch to play it was a matter of detail. Even though at times by default, it was Prussia that took a consistent lead in demanding action as well as negotiation. It was Prussia that reminded its coalition partners that peace was contingent on victory, and victory depended on preserving unity, Ultimately even Frederick William agreed that Napoleon must be deposed.[457] And during the coda of the Hundred Days it was Prussia, personified once more by Bluecher, fulfilling the spirit as well as the letter of alliance to pull the Duke of Wellington's chestnuts from the fire of Waterloo and transform "a damned near-run thing" into a decisive victory. [458]

In these contexts the smooth and rapid integration of Prussia into the new German Confederation stands among the least logical consequences of the Vienna settlement. The common thread of policy recommendations across the political and ideological spectrum during the Wars of Liberation had involved Prussia developing as a European power in a German context—in other words, recovering the status won by Frederick the Great, only with a new foundation. After 1815, moreover, however, Prussia depended on an army of short-service conscripts brought to war strength by mobilized reservists. This was not a force well suited to policies of limited intimidation. Its similarity to the French levee en masse, combined initially with Prussia's image elsewhere in Germany as a focal point for "progressive" forces, including nationalism, generated risk of Prussia being Europe's designated successor to Napoleon's France: an objective military threat combined with a destabilizing and unpredictable ideology.

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[457] Cf. Leggiere, *Fall of Napoleon;*,I' and Andrew Uffindel *Napoleon 1814: The Invasion of France* (Barnskey, 2009).

[458] Peter Hofschroer, overstates the case—but not by much–in *1815, The Waterloo Campaign,* 2 vols. (London, 1998-1999).

Reform and State Strategy in the Age of Metternich

Such a position Prussia was neither able nor willing to sustain. If Hardenberg favored the direct expansion of Prussian rule and Prussian control in northwest Germany, he also understood that expansion in a general context of cooperation, first with the small and middle-sized states and later with Austria, for the sake of strengthening the "German center" against both a rapidly resurgent France and a Russia whose messianic Emperor seemed to have no more sense of boundaries and limitations than Napoleon possessed. For the sake of that objective Hardenberg was willing to settle for part of Saxony, and to follow Metternich's lead in the aftermath of the Congress despite harsh criticism from disgruntled reformers and Prussian nationalists alike.[459] For a decade after Waterloo Prussia correspondingly and consciously assumed a facilitator's role in the Concert of Europe, the Holy Alliance of the three eastern empires, and the German confederation. Only with the revolutions of 1848 and their aftermath did Prussia's policy take a different turn. [460]

On the level of events, the key points of Prussia's state strategy in the aftermath of 1806 are relatively clear. Comprehensive military reforms were underwritten and sustained by wider social and political ones. When the state's hand was forced by Napoleon's disaster in Russia, the army became the fulcrum of a policy of opportunism: maximizing Prussia's position in Germany and Europe—but at limited risks and costs. This dichotomy, producing limited but acceptable direct results, reflected significant domestic disagreements on Prussia's identity and future. Initially mediated more or less successfully by the reasoned discourse of Aufklaerung, these

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[66] Philip Dwyer, "The Two Faces of Prussian Foreign Policy: Karl August von Hardenberg as Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1804-1815," in "*Freier Gebrauch der Kraefte." Eine Bestandsaufnahme der Hardenberg-Forschung*, ed. T. Stamm-Kuhlmann (Munich, 2001), pp. 75-91.

[67] Cf. Lawrence J. Baack, Christian Bernstoff and Prussia: Diplomacy and Reform Conservatism, 1818-1832 (New Brunswick, NJ, 1980) and from a more general perspective Helmut Rumpler, Deutscher Bund und deutsche Frage1815-1866: europaeischer Ordnung, deutsche Politik,und gesellschaftlicher Wandel im Zeitalter der buergerlich-nationalen Emanzipation (Munich, 1990)..

tensions nevertheless brought power to center stag3 in Prussia's state and society, first as reason's counterpoint, eventually as its supplanter . [461]

In consequence, the decisiveness of the events of 1806 for Prussia, Germany, and central Europe remain unquestioned at least among academicians The two thousandth anniversary of Jena/Auerstedt witnessed an explosion of scholarly publication,. Much of it focused on issues of gender and sexuality, public opinion and commemoration: the stuff of the new social history, broadly defined.[462] Running through Prussia's specific experience like a red thread, however, is the question of whether the "Napoleonic shock" was cause or catalyst of the reform movement that carried Prussia towards its fateful role in Europe.[463] The appropriate answer is "both." The Prussia that went to war in 1806 was not a failed state. The occupation and the Peace of Tilsit made it a defeated state. Prussia's internal resources and internal dynamics were, however, sufficiently developed to withstand Napoleon's efforts at state-breaking—efforts that in turn were limited by the effects of his wider ambitions.

The result was a galvanic effect, a salutary shock inviting some comparison to the US military/diplomatic recovery after Vietnam. That recovery also focused on the armed forces' reconfiguration, albeit in the opposite institutional direction-- professionalization rather than nationalization. It involved addressing and overcoming, at least to a degree, domestic malaise. It involved resuming an unapologetic place in international relations' executive game. The major difference, of course, is fundamental. Vietnam was a limited defeat in a limited war. The US endured occupation and exploitation only in apocalyptic fictions like the film "Red Dawn." Yet the kinds of fundamental disagreements on state and society that shaped Prussia's response to

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[68] Lothar Kittstein, *Politik im Zeitalter derRrevolution" Untersuchungen sur preussischen Staatlichkeit, 1792-1897* (Stuttgart, 2003), offers a similar perspective in far greater depth.
[69] Katherine Alestad and Karen Hagemann, "1806 and its Aftermath:Revisiting the Period of the Napoleonic Wars in Central European German Historiography," *Central European History*,29 (2006), pp. 547-579.
[70] Clark,, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 527.

1806 were—and are-significantly present in America as well. That story remains unfinished. And Clio has a well cultivated sense of irony.

VICTORY BY TRIAL AND ERROR
Britain's Struggle against Napoleon

On 15 July 1815, wearing the uniform of a chasseur of the French Army's Imperial Guard, Napoleon Bonaparte surrendered himself to Captain Frederick Maitland, commanding the British ship-of-the-line *Bellerophon* blockading the French Atlantic port of La Rochelle. His surrender finally concluded a war that, with one brief interruption, had consumed Great Britain for 22 years, and that ended by propelling her to a position of preeminence among the world's great powers that she would retain for more than a century.

There was no reason for British leaders to expect that happy result when, on 1 February 1793, France's revolutionary government declared war on Britain and Holland. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that the British government went to war against France with considerable reluctance.[464] Politically, the French revolution had divided the country, fracturing even the reformist Whigs. Economically, Britain was still recovering from the injurious effects of her unsuccessful eight-year effort to suppress American rebellion. Nor was there any great feeling of obligation toward France's deposed Louis XVI, the same Louis XVI who had helped defeat that effort. Conservatives such as Edmund Burke might rail against the French Revolution's excesses, and Britons like most other Europeans were shocked by Louis' execution and that of his queen. But few were interested in fighting to restore what even many British conservatives recognized as a corrupt and despotic Bourbon monarchy. All in all, as one writer put it, "So far as Britain

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[464] For a detailed albeit heavily editorial discussion of the political context preceding Britain's commitment to war, see Robert Harvey, *The War of Wars* (New York, 2006), chs., 11-14.

was concerned, every consideration of national self-interest warned her away from involvement in French affairs."[465] As the context of the war, the character of her enemy, and the interests at stake mutated during the course of the conflict, however, so also did the nation's war aims and her approach to achieving them. Britain's struggle against Napoleonic France thus offers a useful context in which to examine the wartime evolution of military strategy.

Any such examination, however, confronts the awkward problem that the term 'strategy,' with its connotation of a deliberately chosen scheme to achieve a well-defined aim, did not even appear in the English language until very nearly the end of the struggle. Nor was the deficit merely lexicographic. As one distinguished commentator insists, "there was never, in all the twenty-two years of war, any real attempt to think out the [strategic] implications of Britain's position."[466]

That may be too harsh a judgment. But it certainly is true that the absence in turn-of-the-nineteenth century Britain of anything resembling the elaborate analysis and decision processes upon which most modern states rely for defense policy formulation and regulation complicates the task, never easy in any case, of linking action retrospectively to strategic intention. Moreover, one must be wary of what David Hackett Fischer calls the historian's fallacy, in which contemporary reasoning is imputed to policy-makers operating in an earlier and much different cultural and political milieu.[467]

Those difficulties apart, there is the challenge of defining just what constitutes an effective military strategy. Of course, any victorious belligerent may claim to have pursued such a strategy based on success alone. But that definition surely begs the question. For starters, a sufficient

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[465] John M. Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder: British Foreign Aid in the Wars with France, 1793-1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), p. 1.

[466] A.D. Harvey, *Collision of Empires: Britain in Three World Wars, 1793-1945* (London, 1992), p. 114.

[467] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York, 1970), pp. 209–13.

power imbalance tends to render it trivial. Not many would attribute the Nazi's conquest of Poland in 1939, nor the U.S. overthrow of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega 50 years later to any special strategic cleverness on the part of the victors. Similarly, as the latter episode suggests, a conflict so limited that it begins and ends with a single engagement offers little scope for the sort of sequential shaping of action to intention that the word strategy connotes for most of us. That does not mean that such a contest has no strategic content, only that one must look for that content in the decision to fight and its consequences rather than in the manner in which the war itself was prosecuted.

Finally, there is the question whether the appraisal of strategic performance turns at all on how often and how extensively a nation at war, or even at peace, finds itself compelled to amend or abandon a chosen course of action. The question is anything but trivial, since, however prudent, every such alteration invites a penalty, if only by deferring achievement of the strategic aim. In many cases, of course – perhaps most – the developments prompting strategic adaptation may have been unforeseeable and/or unavoidable. Enemies may prove stronger than expected, allies weaker. Moreover, recalling a well-known military adage, even the cleverest strategy may find itself undone by battlefield defeat. During Britain's struggle against Napoleonic France, that unhappy event occurred more than once, for the British all the more frustrating inasmuch as the prompting defeats often were not their own. Indeed, one can argue that the real measure of strategic competence is precisely the willingness and ability to adapt with minimal cost and loss of strategic momentum to such unforeseen setbacks.[468]

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[468] Discussing the achievements of Prince Otto von Bismarck, Prussia's 'Iron Chancellor,' ranked by many historians among history's supreme strategists, Dr. Marcus Jones contends that "Bismarck's great genius…lay not in his adherence to a systematic program or plan, but in his expert navigation of uncertain events through intuition and broad experience." Marcus Jones, "Strategy as Character: Bismarck and the Prusso-German Question, 1862-1878," in Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, James Lacey, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy, Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 80-81.

However, even if effective strategy rarely permits, let alone requires, rigid adherence to a preconceived roadmap, neither can it sensibly be defined by choices made randomly or solely in reaction to events as they occur. Instead, a nation's behavior can be considered strategic only to the extent that it is guided by reasonably explicit and enduring aims and reflects some more or less systematic approach to achieving them.[469] Accepting as inevitable the need for strategy to adapt, therefore, in evaluating strategic effectiveness, the observer still has some obligation to try to determine to what extent that adaptation, however successful in the end, was impelled by avoidable errors of appraisal or choice. That the resulting adjustment may subsequently have redeemed those errors does not excuse ignoring the factors that produced them. On the contrary, especially where one can show the errors in question to have reflected recurring institutional or political proclivities, they are at the very core of the examination to which this project is directed.

Such an examination thus confronts several key questions: Who made what we would today call strategic decisions, and toward what end? How did they define their problem?[470] What alternative solutions, if any, did they consider? What induced them to adopt the courses of action they actually chose? And finally, with what result? Attempting to answer these questions with respect to every strategically relevant undertaking in a conflict as long and complicated as Britain's against Napoleon would require a much longer and more comprehensive treatment than this essay permits.[471] During the two decades in question, British and French military and naval forces collided in engagements large and small from the Baltic to the Bay of Bengal. Instead, it

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[469] Eliot Cohen has defined strategy as "the art of choice that binds means with objectives," requiring that priorities be established and actions sequenced in accordance with a theory of victory, a view shared by this author. Eliot A. Cohen, "In Afghanistan we have a plan – but that's not the same as a strategy." *The Washington Post*, 6 December 2009.

[470] Here understood to include, *inter alia*, the context, capabilities, and constraints limiting strategic choice.

[471] Two contemporary scholars who have attempted with considerable success to describe Britain's strategic behavior throughout the war are Christopher D. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-15* (Manchester, 1992) and Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1807-1815* (New Haven, 1996). Hall's work is more focused, Muir's more comprehensive. This essay relies heavily on both, together with J. W. Fortescue's dated but nevertheless indispensable *A History Of The British Army* (London, 1915) [hereafter Fortescue].

considers only three such episodes, each the product of a different British government at a different stage of the war and in a different geographic theater. Thus, distinguished one from another, collectively they illustrate at least some of the recurring impulses and difficulties influencing Britain's strategic behavior during its prolonged struggle with Napoleon Bonaparte.

Prelude

The first year of the nineteenth century found Britain weary of nearly a decade of war against revolutionary France. Having originally joined a contest in which Europe's other major powers already were engaged, with the intention of immunizing Britain against France's efforts to export its revolutionary zeal and preventing its domination of the Low Countries, British leaders had expected the war to be brief and inexpensive. Instead, apart from a string of British naval victories and mixed success in expeditions against French and later Dutch colonies in the East and West Indies, it proved a prolonged and expensive failure.[472] Accordingly, early in 1801, over the objections of foreign secretary William Grenville, the prime minister, William Pitt the Younger, began exploring the possibilities of a settlement with Napoleon, now First Consul and effective dictator of the French Republic. Following Pitt's resignation in February for reasons unrelated to the war,[473] his successor Henry Addington continued those negotiations, and after reaching preliminary agreement with Napoleon's agents in September, signed what became known as the Treaty of Amiens on March 25, 1802.

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[472] As Fortescue comments with respect to the campaign in the West Indies, "If the losses of the Army, Navy, and transports be added together, it is probably beneath the mark to say that twelve thousand Englishmen were buried in the West Indies in 1794…[British leaders] poured their troops into these pestilent islands, in the expectation that thereby they would destroy the power of France, only to discover, when it was too late, that they had practically destroyed the British Army." Fortescue, vol. 4, p. 385.

[473] Pitt resigned over George III's refusal to endorse Catholic emancipation in Ireland, to which Pitt and his followers had committed themselves. Grenville and other Pittite ministers followed suit.

Most historians doubt that the treaty ever had any real chance of enduring.[474] Notes one, "the peace must be put into context. It was never imagined to be a permanent peace."[475] Few attentive Britons at the time expected it to last, and some hoped it would not. Writing to his brother a month before the signing of the treaty, Grenville complained that "[i]t is a curious thing to hear him [Pitt] confess that our peace system is to cost as much as Defensive War – which is in other words that our peace is to be war, only without the power of defending ourselves or annoying our enemies."[476] Napoleon's subsequent correspondence suggests that he also expected war to resume, although apparently not as quickly as it did.[477]

In the meantime, both signatories played fast and loose with their treaty obligations. Napoleon refused to repeal France's wartime ban on British trade or return British property confiscated during the Revolution. Meanwhile he continued to gobble up additional territory, annexing Elba, Piedmont, and Parma, and in September 1802 re-invading Switzerland. For its part, the British government refused to evacuate Malta, required by the terms of the treaty to be turned over to the Knights of St John under Sardinian protection, while in Britain proper, indignation over the re-invasion of Switzerland was compounded by reformist angst at Napoleon's reinstitution of slavery in Haiti, both sentiments finding public expression in increasingly inflammatory editorials and cartoons.[478] Both parties thus contributed to the deteriorating diplomatic climate.

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[474] For the most negative view, holding that Napoleon agreed to the treaty in the first place merely to recover French colonial possessions and buy time to reconstitute French naval power, see Harvey, *The War of Wars,* chp. 42. Robert Markley offers a more nuanced appraisal in "Peace of Amiens 1801," (http://www napoleon-series.org/research/government/diplomatic/c_peace.html).

[475] Ibid. George III, for one, considered the treaty no more than an "experiment." Stanley Ayling, *George the Third* (London, 1972), p. 423.

[476] *Correspondence of Thomas Grenville with his Brother William Wyndham Grenville*, vol. 2 (ff. 373), 23 Nov 1790- 30 Dec 1808, British Library Ref. 41852.

[477] Fortescue, *vol.* 5, p. 193. See also Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. 103.

[478] Markley, "The peace of Amiens, 1801, ibid.

However one chooses to apportion responsibility, by spring 1803, matters had reached a head, and on May 2, Britain's ambassador asked for his passport. Two weeks later, after scarcely a year of peace, Britain and France once again were at war. This time, however, British leaders had no illusions about the difficulty of the challenge they were undertaking. Although, given Pitt's continuing parliamentary support, the decision to resume hostilities secured an overwhelming vote of confidence in the Commons, Whig leader Charles Fox, whose opposition to Britain's original commitment to war with France had split his own party, unleashed a scathing criticism of the government, while even longtime Pitt ally William Wilberforce complained that "we have been too apt to make ourselves principals in continental quarrels…and above all we have continued them too long."[479] Comments one historian, "To modern eyes the most immediate and wide-ranging shortcoming [of the renewal of war] was the absence of any formal, wide-ranging political unity with which to face the French threat."[480] Compounded by warring personalities, royal stubbornness, the deaths in office of two prime ministers, one of natural causes, the other by assassination, and a duel between two of Britain's ablest politicians, forcing both from office, that disunity would produce six successive governing administrations during the next 12 years, not one enduring more than three years and several considerably less.[481]

But if political unity left much to be desired, the popular commitment to the war during the years that followed rarely wavered. For that, British leaders largely could thank Napoleon himself, who, unlike revolutionary France's relatively faceless Directory, furnished a visible focus for public antipathy, just as Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolph Hitler would do a century later. The average Briton might not follow the twists and turns of a foreign policy that saw other

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[479] Harvey, *Collision of Empires,* p. 19.
[480] Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. 53.
[481] Addington's, one year after the resumption of war; Pitt's, on his return to office, two years; Grenville's, one year; Portland's and Perceval's, two and a half years each. Liverpool's ministry governed from June 1812 until 1827, but, excluding the interval between the first Treaty of Paris and the "100 Days," barely three wartime years.

European nations allies one year, enemies the next, and allies again the year after that. But he or she could readily fear and loathe the man believed responsible for making it necessary, especially one openly contemptuous of what he publicly disparaged as "a nation of shopkeepers."[482] In the British press after 1803, notes one writer, "cartoons and prints converged on a single portrait of Napoleon…diminutive, autocratic, haunted by his misdeeds and assassination threats and aspiring to power beyond measure."[483]

That antipathy only increased during the two years immediately following the renewal of hostilities, during which Napoleon seized George III's hereditary Electorate of Hanover virtually unopposed, declared French ports closed to British produce,[484] and began to assemble men and ships to launch an invasion across the Channel. Britain had endured invasion threats before, in 1796 and 1798, but the first had aimed at Ireland, and Bonaparte himself had aborted the second in favor of invading Egypt. Both in any case were relatively small in scale. The huge force assembling at Boulogne and other French and Belgian ports in 1803 and 1804 was quite another matter, especially inasmuch as regular British troops based at home when hostilities resumed numbered fewer than 70,000, of whom nearly 20,000 were stationed in Ireland.[485]

The Addington government's response to this threat was one of the most significant of the war, but less from a strategic than from a sociopolitical perspective. In addition to undertaking what one account describes as the most extensive fortification of the British coastline since the reign of Henry VIII,[486] in July, 1803, the Government introduced a bill amending the Defence of

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[482] Plagiarizing Adam Smith. See *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York, 1937), p. 579.

[483] Alexandra Franklin and Mark Philip, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain* (Oxford, 2003), p. 14.

[484] Anticipating the so-called Continental System established by the 1806 Berlin Decrees.

[485] Another 50,000-odd local militia, conscripted by ballot unless paying a substitute, were usable only for home defense.

[486] Franklin and Philip, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain,* p. 11. The program resulted in construction of more than a hundred "Martello" towers along Britain's southeast coast. Still others were built in Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel islands, and eventually in British possessions as distant as Canada, South Africa, and Australia. Not all

the Realm Act to permit recruiting volunteers for what today would be called a territorial auxiliary, to be employed in the event of invasion to harass and disrupt the invading force. In thus proposing to arm large numbers of ordinary citizens, British leaders were compelled to rise above the conservative dread of radicalism that had prevailed since the days of Cromwell, and that the French Revolution had only intensified. As Addington argued, "in these times, it is better to run the hazard even of the people making a bad use of their arms, than that they should be actually left in a state of entire ignorance of the use of them."[487] For once, both Pitt and Fox agreed, the king made no objection, and the proposed amendment thus passed without difficulty.

The public reaction was as overwhelming as it was unanticipated. "The government was faced with a tide of volunteering that they could neither ignore nor, seemingly, control."[488] By 1804, more than 400,000 volunteers had enrolled. Together with the addition of a second battalion to each regular regiment and improvements of the militia, by the end of that year, Britain arguably was in better condition to defend itself against invasion than at any time since joining the war against France more than a decade earlier.

In the event, of course, neither fortifications nor volunteers were needed. In summer 1805, prompted by renewed war with Russia and Austria, Napoleon shifted his attention and his army eastward. Then, on October 21, off Spain's Cape Trafalgar, Admiral Horatio Nelson virtually destroyed the combined French and Spanish fleets.[489] In the process, he also effectively destroyed any future threat of cross-Channel invasion.[490]

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approved, Pitt's former acolyte George Canning versifying derisorily, "If blocks can a nation deliver, two places are safe from the French: The one is the mouth of the river [Thames], the other the Treasury Bench." Harvey, *The War of Wars,* p. 422.

[487] Addington to Parliament, *The Times*, July 19, 1803, p.1. (http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/).

[488] Franklin and Philip, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain,* p. 13.

[489] Spain declared war on Britain in December 1804, in response to the Royal Navy's seizure of its annual treasure flotilla homeward bound from Spanish America, Pitt & Co. having judged an impoverished actual enemy to be less dangerous than a wealthy probable one.

[490] Although, as will be seen, fear of one would continue to afflict successive British governments until 1812.

But while the immediate threat subsided, the passions it had aroused did not, nor the antagonism toward its author. Even radical reformers no longer could pretend that the war was merely an excuse to enlarge Britain's commercial reach, or Napoleon the standard-bearer of a popular revolution, especially after he crowned himself emperor in December, 1804, then King of Italy in May, 1805. Neither could the fear and anger excited by the threat of invasion thereafter be pacified by arcane diplomatic objectives such as the restoration of a balance of power. The invasion threat of 1804-1805 thus transformed the war in a profound way; and although there would be additional efforts to seek a negotiated peace, a growing number of ordinary Britons were coming to share the conviction of many of their leaders that no settlement with France was conceivable that left Napoleon Bonaparte in power.

There remained the problem of how to defeat a military genius owning Europe's most powerful army, and who had almost contemptuously swatted down every major continental power daring to oppose him. In the end, the British government's central strategic problem was that of any maritime power confronting a continental adversary. As long as Britain maintained naval supremacy, she could count herself nearly immune from outright invasion. But without allies, she remained correspondingly helpless to confront Napoleon on the European mainland, where British seapower could not be brought directly to bear. From 1803 to 1814, six successive British governments sought an answer to that dilemma, in the process enduring the disappointing failure of three more anti-French coalitions, until at last, with Bonaparte's vital help, hitting on a successful military formula. Along the way, British troops found themselves fighting in overseas expeditions large and small from Copenhagen to Cape Town. It is with three of those expeditions that the remainder of this essay is concerned. Two resulted in embarrassing and expensive failures. The third ended with a British-led army on French soil, helping to earn Britain a seat at

the top table when, following Napoleon's abdication, the victorious allies sat down in Vienna to reconstruct a war-ravaged Europe.

British Strategic Decision-Making

Before examining those expeditions and their results, a few words may help to frame the decision-making milieu from which they emerged. As they do today, early nineteenth century British strategic policies resulted from a complex interaction among elected politicians, primarily but by no means exclusively members of the government charged with ministerial responsibilities; appointed bureaucrats; senior diplomatic officials, some resident in foreign capitals and others dispatched on special assignment; and military and naval commanders at home and abroad. In several ways, however, that interplay differed significantly from its modern successor.

The first such difference reflected the influence of the monarch. By 1803, George III had worn the crown for more than 40 years. For all his obsession with maintaining his royal prerogatives, he was widely popular among his subjects and, within the limits imposed by Britain's still evolving unwritten constitution, very much a hands-on ruler until 1811, when the mental illness that had afflicted him episodically since 1788 finally overcame him.[491] His influence was especially marked in the appointment of ministers – his contempt of Fox, for example, debarred the latter from ministerial office until the Grenville government of 1806 – and in his persistent opposition to Catholic emancipation, approval of which he insisted would violate his coronation oath. Above all, treating as literal the word "royal" in the formal titles of the army and navy, he insisted on active personal involvement in their administration and

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[491] Modern medical research now believes George's "madness" actually to have been a result of the blood disorder porphyria, probably hereditary, and possibly aggravated in its later stages by arsenic-infused medication.

employment, involvement that not infrequently demonstrated a good deal more thoughtfulness than that of his ministers.

A second and closely related difference lay in the character of turn-of-the-nineteenth century parliaments. Acceptance of rigid party discipline was still to come and intraparty schisms were common, especially when the views of party leaders and monarch collided. The Whigs in particular split outright over Britain's response to the French Revolution, with Fox and younger reformers such as Charles Grey sympathetic to the revolutionaries, while conservatives such as Edmund Burke strongly opposed them, as of course did the king. Hence, when Britain went to war with France in 1793, many of the party's luminaries defected, including the Duke of Portland and William Windham, soon to be Secretary at War. And while Grenville's short-lived ministry briefly re-united them, its collapse in 1807 revived the old divisions, helping no little to exclude Whigs from power for the next quarter-century.

Compared with today, in short, the effect of parliamentary indiscipline was less to moderate inter-party tensions than to magnify personal and policy disagreements within the government itself, making it that much more difficult to develop and pursue anything resembling a consistent strategy. Beholden more to their own parliamentary factions than to their ministerial colleagues, cabinet members were not loathe to agitate against each other, a practice only encouraged by a succession of relatively weak prime ministers. Perhaps the most egregious episode was the backdoor campaign waged in early 1809 by Foreign Secretary George Canning to engineer the removal of his war office colleague, Robert Stewart Viscount Castlereagh, an effort culminating in a duel that helped bring down the Portland government as well as the two combatants.

The third major difference between strategic policy-making then and now reflected the tyranny of time and distance. Hostage to horse-mounted couriers and sail-powered ships,

governments at the turn of the nineteenth century could exercise only the most fragile oversight of distant events. For example, to receive a report or dispatch an order between London and Lisbon, a distance of scarcely 1,000 miles, took weeks. Two-way communication with more distant stations such as the Cape of Good Hope could take months.

In the circumstances, close political oversight of remotely stationed soldiers and diplomats was impossible, and both perforce enjoyed a discretion that would astonish their modern successors. That broad discretion both offered advantages and imposed penalties. Among the advantages were a certain (although far from complete) insulation of overseas officials from London's periodic political scandals, and an understanding on the part of all concerned that policy directives must be formulated to allow for some looseness in interpretation and execution. More than once, that understanding permitted officials distant from London to ignore policy directives that events during the interval between dispatch and receipt had rendered infeasible or imprudent.

The principal penalty, of course, was London's utter inability to know for certain what its distant subordinates were up to until well after they were up to it, with the result that the cabinet occasionally found itself committed to a course of action to which it had had little or no input. Just such an episode prompted the first of the three cases examined in this essay.

A Most Astonishing Plan: Buenos Aires, 1806

The first decade of war had demonstrated conclusively that, while blockading the French coast and depriving France of her overseas colonies and their revenues could annoy Bonaparte and diminish the privateer threat to Britain's carrying trade, it could not seriously threaten a French

economy increasingly financed by Napoleon's continental conquests.[492] Indeed, soon after taking office in 1806, the new First Lord of Admiralty, Viscount Howick, complained to his cabinet colleagues that "While we are acquiring colonies, the enemy is subjugating the Continent."[493] At the same time, however, for Grenville, appointed prime minister after Pitt's death,[494] direct military engagement on the continent seemed no more promising. Disillusioned by the defeat and collapse of three successive anti-French coalitions, and exasperated by allies who, in Grenville's view, expected Britain to contribute more to their security, in financial terms at least, than they themselves were willing to invest, the government mocked by its detractors as a "ministry of all the talents" (or simply "the Talents") began by attempting to make peace with Napoleon and, when that failed, chose to disregard past experience and expend Britain's limited military resources on ancillary enterprises that contributed little to defeating the emperor.

In June, 1806, occurred one of the more bizarre such expeditions, the origins of which, still more its subsequent evolution, tell a good deal about the impulses driving, and frictions afflicting, British strategic behavior.[495] The story begins at the Cape of Good Hope, a Dutch colony seized by Britain in 1795 after the French conquest of Holland to prevent its use by the French to interdict Britain's maritime lifeline to India. Pursuant to the Peace of Amiens, Britain returned the colony to the Dutch, only to re-invade it in January 1806 following the resumption of war.[496] The easily achieved reoccupation left some 6,000 troops under Lieutenant-General David Baird largely unemployed, upon which his supporting naval commander, Commodore Sir Home Popham, persuaded him to release some 1,500 soldiers under Brigadier-General William

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[492] Austerlitz alone earned Napoleon the equivalent of £4 million in Austrian reparations. Ironically, a quarter of that probably was contributed – involuntarily – by Britain. Sherwig, p. 170.

[493] Harvey, *Collision of Empires,* p. 25.

[494] Pitt had returned as prime minister in May, 1804, but without Grenville, who refused to serve without Fox, to whom the king remained adamantly hostile. He died in office in January, 1806.

[495] The definitive account is Ian Fletcher, *The Waters of Oblivion: The British Invasion of the Rio de la Plata, 1806-07* (Stroud, Gloucester, 2006).

[496] The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 would award it permanently to Britain.

Beresford for an attack on the Spanish colonies along the Rio de la Plata in today's Argentina and Uruguay.

The origins of this ambitious project were peculiar, to say the least. According to Fortescue, it began as the brainchild of a Venezuela-born expatriate Spanish officer named Miranda, who apparently was in equal parts revolutionary, promoter, and rogue. In October 1804, he and Popham, whom he had met previously and who was both politically and commercially well-connected,[497] attempted to persuade Pitt, recently returned to office after a three-year hiatus, to authorize an expedition to liberate Spanish America, with a view to depriving Spain (and by extension Napoleon) of its revenues and offering British merchants long-coveted access to its resources and markets.[498]

Despite its authors' entreaties, the proposal went nowhere, Pitt at the time hoping that Russia might succeed in detaching Spain from its French alliance. However, in spring 1806, Pitt having died, and learning of the allied disasters at Ulm and Austerlitz, Popham convinced Baird that invading Spanish America would be a monument to Pitt's memory and an easy and inexpensive way to "add lustre to his Majesty's arms, distress our enemies and open a most beneficial trade for Britain."[499] Persuaded by Popham's argument (or, as critics later claimed, by his promise of two-thirds of whatever prize money might accrue from the enterprise), Baird agreed to release the troops, and after stopping briefly at St. Helena to embark a few hundred more men, the small expedition of six warships and five transports reached the mouth of the Plata in June. Following a brief debate between Popham and Beresford about where to land the

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[497] In fact, he was elected to parliament from the Isle of Wight in 1804, and again in 1806 and 1807, by no means the only serving officer of the day to enjoy such dual political and military status (Wellington was another).

[498] According to Fortescue, Miranda had tried three times earlier to sell the idea of fomenting revolution in Spanish America, in 1783, 1790, and 1796, but without success. Fortescue, vol. 5, pp. 311.

[499] Thomas Byrne, "British Army, Irish Soldiers: The 1806 Invasion of Buenos Aires" (http://www.irlandeses.org/ 1003byrne htm#1).

invading force, on the 25 June, the first British soldiers disembarked at Quilmes, some ten miles south of Buenos Aires.[500]

The subsequent defeat of the city's exiguous defenders was as quick and inexpensive as Popham had promised, not least because the British initially were welcomed by wealthy *Porteños* as liberators. That happy condition proved short-lived. Seizing the city's treasury following the flight of Spain's viceroy, Popham and Beresford promptly dispatched it to London.[501] Its arrival, paraded through the streets with great fanfare, caused a sensation; but most of Buenos Aires's citizens were infuriated by what Fletcher describes as an "act of almost Elizabethan buccaneering."[502] Their resentment only mounted with the repeal of the locals' monopoly on overseas trade and growing suspicion of Britain's intentions concerning the colony's political future. The invading force's initial welcome thus soon gave way to passive and active resistance. Meanwhile, Spanish troops that had escaped the city's surrender and others garrisoned elsewhere began assembling under the leadership of an enterprising Spanish naval captain, Santiago de Liniers, eventually reaching a strength of nearly 10,000. With his 1,600 British soldiers already overstretched to maintain control of an increasingly hostile population of 40,000, Beresford found himself in an untenable position, and on 12 August, he surrendered the city to Liniers on condition that his troops be repatriated.

Meanwhile, however, news of his original success had set commercial London afire. Perhaps anticipating official displeasure at his unsanctioned initiative, Popham had written to merchants in the City of London describing in glowing terms the new markets that soon would

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[500] The original plan called for landing at Montevideo. Popham insisted instead on going straight for Buenos Aires.

[501] Fletcher estimates the total take at a 1,500,000 Spanish dollars, or roughly £7,000,000. Baird was awarded nearly £24,000 in prize money, Beresford nearly £12,000. Popham had to settle for £6,000. Fletcher, *The Waters of Oblivion*, p. 18.

[502] Ibid., p. 4.

be opened to British commerce.[503] On 17 September, still unaware of Beresford's capitulation, the London *Times* editorialized rhapsodically, "We know not how to express ourselves in terms adequate to our ideas of the national advantages which will be derived from this conquest."[504] Given the general euphoria, the government had little choice but to make the best of Popham's *fait accompli*, and after ordering Popham home to explain himself,[505] dispatched Brigadier-General Samuel Auchmuty with 2,000 men to reinforce Beresford.

With the government's negotiations with Napoleon going nowhere,[506] even Grenville, previously no enthusiast for colonial expeditions, found himself caught up in the popular excitement, encouraged no little by William Windham, his secretary of state for war and the colonies.[507] Accordingly, with Grenville's approval, Windham ordered Admiral Sir George Murray to convey still another force of 4,000 men under Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd to seize Valparaiso, Chile, with a view ultimately to linking British conquests on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards. Not invariably generous to politicians, Fortescue declared this "one of the most astonishing plans that ever emanated from the brain even of a British Minister of War," adding caustically, "How it was to be effected, and how at the same time Valparaiso, Buenos Ayres, and Monte Video were to be occupied by a total force of six thousand men, the Minister did not explain."[508]

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[503] Richard Gott, "Bad day for the empire" (http://www. guardian.co.uk, Friday, 13 July 2007)

[504] Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. 145.

[505] Tried for leaving his station (at the Cape of Good Hope) without authority, Popham claimed at his court-martial that he had been authorized to act on his own initiative should Spain remain a belligerent, a claim that Fortescue does not entirely dismiss, noting that both Pitt and Melville at the Admiralty might have been "guilty of some indiscretion in their frequent conversations with Popham, for the enterprise was exactly of a nature to captivate their unmilitary minds." Fortescue, vol. 5, pp. 312. In the end, Popham was admonished but not cashiered, remained on active service, and in 1814 was promoted to rear admiral.

[506] Begun in April, almost immediately after Grenville took office, they would break down altogether in October.

[507] A.D. Harvey points out that Grenville did consult his elder brother, the Marquis Buckingham, who lacked any military experience, however; and Buckingham's protégé, then Major-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, who, though a veteran, was still very junior. Grenville notably forbore consulting his other brother Thomas, who just happened to be First Lord of the Admiralty. Harvey, *Collision of Empires,* pp. 116-17.

[508] Fortescue, vol. 5, pp. 375-6.

In the event, before Crauford could link up with Murray at the Cape of Good Hope, word reached London of Beresford's surrender. By that time, however, the government had publicly committed itself, a commitment only reinforced by Popham's grandiloquent promises to Britain's trading houses. Accordingly, the cabinet dispatched new instructions by fast ship directing Murray and Crauford to link up with Auchmuty and retake Buenos Aires, rescuing Beresford in the process. With Crauford and Auchmuty both considered too junior to command the combined force, in March 1807, Windham dispatched Lieutenant-General John Whitelocke to the Plata with 1,500 additional reinforcements to take command of a force that now would exceed 10,000 men.

Meanwhile, arriving at Rio de Janiero in December, 1806, and learning of Beresford's surrender, Auchmuty wisely decided to land his force at Maldonado, some 70 miles east of Montevideo, where reinforcements sent independently by Baird, arriving too late to save Beresford, had established an outpost. Concluding that he was too weak to recapture Buenos Aires, Auchmuty chose instead to attack Montevideo, carrying the city in a costly assault on 3 February 1807. There matters remained until Whitelocke's arrival on 10 May. Taking command, the latter thereupon mounted an attack on Buenos Aires itself remarkable chiefly for its ineptitude. After incurring more than 2,500 British casualties, it concluded ignominiously on 7 July with Whitelocke's virtual surrender, the British general agreeing in exchange for the return of captured British personnel to evacuate the vicinity of Buenos Aires altogether within ten days and Montevideo within two months.

So ended in humiliating failure one of the stranger episodes of a war that witnessed more than a few. News of the defeat, to say nothing of the speculative losses incurred by those who had invested on the strength of Popham's promises, produced a storm of public criticism. By that

time, however, the Grenville government was history. At the end of March 1807, with Fox dead, Windham discredited, Grenville himself worn out, and the administration overall condemned for what many justifiably considered its failure to either make peace or effectually make war, Grenville used the excuse of George III's continuing immovability on Irish Catholic emancipation to resign. The Talents thus were spared the direct fall-out of the Buenos Aires debacle.[509] In the end, of those who played a significant role in it, including the two military commanders who had instigated it, only the hapless Whitelocke, who returned home to be publicly reviled, court-martialed, and cashiered, paid personally for his part in a failure for which he alone scarcely was responsible.[510]

So much for the sequence of events. What insight, if any, does it offer concerning British strategic decision-making?

As for who made the vital decisions, the answer depends no little on the breadth of the aperture through which one examines them. In the narrowest sense, of course, the Buenos Aires expedition resulted from the venturesome initiative of two distant military commanders whose freedom from political supervision enabled them to commit their government to an enterprise that their superiors had not even contemplated, much less approved, for purposes in which their nation's interests and their personal aims are difficult to separate. Similarly, viewed narrowly, one can explain the government's decision, once advised of the expedition, to reinforce and even

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[509] Although it would continue to haunt them in opposition throughout the remainder of the war.

[510] The verbatim record of his court-martial, published in London in 1808 by S. Tipper, has been digitized and can be read on-line at http://www.archive.org/details/trialoflieutenan00whit. The cover page notes pointedly that "This is not the Case of an Officer on his Trial by Court-Martial for any one particular fact alledged [sic] against him, but it is the *first* Trial by Court-Martial, instituted to investigate into the Conduct of a General Officer, having the command of an Expedition against a foreign province." That disclaimer notwithstanding, it is hard to read the transcript without some sympathy for Whitelocke as a man both out of his depth and ill-served by superiors and subordinates alike. Comments Fortescue with uncharacteristic generosity, "If the indignant shade of Whitelocke still broods over the fortune of many British Generals who, though no less deserving of disgrace than himself, have escaped court-martial and cashierment, it may at least find consolation in the thought that the evacuation of South America after his defeat was a wise, true, and courageous service to his country." Fortescue, vol. 5, pp. 435-6.

enlarge it, as the product of commercial greed coupled with a desire to avoid political embarrassment, both magnified by the excitement aroused initially by Popham's report and subsequently by the arrival of Buenos Aires's purloined treasure.

More than anything else, however, the Buenos Aires expedition was a reflection of strategic drift. To operate on the Continent without powerful allies was out of the question, but given the collapse of three previous such coalitions, the Talents were profoundly reluctant to re-engage with – and perforce subsidize – Europe's other major powers. Thus, unable to make peace with Napoleon but unwilling to confront him on the only battlefield on which he could be decisively defeated, the Grenville government found itself reaching for any military alternative that might contribute to France's discomfiture.

It remains to ask whether the expedition ever had any real hope of succeeding, and if it did, whether success was likely to contribute in any significant way to Napoleon's defeat. Concerning the first question, the evidence is compelling that, even had Whitelocke succeeded in retaking Buenos Aires, his prospects for hanging on to it were poor. Notes one historian of the episode, "At no moment did the Talents ever seem to grasp that the British in Spanish America were regarded not as liberators but rather as another unwelcome set of outside rulers like the Spanish, and ones, moreover, seen as godless Protestants out for loot."[511] Even had that not been true, "it is questionable whether the commercial benefits would ever have been on the scale anticipated."[512] Nor, regarding the second question, would liberating Spanish America have done much more in any case to deprive Spain and its French ally of its shrinking revenues than Britain's naval dominance after Trafalgar already had assured.

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[511] Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. 147. The comment seems unfortunately all too contemporary.
[512] Ibid., p. 148.

Instead, in the end, Buenos Aires simply reconfirmed what previous British colonial operations already had demonstrated: that to defeat Bonaparte, means must be found to confront him on his own ground. The next case began as an effort to do precisely that.

A Long Agony: Walcheren, 1809

Grenville's successor was the Duke of Portland, the same Portland whose defection from Fox's Whig opposition to become home secretary at the very beginning of the war had led Pitt to establish the position of war secretary in order to keep Henry Dundas in the cabinet. Sixty-nine years old, in ill-health, and succeeding such commanding figures as Pitt and Grenville, Portland was bound to suffer by comparison. "Portland presided over a Cabinet he did not lead." Critics characterized his administration as a "government of departments," in which strategic direction was driven largely by ambitious young ministers with little adult supervision.[513] Accordingly, it is perhaps unsurprising that, in contrast with the Talents' South American adventure, launched without prior political approval by two remotely stationed commanders on their own initiative, the Walcheren expedition of July 1809, was largely devised by and carried out under the direction of a single minister, Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, Portland's secretary of state for war.

The roots of the expedition lay in Britain's on-again, off-again alliance with Austria. Notes another historian, "[t]he Austrian government had never been reconciled to its defeat in 1805, but

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[513] A criticism to which Spencer Perceval, Portland's chancellor of the exchequer, replied, not entirely unreasonably, that "It is not because the Duke of Portland is at our head that the Government is a Government of Departments, but it is because the Government is and must be essentially a Government of Departments that the Duke of Portland is at our head." Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder,* p. 184. Muir likewise claims that, at least where war policy was concerned, "Important decisions were usually made by the cabinet as a whole, not by individual ministers, and on a number of occasions…the relevant minister's own views were overruled." Instead, he argues, the most troublesome result of Portland's weak leadership was that "disputes could drag on for months before being decided." Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon,* p. 9.

it had felt too weak to join Prussia and Russia against France in 1806-7."[514] Then, in 1808, Napoleon invaded Spain, deposing its ruler in favor of his brother Joseph and prompting a nation-wide rebellion. By the beginning of 1809, with the French having been ejected by the British from Portugal and having more than 200,000 troops tied down in Spain, the Austrians were ready once more to try conclusions with Bonaparte, but desired Britain both to subsidize the effort and to fix French reserves that otherwise might be sent east by mounting a diversionary effort in the west, preferably in northern Germany.

Conveyed to the Portland government in spring 1809, the Austrian request arrived at a peculiar juncture, both strategically and politically. In January, in a preview of Dunkirk, General Sir John Moore's brief foray from Portugal into Spain had ended in a narrow escape at Corunna. A subsequent plan to reinforce Cadiz, still held by the Spanish, fell afoul of Spanish suspicions that only were aggravated by an attempt in February, at the behest of a diplomatically obtuse British military agent, to land British troops without the approval of Spain's Supreme Junta. Together, the two debacles materially dampened the government's enthusiasm for operations in Spain that had been aroused by the uprising of 1808. Instead, "[i]n the wake of the rebuff at Cadiz, it was by no means clear where in or beyond the Peninsula Britain would concentrate her military effort."[515]

Meanwhile, throughout the first few months of 1809, the Portland government was consumed less by strategy than by scandal. In January, accusations were leveled against the Duke of York, George III's second son and the army's highly regarded commander-in-chief, that he had allowed his mistress to peddle military commissions and appointments. Subsequent parliamentary investigation cleared the duke of personal involvement in the scheme, but the

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[514] Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon,* p. 81.
[515] Ibid., p. 82.

public embarrassment nevertheless prompted him to resign. The resulting political turmoil together with the bureaucratic confusion engendered by York's abrupt replacement at Horse Guards only further dampened interest in strategic discussion. In Fortescue's words, "The petty sordid details of the scandal – such is human nature – excluded all other considerations from the minds of the Commons, the press, and the public."[516]

It was into this nexus of military irresolution and political preoccupation that, at the end of March, Count Ludwig Walmoden, Austria's special envoy, returned to London to report that war with France was imminent,[517] and to renew Emperor Francis II's request for both a substantial financial subsidy and a diversionary British military commitment on the Continent.[518] Walmoden proposed three possible targets of such a diversionary effort: the Peninsula, where significant British ground forces already were deployed; Italy, from which Austria earlier had been evicted; or northern Germany between the Ems and Elbe rivers.

None appealed to the Cabinet. With respect to the Peninsula, while the Austrian plea doubtless contributed to the Cabinet's continued albeit nervous support of Sir Arthur Wellesley's operations in Portugal,[519] ministers were not eager to increase Britain's Iberian investment, particularly given the expected impact of the requested Austrian subsidy on an already troublesome shortage of hard money. As Fortescue explains, "the question…arose whether Wellesley's army should not be still further increased; whether, in fact, the whole strength of England should not be turned against that single point, for there could be no doubt of the

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[516] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 31.

[517] It actually began on 12 April with Austria's re-invasion of Italy.

[518] As Sherwig notes, the requested subsidy presented a serious problem for a government chronically short of hard money and already having difficulty meeting Wellesley's requirements. Nevertheless, through a variety of means, Britain eventually managed to pony up more than £1 million, the most yet contributed to an ally, though far less than the £5 million demanded. Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder,* pp. 208-13.

[519] Absolved of responsibility for the widely unpopular August, 1808 Cintra Convention, by which French troops in Portugal were repatriated unmolested, arms, loot, and all, and by British ships at that, Wellesley was reappointed to command of British Peninsular forces following Moore's death at Corunna.

effectiveness of such a diversion. In opposition to such a policy, however, stood the insuperable difficulty of finding specie to pay the expenses of the campaign."[520]

Italy presented a different problem. While British forces in Sicily were adequate to its defense, they were not nearly sufficient to invade Italy with any prospect of success, and with Austria proposing to go to war momentarily, the cabinet concluded that reinforcing them early enough to influence French dispositions on the Danube simply was infeasible. Instead, ministers contented themselves with urging British commanders in Sicily and the Mediterranean to cooperate with the Austrians with the means already at hand.

That left northwest Europe. The Austrians' suggestion of northern Germany had its attractions, not least the possibility of liberating George III's Hanover, and certainly would have the most immediate impact on French operations against Austria. But the objections were even stronger. As recently as 1805, an expedition intended for a similar purpose had sailed to Bremen only to be greeted by news of Austria's defeat at Austerlitz. Moreover, compelled to operate without the immediate support of a continental ally, any British force sufficient to effect the requisite diversion would need to be logistically self-sufficient, once again requiring hard currency. In the end, the government was unwilling to recommit a British army to northern Germany unless Prussia were willing to re-engage against France, which on the evidence was unlikely, King Frederick William refusing to confront Bonaparte again despite mounting pressure from his military leaders and advisors.

Instead, the ministers cast their eyes on an objective closer to home: the Low Countries' Scheldt estuary, French seizure of which was a large part of the reason Britain originally had

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[520] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 44. Moreover, were Wellesley's command enlarged to any significant extent, the king almost certainly would require appointment of a more senior commander, which, in addition to superseding Britain's most successful soldier, would embarrass a government with which the Wellesley faction in parliament was closely associated.

gone to war in 1793, and which, since Napoleon's construction of a major naval base at Antwerp, constituted what the Admiralty feared could become a potential invasion platform. In fact, Castlereagh had proposed invading the estuary shortly after taking office in April 1807, and had revived the suggestion a year later. Both proposals, however, had been overtaken by events on the Peninsula. Now, two years later, he circulated a detailed memorandum among his colleagues once again urging such an expedition and describing the supposed benefits to be derived from it, and on 18 April, without troubling to consult anyone but Portland, went so far as to proffer command of the expedition to the Earl of Chatham.[521]

The cabinet, however, were indisposed to approve out of hand an expedition that even Castlereagh conceded would virtually denude the homeland of active army strength outside of Ireland, and insisted on first consulting several military authorities, few of whom were as sanguine as Castlereagh. As one objected, "[a]gainst the destruction of the enemy's fleet at Antwerp, must be put the risk of the loss of the whole disposable force of the empire, and, with this addition to the comparison, that the risk may be suffered and the object not attained."[522] Perhaps reflecting that concern, George III's order appointing Chatham to command had a distinctly ambivalent ring:

You will consider that this conjoint expedition has for its object the capture or destruction of the Enemy's ships either building at Antwerp and Flushing, or afloat in the Scheldt; the destruction of the arsenals and Dockyards at Antwerp, Terneuse,

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[521] Lt-Gen. the Earl of Chatham, Pitt's elder brother and Master-General of the Ordnance, had been offered but had declined command in Portugal in 1808, claiming an inability for personal reasons to respond on the notice given.
[522] Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Gordon, "Memorandum upon the supposed practicability of destroying the French Ships and Vessels in the Scheldt, and in the arsenals at Antwerp" 31 May 1809, in Charles William Vane (ed.), *Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh* [Hereafter *Castlereagh Correspondence*], vol. 6 (London, 1851), p. 260.

and Flushing; the Reduction of the Island of Walcheren; and the rendering if possible the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war.

If the attainment of all the above mentioned objects should be rendered infeasible by the enemy collecting in such strength as to render perseverance inconsistent with the Security of the Army, you are in that case to use your utmost endeavor in concert with the officer commanding the Naval Force to secure as many of the objects as circumstances will permit; and so soon as the Service should be completed, or such part thereof as is attainable, you will take immediate measures for reembarking the Army and returning with it to England, leaving a sufficient force to maintain possession of the Island of Walcheren till our further pleasure should be signified.[523]

In other words, Chatham's orders urged him to be bold, but not too bold, and above all not to hazard the army. In a separate note, Castlereagh added, "His Majesty feels assured that his Army and Navy will vie with each other in giving effect to an enterprise than which none has been confided of greater importance to their united efforts [and] that the utmost spirit of concert and harmony will prevail throughout the whole of their operations."[524] Given the conflicting personalities of Chatham and his senior naval commander, Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, that was more prayer than prediction. All in all, it is little wonder that caution prevailed over audacity from the outset of the exercise.

In the event, between political scandal and the logistical challenge of assembling a joint army-navy force described by Fortescue as "incomparably the greatest armament that had ever

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[523] George III to the Earl of Chatham, July 16, 1809 (National Archives, WO1 - 191).
[524] Castlereagh to Chatham, 16 July 1809 (National Archives, WO1 - 191).

left the shores of England,"[525] it was 28 July before the expedition was ready to depart.[526] By then, defeated at Wagram three weeks earlier, Austria already was petitioning Bonaparte for an armistice, nullifying the principal objective of the expedition even before it began. Nevertheless, it went forward, at least in part because, as with the Buenos Aires expedition, so much public and political capital already had been invested in it.[527]

About the actual conduct of the expedition itself, little need be said.[528] As with Buenos Aires, initial success soon gave way to embarrassing failure. On 30 July, troops finally began landing on Walcheren, seizing several interior towns and the fort of Batz on the adjacent island of South Beveland. But the vital port city of Flushing, guarding the entrance to the Scheldt, held out against investment by land and bombardment by sea until 16 August, by which time, having been afforded more than enough warning, the French had withdrawn their naval squadron in the Scheldt to the protection of Antwerp's fortifications and had sufficiently reinforced the latter to make any successful attack upon the city itself virtually infeasible.

Meanwhile, Chatham's cautious advance on land coupled with the navy's inability to penetrate upriver in the teeth of worsening weather and French artillery soon shattered the army-navy harmony upon which Castlereagh had so confidently counted. By late August, with more

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[525] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 56. By the time it finally sailed, the expedition comprised more than 200 warships and some 40,000 troops. Ironically, it set out on the very day that Wellesley and Questa were meeting Victor at Talavera.

[526] Noted one writer, "It needs something more than 'the invincible loitering habit,' to which, in public affairs, at least, the British temper so easily leads itself, to explain this delay." William Henry Fitchett, *How England Saved Europe*, vol. 3 (New York, 1900), p. 104.

[527] There also was a contributing political undercurrent: personally hostile to Castlereagh and openly critical of his management of military affairs on the Peninsula, especially Moore's abortive venture into Spain, which Canning had bitterly opposed, Canning had surreptitiously been pressing Portland to replace him. Doing so in the prevailing political climate threatened to split the cabinet, however. Since the Walcheren expedition was largely Castlereagh's project, allowing it to go forward offered Portland a perfect excuse to put Canning off. But the latter's machinations contributed their own quantum of confusion to the expedition's preparations. As one critic comments, "The plot in the Cabinet, and the public scandal which drove the British commander in chief from his office, left the Walcheren expedition drifting like a derelict ship on stagnant waters where no tide stirred and no wind blew." Fitchett, Vol. III, p. 105.

[528] For a comprehensive description, see Gordon C. Bond, *The Grand Expedition: The British Invasion of Holland in 1809* (Athens, GA, 1979).

than a quarter of the British force stricken with 'Walcheren fever,'[529] it was apparent that seizure of Antwerp was out of reach, and after a council of war with his commanders on 27 August reached the same conclusion,[530] Chatham advised London that the expedition must be abandoned and began withdrawing, leaving behind some 19,000 troops to garrison Walcheren in accordance with his orders.

But the abandonment of offensive operations was only the beginning of what Fortescue rightly called Walcheren's "long agony."[531] Hoping that Austria might yet re-enter the war, the Cabinet delayed for nearly three months evacuating the forces that Chatham had left behind. By the time the government finally conceded failure[532] and withdrew the last contingent from the island, more than 4,000 men had perished and thousands more were ill, some never to recover. Of those who did, many suffered permanent weakness or periodic relapses that rendered them effectively unfit for duty, degrading the army's ability to replace Peninsular casualties well into 1812.[533]

At home, outrage over the debacle and its human costs culminated in a bitterly divisive parliamentary inquiry, which, however, ended by whitewashing the whole affair.[534] Not so public opinion, from which neither the government nor the expedition's two principal commanders emerged unscathed. As one caustic ditty proclaimed,[535]

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[529] Believed by modern medical researchers to have combined malaria, typhus, and typhoid fever. See John Lynch, "The Lessons of Walcheren Fever, 1809," *Military Medicine*, vol. 174, no. 3, March 2009, pp. 315-19.

[530] A conclusion to which only Strachan among Chatham's subordinates objected, possibly to protect himself against future recriminations. Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon,* p. 103.

[531] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 91.

[532] Peace between Austria and France having been formalized on October 14th in the Treaty of Schönbrunn.

[533] Wellington eventually requested that no more units that had served on Walcheren be sent to him.

[534] Its initial and all too accurate conclusions – "That the expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken under circumstances which afforded no rational hope of adequate success…and that the advisers of this ill-judged enterprise are, in the opinion of this House, deeply responsible for the heavy calamities with which its failure has been attended" – failed on a division of the House by only 48 votes. See Robert Walsh (Ed), *Select Speeches of The Right Honourable William Windham and The Right Honourable William Huskisson* (Philadelphia, 1837), p. 231.

[535] Believed to have appeared first in London's *Morning Chronicle* sometime in late 1809.

Great Chatham, with his sabre drawn,

Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;

Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,

Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

In October, 1809, in failing health, and embarrassed not only by Walcheren but also by Castlereagh's subsequent duel with Canning, forcing both from office, Portland resigned, dying shortly thereafter. The final melancholy withdrawal from Walcheren thus fell to their successors, Spencer Perceval, Liverpool, and Bathurst respectively.

The real question, of course, is why so much effort was squandered on an objective that, even had it been attained, promised so little real return. Part of the answer certainly lay in the Admiralty's persistent fear that Antwerp might enable Bonaparte first to rebuild warships undisturbed, then to use them to break the blockade, a fear that Trafalgar had by no means entirely allayed, however overblown it may appear to have been in hindsight. Contrariwise, supported by warships in the protected waters of the Scheldt, a British garrison at Antwerp might similarly have troubled Bonaparte, at least to the extent of requiring him to maintain a significant covering force, and might conceivably have helped prompt rebellion in the Netherlands or convince a wavering Prussia to rejoin the fight.[536] In that case, Fortescue's claim that "the expedition gave him [Bonaparte] some of the most anxious and unpleasant moments of his life" might actually have proved correct.[537]

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[536] Although, as Robert Harvey points out, "[t]here was no real sign of disaffection in the Low Countries, which the highly strung King Louis, through his moderate policies, had effectively won over." Harvey, *The War of Wars,* p.673.

[537] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 96. "Could British Ministers have seen the Emperor's letters to Clarke during the month of August?" He comments later, "his reiterated statements that Flushing was impregnable, the violent reproaches over his subordinate's slowness in enrolling troops, and his pungent criticism of his generals in Spain, they would have perceived that their perseverance was beginning to tell…These things, however, were of course almost entirely

As we have seen, however, Chatham's orders envisioned no such permanent lodgment. Instead, the largest amphibious expedition ever mounted by Britain, not equaled until Gallipoli more than a century later, in effect was designed as nothing more than a raid. Executed as originally intended, to fix French forces that might otherwise have been re-deployed against Austria, such an exercise might conceivably have been justifiable, although in contrast with the rejected north German alternative, it is far from clear that it would have achieved such a result. In the event, deprived of that rationale by the Franco-Austrian armistice, the expedition was virtually bereft of a defensible strategic mission, despite which there is no indication that British leaders ever contemplated abandoning it.

There remains the argument, advanced by Clausewitz among others, that the exercise could "be justified by the fact that the British troops could not be used in any other way."[538] That argument might have been valid in April, when Castlereagh proposed the expedition, and when there was no assurance that Wellesley would be successful even in recovering Oporto, let alone in ejecting the French from Portugal. By July, however, he had achieved both objectives and was about to go on the offensive against Victor. The resulting Battle of Talavera, which coincidentally took place on the very day that Chatham sailed, was touch-and-go. It is hard to believe that Wellesley would have found an additional 10 or 15,000 troops superfluous. Moreover, Walcheren's deleterious effects on the army lingered long after the final evacuation, depriving Wellington of reinforcements for which he might well have found employment the following year, when French Marshal André Masséna invaded Portugal with 65,000 troops.

Instead, insists one critic, "[i]t was not because no way could be found of employing her troops that Great Britain undertook the expedition to Walcheren, it was because the Government

hidden from the Cabinet and were totally invisible to the nation. The people could see nothing but armies squandered by generals, and Ministers, who tried to dress up defeat as victory." Ibid., 329-30.

[538] Carl von Clausewitz, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976), p. 563.

took more pains to help her continental allies than in giving to the general already in the field the number of troops that he needed for conducting his operations with credit."[539] Whether or not that was true, that the Walcheren debacle abundantly illustrated the British government's continued inability and/or unwillingness to concentrate its military efforts is difficult to refute.

Although there is no doubt that Castlereagh was the mover and shaker of the original plan to attack Antwerp, assigning responsibility for the final decision, and especially for the failure to evacuate more promptly when the expedition clearly had failed, is much harder. Chatham himself was a significant proponent of the plan – he had been agitating for a field command ever since declining command in Portugal – and through him, although less enthusiastically, the king. Nor can Canning be wholly absolved of responsibility, although his motives appear to have owed less to strategic than to domestic political objectives. Meanwhile, the entire cabinet shared responsibility with Castlereagh for the delayed evacuation that cost so many lives, and while various excuses for the delay were offered in the subsequent investigation, it is hard to avoid concluding that the animating motive was the government's desire to minimize the embarrassment of failure.

In the end, perhaps the most telling comment on the strategic decision-making (or lack thereof) leading to Walcheren once again is Fortescue's, who – anticipating a more recent episode – argues that "[f]rom the beginning to the end of this war Ministers, when they chanced to have troops at their disposal, could never be easy until they employed them somewhere,

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[539] Colonel George Armand Furse, *Military Expeditions Beyond the Seas* (London, 1897), p. 24. Not all agree with this criticism, Fortescue in particular arguing that, as late as 1812, Wellington lacked the logistics to support more British troops even had they been made available. Fortescue, vol. 9, p. 18. As will be seen, Wellington himself complained more frequently of an insufficiency of money than of troops.

doubtless because factious politicians were always demanding with clamor and contumely for what purpose, if not for foreign service, an army was maintained."[540]

One Supreme Blow: Spain, 1813

Between 1808 and 1812, British forces on the Iberian Peninsula, alone or with Spanish and Portuguese allies, invaded French-occupied Spain three times, only to be forced each time to withdraw. Frustratingly, none of those withdrawals was precipitated by defeat in the field. Even the Battle of Corunna in January 1809 could be accounted a tactical success, although its only strategic result, like Dunkirk's a century later, was to enable the British army to evacuate Spain in one piece; while Talavera and Salamanca both were outright allied victories, the latter ending in the virtual rout of a larger French army.

That even Salamanca could not be translated into enduring strategic advantage helps to explain Muir's argument that British operations on the Iberian Peninsula were "made in isolation, not as part of a wider strategic plan."[541] Several factors combined to discourage successive British governments before 1813 from concentrating sufficient military resources on the Peninsula to eject the French from Spain outright. The first was persistent fear of losing the forces committed. As Canning had warned Moore prior to the latter's initial incursion into northern Spain, "[T]he army which has been appropriated by His Majesty to the defence of Spain and Portugal is not merely a considerable part of the dispensable force of this country. It is, in fact, the British army."[542]

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[540] Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 53. The more recent episode in question was U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright's notorious question to then-Joint Chiefs chairman Gen. Colin Powell during the 1990s Bosnian crisis – "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" – which Powell claims nearly gave him an aneurysm. See Colin Powell, *My American Journey* (New York, 2003), p. 561.
[541] Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon,* p. 104.
[542] David Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), pp. 114-15.

Perhaps pardonably, Canning exaggerated. As we've seen, the Portland government subsequently managed commit more than 40,000 troops to the Walcheren expedition without materially reducing British strength in the Peninsula, and still other forces were at one time or another committed to similar expeditions from Denmark to Sicily. But the subtext reflected a genuine concern. With a volunteer army small to begin with compared with Continental armies, more than half of it perforce dispersed abroad to protect Britain's expanding colonial possessions, British leaders could visualize no way of confronting the more than 200,000 French troops in Spain on their own with any hope of success.[543] The ease with which French armies shattered one Continental opponent after another did nothing to alleviate that concern, concern compounded by the lingering fear that outright destruction of any significant expeditionary force would lay the British Isles open to invasion.

The army's narrow escape from Corunna in January, 1809 helped not at all. Together with Bonaparte's concurrent defeat of the bulk of Spain's regular forces, it largely dispelled the public and political euphoria that Spain's 1808 rebellion against French rule and brief military success initially had prompted.[544] "Gone forever was the dream of a quick and victorious union in arms with the Spanish patriots, its place now taken by an equally uncritical condemnation of all things Spanish."[545]

Indeed, as French Marshall Nicholas Soult's forces moved south from Corunna, the government briefly despaired even of retaining Britain's foothold in Portugal. In a lengthy memorandum to his colleagues in April 1809, however, Castlereagh insisted that Portugal could

[543] According to Fortescue, "The Army at the end of January 1809 numbered, as nearly as can be calculated, about two hundred thousand effective rank and file, of whom at the moment rather more than one half were abroad, and rather fewer than one half at home." Fortescue, vol. 7, p. 33.

[544] Initial French operations in Spain were humiliatingly unsuccessful, culminating in July 1808 in the surrender of an entire French *corps d'armée* at Bailén in Andalusia. Furious, Napoleon took personal command of a reinforced French commitment, routed three Spanish armies in short order, and recaptured Madrid in December.

[545] Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder,* p. 203.

be defended successfully with a relatively modest British troop commitment supplemented by a reconstituted Portuguese Army equipped and trained to British standards.[546] Similarly exhorted by Canning, who warned that, absent British assistance, Portugal certainly would be lost, the Cabinet reluctantly agreed to dispatch Beresford, now a major-general, to rebuild Portugal's shattered army.[547] Doing so would take time, however, and in the meantime, the French were moving south, brushing aside Portugal's exiguous defenders as they came. By the end of March, they had taken Oporto. Accordingly, Mackenzie's troops denied entry to Cadiz having returned to Lisbon, Castlereagh dispatched Wellesley with an additional 10,000 troops to command them, under orders, however, explicitly prohibiting operations in Spain without prior ministerial authorization.

In the event, Wellesley soon sought and received relief from that prohibition. After recapturing Oporto and ejecting an over-extended Soult from northern Portugal, he proposed to combine with Spanish General Gregorio Cuesta to defeat French forces in Estremadura. Buoyed by his success against Soult, the cabinet agreed. "Nevertheless," Muir points out, "reluctance breathes through every word of the Cabinet's permission… The ministers, including Canning, remained disillusioned with Spain, and were unwilling to look beyond the immediate defence of Portugal." Hence, he adds, "the foundation of Britain's future strategy throughout the war was laid, not as the keystone of a master plan, but as an ad hoc decision to try to preserve an existing asset."[548] Wellesley's modified instructions permitted him to enter Spain only for tactical

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[546] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vVol. 7, p. 39. His arguments reflected a 7 March memorandum from Wellesley making the same case.

[547] A task he carried out so effectively as to earn praise even from Wellington, who was not given to complimenting other generals. "To [Beresford] exclusively, under the Portuguese Government," Wellington wrote to the Secretary of State for War on 30 September 1810, "is due the merit of having raised, formed, disciplined, and equipped the Portuguese army, which has now shown itself capable of engaging and defeating the enemy." Wellington to Liverpool, "Dispatches, September 21st-24th, 1810," http://www.wtj.com/archives/Wellington.

[548] Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon,* p. 86.

purposes, and only provided that doing so would incur no significant risk to the defense of Portugal or the preservation of his army. The crucial language is worth quoting at some length:

> The Government of Spain not having thought fit to accede to this preliminary and indispensable condition [reinforcement of Cadiz], and having actually declined to permit the British troops, under Major-Generals Sherbrooke and Mackenzie, who were sent as the advanced guard of the British army, to land at Cadiz, his Majesty does not feel that he can, in justice to the safety of his own troops, again employ an auxiliary army in Spain, till the Spanish Government and nation shall cease to entertain those feelings of jealousy, which are equally inconsistent with their own interest and the effectual prosecution of the war.
>
> You will therefore understand that it is not his Majesty's intention, in authorizing you to co-operate with the Spanish armies in the defence of Portugal and of the adjacent Spanish provinces, that you should enter upon a campaign in Spain without the express authority of your Government ; and, in any concert you may form with the armies of Spain, you will cause it to be understood that it is to be confined to the specific object in view ; and that the service of your arm (under the orders you have received) cannot be employed in general operations in Spain, as the force under Sir John Moore was intended to have been, without a previous arrangement being settled to that effect between the two Governments.[549]

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[549] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, vol. 7, pp. 49-50.

The Battle of Talavera that followed earned Wellesley his peerage, but also vindicated the government's caution. Questa proved stubbornly uncooperative, the British did most of the fighting and suffered most of the casualties, promised Spanish logistical support failed to materialize, and Wellington was compelled to retreat back to Portugal. Writing to Lord Burghersh in response to criticism of that decision, he commented, "I lament as much as any man can the necessity for separating from the Spaniards, but I was compelled to go and I believe there was not an officer in the army who did not think I stayed too long."[550]

That Spanish failure to cooperate was the second major factor inhibiting an unreserved British commitment to operations in Spain, and would continue to plague Anglo-Spanish relations for the next three years. In part, it reflected persistent (and not entirely unjustified) Spanish suspicion of British motives and reliability. Only four years had elapsed since Spain's humiliation at Trafalgar, after all, and only two since Britain's failed attack on Spanish America. For many Spaniards, alliance with Britain was at best the lesser of two evils, a sentiment in no way allayed by their detestation of the Portuguese, a problem of which Wellington himself was forced to take note.[551]

But Spanish intractability also reflected the persistent internal disunity of the Spanish government and military. While the establishment of a Supreme Junta in September, 1808 supposedly furnished unified politico-military direction, the Spanish Army was less one army than several separate and effectively autonomous armies under commanders each jealous of his own authority. Not until mid-1812, over their bitter objections, were Spanish commanders subordinated even nominally to unified military direction under Wellington, and even that

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[550] Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War, 1807-1814: A Concise Military History* (London, 2001), p. 115.
[551] To the Earl of Liverpool, March 30, 1810: "I am fully aware of the mutual hatred of the Spanish and Portuguese people toward each other…" Walter Wood (ed.), *The Despatches of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1902) [Hereafter *Wellington's Despatches*], p. 206.

subordination proved to be honored mostly in the breach. The allies' retreat from Spain in the wake of the great victory at Salamanca, for example, owed no little to Spanish General Francisco Ballesteros's mutinous refusal to obey Wellington's orders.[552]

What rescued the Spanish from themselves were the activities of the *guerrilleros* who sprang up in every province, and who year by year became a progressively greater drain on French military manpower and resources.[553] Not for nothing could Wellington write to Lord Liverpool in April, 1810:

> My opinion is that, as long as we shall remain in a state of activity in Portugal, the contest must continue in Spain; that the French are most desirous that we should withdraw from the country, but know that they must employ a very large force indeed in the operations which will render it necessary for us to go away; and I doubt whether they can bring that force to bear upon Portugal without abandoning other objects and exposing their whole fabric in Spain to great risk. If they should be able to invade it, and should not succeed in obliging us to evacuate the country, they will be in a very dangerous situation; and the longer we can oppose them, and delay their success, the more likely are they to suffer materially in Spain.[554]

Wellington's successful defense of Lisbon's "Lines of Torres Vedras" against French Marshal André Masséna's subsequent invasion wholly justified his confidence and went far

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[552] For which he subsequently was arrested, replaced, and imprisoned. Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer,* pp. 371-2.
[553] René Chartrand's *Spanish Guerrillas in the Peninsular War, 1808-1814* (London, 2004) offers an agreeably readable description of the character and operations of the irregulars. A more detailed analysis, albeit limited to a single province, is John Lawrence Tone's *The Fatal Knot* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994), which examines partisan warfare in Navarre.
[554] To the Earl of Liverpool, April 2, 1810," *Wellington's Despatches*, pp. 208-9.

toward reconciling the government to a continued Peninsular commitments. Even so, while such defensive efforts could preserve Britain's foothold, they offered little prospect of ejecting the French from Spain outright unless Britain's peninsular allies could be made effective. Thanks to Beresford's efforts, the Portuguese Army had so significantly improved by 1812 that British commanders considered Portuguese units virtually the equal of their British counterparts, but their limited numbers and the need to safeguard Portugal's frontiers restricted their employment in Spain. Hence, as Wellington himself acknowledged, "It is obvious that we cannot expect to save the Peninsula by military efforts unless we can bring forward the Spaniards in some shape or other."[555]

Apart from Spanish fecklessness, the major obstacle to that ambition, and the third major deterrent to concentrating the bulk of Britain's military effort on the Peninsula, was lack of money. "During the early days of the Spanish uprising in 1808, London had flooded the Peninsula with more than £2,500,000 in silver. Having spent their majority like gentlemen, the ministers were now hard-pressed to lay their hands on more."[556] Lack of hard currency with which to satisfy the incessant demand for subsidies by Britain's allies could be compensated to some extent by the donation of military materiel – uniforms, weapons, ammunition, and so on – which Britain's expanding industrial base had begun to turn out in astonishing quantity. But soldiers' pay and the purchase of subsistence still required specie, and by 1812, it had become hard to find.[557] As Wellington wrote to Bathurst in July, "We are absolutely bankrupt. The troops are now five months in arrears, instead of being one month in advance. The staff have not been

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[555] Quoted in Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War* (New York, 2002), p. 421.
[556] Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder,* p. 224. With respect to financing the war in general, Sherwig's is the definitive treatment.
[557] As Fortescue points out, "[T]he difficulties arising from the dearth of specie reached their climax in 1812…The Bank [of England] had exhausted its store of foreign gold and of bar-gold, and had nothing left but guineas, which it was illegal either to export or to exchange for more than their nominal value." Fortescue, vol. 9, pp. 12-13.

paid since February; the muleteers not since June, 1811; and we are in debt in all parts of the country."[558]

After pay for Wellington's soldiers, the principal effect of this dearth of money was logistical. As early as August 1809, in the aftermath of Talavera, Wellington had complained that "We are miserably supplied with provisions, and I do not know how to remedy this evil. The Spanish armies are now so numerous that they eat up the whole country. They have no magazines, nor have we, nor can we collect any; and there is a scramble for everything."[559] Three more years of armies marching back and forth across a Spain economically depressed even before the war had done little to improve the situation. There could be no question of a strategically decisive offensive unless and until means could be found to keep British and allied forces resupplied on the march without having to rely on a Spanish countryside largely denuded of surplus subsistence.[560] Accumulating such means, needless to say, was above all a question of money.

No single problem prompted more persistent and occasionally bitter correspondence from Wellington to his political masters, the general at one point writing the Secretary to the Treasury, "It will be better for Government in every view of the subject to relinquish their operations in Portugal and Spain, if the country cannot afford to carry them on."[561] On this issue, however, Fortescue uncharacteristically sides with the politicians. "Liverpool," he writes, "had wisely and rightly abjured Pitt's system of great spasmodic effort, followed by helpless collapse, in favour of a policy of steady, even and sustained endeavour. When the right moment should arrive,

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[558] *Wellington's Despatches*, p. 324.
[559] "To Viscount Castlereagh, August 1809,"*Wellington's Despatches*, p. 176.
[560] As George Murray, one of Wellington's quartermaster-generals, commented not altogether facetiously at one point, "Historians will say that the British army…carried on war in Spain & Portugal until they had eaten all the beef and mutton in the country, and were then compelled to withdraw." Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: The Years of the Sword* (New York, 1969), p. 305.
[561] Wellington to Huskisson, 28 March 1810, in Fortescue, vol. 7, pp. 435-6.

Ministers were ready to concentrate the whole of England's military resources for the striking of one supreme blow."[562]

In 1813, thanks to several related developments, that moment finally arrived. By the beginning of 1813, with the lingering after-effects of Walcheren at last overcome, British troop strength in Iberia reached and exceeded 60,000. To these could be added another 15,000 Portuguese troops by now acknowledged even by skeptical British commanders to be every bit the equals in the field of their British counterparts, bringing the total strength available to Wellington to nearly 80,000. The money problem likewise having been eased by a variety of means,[563] Wellington was at last enabled to accumulate sufficient supply and transport to sustain a prolonged offensive campaign. Finally, the lull in operations during fall and winter 1812 enabled him to realize significant improvements in the health and tactical proficiency of the army.[564] As he himself reported to the Secretary of State for War on 11 May, "I shall never be stronger or more efficient than I am now."[565]

Improvement of Spanish forces paralleled, if it did not equal, that of the British and Portuguese. Furious at Ballesteros' insubordination in the aftermath of Salamanca, Wellington demanded and the Cortes reluctantly approved a significant enlargement of his authority over Spanish commanders. And while the tactical proficiency of Spanish units continued to lag that of their allies, the willingness of their commanders to cooperate improved measurably. So also did their relations with the irregulars, some units of which had by now become so large and

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[562] Fortescue, vol. 9, p. 18.
[563] Among them the grudging but, in the end, economically providential shift within Britain proper to paper currency at a guaranteed rate of exchange, freeing specie for use abroad.
[564] "The army after the retreat from Burgos enjoyed, as it sorely needed, the longest period of repose vouchsafed to it in the whole course of the war." Fortescue, vol. 9, p. 107.
[565] Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer,* p. 383. It should be noted that, although Britain and the U.S. went to war in June 1812, no significant reinforcement of British forces in North America occurred before the summer of 1814. The War of 1812 thus had little direct impact on Wellington's operations.

successful that they were integrated formally into the regular Spanish Army, their commanders awarded rank and privileges commensurate with their professional counterparts.

Meanwhile, even as the allies' condition improved during the winter and spring, that of their adversaries eroded. Units withdrawn from Spain the year before to feed Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia were not replaced, and with a new coalition threatening his eastern frontier, never would be. Those remaining in Spain were over-stretched and under mounting pressure from both regular Spanish forces and the *guerilleros*, the latter by now so numerous and self-confident that unhindered French movement through the countryside in less than battalion strength had become nearly impossible. Couriers and supply columns were especially favored targets, to the point where French commanders could be certain of nothing outside the immediate confines of their garrisons and were compelled to divert more and more troops to escort every foraging party and supply convoy.

It was Bonaparte's own intemperate reaction to that problem that unlocked the last door to a decisive allied offensive. Furious at the mounting depredations of insurgents in Spain's northern provinces – Asturias, Cantabria, Navarre, and northern Aragon – and convinced that Wellington lacked the stomach to mount another offensive campaign, in April he ordered Joseph to reassign a significant portion of Reille's Army of Portugal to Clausel's harried Army of the North, leaving his hapless brother fewer than 40,000 troops to bar any allied advance into central Spain.

On 22 May 1813, Wellington charged through door thus opened, feinting toward Salamanca as Joseph sought frantically to concentrate his scattered forces, while the main allied effort sliced north toward Valladolid and Burgos. Repeatedly turned out of position, the French withdrew hastily toward the Ebro, until at last on 21 June, fearing to be hustled out of Spain altogether, Joseph finally stood to fight at Vitoria. The defeat that followed spared the bulk of his army, but

left it little choice but to recoil back to the Pyrenees, whence, over the following two months, it was driven back onto French soil, followed not long thereafter by French forces in eastern Spain. Meanwhile, announced triumphantly by London, the allied victory at Vitoria encouraged Austria to join Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Sweden in a 6th Coalition, and on 6 April 1814, invaded from north, east, and south, and pressured by his own generals, Napoleon finally abdicated.

Aftermath

As everyone knows, Napoleon's abdication and subsequent exile on Elba failed to end the struggle. Minor military actions continued throughout spring 1814 in Italy, Spain, and Holland. Then, on 26 February 1815, with the victorious allies at loggerheads in Vienna over how to carve up post-Napoleonic Europe, and Louis XVIII making himself nearly as unloved by the French people as his late brother, Bonaparte slipped away from Elba with 600 of his personal guard, landing in southern France on 1 March. Three weeks later, without a shot fired to prevent it, he triumphantly re-entered Paris. His return inaugurated what became known as the Hundred Days, culminating in his decisive defeat by Wellington and Prussia's Marshal Gebhart von Blücher at Waterloo on 15 June, followed on 8 July by Louis XVIII's (second) restoration and a week later by Bonaparte's surrender to Maitland and final exile to St. Helena.

From a strategic perspective, the principal effect of these events was to shake the delegates at the Congress of Vienna out of their torpor.[566] While one can argue in retrospect that Napoleon had no real chance of retaining power as long as Britain and Russia remained

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[566] Famously derided by Austria's Prince de Ligne with the quip, "*Le congrès danse, mais il ne marche pas.*" (The congress dances, but doesn't walk – i.e., makes no progress.)

committed to his removal,[567] that reality was much less apparent to the representatives of the great powers that had expended so much blood and treasure to bring him down and had endured so many disappointments along the way. The allied victory at Waterloo thus came as an enormous relief, its swiftness and conclusiveness helping to avert a prolonged struggle that, even though eventually won by the allies, almost certainly would have re-opened questions settled painfully in Vienna and imposed on France a significantly more punitive and thus fragile peace. That it took place in Belgium was appropriate, given that French intervention in Belgium had largely prompted Britain's war with France in the first place, just as there was a certain poetic justice in a final contest pitting Napoleon himself against the one adversary who had beaten every other French general against whom he had been matched. At any rate, the war thus ended with a drama shared with few other such military-historical events.

Conclusion

In the wake of the terrible bloodletting of 1914 to 1918, a scholarly debate arose about British military strategy that persists to this day, for which Britain's victory over Napoleon more than any other single experience furnished the core evidence in contention. The instigator of the debate was British military commentator Sir Basil Liddell-Hart, who argued that in the Great War, Britain had abandoned what he conceived to be a preferred British "way of war" dictated by both its geopolitical circumstances and history. Central to that way of war, in his view, was the deliberate avoidance of decisive land operations on the European mainland in favor of an "indirect approach" designed to exploit British seapower and focused on the continental

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[567] An argument that the writer has made elsewhere. See Richard Hart Sinnreich, "In search of military repose: the Congress of Vienna and the making of peace," in Williamson Murray and James Lacey (eds.), *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 148.

periphery. Just such a strategy, he insisted, had underwritten Britain's intervention on the Iberian Peninsula from 1808 through 1813 in support of Portuguese and Spanish resistance.[568]

Liddell-Hart's viewpoint resonated with many in the years after World War I and resurfaced during World War II, albeit in somewhat different form, in Winston Churchill's "soft underbelly" arguments. In the end, though, the latter failed to deter Britain's subsequent involvement in land operations in the European interior. Since then, Liddell-Hart's assertion of a historically validated British way of war has been refuted by several military historians, notably Sir Michael Howard. Not least of the grounds for Howard's objection was a very different interpretation of Britain's strategy in the war against Napoleonic France. For Howard, Britain's decision ultimately to engage Napoleon decisively only on the Iberian Peninsula reflected less a considered strategic preference than a dearth of realistic military alternatives.[569] When, Howard notes, Bonaparte's escape from Elba and his subsequent invasion of Belgium in spring 1815 presented a renewed threat to the peace, Britain did not hesitate to commit British troops to operations on the European mainland.[570]

Although mutually contradictory, both arguments similarly attribute to deliberate strategic intention what the episodes described in the preceding pages strongly suggest resulted instead from a prolonged and circuitous process of trial and error. That strong-willed ministers such as Pitt, Grenville, Canning, and Castlereagh held and sought to impose views about how Britain should employ its military and naval power can not be doubted. But, as we've seen, not until

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[568] B.H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London, 1932), pp. 35-7.

[569] Hall agrees, arguing that "the politicians whose responsibility it was to formulate policy did so in circumstances of very limited strategic choice." Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. xi.

[570] Michael Howard, "The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal," in Michael Howard, *The Causes of War and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), pp. 178-80. Indeed, as he noted in another context, "It was… precisely the failure of German power to find an outlet and its consequent concentration in Europe, its lack of any significant possessions overseas, that made it so particularly menacing to the sprawling British Empire in two world wars and which make so misleading all arguments about 'traditional' British strategy drawn from earlier conflicts against the Spanish and French Empires, with all the colonial hostages they offered to fortune and the Royal Navy." Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (Oxford, 1971), p. 32.

after years of false starts and disappointments did the British government finally settle on an agreed set of strategic priorities. Until then, disagreement recurred repeatedly with respect to the definition of strategic success, the mechanism by which it should be achieved, in particular the role of the British Army, and finally the theater in which that army's effort should be concentrated.

Those debates rarely involved anything resembling the formal deliberative processes that we have come to associate with strategic decision-making, but instead manifested themselves in the exchange and circulation of contending letters, notes, and memoranda. Even these, moreover, tended to focus on immediate military issues. Secondary sources are replete with references to "the cabinet felt," "the cabinet decided," and "the cabinet directed." But even a cursory examination of ministerial minutes reveals much of that as convenient shorthand. One searches in vain for meetings comparable, say, to those of Presidents Bush and Obama's National Security Councils concerning Iraq and Afghanistan, during which they and their principal political and military advisers examined and debated explicitly competing policy options. Cabinet meetings at the turn of the nineteenth century tended to be informal and participation often was limited. Opposition leaders of course didn't participate at all, some declining even to remain in London.[571]

Reviewing the circumstances surrounding cabinet decisions of the time, it is apparent that, as of course continues to be true today, views concerning what strategic aims Britain should pursue and by what means reflected differences ranging from genuine economic and military conviction to political factionalism and personal ambition. And yet it is arguable in retrospect – though perhaps only in retrospect – that the strategic problem confronting successive British governments really involved only three interdependent but distinguishable questions: (1) How to

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[571] Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War,* p. 61.

convert maritime supremacy into continental advantage; (2) How heavily to rely on allies who repeatedly had proved either incapable or inconstant; and (3) Given answers to the first two questions, when and where to employ Britain's limited ground combat power.[572]

Each of the episodes described in this essay sought to answer all three questions, but in very different ways. Thus, though launched without prior political approval by two over-aggressive military commanders, the Buenos Aires expedition was consistent both with earlier British efforts to exploit naval supremacy to deprive France and its allies of colonial resources, and with the Grenville government's disaffection with continental alliances. But, apart from commercial inducements, it was above all the seductive opportunity to pursue the first and avoid the second with a limited commitment of troops that convinced the government to honor its brash subordinates' unsanctioned initiative. That what began as a limited commitment soon grew into one much more extensive (and expensive) reflected the political concern to avoid embarrassment and amortize sunk costs rather than any considered strategic decision.

In contrast, while the Walcheren expedition originated at the behest of an ally, compounded by the Admiralty's lingering fear that Antwerp might resurrect a French naval threat, the actual choice of targets reflected as much as anything the government's reluctance to commit a large land force where it could not count even on allied logistical support, let alone additional forces, hence where large fiscal expenditures would be required merely to sustain the expedition. Just such considerations ruled out northern Germany of unhappy memory, while the impossibility of mounting a timely assault similarly ruled out Italy. The plan finally adopted envisioned what amounted to a raid, not a decisive confrontation with Napoleon on the continent. That the

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[572] A fourth question might be added – whether to settle for a negotiated peace aimed at containing Napoleon rather than seeking to remove him altogether at whatever cost. But despite post-Amiens efforts by both the Grenville and Perceval governments to engineer a settlement, the reality, eventually perceived by most Britons both in and out of government, was that no attempt to contain Bonaparte by treaty promised to endure.

expedition went forward even after Austria's defeat at Wagram nullified its original purpose must be put down to political inertia, compounded, as in the Buenos Aires debacle, by the desire to avoid political embarrassment.

As for the Iberian commitment, that it finally furnished a strategically convincing answer to all three questions can be attributed as much as anything to Bonaparte himself, as indeed can a good share of the responsibility for its eventual success. By seeking to conquer a nation that he might easily have ruled without reigning, by imposing on his brother and the latter's generals a troop-to-task mismatch only compounded by French mistreatment of the Portuguese and Spanish people, and finally, by first diverting already insufficient troops to his disastrous invasion of Russia, then interfering with the employment of those that remained, Bonaparte furnished the very conditions that a decisive British land commitment required. These included a geography allowing optimal exploitation of the Royal Navy's freedom of action; allies who, if occasionally troublesome, at least could be counted upon to be steadfast, and whose military manpower, both regular and irregular, represented an essential force multiplier for a British peninsular army that never reached a third of its antagonist's numerical strength; and an aroused civil population that forced the French to dissipate that strength even as it eroded. As Fortescue comments scathingly, "let the worshippers of the great Emperor say what they will, there is among the manifold blunders that ruined the French cause in the Peninsula not one that may not be traced directly to the orders of the Emperor himself."[573]

Examined in hindsight, in short, Britain's crucial achievement was to preserve intact its physical safety, maritime freedom of action, and economic and military resources until presented with an opportunity to act decisively, then recognize and exploit that opportunity when it finally arose. But that achievement reflected no preconceived or enduring strategic design. If the

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[573] Fortescue, vol. 8, p.625.

problem confronting successive British governments was much as Howard characterized it – a dearth of attractive strategic alternatives – their solutions throughout most of the war seem largely to have been extemporaneous.[574]

One hesitates to extrapolate from so brief an examination of so lengthy, complex, and historically remote a conflict any definitive lessons about the ingredients of successful strategy. Nevertheless, one scarcely can review the events described in the preceding pages without concluding that Britain's ultimate triumph in its long struggle against Napoleon owed less to strategy than to other factors: to a geostrategic position that afforded her the luxury, provided the Royal Navy remained supreme, of choosing when and where to engage her enemy; to an economy able not only to satisfy her own military needs but also repeatedly to subsidize those of her allies; to a political system sufficiently robust to transcend scandals and embarrassments; and above all, to a public self-confidence and resolve that enabled the British people, as they would again a century later, to endure and recover from repeated military disappointments without ever losing faith in their eventual triumph.

All this tends to suggest that, in the end, strategic success is likely to result less from preconceived planning than from continuous and often contentious adaptation underwritten by effective diagnosis of changes in the operating environment. The latter, moreover, is much more than just a matter of collating and evaluating information, although the more reliably informed by such information, the better. Instead, it is above all about recognizing the evolving *gestalt* of

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[574] It might be argued that, given Britain's long history of struggles with France, her strategy was so deeply imbedded in the minds of British leaders that no explicit discussion of strategic alternatives was necessary. And a case can be made that just such an implicit strategic understanding informed Britain's initial commitment to war against Revolutionary France in 1793. If so, however, it certainly no longer prevailed after the collapse of three successive continental coalitions. Indeed, following Bonaparte's stunning victory at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805, Pitt is famously alleged to have remarked, "Roll up that map of Europe. It will not be wanted these ten years." James L. Stokesbury, *Navy and Empire: A Short History of Four Centuries of British Sea Power and its Influence upon Our World* (New York, 1983), p. 202.

the strategic problem – about answering Ferdinand Foch's famous rhetorical question, "*De quoi s'agit-il?*" To put it another way, the most important word in the term "net assessment" is "net." From a strategic standpoint, the vital task of assessment is not gathering the details, but rather abstracting their larger meaning. In Britain's war against Napoleon, the crucial assessment was that, while Britain remained secure from invasion and its people committed, Napoleon could not prevail; and that, given his own strategic imperatives and the demons that drove him, not to prevail sooner or later meant losing. Britain's central military and political challenge was to sustain the struggle long enough to reach that painfully remote but ultimately successful outcome, and that challenge, successive British governments met successfully.

In contrast, as long as the strategic problem is misdiagnosed, no amount of effort and sacrifice will suffice to produce success.[575] In famously arguing that "No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it,"[576] Clausewitz describes an ideal, but on the evidence, one rarely achieved in practice. Instead, in Britain's case at least, both judgments occurred, not as ingredients of a coherent strategic design carefully devised before going to war, but instead in successive course corrections after doing so: first accepting that naval and colonial successes alone could not restrain Napoleon's ambitions, then acknowledging that only his outright removal could do so and would require defeating him on his own ground, and finally, settling on where to focus Britain's limited land combat power to help bring that about.

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[575] In Afghanistan, for example, NATO's core strategic appraisal has been that "the center of gravity is the Afghan people." If that appraisal is incorrect, the likelihood that NATO will succeed in defeating the Taliban is slim. For a more refined argument, see David E. Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do? NATO and the Strategic Mismatch Between Ends, Ways, and Means in Afghanistan – and in the Future," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 34. no. 5), pp. 383-401.
[576] Clausewitz, *On War,* p. 579.

At each stage, British statesmen arrived at the necessary conclusion reluctantly, contentiously, and only after other alternatives had been tried and failed. That the outcome nevertheless laid the foundation for a century of British supremacy is, or should be, a humbling example to those convinced that preconceived strategy is either prerequisite to or a guarantor of victory. Instead, success is more likely to crown belligerents willing and able to jettison their own strategic preconceptions when the latter are falsified, as they often will be, by the painful but rarely disputable evidence furnished by war itself. The relevance of that lesson to current and future U.S. national security policy should be apparent.

Bismarckian Strategic Policy, 1871-1890

This phenomenon of a political genius of German stock, who in three bloody wars created the Prussian-German realm of power and for decades secured for it the hegemony in Europe – a hysterical colossus with a high voice, brutal, sentimental, and given to nervous spasms of weeping;…a giant of fathomless cunning and…cynical frankness of speech….contemptuous of people and overwhelming them with charm or force, careerist, realist, absolute anti-ideologist, a personality of excessive and almost superhuman format who, filled with himself, reduced everything about him to adulation or trembling….

At the mere mention of a political opponent, his look was that of an angry lion. Gargantuan in his appetites, he devoured half a henturkey at dinner, drank half a bottle of cognac and three bottles of Apollinaris with it, and smoked five pipes afterwards…. Like Luther, he took a passionate joy in hating, and with all of the European polish of the aristocratic diplomat he was, like him, Germanic and anti-European….Revolutionary and at the same time the product of the enormous powers of reaction, he left liberal Europe, thanks to the success of his seasoned Machiavellianism, in the most complete disarray and in Germany strengthened the servile worship of power to the same degree as he weakened faith in tenderer, nobler human ideas and values.[577]

If one accepts Thomas Mann's extravagant characterization of Otto von Bismarck, the great Prusso-German statesman and diplomat of the late nineteenth century, there seems little for the historian to do. But how many can resist the temptation to relate such an outsized historical figure to the circumstances of his age and to understand his policies in the context that they did so much to create? No other individual in European history between Metternich and the First World War approaches the stature of Bismarck. Between 1866 and 1890, Bismarck guided the German-speaking lands of central Europe to a destiny that many wished for, but few could clearly envision and no other could bring to pass. His own evolution as a statesman paralleled that of his country: if he railed against the forces of revolutionary change, nationalism and liberalism early in his career, he later harnessed them skillfully to the cause of Prussian dominance over northern Germany and the growth of German power. In a lecture

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[577] Thomas Mann, "Die Drei Gewaltigen," *Reden und Aufsätze*, vol.1 (Oldenburg, 1965), pp. 62-63; from Gordon A. Craig, "The Reich Stuff," *The New York Review of Books* 38:3 (31 January 1991), p. 26.

commemorating the anniversary of his death, the conservative German historian Arnold Oskar Meyer recounted how the great statesman had embodied the passage through the modern age of the Hegelian historical spirit, albeit with a distinctively Prusso-German character: "What [Bismarck] accomplished for his people is greater than that for which any other people in Europe can be thankful to a single man."[578] After 1871 he struggled with increasing futility to control the forces he had helped to release, "like a sorcerer's apprentice," and to save the new German Empire from the strategic circumstances of its birth.

The past century has seen innumerable attempts by historians to come to terms with Bismarck's foreign and strategic policies, most notably in the recent past by Andreas Hillgruber, Konrad Canis, Wolfgang Mommsen, and Klaus Hildebrand. To greater or lesser degrees and irrespective of the political orientation of the scholars in question, almost all focus intently on the towering personality of Bismarck, particularly on his intentions, expectations, decisions, and miscalculations. To be sure, historians have not neglected the international context in which he operated, a transformative era in which high cabinet diplomacy gradually gave way to populist nationalism and legitimacy, with a correspondent emphasis on social and economic affairs. But one cannot gainsay the imprint that Bismarck left on his age, or the extent to which he shaped, as opposed to having been shaped by the major trends and forces that defined the strategic landscape. In terms of the Morton White's "covering laws" model of historical explanation, Bismarck was the "abnormal" factor, whose presence in the historical process meant the difference between war and peace.[579]

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[578] Günther Wollstein, "Bismarck Heute," in *Ein deutsches Jahrhundert 1848-1945: Hoffnung und Hubris. Aufsätze und Vorträge*, Jürgen Elvert, ed. (Stuttgart, 2010), p. 164.

[579] Morton White, *Foundations of Historical Knowledge* (New York, 1965), p. 126; from Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.3, *The Period of Fortification* (Princeton, 1990), p. 433.

Narrowly seen, Bismarck determined almost every facet of German foreign policy during the first two decades of the empire's existence, a period which, like the preceding half-century, can be viewed as a discrete era in strategic terms. So comprehensive was his command of almost all questions that bore on the external posture of the Reich that contemporaries and historians alike have sometimes described him unfairly as a dictator, or at least of governing Germany as a dictator might. Such accusations miss the true complexion of Bismarck's long term in power. His policy bore the hallmarks of the limited, but meaningful constitutional constraints that he had a decisive role in crafting in the late 1860s, when Prussia consolidated its power over Germany through the North German Confederation. Most importantly, one cannot overlook the fact that throughout his tenure after 1862 as Minister President of Prussia and after 1871 as Chancellor of the *Kaiserreich*, Bismarck was directly subordinate to the Prussian king, who was at the same time emperor of Germany after 1871. Moreover, nobody could have anticipated – his Chancellor least of all – that Wilhelm I would live 92 years before his death in 1888, and that Bismarck would not have to serve under another monarch with whom he might have enjoyed a less tolerant and accommodating relationship, or, as was more probable in a regime of Friedrich III, not serve as chief minister at all.[580]

Much scholarship on Bismarck over the past few decades has tended to interpret his foreign and strategic policies in light of the *Primat der Innenpolitik* (primacy of domestic politics).[581] According to this notion, Bismarck's decision-making in almost every meaningful

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[580] Andreas Hillgruber, *Otto von Bismarck: Grunder der europäischen Großmacht Deutsches Reich* (Göttingen, 1978), pp. 71-2.

[581] The historiographical concept most plausibly originated in the pathbreaking scholarship of Eckart Kehr in the 1920s; see Eckart Kehr, *Der Primat der Innenpolitik: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur preussisch-deutschen Sozialgeschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed. (Berlin, 1965); for a mature expression of the trend, perhaps the most powerful in modern German historiography, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 3, *Von der Deutschen Doppelrevolution bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges, 1849-1914*, 2nd ed.(München, 2007); see the appraisal by Winfried Baumgart, "Eine neue Imperialismustheorie?

sense aimed at the consolidation of the power of German, and particularly Prussian agrarian, financial, and industrial elites against the rising social and economic power of other, marginal groups and classes. Such approaches to the vexing problems of Bismarckian strategic policy, however elegant and gratifying to certain ideological perspectives, find virtually no basis in the documentary record.[582] Indeed, Bismarck was extraordinarily sensitive to the inherent tension between domestic and foreign affairs and pointedly, perhaps self-servingly rejected the idea that a responsible statesman made decisions about the latter in light of the former. "Foreign policy and economic affairs must never be combined with one another," he avowed in the 1890s. "Each is balanced within itself. If one of them is burdened by the other, the equilibrium is lost."[583]

Moreover, there is much to commend the view that a conscientious statesman is well-enough absorbed by the secular attributes of an outwardly-directed strategic policy. Perhaps the greatest historian of Bismarckian Germany has characterized the Iron Chancellor's preoccupations as "the attitudes of rulers and foreign ministers, changing alignments and realignments among states, alternating fears of isolation and entanglement, shifts in the balance of power engendered by those fears, and the changed margins of safety and danger those shifts produce."[584] So complex and dangerous a collection of factors would fully absorb even the most capable leader and serves to underscore that Bismarck's policy is best understood, in the words

Bermerkungen zu dem Buche von Hans-Ulrich Wehler über Bismarcks Imperialismus," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 10 (1971) pp.197-208.

[582] See especially the published lecture by Otto Pflanze, "Bismarcks Herrschaftstechnik als Problem der gegenwärtigen Historiographie," Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, ed. (München: Stiftung Historischer Kolleg, 1982).

[583] To Hermann Hoffmann, editor of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, in the 1890s: in Hermann von Petersdorff, ed., *Bismarck: Die gesammelten Werke*, vol.9 (Berlin, 1924-35), p. 400; from Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.2, *The Period of Consolidation, 1871-1880* (Princeton, 1990), p. 246; see especially p. 246, n. 2, wherein Pflanze cites numerous similar references from Bismarck's collected writings.

[584] Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. 2, p. 246-7.

of still another historian, as the "pragmatic security policy of a state understood as internally coherent," and not a form of "outwardly directed social policy."[585]

Bismarck is considered perhaps the greatest practitioner of *Realpolitik* in history, a nebulous concept that, depending on how it is applied, takes on alternately sinister and praiseworthy overtones. At the least, it is thought to refer to a political understanding of international and strategic affairs based on the imperatives of power instead of some notion of legalism, idealism, or morality. Neither legal niceties nor selfless altruism lay at the root of prudent strategy, Bismarck held, but the "rational determination of legitimate interests, the careful assessment of the risks involved in their fulfillment, and the measuring of the power available to that end."[586] The great German historian Friedrich Meinecke called attention in 1906 to Bismarck's scant regard for the great intellectual and nationalist bellwethers of his age – thinkers like Kant, Hegel, or Ranke and soldiers like Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, or Boyen – who considered the German nation to be nothing less than the earthly instantiation of a moral and spiritual ideal.[587]

For Bismarck, the German nation was nothing more than a *Machtstaat*, an expression of the power that it aggrandized to itself and which permitted it to flourish in the self-help environment of international politics.[588] From this flowed his measured appreciation of the place of the military in the life of the nation. As a young man he had observed how the loyalty of the army had permitted the Prussian crown to retain its prerogatives against revolutionary reform in

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[585] Theodor Schieder, *Staatensystem als Vormacht der Welt 1848-1918* (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p. 42; other leading exponents of a view that champions the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (primacy of foreign policy) include Gerhard Ritter, *Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk: das Problem des Militarismus in Deutschland*, 4 vols. (München, 1954-68); Andreas Hillgruber, *Bismarcks Außenpolitik* (Freiburg, 1972); and Klaus Hildebrand, *Deutsche Außenpolitik 1871-1918* (München, 1989).
[586] Otto Pflanze, "Bismarck's 'Realpolitik,'" *The Review of Politics* 20 (1958), p. 495.
[587] Friedrich Meinecke, "Bismarcks Eintritt in den christlich-germanischen Kreis," in idem, *Preussen und Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert; historische und politische Aufsätze* (München/Berlin, 1918), p. 296ff; from Hajo Holborn, "Bismarck's Realpolitik," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960), p. 85, n. 4.
[588] Hans Mombauer, *Bismarcks Realpolitik als Ausdruck seiner Weltanschauung* (Berlin, 1936).

1848, and he later made his political reputation in defending those prerogatives, and the military itself, against liberal parliamentarians in the Prussian constitutional crisis of the early 1860s. At root it was brute force that reinsured the Prussian state. "It is not by speeches and majority resolutions that the great questions of the time are decided," Bismarck proclaimed to the liberal Max von Forckenbeck in 1862, "but by iron and blood."[589] Until the end of his career, he never fully abandoned the possibility that, in the event of a parliamentary challenge to the executive authority of the crown, a *coup d'etat* against the constitution by the Prussian army was wholly justified.[590] Force, prudently applied, was the final arbiter of political disagreement: regardless of any other means by which the German power was understood, the naked power of the military would underpin Germany's standing in Europe, just as it had his beloved Prussia in 1866.

In 1862 the new Prussian king, Wilhelm I, called Bismarck to serve as Minister-President of Prussia, the foremost political officer in the crown's administration, at the height of a protracted constitutional crisis. Key military advisors to the Prussian king had sought to expand and modernize the army based on the exclusive right of royal command, a process for which the elected Prussian legislative chambers refused to pay. A military *coup d'etat* from above was judged to be too risky. Wilhelm's appointment of Bismarck, considered a reactionary even by Prussian standards and a political cipher with little experience in the practical administration of domestic affairs, offered a less obvious version of the same. The new Minister-President simply sidestepped the legislature to all intents and purposes by openly flouting the constitution, collecting tax receipts, disbursing revenues, and reforming the army without its approval.[591] The

[589] Otto von Bismarck, *Reden 1847-1869*, Wilhelm Schüßler, ed., vol. 10, *Bismarck: Die gesammelten Werke*, Hermann von Petersdorff, ed. (Berlin, 1924-35), pp. 139-40.
[590] Egmont Zechlin, *Die Staatsstreichpläne Bismarcks und Wilhelms II, 1890-1894* (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1929).
[591] See the collection by Jürgen Schlumbohm, *Der Verfassungskonflikt in Preußen 1862 bis 1866* (Göttingen, 1970); on Bismarck's approach to the crisis, see Kurt Promnitz, *Bismarcks Eintritt in das Ministerium* (Vaduz, 1965); reprinted from *Historische Studien* 60 (1908), pp. 67-99.

memory of his defiance never quite left him: throughout the remainder of Bismarck's long political career and whenever his frustrations with the challenges of policy mounted, he flirted with the possibility of another *coup d'etat* from above, however implausible such a course seemed by the 1880s.

Bismarck's first major foreign policy initiative as Prussia's minister-president laid the foundation for Germany's later rise to great power status. In January 1863 he authorized General Gustav von Alvensleben to negotiate a draft convention with Czarist Russia providing for joint military action against Polish rebels who crossed into the Polish territories of Prussia.[592] The immediate purpose was to persuade Russia not to abandon her Polish territories as a reaction to the last Polish revolt of 1863; it also served Bismarck's cynical determination to keep those territories divided and preserve the solidarity of the three conservative monarchies of Eastern Europe − Prussia, Russia, and Austria-Hungary − against an independent Poland. The convention triggered a storm of protest in London, Paris, and Vienna and threw Bismarck abruptly onto the defensive. In the end, he disowned it and rather weakly proposed to Vienna and St. Petersburg a restoration of the Holy Alliance of 1815 in its place. But the larger result of the Alvensleben Convention was to purchase a substantial measure of Russian goodwill in the struggle against Austria for primacy in the German confederation.[593]

Bismarck engineered a series of three short, sharp, and opportunistic wars on his way to unifying northern Germany under Prussian auspices.[594] He derived immediate advantages from the Prussian and Austrian war against Denmark in 1864, which gained Schleswig for Prussia but

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[592] On Bismarck's intentions, see Stéphanie Burgaud, "Février 1863: la Convention Alvensleben, 'coup de poker' ou erreur stratégique pour la diplomatie bismarckienne?" *Etudes Danubiennes*, 1er semester, XVII, n.1 (Strasbourg, 2001); Helmuth Scheidt, *Konvention Alvensleben und Interventionspolitik der Mächte in der polnischen Frage 1863* (München, 1937).

[593] A key argument in Egmont Zechlin, *Bismarck und die Grundlegung der deutschen Großmacht* (Stuttgart, 1960).

[594] For background, see Andreas Kaernbach, *Bismarcks Konzepte zur Reform des Deutschen Bundes: zur Kontinuität der Politik Bismarcks und Preußens in der deutschen Frage* (Göttingen, 1991).

also provided a source of leverage against Austria. By embroiling the Habsburg monarchy in the labyrinthine problem of Schleswig-Holstein and forcing the Austrian hand in the process of reforming the German confederation, Bismarck found a convenient pretext for war in 1866 against Austria and most of the rest of the major German states. The battle of Königgrätz on 3 July decided Prussian hegemony over Germany north of the Main River and allowed Bismarck a free hand to enlarge Prussia through the annexation of Hanover, Northern Hesse, and Frankfurt. [595] While the southern, Catholic German states remained outside of the new accommodation and Bismarck was circumspect in crafting a settlement that excluded Austria from northern German affairs without humiliating her, the strategic foundation for the Second Empire had been laid.

It was left to overcome the French, historically the underwriter of southern German autonomy and a spoiling factor in any German plans for greater cohesion. By cynically manipulating the liberal movement in Germany and through a savvy diplomacy abroad, Bismarck succeeded between 1968 and 1870 in isolating France and portraying the regime of Napoleon III in European popular media as both an illegitimate aggressor and the last obstacle to the liberal unification of Germany. The war itself was decided only partially by greater German manpower; far more important was superior German operational planning and a brilliant execution of the military campaign in the opening months of the war. German forces eventually prevailed over the French at Sedan and captured Napoleon III – disastrously for Bismarck, who had desired a viable partner for a quick settlement – and were forced to wage a vicious and taxing hybrid war against the forces of the nascent French republic to realize the aim of annexing

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[595] As historians have made clear, what saved Bismarck was not so much his brilliance as Austria's terrible mistakes: see especially Gordon A. Craig, *The Battle of Königgrätz: Prussia's Victory over Austria, 1866* (Philadelphia, 2003); Frank Zimmer, *Bismarcks Kampf gegen Kaiser Franz Joseph: Königgratz und seine Folgen* (Graz, 1996); and Gerd Fesser, *1866 – Königgratz-Sadowa: Bismarcks Sieg über Österreich* (Berlin, 1994).

Alsace and Lorraine.[596] The German Empire was officially proclaimed on 18 January 1871 at Versailles in a ceremony pregnant with symbolism, precisely 170 years after the coronation of the first King of Prussia at Königsberg, which at the time lay beyond the borders of the traditional German empire.[597]

The new Reich suffered from major strategic handicaps, all of which were in evidence in Bismarck's strategic policy after 1871.[598] As a late-comer among the great powers, it lacked not only the legitimacy born of tradition and experience, but a persuasive civilizing idea, in contrast to the liberalism or republicanism of the western European nations and pan-Slavism of Russia. Particularly by the 1880s, as the Bismarkian era wore on, the lack of a compelling civic ideology in an increasingly populist age made Bismarck's creation seem distinctly antediluvian, based as it was on balancing the "necessities of states" more than on shaping a bolder future.[599] More concretely, the creation of the Reich unhinged a balance of power that had been based since the Metternichian settlement, however precariously, on a weak European center.[600] Germany, often referred to as the "Germanies," had traditionally served as the object of decision, the landscape over which the strategic decisions of other powers were brought to fruition. Henceforth it would exert a strong and sovereign influence on European affairs.

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[596] On Bismarck's policy throughout this period, see Marcus Jones, "Strategy as Character: Bismarck and the Prusso-German Question, 1862-1878," in Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011); and idem, "*Vae Victoribus*: Bismarck's Quest for Peace in the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-1871," in Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey, *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge, 2009).

[597] See Theodore Schieder and Ernst Deuerlein, eds., *Reichsgründung 1870-71: Tatsachen, Kontroversen, Interpretationen* (Stuttgart, 1970); from Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy 1971-1914* (London, 1976), pp.5-6, n. 9.

[598] A useful introduction to scholarly approaches to the Prussian dilemma is Michael Stürmer, "Das zerbrochene Haus – Preußen als Problem der Forschung," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 10 (1971), pp. 175-96.

[599] Siegfried A. Kaehler, "Bemerkungen zu einem Marginal Bismarcks von 1887," in idem*, Studien zur deutschen Geschichte des 19. Und 20. Jahrhunderts. Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Göttingen, 1961), p. 182; from Klaus Hildebrand, "Opportunities and Limits of German Foreign Policy in the Bismarckian Era, 1871-1890: 'A System of Stopgaps?'" in Gregor Schöllgen, *Escape Into War? The Foreign Policy of Imperial Germany* (Oxford and New York, 1990), p. 76, n. 17.

[600] See Theodor Schieder, "Europäisches Staatensystem und Gleichgewicht nach der Reichsgründung," in Karl Ottmar Freiherr von Aretin, ed., *Bismarcks Aussenpolitik und der Berliner Kongress* (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 17-40.

Finally, and in part because of its geographic centrality and vulnerable frontiers, the new Reich was forced to cultivate a powerful military establishment, balanced on a knife's edge against a host of possible threats, any one of which could unwind Bismarck's new creation.[601] By necessity, the Prussian army had long focused more on offense than defense and excelled at waging short and decisive wars for limited objectives. By radically expanding the scope of threats and interests, the unification of Germany expanded the importance of the military, not only in Germany but throughout Europe.[602] The cheap allure of a decisive military campaign to solve the country's problems was greater than any lasting solution they offered to the strategic dilemmas of the Reich, a fact no less true in every other European capital.[603] Julius Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, lamented that "[t]he consequence of the recent wars is that 'might dominates over right'…that foreign policy is only correct, when it is also [military-]strategically correct."[604] Bismarck correctly grasped that the problematic scale of the German Empire, easily the most powerful single piece on the European chessboard but vulnerable to any coalition against it, made far-reaching military entanglements inevitable.

How to minimize the likelihood of a general European war that Germany could not possibly win became an enduring strategic problem after 1871, as was the domestic political problem of diminishing the military alternative that seemed to offer an easy escape to the counry's dilemmas. Bismarck understood the problem well as early as 1871 and thereafter

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[601] Josef Joffe, "'Bismarck' or 'Britain:' Toward an American Grand Strategy after Bipolarity," *International Security* 19 (1995), pp. 105-6.
[602] A perspective on the Prusso-German civil-military dilemma is offered by Michael Schmid, *Der Eiserne Kanzler und die Generäle: Deutsche Rüstungpolitik in der Ära Bismarck, 1871-1890* (Paderborn, 2003); also the provocative argument about the last half of Bismarck's tenure in office in Konrad Canis, *Bismarck und Waldersee: die aussenpolitischen Krisenerscheinungen und das Verhalten des Generalstabes 1882 bis 1890* (Berlin, 1980).
[603] See the classic treatment by Stig Förster, "Der deutsche Generalstab und die Illusion des kurzen Krieges, 1871-1914: Metakritik eines Mythos," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 54 (1995), pp. 61-96.
[604] Heinrich Lutz, *Österreich-Ungarn und die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches: europäische Entscheidungen, 1867-1871* (Frankfurt a.M., 1979) pp.488ff.; from Hildebrand, "Opportunities and Limits," p. 76, n. 15.

embraced the idea that German security depended on peace and stability in Europe.[605] As the postwar strategic landscape gradually came into focus, he foresaw that military conflict involving any two other powers would almost certainly involve the new Reich somehow. "Whatever the origins, whoever the combatants, wherever the battlefield, Germany was likely to become involved. In such a war she would inevitably be trapped into fighting for someone else's interests. *Realpolitik* dictated that Germany strive to preserve the peace of Europe."[606] His strategic policy had to manage the transition from a power striving militarily for its zenith to a "saturated power," but one that at the same time provoked fear and suspicion among its neighbors and which could not expand without provoking a balancing coalition against it.

Especially after 1875, Bismarck cast himself as an impartial arbiter in international disputes, most notably at the Congress of Berlin on the Near Eastern question. Then, and during other crises too, he correctly calculated that Germany had little to gain and everything to lose in a general European war, particularly a two-front war. Given the hostility of France, he focused much of his diplomacy on Russia to prevent one. By the late 1880s some of his critics urged a preventive war against what they saw as a growing Russian threat, a course of action he once famously dismissed as "committing suicide for fear of death." Nevertheless, the chancellor never embraced the abstract principle of European peace as an end in itself, and never ruled out the ultimate need for war to safeguard Germany or its interests.[607] Indeed, he reasoned that in all probability Germany would eventually have to go to war against France again after 1871, and better sooner than later.

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[605] Heinz Wolter, "Bismarck als 'Realpolitiker:' Das Problem des europäischen Friedens," in Helmut Bock and Marianne Thoms, eds., *Krieg oder Frieden im Wandel der Geschichte: von 1500 bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1989), p. 166-73.

[606] Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, pp. 252-3.

[607] Karina Urbach, "Bismarck: Ein Amateur in Uniform?" in Brendan Simms und Karina Urbach, eds., *Die Rückkehr der 'grossen Männer:' Staatsmänner im Krieg. Ein Deutsche-Britischer Vergleich* (Berlin and New York, 2010), pp. 87-96.

But Bismarck opposed war for the sake of any objective apart from cold state interest. As early as the famous Olmetz speech in December 1855 he fulminated against wars waged on "principled" grounds, such as honor, glory, or the partisan domestic political advantage.[608] For Bismarck, the sledgehammer of the military was almost always a poor substitute for the scalpel of diplomacy, and wars represented the least attractive strategic instrument in most cases: difficult to contain, uncertain in their outcome, and prone to slippage in their aims and justifications. Wars frequently destroyed more than they created, and Bismarck preferred throughout his career to exhaust almost every other option before resorting to the armed conflict.

The strategic dilemmas created by Bismarck's unification of Germany converged after 1871 in the central question of how the great powers would react to the new and destabilizing presence at the heart of the European continent that the German empire represented. France was his most urgent problem. The greater part of German popular opinion regarded the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, once part of the Holy Roman Empire but since the seventeenth century the eastern frontier of France, as the legitimate fruits of a victorious war. But the inhabitants of both regions thought of themselves as Frenchmen and displayed little enthusiasm for becoming subjects of the Prusso-German monarch. Further complicating the matter was the fact that the Prussians reached well into French-speaking areas to satisfy the Great General Staff, which insisted on control of the western invasion routes into Central Europe. Although conceding that it was militarily useful, Bismarck felt the policy of annexation to be excessive and came around only grudgingly to the military's hard-put position. As he understood, if Alsace and Lorraine enhanced German military defenses in the west, it also tied a strategic albatross around the neck of the new empire.

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[608] Bismarck, *Werke in Auswahl*, vol. I:1, *Das Werden des Staatsmannes 1815-1854* (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 333-44; from Jost Dülffer, "Bismarck und das Problem des europäischen Friedens," in Jost Dülffer and Hans Hübner with Konrad Breitenborn and Jürgen Laubner, *Otto von Bismarck: Person – Politik – Mythos* (Berlin, 1993), p. 109.

But he also recognized the long-term consequences of that annexation of territory. The French – rich, powerful, and influential even after defeat in 1871 – would not forgive the loss and would contrive to recover the two provinces. The abiding animosity of the French nation became the constant of Bismarck's strategic calculus. "Nobody ought to harbor any illusions; peace will end once France is again strong enough to break it," he remarked in 1874.[609] Fortunately for Bismarck, France, as the one republican government among the major powers of Europe, was regarded with suspicion by all. For his part, Bismarck focused on keeping France isolated, in part by fanning the flames of a militant republicanism that the other powers detested and in part by encouraging the French to become involved in colonial ventures and rivalries with other powers, thus deflecting them from Alsace and Lorraine.

Nor did Bismarck baulk at sowing dissension between the other European powers. The conflicts between the great powers, especially on the periphery of Europe and overseas, were not engineered by Bismarck exclusively, of course. But he understood how they could be turned to Germany's advantage. He could also count on greater or lesser degrees of indulgence from the other major powers of Europe. A prominent strain of British thinking had viewed German strivings for a unified nation as praiseworthy and potentially consistent with British interests on the continent, at least when unification seemed synonymous with democratization.[610] But the new and muscularly Prussian character of Germany after 1871 made even the normally unflappable British apprehensive. Speaking in the House of Commons, Sir Robert Peel said, "I must say that I look on the unification of Germany as a great peril to Europe… We have at this moment the unification of Germany as a military despotism. It cannot be for the good of Europe

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[609] Dispatch to the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, dated Feburary 28, 1874, in Johannes Lepsius, et al., eds., *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, vol.1: *Der Frankfurter Friede und seine Nachwirkungen, 1871-1877* (Berlin, 1924), p. 240; from Joffe, "'Bismarck' or 'Britain,'" p.106.
[610] See Klaus Hildebrand, *"No Intervention:" Die Pax Britannica und Preußen 1865/66-1869/70: eine Untersuchung zur englischen Weltpolitik im 19.Jahrhundert* (Oldenbourg, 1997).

that there should be a great military despotism in Germany built on the ruin and destruction of France."[611] Disraeli expressed British misgivings in darker terms. "This war represents the German Revolution, a greater political event than the French Revolution of the last century," he said, describing the uncertain pall it cast over European affairs. He went on to lament that "[t]here is not a diplomatic tradition which has not been swept away. You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope, at present involved in that obscurity incident to novelty in such affairs."[612] Disraeli grasped that the *Pax Britannica* rested on a careful European balance of power, a fact that had been clear six decades earlier to Metternich, who had worked with Lord Castlereagh in 1814–15 to ensure that no state gained too much from the defeat of Napoleon.

Bismarck labored for years to allay British fears and remove pretexts for disagreement or conflict, but never fully dispelled British concerns over the rapid growth of the German population and economic power in the decades after unification, nor stop the British from coming to see that affairs on the European continent had a growing potential to destabilize their empire.[613] For the British, this meant paying greater attention to potential threats to their lines of communication and trade, especially in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and Central Asia, where the Russians were beginning to spread their wings with alarming implications for the British Empire.

Even as they noted British influence in those areas where their own imperial designs were moving them, the Russians fixated closely on Austrian intentions in Southeastern Europe. The

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[611] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. CCIV (London, 1871), pp. 404-05.

[612] William Flavelle Moneypenny and George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, rev. ed., vol. 2, *1860-1881* (London, 1929), pp. 473-4.

[613] Scholarship on the long and conflicted relationship between Germany and Great Britain in this era, so important for world history, is broad and deep. See especially Raymond James Sontag, *Germany and England: Background of Conflict, 1848-1894* (New York, 1969) and especially Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London, 1980).

Czarist empire had earlier viewed the Prussian domination of Germany as the best among several unappealing possibilities and done much to midwife the new German Reich, seen as another conservative bulwark against western liberalism and republicanism, into existence.[614] For their passivity during the wars of 1866 and 1870-71, the Russians felt that they should be able to count on the support of the new German nation for their policies. They also quickly fell into the comfortable mindset of regarding the Prussians as a strategic junior partner, and were not shy about conveying it to Bismarck, who was no less prickly about Prussia's status against Russia than he had been against Austria some twenty years earlier.[615]

The most urgent aspects of Russia's strategic posture in the new European landscape had to do with Turkey. As Turkish power gradually waned, the Russians cultivated aggressive plans to expand their influence in the Slavic areas of that decrepit empire and were sensitive to the intentions of other powers, especially Austria-Hungary, to contain them.[616] And while Austro-Hungarian designs were not as insidious as the Russians supposed, the imperial government in Vienna had indeed come to view its center of strategic gravity after 1866 as residing more in the Balkans than in the German-speaking parts of Central Europe. The Austrians looked with increasing indulgence on the new German nation, a fact which had as much to do with the Bismarck's careful cultivation of that relationship as it did with any secular strategic gain to be had.[617] The Austrians also kept a weather eye on the newly united Italian nation, particularly in light of its strong interest in the Brenner provinces (the Trentino) and the port of Trieste. The

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[614] Barbara Jelavich, "Russland und die Einigung Deutschlands unter preussischer Führung," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 19 (1968), pp. 521-538; also Eberhard Kolb, "Russland und die Gründung des Norddeutschen Bundes," in R. Dietrich, ed., *Europa und der Norddeutsche Bund* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 183-219.

[615] This emerges unmistakenly from Ulrich Lappenküper, *Die Mission Radowitz: Untersuchungen zur Russlandpolitik Otto von Bismarcks, 1871-1875* (Göttingen, 1990).

[616] On the strategic dimensions of Russian concerns in the Balkans, see Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914* (Cambridge, 1991).

[617] Nicholas Der Bagdasarian, *The Austro-German Rapprochement, 1870-1879: From the Battle of Sedan to the Dual Alliance* (Rutherford, 1976).

puckish Italians seemed eager throughout this period to assert themselves and make up for centuries of fractiousness and strategic irrelevance.[618]

For Bismarck, the essence of strategic policy, particularly when it involved the potential for violent conflict, consisted not in military success alone but in a stable and enduring settlement. On behalf of a nation with much to lose in any realignment of the European strategic balance, Bismarck rightly foresaw complications for the new Germany in each of relationships described above and struggled in the first years after unification to chart a course between them. The period between 1871 and 1875 was a phase of considerable flexibility and uncertainty in his policy. He tested the constraints of the international system and clarified which squares on the chessboard of international politics were covered and which open. He never wavered in his broad focus on mitigating disturbances to the delicate equilibrium established by the consequences of the wars of unification, but he explored, at times indelicately, the full extent of his strategic *Handlungsspielraum*, or room for maneuver.

To prevent France from exploiting the insecurities of either Russia or the Habsburg monarchy for its purposes, Bismarck struck quickly after the war of 1871 to forge an accommodation between them. Through artful press policy and gentle suasion, he engineered a meeting between his monarch and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary at Bad Gastein in August 1871, reassuring Czar Alexander II that a warming of the German-Austrian relationship need not diminish Germany's reliance on Russian support. The apprehensions raised in St. Petersburg persuaded Alexander to join the Habsburg monarch on a visit to Berlin in September 1872. The occasion resulted in the so-called *Dreikaiserabkommen*, or Three Emperors' League

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[618] For the place of Italy in Bismarck's calculations, see Joachim Scholtyseck, *Alliierter oder Vasall? Italien und Deutschland in der Zeit des Kulturkampfes und der "Krieg-in-Sicht" Krise 1875* (Köln, 1994).

of 22 October 1873, the basic concept behind which remained the strategic constant in Bismarck's thinking until 1890.[619]

In the short term, the agreement served to lessen tensions in the Balkans between Austria-Hungary and Russia and stave off a rift between the two, thereby papering over one of the gravest threats to European peace. But the dynamics of the continent's strategic landscape even at this early point highlight the enduring difficulties of Bismarck's program. As successful as his attempts over the next two decades seemed, the writing was already on the wall for any program to bind the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. The decline of the Ottoman Empire drew both into an inescapable competitive rivalry over the Balkans, leading directly to the First World War. The Three Emperors' League was little more than a temporary stopgap to the need to choose between Russia and Austria-Hungary while keeping France marginalized. It did nothing to ameliorate the underlying conditions that fueled the strategic rivalry, as Bismarck himself understood. Despite the fact that France was a republic and Russia a reactionary autocracy, the cold and hard facts of *Realpolitik* pointed to France as the natural ally of Russia against an increasingly powerful and thereby threatening Germany. As time wore on, Bismarck found it harder to remain on the side of three great powers against two.

If Bismarck had succeeded in papering over the latent conflict between the eastern empires, he could not quite master the shifting circumstances of European diplomacy more generally. Two developments in 1873 – the rise of the conservative administration of Marshal MacMahon in France and a decrease in Hungarian influence over the dual monarchy in Austria – called into question key components of his postwar strategy. By early 1875, events pointed to a

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[619] Volker Ullrich, *Die nervöse Grossmacht: Aufstieg und Untergang des deutschen Kaiserreichs 1871-1918* (Frankfurt a.M., 1997), pp. 77ff.; most generally, William N. Medlicott, *Bismarck and the Three Emperors' Alliance* (London, 1945).

growing isolation of Germany.[620] Bismarck had supported the republican government of Adolphe Thiers in France against the forces of monarchical reaction, reasoning that it made the country a less attractive alliance partner to the conservative monarchies of Eastern Europe.[621] By 1875 forces led by MacMahon were contemplating a *coup d'etat* to put an Orleans prince on a restored throne and seeking the support of the Russian czar for their plans. There were further indications that Leon Gambetta, the republican firebrand and hero of the French resistance in 1871, would bridge the ideological divide and support the Orleanist candidacy.[622]

In Austria-Hungary, Bismarck had supported the appointment of Julius Andrassy as foreign minister of the dual state in Austria in 1871, which diluted the power of Austro-German centralism and a revanchist foreign policy against Germany. Within a couple of years, however, the financial insolvency of Hungary threatened to unwind the dual state constitution and the conservative forces of centralism in Vienna rallied. A strong Austro-German regime was bound to pursue a revanchist policy against Germany. Matters with Italy, a new factor in Bismarck's calculations, were scarcely better.[623] Most alarmingly, perhaps, relations with Russia had chilled considerably by 1875.

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[620] For so discrete a diplomatic event, the historiography on the War-in-Sight Crisis is imposing. The basis for the present interpretation is Johannes Janorschke, "Die 'Krieg-in-Sicht' Krise von 1875: Eine Neubetrachtung," *Historische Mitteilungen* 20 (2007), pp. 116-39; see also idem, *Bismarck, Europa und die "Krieg-in-Sicht"-Krise von 1875* (Paderborn, 2010); James Stone, *The War Scare of 1875: Bismarck and Europe in the Mid-1870s* (Stuttgart, 2010); Andreas Hillgruber, "Die 'Krieg-in-Sicht' Krise 1875: Wegscheide der Politik der europäischen Großmächte in der späten Bismarckzeit," in Ernst Schulin, ed., *Gedenkschrift Martin Göhring: Studien zur europäischen Geschichte* (München, 1968), pp. 239-53.

[621] See Allan Mitchell, *The German Influence in France after 1870: the Formation of the French Republic* (Chapel Hill, 1979); the French perspective is handled by Bert Böhmer, *Frankreich zwischen Republik und Monarchie in der Bismarckzeit: Bismarcks Antilegitimismus in französischer Sicht 1870-1877* (Kallmünz, 1966); the diplomatic corollary to this policy is detailed skillfully in James Stone, "Bismarck and the Containment of France, 1873-1877," *Canadian Journal of History* 29 (1994), pp. 281-304.

[622] James Stone, "The War Scare of 1875 Revisited," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 53 (1994), p. 312.

[623] The difficulties are well detailed in Scholtyseck, *Alliierter oder Vasall?*.

To shore up that crucial connection, Bismarck appointed Joseph Maria von Radowitz, a privy councilor in the Foreign Office, as special envoy to St. Petersburg in February 1875.[624] Much speculation surrounded the special mission, at the time and since. Rumors circulated of potential German toleration of Russian expansion in the Balkans at the expense of Austria-Hungary, in exchange for benevolent neutrality in the event of a German pre-emptive strike against France.[625] Dark mutterings followed of German, French, and Russian troop movements. Informed opinion, both diplomatic and military, held that neither France nor Germany could risk war; both militaries, it was widely known, were rearming and reorganizing after the war of 1870-71, a process Germany expected to complete in 1876 and France in 1877. The militaries of Austria-Hungary and Russia were even less prepared. At the center of these swirling currents stood Bismarck, whose assessment of the situation remained unclear to contemporaries.

It is worth pointing out that historians have, too, struggled mightily to divine Bismarck's reasons for igniting the crisis.[626] In the first decades of the twentieth century, they focused on whether he anticipated a general European war, similar to First World War, 30 years before the fact and whether they could thus write him into the interpretative archaeology of that tragedy. A major study on Bismarck's understanding of preventative war in 1957 resolved that debate resoundingly, sending historians back to the sources for an entire generation of fresh insights.[627] The absence of documentation directly attesting to his objectives and strategic calculations

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[624] Hajo Holborn, *Bismarcks Europäischer Politik zu Beginn der siebziger Jahre und die Mission Radowitz* (Berlin, 1925).

[625] See Janorschke, "Krieg-in-Sicht," p. 117, n. 4, who points out that the documentary record does not support this interpretation of the Radowitz Mission, which was almost axiomatic in older scholarship on the crisis; find a good survey of the matter in James Stone, "The Radowitz Mission: A Study in Bismarckian Foreign Policy," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 51 (1992), pp. 47-71; the interpretation dismissed by Janorschke is that of Ulrich Lappenküper, *Die Mission Radowitz: Untersuchungen zur Russlandpolitik Otto von Bismarcks, 1871-1875* (Göttingen, 1990).

[626] See especially Janorschke, "Krieg-in-Sicht," p. 119.

[627] Karl Ernst Jeismann, *Das Problem des Präventivkrieges im europäischen Staatensystem, mit besonderem Blick auf die Bismarckzeit* (Frieburg, 1957); Janorscke, "Krieg-in-Sicht," p. 119 points to further confirmation in Robert Ziegs, *Die "Krieg-in-Sicht-Krise" von 1875 und ihr militärpolitische Hintergrund* (Hamburg, 2000).

makes any interpretation unstable, and compels historians to consider the crisis within the broad sweep of Bismarck's strategic policy. Regardless of where one falls, however, there can be no question that Bismarck badly misjudged the support of the other major powers for a strong French counterweight to Germany in 1875. His role in what quickly came to be called the *Krieg-in-Sicht* (War-in-Sight) crisis of 1875 had its origins in rumors of a massive French campaign to purchase military mounts in Germany, presumably as part of a campaign to mobilize for war. Moreover, an actual French decision on 12 March to add a fourth battalion to each regiment and fourth company to each battalion of the army further exacerbated tensions. According to estimates of the German General Staff that leaked to the press, the reform implied a massive and ready superiority over the German Army in the event of war.

Bismarck turned to the press to discipline the French temper. In early April, the *Kölnische Zeitung* carried an article accusing the French of plotting a revanchist war against Germany in league with Italy and Austria, a revival of Bismarck's abiding fear of a so-called *Kaunitzian* coalition of Catholic powers against Prussia to undo the results of 1866 and 1871.[628] More seriously, the Berlin *Post* ran a piece on 8 April by a journalist known to be close to Bismarck entitled "Is War in Sight?" The article argued that, while clouds had indeed gathered, they could yet disperse. The articles sent shock waves throughout Europe, with even the Kaiser expressing dismay over the alarmist mood, precipitating a three-week campaign by both Bismarck and the French foreign minister, Louis Decazes, to score diplomatic triumphs over one another. At an official dinner in Berlin on 21 April, a tipsy Radowitz declared to the French Ambassador, Elias de Gontaut-Biron, that a preventive war would be entirely justified "politically, philosophically and even in Christian terms," if France continued to rearm with the

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[628] A point made by Bagdasarian, *The Austro-German Rapprochement*, who argues that Bismarck's war scare was directed as much against Austria as France.

intention of overturning the results of 1871.[629] Only the British ambassador, Odo Russell, remained unruffled by the unfolding drama, writing to Lord Derby that

> Bismarck is at his old tricks again alarming the Germans through the officious press and intimating that the French are going to attack them and that Austria and Italy are conspiring in favour of the Pope … This crisis will blow over like so many others but Bismarck's sensational policy is very wearisome at times…. I do not, as you know, believe in another war with France.[630]

By insinuating that Germany would declare war against France, Bismarck had overreached and provoked a swift British and Russians reaction. Disraeli persuaded the Russians to intervene jointly in Berlin to tamp down tensions and preserve peace, and Russell was instructed to support a Russian peace initiative during the czar's scheduled visit in May. The visit provided a prime opportunity for the Russian state chancellor, Alexander Gorchakov, to chasten Bismarck before his monarch, informing him bluntly and directly that the European powers would not tolerate the subordination of France.[631] As Otto Pflanze recounts, Bismarck "never forgave Gorchakov for what he believed to have been a deliberate attempt by the Russian to portray himself as an 'angel of peace'….If Gorchakov enjoyed putting his German 'pupil' in his place, Bismarck was the chief cause of his own humiliation."[632]

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[629] Andreas Hillgruber, *Bismarcks Außenpolitik* (Freiburg, 1972), p. 141.

[630] Karina Urbach, *Bismarck's Favourite Englishman: Lord Odo Russell's Mission to Berlin* (London and New York, 1999), p. 138.

[631] Reinhard Wittram, "Bismarck und Gorchakov im Mai 1875," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (1955) pp. 221-244.

[632] Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.2, p. 271.

The War-in-Sight crisis marked the greatest setback of his career. If Bismarck's strategic policies over the preceding 11 years had set a standard for cultivating multiple alternatives, managing risk, and achieving great outcomes at minimal cost, his ill-conceived bluff in 1875 – inflating a half-baked war scare he had no real intention of fulfilling – seemed more like the haphazard bungling of a second-rate statesman. To be sure, the crisis arose at a time of great personal stress for Bismarck. The extraordinary pace and intensity of the events leading to German unification exacted a high price on his health and psychological disposition, which in turn contributed to his general crankiness and adversarial disposition. His personal papers and letters list innumerable complaints about his dreadful physical health and declining energy in the years after unification. "My energy is all used up," he complained in May 1872. "I can't go on."[633] To varying degrees over the years, Bismarck griped about rheumatism, facial pain, influenza, stomach cramps, leg injuries, and shaky nerves.

Restless and in a constant state of discomfort, he spent only half of his time in the 1870s in Berlin, passing the remainder at his estates in Varzin and Friedrichsruh and at several spa retreats. As Eberhard Kolb points out, a good bit of Bismarck's suffering was probably psychosomatic and characteristic of a massively self-absorbed personality, which detracts in no way from its significance for his statecraft.[634] A good bit also undoubtedly derived from his grossly unhealthy lifestyle, which involved, not least among its features, astonishing gluttony. During a visit to Bismarck's retreat at Friedrichsruh, Christoph von Tiedemann, the chief of the Reich Chancellery, recounted that "as before, one eats here until the walls crack."[635] Breakfast consisted of roast beef and beefsteak with potatoes, cold roast venison, game birds, desert puddings, and "so forth," all washed down with copious amounts of red wine, champagne, and

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[633] Volker Ulrich, *Otto von Bismarck* (Reinbek, 1998), p. 111.
[634] Eberhard Kolb, *Bismarck* (München, 2009), p. 94-5.
[635] Volker Ullrich, *Das erhabene Ungeheuer: Napoleon und andere historische Reportagen (*München, 2008), p. 42.

beer. Bismarck, who had been slim in his youth, gained weight steadily in the 1870s and broke the scales at 273lbs by the end of the decade. Only with the appointment of Dr. Ernst Schweninger as his personal physician and the imposition of a strict diet did his weight fall and his overall health and well-bring begin to improve.

But one cannot overlook Bismarck's continual stream of complaints and references to his health and state of mind throughout his tenure as chancellor, all of which contributed to lengthy periods away from Berlin and innumerable threats to resign from office. It also contributed to a disposition that was sometimes nothing short of nasty: political associates, friendly and hostile alike, struggled to compensate for a strong adversarial streak in Bismarck's attitude. "[His] inclination to seize on every triviality as a pretext for conflict is pathological and leads to unending friction," argued Robert Lucius von Ballhausen, a Prussian politician. "With such shaky nerves he'll only hold the Reich and state together if he abandons a good part of his responsibilities and cedes some leeway to other actors. In quiet moments he recognizes that and sets himself to it."[636]

But even if Bismarck's travails in 1875 had a personal dimension, they had important lessons for his strategic policy that he could not afford to overlook. Nurturing alternatives as a strategic device has utility only when the alternatives are plausible. The crisis revealed the fault lines among the great powers and those limits to Germany's discretion that the other powers were willing to enforce. Bismarck had little choice after 1875 but to face the implications of the strangely 'half-hegemonial' position of Germany in Central Europe: the political isolation of the German Empire; the *ad hoc* willingness of France, England and Russia to counteract German initiatives if pushed too far; and the reduction of core German interests to a fraught dependence on the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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[636] Freiherrn Lucius von Ballhausen, *Bismarck Erinnerungen* (Stuttgart, 1920), p. 134.

But if the emphasis in this analysis is on Bismarck's policies, the real justification for it lies in what the War-in-Sight crisis reveals of the European strategic landscape in the long prelude to the First World War. Above all else, the record of the crisis and its aftermath marks it as the basis of Bismarck's program after 1875 to secure the German empire through a policy of stabilization and peace across the continent. It shaped Bismarck's sense that a reordering of the strategic landscape in Central Europe was impossible after 1871 without a major war, and that such a war threatened to undermine Germany as much as help it. The British and Russians seized upon the opportunity to temper overweening German ambitions, and the Russian foreign minister, Gorchakov, reveled in the chance to cast himself as an honest broker on behalf of European peace, a role that Germany's strategic dilemmas demanded it fulfill. The War-in-Sight crisis of 1875 points to the broader view historians of grand strategy take of Bismarck's approach to German security and European peace in the years after unification. Clearly, gone were days when Bismarck could boast that the fate of Europe could be "always be made ready, combed and brushed in ten to fifteen minutes over breakfast" by him.[637]

In the aftermath of the War-in-Sight Crisis, tensions in the Balkans flared and the long-simmering 'Eastern Question' again pushed to the forefront of European affairs. Bismarck observed the situation warily, if not with outright relief, and initially hived to a policy designed to reassert the central role in the European balance of power that he had in the late 1860s: "a total political situation, in which all powers, except France, need us and are kept from coalitions against us as much as possible by their relations with each other."[638] A chain of events

[637] Letter to his daughter Marie, 23 June 1872, in *GW*, vol. 14, p. 834; from Klaus Hildebrand, "Primat der Sicherheit. Saturierte Kontinentalpolitik," in Lothar Gall, ed., *Otto von Bismarck und Wilhelm II. Repräsentanten eines Epochenwechsels?* (Paderborn, 2000), p. 15, n. 7.

[638] Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and Friedrich Thimme, eds., *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1922-27), pp. 153-4; from Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.2, p. 418.

beginning in July 1875 with uprisings against Turkish rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina challenged the stability of the entire Southeastern European region.

The gradual collapse of Turkish power threatened to create a vacuum which Austria-Hungary and Russia, circling like vultures around a dying animal, would compete to fill. In the worst case, the crisis would lead to a war in which each power sought direct German assistance against the other. The best possible outcome, an international conference in which each would likewise seek German support, if only diplomatically, was scarcely better. Bismarck could not afford to be placed in a position in which he would be compelled to choose; indeed, a decision one way or the other would cut against the grain of a strategy of alternatives. The rebuffed party would almost certainly turn to France and strategic fault lines across the continent would harden to Germany's detriment. Initially, Russia and Austria-Hungary were able to cooperate enough to agree in July 1876 on a plan to partition the Balkans peacefully.

However, unexpected Turkish military success against Serbia and Montenegro soon forced the hand of the czar who was under immense pressure by a radical pan-Slavic faction in his retinue to step forth as the protector of Balkan Slavs. In October he pointedly asked Bismarck whether Germany would remain neutral in the event of war with Austria. Bismarck's reply, while exhibiting rare candor, exasperated the Russians. He emphasized that German could ill-afford a weakening of either eastern power, and that he hoped still for an accord that would resolve the matter without firm German commitment in either direction. Unable to wait, Russia declared war on Turkey in April 1877. The Russian Army broke the resistance of the Turks and forced the capitulation of the fortress at Plevna before dictating a peace before the gates of Constantinople. The Treaty of San Stefano on 3 March 1878 restricted the European territory of Turkey to a small region around the Ottoman capital. Russian intentions of establishing a greater

Bulgarian duchy as a satellite, however, directly challenged British interests in the Mediterranean and Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans. Neither was prepared to put up with so large an increase in Russian power, and Bismarck felt constrained to call a general conference to head off a war among the great powers.

The challenges of his relationships with Austria-Hungary and Russia, as well as the war scare of 1875, spurred Bismarck to step back from international affairs in 1877 and recover his energies by an extended leave. While taking a cure at Bad Kissingen in June, he had occasion to ruminate on his strategic policy and dictated the so-called 'Kissingen Diktat,' wherein he described his "nightmare of coalitions" and enumerated the vision that guided his thinking on the developing strategic landscape:

> A French newspaper said recently about me that I have a "le cauchemar des coalitions;" a nightmare of this kind lasts for a long time, maybe forever, an entirely justified worry for a German minister. Western coalitions against us can be formed if Austria joins one. More dangerous, perhaps, would be a Russian-Austria-French combination; a greater intimacy among two of the above would give the third means to exercise a not inconsiderable pressure on us. In my concern about such eventualities, not suddenly but over years, I would see the following as a desirable outcome of the Oriental crisis:
> 1. a gravitation of Russian and Austrian interests and rivalry towards the east;
> 2. a pretext for Russia, in order to achieve strong defensive position in the Orient and on its coasts, to seek an alliance with us;

3. for England and Russia a satisfactory status quo that gives them the same interest in maintaining it as we have;

4. division of England from France, which remains hostile to us, as a result of Egypt and the Mediterranean;

5. relations between Russia and Austria that make it hard for both to create the kind of anti-German coalition which centralizing or clerical forces in Austria are somewhat inclined to pursue.

Were I capable of work, I would complete and refine the picture that I have in mind: not that of the acquisition of territory, but a total political situation, in which all powers, except France, need us and are kept from coalitions against us as much as possible by their relations with each other.[639]

Energized by his vacation, Bismarck successfully defused the immediate tensions for war through his masterly administration of the Congress of Berlin, which convened under his chairmanship on 13 July 1878 in the palace of the Reich Chancellery. The Congress drew the most important European statesmen together for the first time since the Crimean War to overcome the Balkans crisis and remove the strongest pretext for conflict in a generation.[640] That it was held there reflected the enormous importance that Germany now had for international politics, particularly as viewed through Bismarck's strategic policy over the preceding fifteen years. His careful course between the Austria-Hungary and Russia to that point left him as the only statesman with the stature and impartiality necessary to oversee a diplomatic settlement to

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[639] Michael Stürmer, ed., *Bismarck und die preußisch-deutsche Politik, 1871-1890*, text no.40 (München, 1973), pp. 100f.

[640] Ralph Melville und Hans-Jürgen Schröder, eds., *Der Berliner Kongress von 1878: die Politik der Grossmächte und die Probleme der Modernisierung in Südosteuropa in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

the problem.[641] He resolved to act as "an honest broker, who really wants to get the business settled," ameliorating tensions and generating compromise among the major stakeholders.[642] Even before the Congress met, broad consensus emerged on the most controversial potential points – most importantly, the unwillingness of the Russians to fight both the British and Austrians in defense of the Treaty of San Stefano – which, it must be admitted, contributed as much to its successful outcome as did Bismarck's even-handed administration of its proceedings.

Nevertheless, his task was far from simple in practical terms:

> Quite apart from the importance of the negotiations, it is extremely tiring to express one's self in a foreign tongue [French] – even though one speaks it fluently – so correctly that the words can be transcribed without delay in the protocol. Seldom did I sleep before six o'clock, often not before eight in the morning for a few hours. Before twelve o'clock I could not speak to anyone, and you can imagine what condition I was in at the sessions. My brain was like a gelatinous, disjointed mass. Before I entered the congress I drank two or three beer glasses filled with the strongest port wine…in order to bring my blood into circulation. Otherwise I would have been incapable of presiding.[643]

Bismarck dominated the congress in three languages, nearly driving the delegates to exhaustion. ("No one has ever died from work," he told them.) He established the agenda,

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[641] William L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890* (New York, 1931), pp. 140-2.

[642] Horst Kohl, ed., *Die politischen Reden des Fürsten Bismarck: Historisch-kritische Gesammtausgabe*, vol.7 (Stuttgart, 1892-1905), p. 92.

[643] *GW*, vol.8, p.280, also pp.265-66; from Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.2, p. 438.

directed the deliberations, and husbanded the resulting consensus through the ratification process, which he accomplished with speed and aplomb. Ultimately Russia relinquished a sizable proportion its gains from the war, although Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania became fully autonomous and Bulgaria a semi-autonomous, tribute-paying possession of the Ottoman Empire. Apart from Germany and France, every major European power profited in some manner from the settlement -- with the British gaining the most.

Nevertheless, the autonomy of Bulgaria and enhanced sovereignty of the Slavic territories were not enough to dissuade the Russians that the Congress had shortchanged them.[644] Gorchakov, who headed the Russian delegation, directed his ire at the deputy Russian plenipotentiary, Peter Shuvalov, and at Bismarck, whom he accused of giving scant support to Russian initiatives; a poor reward, in his estimation, for the sturdy backing that Russia had lent Prussia in its most vulnerable years. If Bismarck had succeeded in convincing the Reich's doubters that Germany was a stabilizing element in the European balance, then he did so at the cost of Russian distrust and hostility. But the net effect was to allay the still-simmering apprehensions of the new German empire and Bismarck's policies among most statesmen in Europe, so much so that historians see the Congress of Berlin, only three years removed from the War-in-Sight Crisis, as the high point of his public stature, if not his actual influence.

Tensions between Germany and Russia worsened with the so-called *Ohrfeigenbrief* of 15 August 1879, wherein Czar Alexander II demanded, in the form of a virtual ultimatum, that Kaiser Wilhelm issue a binding declaration on the future course of German strategic policy and criticized Bismarck in undiplomatically sharp terms. In a cabinet meeting, Bismarck declaimed that "Russia has comported herself toward her sole friend like an Asiatic despot...the behavior

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[644] Manfred Müller, *Die Bedeutung des Berliner Kongresses für die deutsch-russischen Beziehungen* (Leipzig, 1927).

and letter are like those of a master to his vassel." He resolved to pursue that policy from which he had long shied, namely, a compact between the Habsburg monarchy in Austro-Hungary and the German Empire. He found a reliable negotiating partner in Graf Andrassy, the Austrian foreign minister, and during a sojourn in Vienna at the end of September 1879 brokered a secret treaty. For this diplomatic coup to take effect, Bismarck had to overcome the formidable opposition of his sovereign, Kaiser Wilhelm, who viewed any closer relationship with Austria as a personal betrayal of his nephew, the czar. Because the chancellor and his monarch were in widely separated locations at the time, the most serious disagreement to plague their long and productive relationship was carried out in letters. Bismarck employed every device – from unanimous Cabinet resolutions to the threat of resignation – to persuade his monarch to ratify the document on 16 October 1879.

The Dual Alliance was a strictly defensive treaty, renewable every five years and containing secret language that obliged both parties to come to the defense of the other in the event that either was attacked by Russia. Bismarck's purpose in negotiating the alliance with Austria was not to close off the possibility of a further accommodation with Russia; rather, he intended the reorientation to lever the Russians into a more intensive relationship with the German empire, an outcome served with the renewal of the Three Emperors' League in June 1881. The terms of the treaty, which was renewed in 1884, were strictly secret and offered Bismarck the most important source of ongoing leverage he possessed, however modest, over the potentially disastrous Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans.

The outcome of Bismarck's efforts in the 1880s was a complicated web of alliances designed to prevent the outbreak of a general European war; and failing that, to guarantee that Germany faced such an unfortunate eventuality on the side of a sturdy alliance. In May 1882 the

Italians, who felt duped and isolated by the French annexation of Tunis in 1881, transformed the Austro-German coalition into the Triple Alliance; they were followed in short order by Romania, Spain, and Turkey, propelling Bismarck to the height of his international influence. "At St. Petersburg," wrote Odo Russell in 1880, "his word is Gospel, as well as at Paris and Rome, where his sayings inspire respect, and his silence apprehension."[645] To be sure, Bismarck was much aided by the fact that the German Empire confronted no great strategic challenges in the early 1880s.

During these years in which he enjoyed a comparatively free hand, he embarked on a short-lived and misbegotten flirtation with colonialism, placing Southwest Africa, Togo, Cameroon, East Africa as well as New Guinea and a slew of other Pacific islands under German protection after German merchants and colonial enthusiasts ran up German flags. Historians have long agonized over what Bismarck might have intended in pursuing a policy that so baldy contradicted core tenets of his strategic doctrine and incurred needless liabilities while providing few meaningful advantages.[646] For a time, popular historical wisdom focused on putative domestic-political agenda, namely the reinforcement of the Reich's legitimacy through social-imperialistic manipulation of popular opinion. The influence of this interpretation has waned as much as suggestions that Bismarck, anticipating a monarchical succession in the near term, intended the colonial policy to antagonize England and hence the domestic position of the Anglophilic Crown Prince and his English wife.

The explanation for Bismarck's colonial policy, which he himself continually reiterated, was straightforward and simple. As he put the matter in the Reichstag on 10 January 1885,

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[645] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, 27 November 1880; from Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville, K. G., 1815-1891* (London, 1905), p. 207.

[646] As seen in Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., "Bismarck's Imperialist Venture: Anti-British in Origin?" in Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa* (New Haven, 1967), pp. 47-82.

German colonialism aimed at the "protection of oversees settlements which our trade has brought forth."[647] In another connection he argued that "we follow no foreign example, rather we follow our merchants with our protection. That is the principle." Of course, no single explanation captures so multi-faceted a phenomenon, and historians like A.J.P. Taylor are correct to point to Bismarck's flirtation with colonialism as "the accidental by-product of an abortive Franco-German entente," or a brief campaign to cooperate with the republican government France in the colonial sphere to dissipate revanchist passions.[648]

In fact, Bismarck's efforts resulted in a momentary relaxation of tension with France during a period of relative calm in European strategic affairs. But with the fall of the cabinet of Jules Ferry in late March 1885, tensions again grew. General Boulanger, minister of war in 1886 and a rabid anti-German, fostered a populist and blatantly revanchist policy against the Reich's protectorates over Alsace and Lorraine. Aggressive agitation for war complemented the French push for a Russian alliance, a clear prerequisite to any potential conflict with Germany. Although tensions again slackened with the departure of Boulanger in May 1887, the ground was laid for major challenges to Bismarck's policy of stabilization.

Once again, the problems arose in southeastern Europe. In September 1885, Bulgaria united under Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the pro-British and pro-German interloper who had married the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. That action had resulted in a Serbian attack on the country to enforce a new partition. Even the Serbian defeat at the battle of Slivnitza would have little mattered, had it not moved the Russians to pressure Alexander, who was, fortunately for them, kidnapped and ultimately resigned his shaky thrown. Increasingly alarmed by these muscular Russian initiatives on their borders, the Austrians informed them in November 1886

[647] Rudolf Hafeneder, "Deutsche Kolonialkartographie 1884-1919," Dissertation, Universität der Bundeswehr, München, 23 January 2008, p. 5.
[648] A.J.P. Taylor, *Germany's First Bid for Colonies, 1884-1885* (London, 1938), p. 6.

that an occupation of Bulgaria was unacceptable. For his part, Bismarck was willing to tolerate a Russian occupation for the sake of salvaging his accommodation with the czarist empire, and was at pains to temper both of his allies, whom he compared to "two savage dogs."

But Germany stood to lose as much as either Russia or Austria in the event of a war between the two. Bismarck clung to his basic view that Germany could perhaps tolerate a war in which one or the other side lost a battle, but could not afford to have either mauled so badly that it endangered its position as a great power. In the meantime, he had to work feverishly to keep them bound in the alliance that he oversaw: "We must spin out the Three Emperors League as long as a strand of it remains."[649] Bismarck understood this to be especially important in light of the Boulanger threat then percolating in France and the possibility of a Franco-Russian alliance to which it gave rise. His efforts in this period reflected increasingly desperate maneuverings to maintain an open channel to the Russians while strengthening Austro-Hungarian resolve and building a Mediterranean coalition of Britain, Italy, and Austro-Hungary to contain the Russians on the southwestern flank.[650]

The czar ultimately refused to renew the Three Emperors' League, but assented to direct and secret negotiations with Germany over what became the Reinsurance Treaty of 18 June 1887. Bismarck conceded a great deal to Russian discretion by acknowledging its right to exert a dominant influence over Bulgaria and acquiescing to the closure of the Straits to foreign warships. To uphold the Dual Alliance with Austria, he further agreed to a Russian proposal binding Germany and Russia to neutrality in the event of a war fought by either against a third power, except in the event that Germany attacked France or Russia attacked Austria. With this

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[649] GP, vol.5, pp.78 (note), 96, 123-53; from Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol.3, p. 225.
[650] The complexities of Bismarck's policy toward Russia are detailed in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Bismarcks späte Russlandpolitik 1879-1890," in idem, *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871-1918: Studien zur deutschen Sozial- und Verfassungsgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 163-80; Andreas Hillgruber, "Deutsch-Russland Politik 1871-1918: Grundlagen – Grundmuster – Grundprobleme," *Saeculum* 1 (1976), pp. 94-108.

expedient, Bismarck may have fulfilled his ultimate strategic objective of heading off a Franco-Russian alliance, but he effectively committed Germany to support Russia in Bulgaria, a contradiction of his commitments to Austria-Hungary. He consequently ran the risk of igniting the very war in southeastern Europe that his policies had done so much to that point to avert. The provisions of the treaty – quite apart from its advantages or disadvantages in retrospect – points to the fact that to all intents and purposes, Bismarck had run out of space to maneuver. Almost all of the squares on the chessboard of European politics were now blocked off, and he had precious few alternatives remaining to head off aggressive French efforts to insinuate themselves into the Austro-Russian rivalry. As he well understood, any benefits to Germany's strategic position on the continent rested on conditions that were changing fast, and Russian expansionism could not be contained for long.

Throughout autumn 1887, Russia agitated aggressively against developments in Bulgaria that it viewed as evidence of Austrian conspiracy against its interests. Although Bismarck was initially sympathetic, his irritation with Russian initiatives mounted and he began to apply financial pressure to head off an increasingly likely Russian occupation of Bulgaria. In November 1887 the German government effectively vetoed a major loan to Russia when it ordered the *Reichsbank* not accept Russian bonds as collateral. His moves may have restrained the Russians from overt military action but drove them into the welcoming arms of the French, where a Russian loan was so oversubscribed in March 1890 that the czarist regime was able to finance its new military programs on a grand scale. Perhaps paradoxically, the accession of Wilhelm II, who favored a British alliance and the vehemently anti-Russian counsels of senior military and diplomatic advisors (in stark contrast to Bismarck, who consistently felt that "the Russian shirt [was] preferable to the English jacket"), alarmed the Russians into reopening

negotiations to renew the Reinsurance Treaty.[651] But Wilhelm dismissed Bismarck in March 1890, and his successor as chancellor, General Leo von Caprivi, convinced the young Kaiser to let it lapse, knocking out the most pivotal single strut supporting Bismarck's alliance system.[652] With that the "conjuring trick," as one skeptical historian referred to Bismarck's complex and contradictory alliance system, collapsed against the basic causes of European insecurity: the spiraling fragmentation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the disintegration of Ottoman authority across Southeastern Europe, and increasingly strident Russian expansionism.[653]

Conclusion

In a poignant comment on one of his favorite historical actors, A.J.P.Taylor once remarked that historians who wrote about Bismarck always had "some political axe to grind, they were all concerned to show that he had failed or succeeded."[654] It is striking that Bismarck himself took pains to forswear any explicit responsibility for the outcome of his decisions and policies. "One cannot possibly make history," he was fond of repeating, apparently without irony, to many of the admirers who sought out the great man after his retirement. At most, he would add, one might guide affairs more prudently on the basis of it. To a university delegation, he declared that "One can always learn from [history] how one should lead the political life of a great people in accordance with their development and their historical destiny." In Bismarck's

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[651] Karl Messerschmidt, *Bismarcks russische Politik vom Berliner Kongreß bis zu seiner Entlassung* (Thesis/Hamburg, Würzburg, 1936), p. 87; from Hildebrand, *German Foreign Policy*, p. 87, n. 47; the running conflict between Bismarck and senior military officials over policy toward Russia is detailed in Konrad Canis, *Bismarck und Waldersee: die außenpolitischen Krisenerscheinungen und das Verhalten des Generalstabes 1882 bis 1890* (Berlin, 1980).

[652] L.Raschdau, "Das Ende des deutsch-russischen Geheimvertrages von 1887," *Berliner Monatshefte* 17 (1939), pp. 361-366.

[653] A.J.P.Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (Oxford, 1954), p. 278.

[654] Idem., *Europe: Grandeur and Decline* (Harmondsworth, 1967), p. 96.

cautious outlook, the constantly shifting currents of strategic affairs and the changing terms in which power is expressed render even the greatest strategic accomplishments transitory. Success in the near term may well translate into failure later, as the circumstances that contributed to the former are apt to change in ways nobody can anticipate. In a lengthy series of post-retirement interviews with Hermann Hofmann, editor of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, Bismarck summed up his strategic career with characteristic modesty:

> My entire life was spent gambling for high stakes with other people's money. I could never foresee with certainty whether my plans would succeed....Politics is a thankless job, chiefly because everything depends on chance and conjecture. One has to reckon with a series of probabilities and improbabilities and base one's plans upon this reckoning.... As long as he lives the statesman is always unprepared. In the attainment of that for which he strives he is too dependent on the participation of others, a fluctuating and incalculable factor….Even after the greatest success he cannot say with certainty, 'Now it is achieved; I am done with it,' and look back with complacency at what has been accomplished...To be sure, one can bring individual matters to a conclusion, but even then there is no way of knowing what the consequences will be. He came to the conclusion that "in politics there are no such things as complete certainty and definitive results.... Everything goes continually uphill, downhill.[655]

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[655] *GW*, IX, pp.397ff; from Pflanze, "Bismarck's 'Realpolitik," pp. 497-8; the full text is reproduced in Eberhard Kolb, "Strategie und Politik in den deutschen Einigungskriegen: Ein unbekanntes Bismarck-Gespräch aus dem Jahr 1895 [Dokumentation]," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 48 (1990), p. 123-42.

As much as contemporary sensibilities may be gratified by the humbling of eminence, Bismarck was too reserved in his assessment. No statesman bore greater responsibility for the comparative stability and peace of Europe after 1871. He learned from the outcome of the War-in-Sight crisis how different the constellation of interests across the continent had become since German unification, and resolved to work within them to preserve the delicate balance that secured the new Reich. By 1883, he had woven a complex web of alliances that covered half of Europe. Some have criticized Bismarck for the contradictions inherent in that web, particularly the secret pledge of neutrality with Russia in 1887, and have argued that the presence of contradictions would seem to undercut the power and discretion that Bismarck commanded in international politics.

But such criticism misses the mark. The purpose of his strategy for safeguarding the German Empire was not to accrue and retain power, but to disperse and nullify it. In striking contrast to the strategic lights of the following generation, Bismarck's identity as a statesman and strategic actor was rooted in his *Kleindeutsche* sensibility, an awareness of how weak, exposed, and vulnerable Germany was in the center of Europe. As a result, his preoccupations were far more with the limitations of German power rather than its potential, and he operated in the semi-paranoid manner of a man convinced that his nation's strategic sovereignty could be taken away as quickly as it had been gained. If Germany could not hope to become powerful enough to command the continent unilaterally, especially given its major inherent liabilities as a strategic entity, then Bismarck would labor to ensure that no other nation or constellation of nations accrued enough power to dominate it, either. All save France were bound in some fashion to Berlin, and none could build a hostile coalition or launch a war without violating those ties.

Among Bismarck's most striking characteristics as a strategist was an almost complete lack of faith in the permanence of any international accommodation. To the extent that such an anachronistic concept can be applied to him, grand strategy was an ongoing process of adaptation to shifting circumstances instead of a formula or handful of trite maxims. Understood in these terms, no successor could hope to equal his subtlety and insight, and none could consequently safeguard German security in the circumstances he created. Nevertheless, Bismarck's diplomacy achieved its objectives while he remained in office, but ultimately its cost for the future security of the Reich in Europe was high. By working through a series of formal, binding alliances during peacetime, Bismarck contributed to a growing climate of mistrust and insecurity on the continent, in part because the content of the treaties was often suspected rather than known.

Moreover, one method by which the chancellor bound the different powers to Berlin was by promising them territory at the expense of the increasingly fragile Ottoman Empire, even while he promoted Germany's relations with that dying regime in other ways. Bismarck lured Austria, Russia, Britain, Italy, and even, on occasion, France with the prospect of German support for their territorial ambitions in Europe and overseas. The logic behind his tortuous and often contradictory diplomacy appeared arcane to some of his subordinates, who never understood its wisdom, and their bafflement only grew as Bismarck's term of office neared its end in the late 1880s. In 1890, shortly after Bismarck's dismissal, his successors decided not to renew the secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, believing it was incompatible with Germany's other commitments. Their action led indirectly to a Franco-Russian entente, cemented into a formal alliance in 1894. German grand strategy was forced thereafter to contend with a far less favorable international environment.

This is not to suggest that Bismarck's strategic initiatives were hollow, but that their historical ramifications and significance cannot properly be appraised if we are overawed by his putative genius. During his chancellorship the new German Empire was elevated to a dominant position in European international relations. Germany was able to enjoy what amounted to a soft hegemony, provided it exercised that hegemony with restraint. The German chancellor was Europe's pre-eminent statesman whose abundant skills were satirized in the famous cartoon depicting the chancellor as a juggler able to keep five balls in the air simultaneously. At the same time the empire's economic dynamism in the decades after unification and the reputation of its army (essentially the Prussian Army) commanded international attention and respect. Nevertheless, by the end of Bismarck's tenure in office the strains on his strategic policy were already in evidence, and it was becoming increasingly unlikely that his system of improvised checks and balances could endure.

The Strategy of Lincoln and Grant

Abraham Lincoln's primary grand strategic end during the Civil War, to preserve the Union, contained within itself a deceptive simplicity. On the one hand, it meant preserving the Federal Union of 1860 and the results of the 1860 Presidential election, which had elected a Republican Party committed not to the abolition of slavery, but to its restriction to the states where it already existed. On the other hand, the outbreak of war in 1861 raised questions within the loyal states of the Union as to whether or not the antebellum goals of the Republican Party could provide a lasting political and military solution to the problem of Confederate rebellion. Some Republicans hoped to strike directly at what they saw as the root cause of Confederate treason—a social system dominated by slaveholding planters—with punitive measures most of them would have disavowed during the 1860 election, while many Democrats and even some conservative Republicans feared the consequences of such harsh measures for both domestic liberty in the free soil states and the prospects of long-term reunion.

Lincoln eventually determined that only "hard war" measures could crush Confederate resistance, but he had to manage a Northern public opinion divided within itself even as his own views evolved. In 1864, in accordance with his commander in chief's political ends, Ulysses Grant selected a military strategy of coordinated and simultaneous military movements against Confederate military power that had the virtues of simplicity and inherent flexibility. Grant adapted his military methods to Lincoln's need to manage his political coalition, even when it resulted in over-riding Grant's own professional preferences as to military priorities and personnel. Above all else, Lincoln had to prevent political support for the war in the North from

catastrophically eroding under the stress of increasing losses in blood and treasure, even when the Northern political system's own misplaced priorities helped bring about the very losses that came so close to demoralizing it.

By the winter of 1863/64, Lincoln and Grant had developed the Federal grand strategy that eventually won the war. Coordinated pressure on every front by Federal armies attacked the Confederacy's ability to feed its armies when it could not destroy Confederate military forces more directly, and those armies facilitated emancipation by either freeing slaves directly or serving as magnets that attracted the most intrepid slaves in areas under nominal Confederate control but in the vicinity of Federal forces. Emancipation weakened the economic basis of Confederate power and foreclosed intervention by antislavery Britain, while adding badly needed recruits to the Union army. Union naval power at the same time enforced a tightening blockade that helped hasten the decline of the Confederacy's crucial but vulnerable railroad network.[656] Finally, the Lincoln administration recognized that because former Confederates would have to acquiesce to Federal supremacy and the end of slavery, Federal forces could not embark on a scorched earth campaign of punitive retribution after the surrender and demobilization of Confederate military forces. Give an unlimited amount of time, this strategy would almost certainly succeeded in any historically plausible scenario, but the looming 1864 Presidential election ensured that the Lincoln administration would have so little time from the Northern electorate to show progress that Federal failure became a real possibility.

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[656] Since the focus of this essay is on Lincoln and Grant, the Union blockade will not receive extensive coverage. While historians have argued over the blockade's effectiveness, the most recent scholarship finds the blockade's most serious military effects in how the Federal suppression of coastal domestic shipping in the Confederacy further overburdened an inadequate, deteriorating, and irreparable Confederate railway network. See Lance E. Davis and Stanley L. Engerman, *Naval Blockades in Peace and War: An Economic History since 1750* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 158, and David G. Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority and the Economics of the American Civil War* (Columbia, SC, 2001), pp. 83-84, 207.

Historians have paid ample attention to the merits of the Union's final victorious strategy, and whatever controversies exist over Lincoln's leadership center on either a libertarian fear of his supposedly statist policies or left-wing disappointment with Lincoln's policies and views on race. Few modern historian questions Lincoln's consummate political skill,[657] and while Grant's military reputation has oscillated between different poles in the 150 years since the war, few competent historians since J. F. C. Fuller subscribe to the view of Grant as a "butcher" who blundered his way to victory via clumsy and sanguinary methods of attrition.[658]

However, academic historians have not examined the experiences of Lincoln and Grant in light of the problems and challenges that early twenty-first strategic planners face in formulating American foreign policy and grand strategy.[659] Historians should avoid glib comparisons, but neither should they cede the field of policy formulation to political scientists, and the American Civil War highlights to an early-twenty-first century audience the importance of public opinion and democratic coalition building in the formulation of grand strategy. In an era of instantaneous communication, social media, public opinion polling, and relentless media coverage, the American Civil War shows that our own era's policy makers should recognize that other American leaders have had to reconcile their grand strategic ends with a political system

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[657] For two recent and relevant scholarly studies of Lincoln, see David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (London, 1995); Philip Paludan, *Presidency*. The literature on Lincoln is so vast as to be unmanageable.

[658] Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), pp. 304, 307; J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (London: John Murray 1929). The current standard scholarly biography is Brooks D. Simpson, *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph over Adversity, 1822-1865* (Boston, 2000).

[659] The strictly historical literature on Union strategy and the American Civil War cannot be summarized here, but the two most important recent books are James M. McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York, 2008), and Donald Stoker, *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (New York,, 2010). McPherson's work is the sounder history, and while Stoker is more engaged with modern discussions of strategy, his book is weaker in its grasp of both the history itself, and the larger literature. Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana, IL 1991), remains the standard one volume military history of the Union war effort, and its discussion of Union strategy remains the consensus view in the literature. This article attempts to take a more systemic approach to the role of political on Union strategy during the Civil War by focusing on Lincoln and Grant.

deliberately designed to respond as quickly as possible to changes in public sentiment, rather than to the exigencies of long-term strategic realities.

In the context of mid-nineteenth century American politics, Lincoln as party leader had to manage the diverse factions within the Republican Party, while retaining sufficient support from the Democratic minority in the North to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. While the Republicans had swept the north in the Presidential election of 1860, in the words of one historian, "though divided between two candidates and forced to defend one of the most unpopular and corrupt administrations in American history, the Democrats still won almost 44 percent of the popular vote in the free states in 1860," compared to almost 54 percent for Lincoln.[660] The Democratic Party remained the "Democracy," which had risen to prominence under its first president, Andrew Jackson, during the 1820s and 1830s, and which historians still call the Jacksonian period.

As a young man, Lincoln had grown up a Whig, which had opposed the Democracy, but had later collapsed as a coherent political force in the 1850s. Various political parties, including the Republicans, competed with one another to rally opposition to a Democratic Party increasingly dominated by slaveholders, and the fractured political landscape of the free states in the election of 1860 showed that even then the Republican Party still only held a fragile political position in the free states, never mind slaveholding border states such as Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware, which had all stayed in the Union.[661] As the war dragged on, Lincoln always remained mindful of Northern Democrats' potential political power—both at the polls

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[660] Michael Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992), pp, 325-26; James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (New York, 2000), p. 138.
[661] Holt, *Political Parties*, pp. 333-34. For a concise treatment of American political history and the coming of the Civil War, see Michael F. Holt, *The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 2004).

(especially if war efforts lagged) and through widespread acts of civil disobedience. While the vast majority of Northern Democrats supported the war to restore the Union, many did not want victory at the cost of what they viewed to be excessive restrictions on liberty at home and overly punitive measures against former Confederates, which in their view would compromise the long-term goal of reunion.

Even Civil War specialists have not always paid enough attention to the scale of Northern dissent against the mobilization measures that became necessary to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion. Conscription proved to be the most vexatious issues, and the New York City Draft Riots of 1863 proved to be only the most spectacular and violent manifestation of Northern opposition to the draft. Damage from these riots included approximately 119 dead and over 300 injured. The working-class white rioters reserved special fury toward African-Americans, whom they saw as dangerous competitors at the lowest end of the economic scale. They incinerated a black orphanage and murdered African-Americans they found on the streets. After the initial suppression of the rioters by troops from the Army oif the Potomac, the Lincoln administration acquiesced to a long term solution where it allowed New York City authorities to fund commutation fees or obtain substitutes to relieve their constituents from military service. Utica, Brooklyn, Albany, Troy, Syracuse, and Auburn followed New York City's lead in subsidizing overt avoidance of the draft.[662] In the run up to the election, various episodes of draft resistance bubbled up, the most serious in central Pennsylvania where 1,200 to 1,800 deserters, defiant draftees, and Copperheads killed the colonel sent to round up deserters, before being eventually suppressed.[663]

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[662] Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1990), p. 5; Paludan, *People's Contest*, pp. 191, 193.
[663] Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York, 2006), p. 195.

Over the course of the war, draft resisters murdered 38 conscription officials and wounded 60 others.[664] Serious draft-related disturbances occurred all across the North, in as communities as diverse as Chicago's Third Ward, Boston, Portsmouth, Troy, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and among the Irish-American miners in the Tenth Congressional district of Pennsylvania.[665] Different localities had different specific reasons for disorder, including corrupt or inept district provost marshals, but one modern historian has generalized that "depending on the area, the basis for their objections emanated mainly from racial animosity, general dissatisfaction with the Lincoln administration, and discontent with employers who sought to employ federal authority against their interests."[666] Indeed, the Federal government relied so much on partisan machinery that the crucial provost marshal's office in charge of the draft relied on the Republican political machine for officials, described by one historian as "narrow-minded partisans totally lacking in tact or judgment."[667]

In addition to the political controversy it stoked, the conscription law still only produced 46,347 direct Federal conscripts, or 3.67 percent of the Federal armies, although it did produce 118,010 substitutes and served as the bedrock of a complicated system of bounties that helped keep the armies in the field.[668] Nevertheless, the draft squeezed the loyal white population as severely as the historical circumstances would allow, but by itself it could not have sustained the Union armies. Emancipation and the enrollment of African-American troops played such a large part in the Union war effort for precisely this reason; just as Northern white commitment weakened, the Federal government could draw on a body of manpower fiercely committed to the

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[664] Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana, IL 1991), p. 438.
[665] Paludan, *People's Contest*, pp. 191-92.
[666] Geary, *We Need Men*, pp. 71, 107-8.
[667] Paludan, *People's Contest*, p. 236.
[668] Geary, *We Need Men*, pp. 168, 173-74.

destruction of the Confederacy.[669] 186,017 African American men (out of a roughly 2.3 million man total) served in the Union armies, and of those, 93,346 came from Confederate states.[670]

The Lincoln Administration's claims to war powers allowed it to enforce the draft and various other restrictions on civil liberties in the loyal states of the Union, but the farther one moved from the front, the weaker those wartime powers became. In the hostile territories of the Confederacy, Federal forces could confiscate property, demand loyalty oaths, expel civilians, and even execute guerrillas without traditional due process, but constitutional scruples hemmed in executive power in the loyal states. While the loyal states proved willing to make concessions to Federal power, especially with regards to questions of supply, they continued to serve as crucial conduits for much of the Union's military mobilization. For example, despite continual complaints by generals such as Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, the states retained control over recruiting and continued to raise new regiments for their patronage opportunities, as opposed to filling out veteran regiments depleted by wartime losses. Governors preferred to raise new regiments, because they offered them a full regiment's worth of officers to distribute as patronage, which Sherman described in his memoirs as "the greatest mistake made in our civil war."[671]

The dispersed nature of the American political system also hindered the Union's ability to mobilize the loyal states' enormous advantages in industrial capacity and economic potential. Few modern historians use the sort of demographic determinism claimed by historian Richard N. Current in 1960, that "in view of the disparity of resources, it would have taken a miracle, a

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[669] Joseph T. Glatthaar, "Black Glory: The African-American Role in Union Victory," in Gabor S. Boritt, ed., *Why the Confederacy Lost* (New York, 1992), p. 161.

[670] Marvin A. Kreidberg, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945*, DA Pamphlet 20-21, Department of the Army, November 1955, pp.114, 94.

[671] Sherman, *Memoirs*, p. 879. Also see Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War: The Old Army in War and Peace* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), p. 161.

direct intervention of the Lord on the other side, to enable the South to win. As usual, God was on the side of the heaviest battalions."[672] Nevertheless, few would deny the North's tremendous advantages in material resources. The free states in the last year before the outbreak of war (1860) produced 97 percent of American firearms, 93 percent of American pig iron, almost 96 percent of American locomotives, and possessed double the amount of railroad mileage, as measured on a per square mile basis.[673] The Union also possessed roughly two-and-a-half times more white men of military age than the Confederacy, when historians adjust for manpower unavailable to the Union and white men made more available to Confederate armies due to slave labor.[674]

Nevertheless, despite all this raw economic potential, Union institutions struggled at the beginning of the war to translate material strength into military power. It was not until early 1862 that the professional logisticians of the U.S. Army's Quartermaster Bureau solidified their control over military procurement and purchasing, in opposition to state governments dominated by partisan machines, despite the fact that it was by far the most qualified American institution to manage the mammoth administrative and logistical problems faced by the Union Army.[675] Nevertheless, even the well-resourced Union would struggle to feed, clothe, and pay soldiers in the Army of the Potomac as late as the winter of 1862-63, due in large part to Ambrose Burnside's weaknesses as an administrator.[676] Furthermore, while the Civil War certainly saw a massive expansion in Federal authority, the Union effort still retained much of the decentralized

[672] Richard N. Current, "God and the Strongest Battalions," in David Herbert Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War* (New York,, 1996, reprint, 1960), p. 37.
[673] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988), pp. 318-19.
[674] Ibid., p. 322.
[675] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore, 2006), pp. 65-68.
[676] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, p. 170.

apparatus of antebellum American politics, with its heavy reliance on partisan machines at the local and state levels of government.[677]

Despite all the concessions the Lincoln administration made to local prerogatives, and the boost in Federal manpower provided by freedmen, Lincoln still believed that he would have lost the 1864 elections if it had not been for Sherman's capture of Atlanta in September 1864. Even after Atlanta's fall, and positive results for Republicans in the October elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, Lincoln still believed as late as mid-October 1864 that he would only defeat George B. McClellan by the bare margin of 120 to 114 votes in the Electoral College.[678] Lincoln eventually won the election by a virtual landslide due to the rapidly improving military outlook and the Democratic Party's own mis-steps. Nevertheless, despite the taint of its pre-war associations with Southerners, aggressive Republican efforts to turn out the pro-Lincoln soldiers' vote, and the glow of an impending Union victory, the Democrats could still manage to receive 45 percent of the popular vote in the 1864 canvas.[679] Even if he had wanted to do so, no successful Union leader could afford to take for granted Republican political dominance.

Not only did Lincoln have to contend with the resilience of state governors, legislatures, and the Democratic Party, he also had to manage the Republican Party's internal divisions. In addition to conscription, emancipation served as the other yoke fellow of political controversy during the war. Even among Republicans, the question of emancipation raised much debate, especially at the war's opening. The Republican Party had been in its origins a polyglot assemblage of former Whigs (like Lincoln himself), disaffected Northern Democrats, and

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[677] For example, one political scientist who studies American state formation has argued that "many features of the Confederate war mobilization were far more statist and modern than their counterparts in the Union," Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 6.

[678] Andre M. Fleche, "Uncivilized War: The Shenandoah Valley Campaign, the Northern Democratic Press, and the Election of 1864," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006), p. 200.

[679] William Frank Zornow, *Lincoln & the Party Divided* (Norman, OK, 1954), p. 215.

Nativist Know-Nothings fearful of the Democracy's friendliness toward Irish Catholic immigrants. Although unified by their opposition to the "slave power," as Lincoln put it in his first inaugural address, many Republicans before the war had no objection to a proposed constitutional amendment designed to placate slaveholders by explicitly declaring that "the federal government, shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service [i.e. slavery]," because he held "such a provision to now be implied by constitutional law."[680]

The outbreak of war transformed the Northern political environment and sharply increased sentiment in favor of coerced emancipation at the point of the bayonet. Furthermore, as the casualty rolls lengthened, more and more Republicans saw emancipation as a way to strike at the heart of the rebellion and punish Confederate treason. In August of 1862, the influential newspaper editor and "Radical" Horace Greeley published a famous letter, where he declared, "there is not one disinterested, determined, intelligent champion of the Union cause who does not feel that all attempts to put down the Rebellion and at the same time uphold its inciting cause are preposterous and futile."[681]

Lincoln's deft if necessarily circuitous—and perhaps even duplicitous—handling of Horace Greeley's famous letter exemplifies Lincoln's approach at managing Republican Party politics. While Lincoln had already decided to issue a Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation due to the increasingly pro-emancipation sentiment of many Republicans, his own antislavery sentiments, and reasons of military necessity, Lincoln wrote Greeley a cautionary missive, declaring that "[m]y paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if

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[680] Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1953), vol. 4, p. 270.
[681] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 389.

I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help save the Union."[682] At that point, the president was only awaiting a military victory to issue the proclamation, which would later come after Antietam, but he could not afford to alienate Republican conservatives such as Secretary of State William Seward and the influential Blair family, who not only held positions inside his cabinet but also served as generals in the field.[683]

Lincoln positioned himself as a consummate moderate who realized that only the immensely powerful but much-debated concept of "Union" fully unified northern public support behind the prosecution of the war. For many northern Democrats, even as emancipation's military advantages looked all the more impressive, to make emancipation a war aim in those parts of the Union where slavery existed in 1861 not only represented an unconstitutional expansion of Federal power but a revolutionary attack on Southern white society, which would make post-war reconciliation impossible. As Horatio Seymour, the influential Democratic governor of New York put it at the 1864 Democratic convention, the Republicans "will not have Union except upon conditions unknown to our constitution; they will not let the shedding of blood cease, even for a little time, to see if Christian charity, or the wisdom of statesmanship may work out a method to save our country."[684] While Lincoln's important position in American political thought derives from his eloquent expression and interpretation of freedom's meaning during the war, for which emancipation became an important component, he also needed to build support for emancipation as a *war measure*. Lincoln in effect demonstrated his conservative

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[682] Donald, *Lincoln*, p. 368; Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham* Lincoln, vol. 5, p. 388.

[683] Philip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence, KS, 1994), pp. 262, 288.

[684] Quotation in Weber, *Copperheads*, p. 169.

bona fides to reluctant Republicans and suspicious Democrats with the letter, while at the same time preparing the ground for his eventual legal and political argument that military necessity required emancipation as a means to suppress the rebellion.

While Lincoln both guided and managed loyal public opinion's increased enthusiasm for emancipation as a war measure, he retained the public's desire for decisive battlefield decisions. Like many other Northerners, Lincoln began the war under the impression that a powerful current of widespread Unionism existed in the Confederacy, which could be exploited with a few military victories and moderate political measures. While Lincoln later embraced emancipation and other aggressive military measures directed at Confederate civilians, including confiscation of property, expulsions, and the use of martial law, he remained fixated on decisive set-piece battles, as opposed to the sorts of raids Sherman made famous with his March to the Sea in 1864.

Federal political leaders, including Lincoln himself, demanded hard-fought battles, both because their voting constituents demanded such measures, and because they themselves shared the same assumptions about war held by their constituents. Both the Union and Confederate armies sprung forth as manifestations of Jacksonian political culture; the volunteers of 1861 formed locally raised units, officered by the same elites that held political sway in the rough-and-tumble world of American partisan politics and closely linked to their home communities through both letter-writing and the vibrant newspaper culture of nineteenth-century America. The same self-organizing voluntarism that Alexis de Tocqueville had seen as the hallmark of American democracy in the 1830s also drove the recruitment and organizing of early Civil War regiments. Northerners, seeking the suppression of a rebellion, obviously could not draw on the American tradition of irregular warfare from the Revolutionary exploits of Saratoga and Francis

Marion, or the Fabian tactics of George Washington, and they instead focused on the prospect of crushing the Confederacy in a decisive battle reminiscent of Napoleon's exploits.[685]

While many historians have tended to praise Lincoln's focus on destroying Confederate armies, contrasting it to the seemingly pusillanimous activities of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, we should discard an unnecessary fixation on the virtues of battlefield decisions as the most effective means of crushing Confederate military power. Indeed, as Brooks Simpson has pointed out, for all its famous and sanguinary battles, in the Eastern Theater the pattern would be that "both sides would seek battle, but battle would achieve little, in part because it proved so hard to follow up on any advantage gained in the field."[686] Even the Overland Campaign only set the stage for the grinding siege of Petersburg that finally broke the back of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Union commander who supervised that campaign, Grant, held the most impressive military record of any American commander during the war, because he destroyed multiple Confederate field armies while fighting on the offensive: first during the Forts Henry and Donelson campaigns, again at Vicksburg, and finally at the war's end. However, his more impressive and less costly achievements in the western theater had been produced by deft maneuver leading to Confederate defeat via siege, as opposed to a climactic single battlefield decision.

Nevertheless, from the war's outset, a thirst for battle drove American military strategy at the highest levels, and it drowned out in 1861 the strategic preferences of the greatest American military leader between Washington and Grant, Major General Winfield Scott. Scott had commanded the Vera Cruz campaign in 1847 that captured Mexico City--perhaps the single most successful military campaign in American history. With an army numbering around 11,000 men,

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[685]Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865* (Boston, 1968), *pp.* 4-5; Hattaway, *How the North Won*, pp. 19, 85; Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War,* pp. 117-18, 161.
[686] Brooks D. Simpson, *The Civil War in the East: Struggle, Stalemate and Victory* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2011), p. 6.

Scott had defeated every Mexican field army sent against him and, more importantly, laid down the political preconditions necessary for the post-war settlement and the Mexican Cession. He had managed the occupation of Mexican territory, including short-term pacification efforts against Mexican guerrillas, and facilitated the search for Mexican leaders willing to acquiesce to a peace treaty fulfilling American war aims.

Scott now called for a military plan that involved a naval blockade and an expedition down the Mississippi "to clear out and keep open this great line of communication in connection with the strict blockade of the sea-board, so as to envelop the insurgent States and bring them to terms with less bloodshed than by any other plan."[687] Scott hoped to use Federal sea power to turn Confederate military positions, with New Orleans as the southern anchor of the Federal envelopment. The plan aimed at eroding Confederate will gradually, and at avoiding the losses that would make the war a remorseless revolutionary struggle.

Northern public opinion believed Scott's ideas, derisively called the "Anaconda Plan," far too passive, and to use Scott's own words, "they will urge instant and vigorous action, regardless, I fear, of consequences."[688] Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, reflecting much of Northern public opinion, famously declared in early July 1861, "*Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond! The Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the 20th of July!*"[689] The Lincoln administration thus placed tremendous pressure on Major General Irwin McDowell to advance on Richmond. While a decisive Federal victory at Bull Run might have strangled the Confederacy in its cradle, Scott had good reason to warn one of his subordinates in

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[687] United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate* Armies, 128 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, p. 369. Henceforth cited as *OR*.

[688] Timothy D. Johnson, *Winfield Scott: The Quest for Military Glory* (Lawrence, KS, 1998), pp. 227-28; *OR*, Series 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 369.

[689] *New York Daily Tribune*, July 2, 1862.

early June that "we must sustain no reverse . . . a check or a drawn battle would be a victory to the enemy, filling his heart with joy, his ranks with men, and his magazines with voluntary contributions."[690] McDowell moved forward, of course, and the Confederates won a victory at First Bull Run.

Realistically, a Federal victory at First Bull Run would not have been so decisive as to prevent a residual force from retreating to Richmond, where it could rally stragglers and defend the city in the same way that the broken Federal army after the actual battle had retained its hold on Washington. Aside from the possible exception of the Battle of Nashville at the end of the war, no Civil War field army ever annihilated its opponent in an open field battle. The long-brewing sectional crisis, and the obvious resiliency of Confederate nationalism—over the course of the war, roughly one out of five Southern white military age men perished[691]—meant that only the complete (and extremely unlikely) destruction of the Confederate army at First Bull Run would have resulted in an immediate Confederate collapse. In short, by moving so quickly, the Federals risked suffering a defeat that would substantially improve the Confederacy's prospects for the sake of prospective gains that would not have outweighed the risks involved.

The stinging defeat at First Bull Run chastened Northern public opinion, and it proved willing to give Scott's successor, McClellan, time to train and reorganize his army. The newspapers quickly rediscovered their impatience, however, as did the Republican leaders who so closely tracked the public pulse. Lincoln shielded his most important general from the criticism, but he also urged McClellan to pay heed to public opinion.[692] McClellan, combining the twin vices of egotism and political ignorance, squandered the limited reservoir of public

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[690] *OR*, Series 1, vol. 2, p. 671.
[691] Gallagher, *Confederate War*, pp. 28-29; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, 2008), p. xi.
[692] Donald, *Lincoln*, pp. 318-19.

patience produced by the fiasco at Bull Run and Lincoln's conditional support.[693] McClellan's strategic ideas deserve a fair hearing, and in the words of Ethan Rafuse, his most recent scholarly biographer, "McClellan especially looked to impose a military paradigm that limited the number of battles and, by relying on maneuver and siegecraft, ensured that any fighting that took place would result in decisive Union victories. Fighting battles, he understood, meant accepting casualties, too many of which would exacerbate sectional enmity and jeopardize the effort to restrain passions on both sides."[694]

McClellan's strategic ideas, like Scott's, also integrated judicious military movements with a cautious and conservative political strategy. As he later argued famously in his Harrison's Landing letter, the Federal effort "should not be a War looking to the subjugation of the people of any state . . . but against armed forces and political organizations." In McClellan's view, attacking slavery would have disastrous effects on both the morale of the Union armies, and unnecessarily alienate Southern white opinion.[695] Or, as Rafuse puts it, McClellan believed "it was essential . . . that the task of restoring the Union be guided by reason, moderation, and enlightened statesmanship. The success of that endeavor would be as much dependent on the ability of Northern statesmen to restrain the passions of the people, and the irresponsible politicians who stirred them up, as it would be upon the tactical skill of Billy Yank and his commanders."[696] Such a policy casting scorn on the democratic habits of Americans would face difficult political challenges, and McClellan also paired his strategy with the erroneous assumption that large reservoirs of Unionism continued to exist in the Confederacy.

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[693] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, pp. 156-57.
[694] Ethan S. Rafuse, *McClellan's War: The Failure of Moderation in the Struggle for the Union* (Bloomington, IN, 2005), p. 388.
[695] *Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan*, p. 344.
[696] Rafuse, *McClellan's War*, pp. 5-6.

Furthermore, while the more aggressive measures McClellan despised became part of the Union's winning strategy, Lincoln and much of the Northern electorate, especially Democrats, shared McClellan's concerns about paving the way for post-war reconciliation. How Lincoln's Reconstruction policy would have evolved in light of post-war Southern white intransigence will always be uncertain, but we do know that Lincoln preferred, if circumstances allowed it, a reconciliationist policy.[697] Andrew Johnson, his slaveholder-hating vice president who had been a Democrat from Tennessee before the war, embarked on such a lenient policy, and while that approach failed due to former Confederates' intransigence, subsequent Northern outrage, and Johnson's own political ineptitude, most Northerners hoped that former Confederates would eventually recognize the legitimacy of the Federal government.[698]

In the context of the American political system, for most loyal citizens in the free states, ex-Confederates would eventually have to give a measure of real democratic consent to rule by Washington. Northern whites, including many Republicans, thus proved willing at the end of Reconstruction to abandon political and military support for African-American civic and political rights in order to obtain that consent. In the end, restoration of the Union and the destruction of slavery served as the most important and permanent war aims for the North, and it would take a hundred years before Federal power would support full political equality for African-Americans.

Both McClellan and Scott understood that a harshly punitive military strategy had serious political drawbacks for a war that aimed at reunion. Scott, in particular, had ample experience with complex environments that required as much political as strictly military skill. McClellan had participated in Scott's Vera Cruz campaign, and like many other regulars, he found the

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[697] Simpson, *Reconstruction Presidents*, pp. 37, 63.
[698] Ibid., pp. 99, 129-30.

sometimes violent behavior of volunteer citizen-soldiers "shameful and disgraceful."[699] Scott

shared such humanitarian sympathies, which reflected the paternalistic ethics of much of the

regular army's officer corps, but he had a deeper reason to demand from his troops decent

treatment of Mexicans—military necessity. As a commander of a small expeditionary force in

hostile territory, Scott recognized the danger of unnecessarily inflaming local opinion against his

force, both during the campaign to capture Mexico City and during its occupation.[700]

In addition to his deft handling of the local population in Mexico, which McClellan

himself witnessed, Scott had also managed civil disturbances that involved the antebellum "old

army," and success in these circumstances always involved a cautious and judicious use of

military force. On the Canadian border in the late 1830s, he had helped suppress private

American support for Canadian rebels with minimal forces and maximum political delicacy,

while assuaging British concerns. More directly related to the Civil War, President Andrew

Jackson sent Scott to South Carolina during the Nullification Crisis of 1832-33 to show Federal

resolve in the face of South Carolina's threat to nullify the Federal tariff (a proxy for increasing

sectional animosities over slavery), while not unnecessarily inflaming a tense situation.[701] In

Scott's memoirs, written during the Civil War, he recalled that he had told his men that "these

nullifiers, have no doubt, become exceedingly wrong-headed, and are in the road to treason; but

still they are our countrymen, and may be saved from that great crime by respect and kindness on

our part. We must keep our bosoms open to receive them back as brothers in the Union."[702]

The regular army had struggled to manage the sectional guerilla war over slavery that

plagued "Bleeding Kansas," but it had the most success when it acted with restraint and

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[699] McClellan, *Mexican War Diary*, p. 39.
[700] Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army*, p. 269.
[701] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, pp. 94-95.
[702] Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Winfield Scott, LL.D* (New York, 1864), vol. 1, p. 248.

sensitivity toward local tensions. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 stipulated that Kansas' status as a slave or free state would be determined by the local population, free-soil and pro-slavery settlers clashed over the territory's future. Successive Democratic administrations favored the pro-slavery settlers from Missouri, while the regular army units in the state attempted to maintain a semblance of law-and-order while sustaining Federal authority. In general, old army officers proved effective and relatively impartial under the circumstances, in spite of the sometimes blatantly pro-slavery policies of political authorities in Washington.[703] They understood the limits to their authority as soldiers and the importance of civil authority. When one acting pro-slavery governor demanded he use the Army to capture free-soil Topeka, Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, refused and explained that "if the Army be useless in the present unhappy crisis, it is because in our constitution and law civil war was not foreseen, nor the contingency [of] a systematic resistance by the people to governments of their own creation, and which, at short intervals, they may either correct or change."[704]

Indeed, even advocates of stringent anti-Confederate policies frequently brought a patience and prudence to civil order questions that came out of the Old Army's long traditional of constabulary duty on the frontier. Major General John Pope, who introduced more aggressive policies to the eastern theater after McClellan's failure during the Seven Days, would grumble in Milwaukee after his post-Second Bull Run exile that in enforcing the draft, "federal officers should learn to hold their tongues and do their duty without making counter threats of blustering about the use of military force, which probably would not be required if they did their duty

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[703] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, pp. 97-99.
[704] Philip St. George Cooke to Daniel Woodson, September 2, 1856, reprinted in United States, War Department, *Report of the Secretary of War*, Senate Executive Document No. 5, Serial Set No. 876, vol. 3, pt. 2, 34th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1857), pp. 91-92.

quietly and discreetly."[705] The old army McClellan and Scott had served in had extensive experience with what we would now call stability operations, and it should not be a surprise that some regulars carried those then-judicious habits into the Civil War.

Many modern historians too frequently dismiss McClellan's ideas about conciliation and restraint as naïve and anachronistic for a conflict they characterize as a "total war" similar to the world wars of the twentieth century. Historians such as Mark Grimsley, Mark Neely, and myself have argued that the American Civil War did not see the widespread violence against noncombatants we associate with the rise of total war, and at least in the North, political divisions limited the Lincoln administration's power to mobilize the population in support of the war effort.[706] However, most historians agree that the Civil War was a "people's war," and that public opinion in both sections could not be ignored.[707] Surely McClellan deserves some credit for not wanting to wage the war in a manner that would make every white Southerner an "irreconcilable," to use the famous term used by General David Petraeus in current American counterinsurgency practice.

Ironically enough, McClellan's own moral collapse during the Seven Days in the early summer of 1862 made impossible his political goal of conciliation. Lincoln did not make the decision to adopt emancipation as an explicit Union war aim until after McClellan's defeat in July,[708] and McClellan's Harrison's Landing letter to Lincoln fell on deaf ears. Lincoln now recognized that he had to strike directly at the institution of slavery to win the war. Northern

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[705] Pope quoted in Paludan, *A People's Contest*, p. 236; Clay Mountcastle, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals* (Lawrence, KS, 2009), p. 54.

[706] Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, 1995); Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge, 2007); Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh, "Total War and the American Civil War Reconsidered: The End of an Outdated 'Master Narrative,'" *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, Sept. 2011, pp. 394-408.

[707] Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler, eds., *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 4.

[708] Donald, *Lincoln*, pp. 360-64.

advocates of "hard war," to use historian Mark Grimsley's formulation, saw attacking slavery as only one of a whole constellation of more stringent measures to suppress the rebellion, including forced confiscation of supplies from areas loyal to the Confederacy, expelling individuals who refused to swear loyalty oaths in recaptured parts of the South, summary executions of pro-Confederate guerrillas, and other similar devices.[709] None inspired as much controversy as did emancipation, however, and for good reason. The bondsmen and women of the Confederate home front made possible the direct military mobilization of roughly 80 percent of Confederate white men of military age, but they also formed a potential dagger pointed at the heart of the Confederacy.[710] Advancing Federal military armies made it possible for freedmen and women to aid the Union cause, most directly in the form of black regiments.

Emancipation also served an important grand strategic purpose in forestalling British recognition. Historians should not overstate the importance of British intervention, because the vast distances of the Atlantic Ocean, the vulnerability of Canada, and the vulnerability of the ships of the Royal Navy to Union ironclads presented military obstacles to direct British military intervention. George Cornewall Lewis, Britain's secretary for war during the American Civil War, informed his cabinet colleagues of these military obstacles. At most, the British government seriously considered an attempt to peacefully mediate the sectional, as opposed to providing direct military aid to the Confederacy.[711] Nevertheless, British recognition of the Confederacy would have boosted Confederate morale considerably, and more importantly, it would have further eroded support for the war in the free states.

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[709] Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, pp. 4-5.
[710] Gallagher, *Confederate War*, ?.
[711]Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hil, NC, 2010), pp. 277-80, 243, 269, 218-19, 240-41, 323.

Nevertheless, even after he had decided to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln remained attuned to those Unionist Northerners who remained skeptical of abolition. Not wanting to make the proclamation appear as a sign of weakness, Lincoln waited for a victory, and McClellan managed an ambiguous triumph at Antietam in September 1862. Even then, Lincoln remained sensitive to some Northerners' skepticism of abolition and hard war measures in general, and he delayed the proclamation's enactment until 1 January 1863. McClellan's repulse of Lee's invasion of Maryland won the general only a brief extension at the head of his beloved Army of the Potomac. His conduct on the Peninsula, exacerbated by his unwillingness to support Pope during the Second Bull Run campaign, had fatally compromised his position with both Lincoln and most Republican leaders. McClellan's victory at Antietam, however, combined with his well-known opposition to hard war measures made him a popular figure among northern Democrats. After Lincoln's inevitable disappointment with McClellan's post-Antietam movements, he forbore to relieve the general until after the 1862 elections in order to postpone the unavoidable political criticism from Democrats. McClellan, of course, would go on to stand against Lincoln as the Democratic nominee for president in 1864.

Nevertheless, for all of McClellan's mis-steps and the obsolescence of his political strategy after the Seven Days, his aversion to fighting pitched battles remained reasonable and compatible with the goal of destroying Confederate military power. McClellan realized that the defeat of Confederate armies did not require set-piece battles, but could in fact be achieved by the encirclement of Confederate forces through superior Federal mobility, especially via Union sea power. Until the Seven Days, McClellan had in fact placed the primary Confederate field army at peril with relatively little loss by moving the Army of the Potomac via water transport to the Peninsula. McClellan thus avoided the vexations of an overland route, which posed

challenges of resupply and provided ready-made barriers to Federal advance due to the east-west flow of the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers. Even after McClellan's gross mishandling of the Seven Days, he remained entrenched in a base on the James River—the same strongpoint from which Grant would conduct the decisive siege that finally doomed the Army of Northern Virginia.[712] From there, if McClellan had had more resolve and the confidence of the Lincoln administration, he could have pushed the campaign to a victorious conclusion over Lee's battered forces. He thus might have saved his own strategy of conciliation. Neither of these sufficient conditions existed, however, and the Peninsula as a line of operations would forever be tarnished by McClellan's failures during the Seven Days.

In order to reach a similar position on James in late summer 1864, Grant had to fight his way From Washington to Richmond via the almost catastrophically costly Overland Campaign, during which the Army of the Potomac suffered roughly 55,000 combat losses, a casualty bill that nearly broke Northern morale.[713] Grant himself had originally hoped for a strategy focused more heavily on maneuver and less heavily on pitched battle. When first asked by Halleck for ideas about the coming spring campaigns for 1864, Grant asked "whether an abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable, and in line of these one be taken further South." Instead, Grant planned a movement by 60,000 troops from Suffolk in southeastern Virginia to Raleigh, NC, in order to "destroy first all the roads about Weldon . . . From Weldon to Raleigh they would scarcely meet with serious opposition. Once there the most interior line of rail way still left to the enemy, in fact the only one they would then have, would be so threatened as to force him to use a large portion of his army in guarding it. This would virtually force an

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[712] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, p. 155; Rafuse, *McClellan's War*, p. 161.
[713] Ibid., p. 191; Gordon Rhea, *Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2002), p. 393. Rhea counts about 33,000 casualties for Lee during the Overland Campaign.

evacuation of Virginia and indirectly of East Tennessee."[714] The Weldon railroad connected

Lee's army to North Carolina and points south, and Lee would fight long and hard during the

siege of Petersburg in the summer of 1864 to maintain that crucial supply line. If Grant had been

able to execute this campaign, he would have had an opportunity to threaten Lee's logistics and

force a battle on his own terms.[715]

Major General Henry W. Halleck, at the time the general-in-chief of the army and

Lincoln's chief military counselor, rejected Grant's campaign plan. He wrote his more creative

subordinate that "I have never considered Richmond as the necessary objective point of the army

of the Potomac; that point is *Lee's army*. . . . The overthrow of Lee's army being the object of

operations here, the questions arises how can we best attain it? If we fight that army with our

communications open to Washington, so as to cover this place and Maryland, we can concentrate

upon it nearly all of our forces on this frontier; but if we operate by North Carolina or the

peninsula, we must act with a divided army, and on exterior lines, while Lee, with a short interior

line can concentrate his force upon either fragment." Furthermore, Halleck remained wary of

Lee's aggressiveness; he asked Grant,

> Suppose we were to send thirty thousand men from that army [the Army of the
>
> Potomac] to North Carolina; would not Lee be able to make another invasion of
>
> Maryland and Pennsylvania? But it may be said that by operating in North
>
> Carolina we could compel Lee to move his army there. I do not think so.
>
> Uncover Washington and Potomac River, and all the forces which Lee can collect

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[714] Ulysses S. Grant to H. W. Halleck, Jan. 19, 1864, John Y. Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale, IL, 1982), vol. 10, 39. Henceforth cited as *PUSG*.

[715] Historians have generally treated Grant's plan with respect. See Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, pp. 251-52; Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, pp. 512-16.

will be moved north, and the popular sentiment will compel the Government to *bring back* the army in North Carolina to defend Washington, Baltimore, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. I think Lee would tomorrow exchange Richmond, Raleigh and Wilmington for the possession of either of the aforementioned cities.[716]

Nevertheless, even if Lee had captured a major Northern city and accepted the trade Halleck proposed, he would not have been able to hold the city for any length of time if his source of ammunition and ordnance fell to Union forces. Perhaps the political blow of such a Confederate triumph on Northern soil would have ended the war in one fell swoop, but surely such an event would have been canceled out by Richmond's fall. Furthermore, the actual course of events would show that Lee himself highly valued Richmond and Petersburg, and would accept a siege to defend it, as fatal as he knew it to be, simply because he felt he had no other choice. Halleck's "headquarters doctrine," to use the terminology of historians Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, overstated the vulnerability of the Federal capital (by Meade's time already ringed by powerful fortifications) and understated the possibilities of striking the Army of Northern Virginia's crucial logistics network based in Richmond and Petersburg.[717]

For the lay reader, however, "doctrine" understates the *ad hoc* nature of Federal strategic planning, which involved letters written between Halleck and Grant. Civil War Washington, for better or for worse, possessed none of the strategy-making apparatus created during and after World War II, and before Grant's elevation, Halleck served as Lincoln's primary military aide, who provided advice to the President and transmitted his views to field commanders, but

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[716] *PUSG*, pp. 110-12.
[717] Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, p. 514.

provided little direct guidance.[718] Halleck's exchange showed him at his worse, as he stifled creative strategic thinking and helped enable the administration's worst military prejudices with pedantic references to interior and exterior lines.

While Halleck justified the overland route to Grant in part by referring to Jominian principles of strategy, McClellan's failures during the Seven Days, his dubious conduct during the Second Bull Run campaign that contributed to Pope's defeat, and his failure to exploit fully his opportunities during the Antietam campaign made strategy a dirty word for many Union political leaders. Lee's successes, in contrast, seemed to vindicate Northerners' strong cultural preference for offensive operations, and it tarnished the Army of the Potomac's single victory between McClellan's relief and Grant's arrival—Major General George Meade's defensive victory at Gettysburg. Even the usually sagacious Lincoln proved impatient with Meade, but he could not allow Meade to depart—he remained the only commander of the Army of the Potomac who had ever won a clear-cut victory.

Nevertheless, Lincoln did not have enough confidence in Meade to allow another reprisal of McClellan's advance on Richmond via the Peninsula. Meade thus attempted an overland campaign during the Mine Run campaign in the late fall following Gettysburg, but he declined to assault Lee in his works when he failed to outmaneuver the Confederate general. While Meade lacked Grant's dogged determination to find a way to push through, making Grant's move east necessary, the fearsome losses of Grant's campaigns show Meade's reluctance hardly unreasonable. One historian, Mark Neely, has gone as far as to argue that "an exaggerated

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[718]John F. Marszalek, *Commander of All Lincoln's Armies: A Life of General Henry W. Halleck* (Cambridge, 2004), p. [?].

aggressiveness that was part of what might be called the cult of manliness" encouraged excessive aggressiveness among Union political and military leaders.[719]

In spite of Halleck's interference, Grant's strategic ideas still had the supreme virtue of clarity and simplicity. As he described it to one of his subordinates on 2 April 1864,

> it is proposed to have co-operative action of all the Armies in the field as far as this object can be accomplished. It will not be possible to unite our Armies into two or three large ones, to act as so many units, owing to the absolute necessity of holding on to the territory already taken from the enemy. But, generally speaking, concentration can be practically effected by Armies moving to the interior of the enemy's country from the territory they have to guard. By such movement they interpose themselves between the enemy and the country to be guarded, thereby reducing the numbers necessary to garrison important points and at least occupy the attention of a part of the enemy's force if no greater object is gained.[720]

Or, as Grant put it later in his report summing up the decisive military campaigns of 1864-65,

> From the first, I was firm in the conviction that no peace could be had that would be stable and conducive to the happiness of the people, both North and South, until the military power of the rebellion was entirely broken. I therefore determined, first, to use the greatest number of troops practicable against the

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[719]Mark Neely, "Wilderness and the Cult of Manliness: Hooker, Lincoln, and Defeat," in Gabor S. Boritt, ed., *Lincoln's Generals* (New York, 1994), pp. 67-74.
[720] *PUSG*, pp. 245-46.

armed force of the enemy, preventing him from using the same force at different seasons against first one and then another of our armies, and the possibility of repose for refitting and producing necessary supplies for carrying on resistance ; second, to hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy and his resources, until by mere attrition, if in no other way, there should be nothing left to him but an equal submission with the loyal section of our common country to the constitution and laws of the land.[721]

In order to execute this strategy, Grant himself would take the field against Lee with the Army of the Potomac, in coordination with a series of other military movements that would place simultaneous pressure on the Confederacy. Sherman would move against the important railroad junction and logistical hub at Atlanta, Major General Nathaniel P. Banks would strike at Mobile, Major General Franz Sigel would interdict supplies coming from the Shenandoah Valley, and Major General Benjamin Butler would advance from Fort Monroe up the James River and strike at Richmond from the south.[722] Grant adapted his own planning to Washington's concerns, and he explained to Butler on 2 April that "Lee's Army, and Richmond, being the greater objects towards which our attention must be directed in the next campaign it is desirable to unite all the force we can against them. The necessity for covering Washington, with the Army of the Potomac, and of covering your Dept. with your Army, makes it impossible to unite these forces at the beginning of any move."[723] Grant then laid out to Butler his simultaneous advance on Richmond from the South while the Army of the Potomac used the overland route as the next best option to Halleck's Jominian obsession with concentration.

[721] U. S. Grant to E. M. Stanton, July 22, 1865, *OR*, Ser. 1, vol. 26, pt. 1, pp. 12-13.
[722] Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, p. 269.
[723] *PUSG*, p. 246.

Grant's instructions to his field commanders emphasized that all these movements should be part of a larger design. On 4 April, he wrote Sherman, his most talented and capable subordinate,

> it is my design, if the enemy keep quiet and allow me to take the initiative in the Spring Campaign, to work all parts of the Army to-gether, and, somewhat, toward a common center. . . . You I propose to move against Johnston's Army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their War resources."[724]

Sherman intuitively understood Grant's idea of coordinated action, and he wrote one of Grant's aides on 5 April that "concurrent action is the thing. . . . We saw the beauty of time in the Battle of Chattanooga, and there is no reason why the same harmony of action should not pervade a continent."[725]

Grant's orders to Butler also emphasized coordination: "Richmond is to be your objective point, and that there is to be co-operation between your force and the Army of the Potomac must be your guide."[726] Grant built flexibility into his plan for the Army of the Potomac, and as he put it to Butler later on 19 April, "with the forces here I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond if he will stand. Should Lee however fall back into Richmond I will follow up and make a junction with your Army on the James River."[727]

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[724] *PUSG*, 251-52. Lincoln himself had suggested to Halleck and Buell in January 1862 a strategy of coordinated movements by Federal armies on exterior lines, with little effect. See McPherson, *Tried by War*, pp. 70-71, 214.
[725] Ibid, p. 219.
[726] Ibid., p. 246. Also see also, p. 292.
[727] Ibid., p. 327.

On 31 March, Grant had also ordered Banks to wrap up operations in the Red River and prepare for the more important campaign against Mobile, telling him "it is intended that your movements shall be co-operative with movements of Armies elsewhere [sic] and you cannot now start too soon."[728] While Grant had acquiesced to the administration's desire to mount an expedition via the Red River to support Louisiana Unionists' attempt to establish a loyal state government and signal Federal resistance to French designs on Mexico, Grant had earlier impressed on Banks the need to prioritize Sherman's operations. He also directed Banks to act aggressively, telling his subordinate that "I look upon the conquering of the organized armies of the enemy as being of vastly more importance than the mere acquisition of their territory."[729] Finally, Grant reminded Sigel in the Valley on April 15 that "you must occupy the attention of a large force, (and thereby hold them from reinforcing elsewhere) or must inflict a blow upon the enemies resources, which will materially aid us."[730] Or, as he put it to Sherman, reflecting a comment Lincoln had made to him, "if Sigel cant skin himself he can hold a leg whilst some one else skins."[731]

Unfortunately Sigel proved incapable holding a leg, as did Banks and Butler. While Sherman rightly described Grant' strategic design as "Enlightened War,"[732] Grant could never escape the demands of partisan politics in the North. In addition to the overland route, as opposed to Grant's early ideas about raid from southeast Virginia, Grant also bowed to political pressure and assigned important Federal field commands to marginal commanders. While Grant himself in the initial phases of the campaign misperceived Butler's abilities, he had always

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[728] Ibid., p. 243.
[729] Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, p. 275; *PUSG*, p. 201.
[730] *PUSG*, p. 287.
[731]Ibid., p, 253. Lincoln had actually inspired this turn of phrase about skinning. See Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, p. 273.
[732] *PUSG*, p,. 53.

recognized his appointments of Sigel and Banks as necessary evils. As Grant and Lee grappled in the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, Sigel and Banks proved unable to even prevent Confederate reinforcements from being sent to Lee from their areas of responsibility, much less force Lee to weaken his own forces in order to respond to threats elsewhere.[733] In the highly politicized environment of an election year, where McClellan would eventually stand against Lincoln as the Democratic nominee, Lincoln had good reason to respect the important political constituencies represented by these generals. Due to all these factors, only two of Grant's planned five coordinated campaigns for 1864 actually playing their projected role in bringing pressure to bear on the Confederacy.

Sigel represented an important German constituency, especially since a tenth of the Union Army had been born in Germany.[734] Many of those Germans had immigrated due to the failed Revolution of 1848, and Sigel had commanded revolutionary forces in Baden before being defeated by a Prussian Army. Sigel became during the war the favorite of German immigrants and Unionist state legislators in West Virginia, who in an election year represented important political constituencies Lincoln had to placate. Lincoln especially worried about losing the states of Missouri, Wisconsin, and Illinois if he alienated the German vote, and German Radicals did attempt to back John Frémont as a third party alternative to Lincoln.[735] McClellan's nomination on a platform that declared the war a virtual failure, promptly followed by the fall of Atlanta in September, eventually allowed Lincoln to suppress a Radical Republican revolt, but during the previous spring, Lincoln had to heed Radical sympathies. Butler, in contrast, had been a Democrat before the war, and early in his career he represented the War Democrats whom

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[733] Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, pp. 270, 274-77, 314.
[734] Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, p. [?].
[735] Thomas J. Goss, *The War within the Union High Command: Politics and Generalship during the Civil War* (Lawrence, KS, 2003), pp. 177-78; Zornow, *Lincoln & the Party Divided*, pp. 74, 84-85, 211.

Lincoln needed to cultivate. He eventually became a radical, and like Sigel, he represented an important political constituency Lincoln had to manage. Furthermore, Butler had support among Radical Republicans for the nomination, and if Lincoln discarded Butler, the general might mount a presidential bid himself. Lincoln may even have offered Butler the Vice Presidency, which in this historical account, the general refused due to fears that the office would only stifle his ambitions.[736]

Banks, like Butler, had been a Democrat earlier in his political career, but he remained more moderate in his political views. More importantly, he helped superintend Lincoln's early attempt at re-establishing a loyal civil government in Louisiana, which Lincoln saw as an important experiment for Reconstruction policy in general. Lincoln announced his "ten percent" plan for Reconstruction in December 1863, which envisioned southern state governments reforming when the number of qualified voters with pardons matched 10 percent of the ballots cast in the 1860 election. Voters (excluding certain groups such as Confederate officials) could only obtain pardons by swearing future loyalty to the Union and acceptance of emancipation. Lincoln backed Banks' decision to placate conservatives in Louisiana, despite some grumbling from Radicals, and the administration had hoped that the Red River campaign would help consolidate Federal control over Louisiana as Unionists in the state attempted to re-establish a civil government. Banks' political duties further delayed his campaign and helped lead to the military fiasco that resulted when the Red River's water level fell, depriving Grant of the coordinated move on Mobile he desired that spring.[737] Grant understood these complexities, and he only moved to relieve Banks when the latter proved completely ineffective in the field.

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[736] Zornow, *Lincoln & the Party Divided*, pp. 66-67.
[737] Simpson, *Triumph over Adversity*, pp. 274-77; Simpson, *Reconstruction Presidents*, pp. 39-44.

Few historians would dispute the idea that military methods should correspond with political objectives. But how does any individual polity determine and establish political objectives? The mid-nineteenth century American state had a decentralized political system that dispersed authority among mass political parties working at multiple levels of government—local, state, and Federal. While Lincoln stood at the head of this system, and could call on special wartime powers, he still had to channel even his most ambitious and aggressive wartime powers through this diffuse political system, where most officials (including himself) still had to answer at the polls in a mass participatory democracy. While the popular basis of the system gave it tremendous latent strength, it also demanded all sorts of concessions to military measures more related to popular prejudice than any coherent conception of military strategy. Indeed, when Northern public opinion found a general in Grant willing to give it the hard fighting it claimed it desired, it had a severe case of buyer's remorse after seeing some of the consequences of such a preference and seriously thought of turning back to the deposed McClellan.

Nevertheless, at the level of grand strategy, for all its military inefficiencies, Lincoln rightly focused on aligning domestic politics with the larger goal of restoring the Union. As a veteran and consummate player in the partisan politics of this era, Lincoln intuitively understood this truth, and he probably could not have acted otherwise even if he had desired to do so. Indeed, even the haughty McClellan played the partisan game by cultivating contacts in the Democratic press during his tenure at the head of the Army of the Potomac, which helped lead to friction with Republican party leaders. [738] Grant self-consciously stayed aloof of partisan ambitions related directly to his own person, which helped him win Lincoln's confidence, but he recognized the political imperatives Lincoln had to manage and adjusted his own military

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[738] Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (New York, 1988), pp. 117-18.

measures accordingly.[739] The Jacksonian period had bequeathed to Civil War Americans a political system that dealt with social conflict by channeling it through adversarial political parties. That system had allowed, and perhaps even encouraged civil war; it could not help but reflect, and perhaps even exacerbated divisions within the loyal states. Union civil and military leaders could not escape that structural reality, even if they had hoped to do so.

If Carl von Clausewitz' s dictum that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means" should guide our understanding of grand strategy,[740] then it should serve as the lodestar for all the subordinate levels of military activity, i.e. strategy, operations, and tactics, to use the standard formulation. Williamson Murray's and Allan Millett's justly influential military effectiveness volumes demonstrated the importance of this insight, declaring that "no amount of operational virtuosity . . . redeemed fundamental flaws in political judgment. . . . Mistakes in operations and tactics can be corrected, but political and strategic mistakes live forever."[741] The American Civil War, however, saw a reversal of this paradigm. The Union's responsive and vigorous two-party system produced grand strategies so responsive to political concerns that they actually compromised operational and tactical effectiveness, which in turn threatened the most important grand strategic imperative of preserving the Union and dismantling the Confederacy. Nevertheless, Lincoln's political acumen and Confederate mis-steps (some taken due to the Confederate leadership's own needs to answer political imperatives) still made possible the emergence of Grant, who formulated a military strategy capable of achieving the Union's preservation. Both Lincoln and Grant kept the primary long-term objective of restoring the Union in mind, but in line with one group of historians' metric for successful strategy, "at the

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[739] McPherson, *Tried by War*, pp. 211-12.

[740] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976), p. 87.

[741] Quoted in Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey, eds., *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 4.

same time that they have maintained a vision focused on the possibilities of the future, they have adapted to the realities of the present."[742]

When historians judge the grand strategy of Lincoln and Grant, they should first understand that the political aspects of Union grand strategy went beyond managing civilian manifestations of power, "soft power" to use the current terminology, involving economics, diplomacy, and the shaping of international public opinion. All those factors played a role during the Civil War, but none more so than managing political support for the war effort *within* the loyal states of the Union. Even though Lincoln and Grant had put in place by the late spring of 1864 a grand strategy for victory, integrating all the outward looking military, naval, diplomatic, and political measures necessary to defeat the Confederacy, their obligations to respect domestic political concerns nearly sabotaged their success in every other line of effort. Grant's decision to face Lee directly, combined with the Army of the Potomac's institutional short-comings,[743] made possible the mind-numbing casualties of the Overland campaign, which coming after three long years of war threatened to exhaust Northern political will. Nevertheless, while in retrospect the Overland campaign represented a terrible error and one of the last lamentable legacies of McClellan's disastrous relationship with Lincoln, how can we expect Lincoln and Grant to have acted differently?

Writers on strategy frequently assume states and polities have centralized decision making systems that promulgate coherent strategies, with explicitly declared ends and measured means necessary to achieve those ends at a reasonable cost. Lincoln and Grant could promulgate clear ends, but the very political structure of their republic allowed countless points of influence, ranging from the violent resistance of immigrants hostile to the draft to the demands by Radical

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[742]Ibid., p. 3.
[743] Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War*, pp. 186-87.

Republicans that politically sound generals be given significant military responsibilities. As the most able politician of his era, Lincoln's success owed in large part to the natural sympathy he felt for the currents of Northern public opinion, and he himself famously claimed "not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."[744] Lincoln's stated fatalism had much to do with his religious views on Providence, and he understated his own historical influence on the course of events, but Lincoln himself would have found a portrayal of him as some sort of far-seeing philosopher statesman guiding history as both inaccurate and contrary to the republic's sacred principle of self-government.

Indeed, when Lincoln presented after Antietam his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet, he told them that before the battle, he had, according to Gideon Welles' diary, "made a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle, he would consider it an indication of Divine will, and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation."[745] Lincoln's astonishing attempt to divine the will of God reflected his own unwillingness to play the part of the Promethean statesman, or the Clausewitzian genius who overcomes friction through force of will and *coup d'oeil.* The Clausewitzian general or statesmen combined both the discerning intellect of an Enlightenment philosopher and the force of will of a Romantic hero. In contrast, if Lincoln had genius, he possessed a democratic version that allowed him both to perceive and to guide the better angels of Northern sentiment to victory. Lincoln thus served less as a dictator endowed with absolute power and called from the plough to guide the republic through an existential crisis, but more as a tribune of the people—leading public opinion while never departing too far from it. When he

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[744] This served as the controversial epigraph to David Donald's biography of Lincoln.

[745] Howard K. Beale, ed., *Diary of Gideon Welles: Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson* (New York, 1960), vol. 1, p. 143; Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), pp. 341-42. Salmon P. Chase's diary also confirms Welles' account in its broad outlines.

flexed his most impressive wartime executive power—the Emancipation Proclamation—little wonder that Lincoln would search for God's will in that act, and he would later declare that "in giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free---honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of earth."[746]

In the small world of those who think on, write about, and hope to determine American grand strategy in the present day and in the near future, the democratic habits of the American people and its elected representatives might seem hostile and threatening to the rational formulation and development of true grand strategy. Lincoln and Grant, however, show that strategy can still exist in a world where democratic political processes intersect at every level of policy formulation and execution. The "people" may make mistakes and rue their own impetuousness, without really acknowledging their own portion of responsibility for mistakes and errors, as they did after the Overland Campaign, but their deep involvement with the war also gave great strength and resilience to Northern public opinion. When Atlanta gave them hope again that their sons' sacrifices in the Wilderness and Cold Harbor were not in vain, they returned Lincoln to the Presidency and gave Grant his due, eventually rewarding the general with the Presidency and a spectacular equestrian monument facing Washington's outside the Capitol. In an era of social media and radically decentralized information technology, perhaps the institutions of the national security state should find a way to embrace the natural democratic genius of the American people.

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[746] Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 5, p. 537.

U.S. Naval Strategy and Japan

Innovation and surprise tested the plan's validity throughout the war. Certain changes had been anticipated by the planners, in outline if not in detail, and did not materially alter its relevance. Most of the unexpected developments were easily co-opted within the plan's framework, a tribute to its flexibility and broad aims. Only a few surprises compelled wartime leaders to depart from it. None comprised its fundamental principles.[747]

The U.S. Navy during the period between 1919 and 1939 has received considerable attention from historians and political scientists, much of that interest driven by Andrew Marshal of the Office of Net Assessment. The author of this essay, in fact, was a willing and self-inflicted victim of one of those efforts in the early 1980s, when he and Allan Millett directed the "military effectiveness studies, recently reissued by Cambridge University Press.[748] At the time, the author, as with many other students of European military history, found himself intrigued with the German innovations in combined arms tactics during the twenties and thirties.[749] Yet, nearly 30 years later, he finds himself far more impressed with the performance of America's military institutions in innovating during the interwar period than with the Germans.[750]

While during the interwar period the *Reichswehr* and the Wehrmacht addressed

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[747] Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange, The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, MD, 1991), p. 347.

[748] Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, 3 vols., *World War I, The Interwar Period,* and *World War II* (Cambridge, 2011).

[749] See among others of the author's writings: Williamson Murray, "Armored Warfare, The British, French, and German Experiences," in Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, 1996). For the most thorough study of the background of the creation of combined-arms tactics by the Germans see James Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg, Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Leavenworth, KS, 1994).

[750] The author has attempted in the books that he has written and helped to edit to delineate innovation as a peace time phenomenon and adaptation as a wartime phenomenon. For the former see Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, 1996); and Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War, For Fear of Change* (Cambridge, 2011).

successfully the complex problems involved in developing combined-arms ground tactics, the German military also managed to repeat every strategic mistake in the Second World War that it had made 20 years earlier.[751] It was not just a matter of repeating disastrous political and strategic mistakes of the First World War that made the German approach to war so flawed in the world war that followed twenty years later. It was also the fact that their understanding of the operational level of war lacked any grasp of the importance of logistics and intelligence.[752] In particular, the performance of the *Kriegsmarine* in two world wars displayed the same careless disregard for strategy, logistics, and intelligence that the army displayed, for example in the planning and execution of its invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.[753] What this suggests is that there was a deep cultural bias in the German military that led to an over emphasis on tactics and a deep ignorance of strategic and political factors.[754]

In the case of the U.S. Navy, however, innovation occurred at all the levels of war from grand strategy, to theater operational strategy, and to the basic tactical framework within which the navy would fight the Pacific War from 1941 to 1945. Exacerbating the difficulties of innovation and the development of a coherent and effective theater strategy was the reality of the immense distances of the Pacific. Moreover, the increasing pace of technological change as well as an evolving political context challenged many of the deeply held traditions and strategic concepts of the navy's officers. Moreover, the increasing pace of technological change also

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[751] And as this author and Allan Millett pointed out in 1989, effectiveness at the strategic level is of much greater importance than effectiveness at the operational and tactical levels of war. Given a strategic approach that is largely on target, one can repair weaknesses at the other levels, but a weak strategy will always fail no matter how effective one's military instruments are at the operational and tactical level. See Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, "Lessons of War," *The National Interest,* Winter 1988/1989

[752] Martin van Creveld has underlined their abysmal performance of Germany's army in two world wars in the realm of logistics in his *Supplying War, Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge, 2004). For a general critique of German military effectiveness see Williamson Murray, *War, Strategy, and Military Effectiveness* (Cambridge, 2011), chpt. 9.

[753] After all, the Kriegsmarine managed to get its codes compromised in both world wars with enormous consequences in the two conflicts.

[754] In this regard see particularly Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, 2006).

introduced new uncertainties and ambiguities into the tactical and operational frameworks that guided strategic thinking. While the development of a military strategy for a potential war with Japan evolved over decades, the political framework of U.S. grand strategy underwent a series of major changes, as political leaders confronted the difficult political and diplomatic problems in dealing with Japan.[755]

Thus, the performance of the American Navy in the interwar period demanded the ability to address a host of issues in a time of few resources, considerable shifts in the international environment, and rapid technological change. Inevitably, the conditions of the war proved almost antithetical to what planners had foreseen. As Michael Howard has suggested about all military organizations, the Americans initially got the next war wrong at its beginning.[756] But the thinking of the prewar period, the innovations in technology, and the intellectual preparation of the officer corps were such that the navy was able initially to improvise and then to adapt to *the actual conditions of the war that it confronted.* In the end, the navy's preparations proved "good enough," and in the real world "good enough" represents a major success, given the sorry performance of most human institutions at the strategic and operational levels.[757]

Thus, the conceptions and innovations that the navy developed during the interwar period allowed it to adapt its operational and tactical capabilities to solving the actual strategic realities it confronted in the war against Japan. What makes this case study so interesting in thinking about the coming interwar period is the fact that the navy's culture within which the

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[755] On grand strategy see: Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey, eds., *the Shaping of Grand Strategy, Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011).

[756] Among others see Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, vol. 107, February 1962, p. 6.

[757] I am indebted to Colin Gray for his use of the term "good enough," a term which underlines that in the real world "good enough" is more than sufficient, while the search for a perfect solution more often than not results in disaster. As for the performance of most at the political and strategic levels, Clausewitz notes with dripping irony that: "No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. And ed. By Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976).

development of future military strategy of the Pacific War took place underlines not only the pit falls of the current approach to the future, but also the enormous importance of the values of honest, open debate, imagination, and serious, sustained study, all of which marked the interwar navy have for the preparation of America's military forces for the next century.

The Background

After the dust of the collapse of the Imperial Japanese Empire had settled, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz noted that the navy had foreseen everything that had happened in the Pacific War except for the damaging attacks the Kamikazes had launched in the last months of that conflict.[758] Nimitz was both right and wrong. He was wrong in the sense that, had the Japanese not sunk most of the U.S. battle fleet, the Pacific fleet's leaders might well sallied forth with their ships in a vain effort to take the pressure off MacArthur's hard-pressed garrison in the Philippines as well as the deteriorating position of the Allies in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. As is the case with all successful strategies, contingency played a major role in the navy's success in the Second World War. Thus the shambles of 7 December 1941 may well have prevented a far worse disaster.

Although the history is somewhat ambiguous on what Admiral Husband Kimmel, commander of the Pacific Fleet might have done, had the Japanese not sunk the battle fleet he commanded in Pearl Harbor, his record and reputation among his fellow officers suggests that he would have accepted the risks involved in challenging the Japanese to a great naval battle somewhere in the area between Wake and Guam. Kimmel's personality, as well as his preparation for war, predisposed him up to launch an aggressive response to the outbreak of a

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[758] Chester Nimitz, Dennis A. Vincinzi, *Human Factors in Simulation Training* (Boca Rotan, FL, 2009), p. 17.

war with Japan.[759] His chief of plans, "Soc" McMorris suggested after the war that had he known that Nagumo, his six fleet carriers, and two battleships were on a course headed for Pearl Harbor, he would have advised Kimmel that the American fleet should head west to meet them, even though the American battleships would have "suffered quite severely."[760] Gordon Prange noted that Kimmel's probable intention, had the Japanese not attacked, was "to sail forth to engage Yamamoto and waste no time about it."[761] At the time such was the superiority of Japanese naval and air power, the latter both carrier and island based, that the slaughter of much of the American fleet, battleships, carriers, and accompanying vessels would most probably have ensued. But even more disastrous than the loss of the ships would have been the loss of the officers, petty officers, and sailors, the personnel framework on which the navy's massive expansion would rest in the coming years.[762] The former the immense productive capacity of American industry would have been able to replace. The latter could never have been replaced.

In the end, the success of strategy at any level depends on the personalities of those who conduct it. Thus, all the intellectual efforts in war gaming, concept development, and analysis of fleet exercises by American naval officers during the interwar period might have gone for naught had Admiral Yamomoto not decided to launch a surprise attack against Pearl Harbor, an attack it is worth noting that most of the Imperial Navy's senior officers opposed. The direct result of the Pearl Harbor disaster was that the president fired Kimmel and immediately appointed Nimitz to

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[759] One suspects that Admiral Ernest J. King, had he been in Kimmel's place would also have acted aggressively to a Japanese offensive against the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Kimmel's immediate predecessor, Vice Admiral James Richardson, however, had lost his job, because of his strong objection to stationing the fleet at Pearl Harbor rather than San Diego, because of his fears as to its vulnerability. As in all things in human affairs, individuals represent the key, unpredictable factor in the course of events.

[760] Quoted in Miller, *War Plan Orange,* p. 310. McMorris' comment undoubtedly represented an understatement of what would probably have happened.

[761] Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor, The Verdict of History* (New York, 1986), p. 475.

[762] This was, of course why the saving of the British Army at Dunkirk was so important, because the rebuilding of the army in the aftermath of defeat on the Continent would have been impossible without the officers and NCOs brought off the beaches of northern France.

command the battered Pacific fleet, an admiral far more in tune with the navy's culture than his predecessor.

Another factor underlies the potential of officers like Kimmel to undermine strategic approaches that have been developed through rigorous processes, and that lies in the failure to estimate the enemy's potential, in other words the failure to understand the "other." On one hand, as we will see, the navy carried out its exercises at sea and its war games at Newport in the most rigorous fashion. In every war game and fleet exercise, the fleet units that represented the opposing sides possessed every opportunity to savage their opponent's fleet. Yet, in his report on Fleet Exercise XV (1934) in which the opposing fleets had engaged in a running battle that inflicted heavy casualties on both sides, Admiral David Foote Sellers CINCUS (commander in chief U.S. Fleet) commented that "it is by no means probable that an Asiatic power could wage such an efficient war of attrition as that waged by the GRAY fleet."[763] Given what was to happen not only on 7 December 1941, but at Savo Island eight months later, one can only conclude that too many naval officers in the interwar period agreed with Sellers that the capabilities and competence displayed by opposing fleets and their commanders in American fleet exercises were far superior to the actual effectiveness of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Events in the first year of the war would prove that assumption to be seriously flawed.

Kimmel never managed to sail the battle fleet west.[764] Here chance, with the helping hand of the Admiral Yamamoto, determined there would be no great fleet engagement at the start of the war between the United States and Japan. Instead that fleet engagement would take place six months later at the Coral Sea and Midway, when the U.S. Navy was far better prepared

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[763] Quoted in Albert A. Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War: The U .S. Navy Fleet Problems* (Newport, R.I.), p. 188.
[764] Instead he sailed off into a disgruntled retirement.

operationally and tactically to take on the Japanese in a major fleet engagement.[765] From that point on, the navy's Pacific strategy crushed the power of Imperial Japan in three years by assembling the various intellectual, technological, and doctrinal pieces developed in the interwar period.

Thus, Nimitz was right in the sense that the theater strategic approach that American ground, sea, and air forces used to defeat the Japanese from summer 1943 on reflected the developments of the 1920s and 1930s, an environment that typified the ambiguities that confront the creation of any successful strategy. In other words, the war games at Newport, the fleet exercises of the twenties and the thirties, and education of the officer in general provided the concepts, understanding, and particularly the culture necessary to adapt to the actual conditions of war and thus execute a successful strategy through to conclusion. To quote this author's comment in another work, the success or failure of a strategy depends on the context within which it is developed. "No theoretical construct, no set of abstract principles, no political science model can capture its essence.... Constant change and adaptation must be its companions if it is to succeed."[766]

The problem of a possible war with the empire of Japan first appeared in the period immediately after the United States had crushed the Spanish Navy and colonial armies in the Spanish American War at the end of the nineteenth century. Over most of the 40 years that followed until the war finally broke out, the U.S. Navy focused on Imperial Japan and its navy as its most likely enemy.[767] To a considerable extent, its plans and its conceptions of future war

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[765] By that point in the war substantial adaptation had taken place in the employment of carriers and their aircraft, which helped to minimize the advantages that the Japanese enjoyed. However, in December 1941 an American fleet would not have been in the position even to improvise tactics and the conduct of operations.

[766] Murray, et al., *The Shaping of Grand Strategy,* p. 11.

[767] Admittedly there were other potential enemies. For many of the navy's officers, particularly King, who would lead the American naval effort in World War II, Britain was the enemy of choice. And King's Anglophobia would last into and through the Second World War.

dealt with the problems associated with a war across the vastness of the Pacific.[768] That said, the period during which the navy examined the strategic problems raised by a war with Japan was one of constant change. At the level of American grand strategy, the outbreak of World War I and America's eventual entrance into that conflict removed thoughts of a war with Japan from all but a few from 1915 through 1919.

Similarly, during the 1920s into the early 1930s the idea that there might be a major war between the United States and Imperial Japan was inconceivable not only to nearly all Americans, but to their political leaders as well. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 had apparently removed much of the tension between the triangle of naval powers, the United States, Japan, and Britain. Moreover, the return to "normalcy" of the 1920s as well as the liberal, non-aggressive government in Japan further reduced the tensions. Even, the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931 hardly bothered an America sinking into the sloughs of the depression. In one sense the relative passivity and lack of tension through to the mid-thirties with the demilitarization of the islands in the Central Pacific eased the military problems of an advance across the Pacific by making a war with Japan less likely. Nevertheless, while the political and strategic framework of the period seemed to make a major conflict unlikely, the navy was forming an understanding of how to address the problems associated with such a conflict.

As the political landscape changed in the mid- to late thirties, however, so too did the tactical and operational problems, as it became apparent the Japanese were fortifying and building airfields on the mandate islands in the Central Pacific, seized from the Germans at the outset of the First World War. In effect, the technological change as well as the increasing

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[768] Nimitz in his Naval War College thesis of 1923 posited that there were two potential naval wars the United States would face: the first against the Royal Navy, the second against the Imperial Japanese Navy. Nevertheless, his opening remarks make it clear that he believed the former case to be highly unlikely, while the latter represented a more likely possibility. Chester V. Nimitz, "Naval Tactics," *Naval War College Review*, November-December 1982.

potential of weapons systems demanded that the fleet and its planners develop and extend concepts of operations.

Thus, in serendipitous fashion, the navy's processes of change forced technologies in new and unexpected directions.[769] This essay then proposes to examine the development of American theater strategy in the Pacific through the lens of the influence of war gaming, fleet exercises, innovation in weapons systems, and technological change. Inherent in the processes of developing theater strategy, the reader must not forget the impact of individuals and their interplay, some of whom history has remembered, but most forgotten. And finally, we will examine how well they actually worked out in the harsh laboratory of war.

The Tyranny of Distance and War Planning

In thinking about a war with Japan, the greatest difficulty military leaders and planners faced lay in the enormous size of the Pacific theater. The distance from San Diego to Oahu is 2,612 miles, from whence U.S. military operations would begin; from Honolulu to Tokyo is a further 3,862 miles; Honolulu to the Philippines 5,305 miles; from Pearl Harbor to Darwin, Australia is 5,388 miles, while the distance from Pearl Harbor to Micronesia is 3,088 miles.   In the 1920s and 1930s, the distances of the Pacific represented problems of time and space and logistics that no strategic theater in history had ever before posed to military organizations proposing to mount a major campaign. Simply put, the great, vast emptiness that lay between

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[769] Nowhere was this clearer than in the continuing development of radial engines. In the early 1920s the belief among aeronautical experts was that the in-line engine would provide a better means of developing engine power than the radial engine. But aircraft equipped with in-line engines proved to be a nightmare to maintain on board carriers, while radial engines were relatively easy to maintain. The result was that both the Japanese and U.S. Navies pushed the development of radial engines in the late twenties into the thirties. That technology influenced the civilian airlines in the 1930s as well as the Army Air Corps. The result was that the only effective front-line American bomber or fighter in the Second World War to possess an in-line engine was the P-51, and that aircraft possessed a British Rolls-Royce in-line engine.

Hawaii and the Home Islands of Japan offered up no simple, easy, or direct solutions for naval planners or strategist in terms of the projection of military power against a major power. Thus any discussion of the development of the navy's theater strategy must depend on an understanding of the geography and distances of the Pacific.

Exacerbating the problems of the Pacific was the fact that in a fit of strategic absent-mindedness, the United States had acquired the Philippines as one of the prizes of its victory in the Spanish-American War. In effect, those islands represented a hostage to fortune, easily accessible to Japanese attack and at the same time even farther from American bases than the Japanese Home Islands were. Yet, initially the acquisition of the Philippines and the island of Guam appeared advantageous to American naval strategy, since they offered the possibility of major naval bases on the far side of the Pacific: Certainly that was how naval planners viewed those possessions up until the signing of the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922.

But that treaty, besides limiting the size of the Japanese battle fleet to only 60 percent of that of the United States, also forbade the United States from the construction of major naval or military in either the Philippines or Guam. Thus, the U.S. Navy would have no major naval facilities in the western Pacific, from which to launch a campaign against the Japanese. This represented a major concession on the part of American negotiators in Washington, but one that was necessary to get to the Japanese to agree to a 60 percent limitation on the size of their battle fleet. In effect, it radically changed the options open to American strategic planners and made their world more difficult.

A recent history of the navy's General Board has posed the fundamental operational and strategic question with which the new treaty regime confronted strategic planners and thinkers in Washington and Newport: "How could the navy accomplish its strategic tasks with a doctrine

and strategy based on the battleship and overseas bases when the Washington Treaty had severely limited both of these pillars of sea power?"[770] Ironically the treaty would also played a major role in expanding the capabilities the navy would need for such a campaign,

Commander Chester Nimitz noted in his war college paper in 1923, "at no time in our history has the BLUE naval tactician been confronted with a problem as difficult of solution as that imposed by the restrictions of the Treaties..."[771] Thus, American naval planners and strategists had to confront the tyranny of distance, which meant that any direct Mahanian approach to the Japanese Home Islands risked the problems which the Russians had confronted in the Russo-Japanese War: how could a major fleet cross the immense distances of the Pacific without suffering a crushing defeat similar to that which the Russian Navy had suffered at Tsushima Straits.[772]

Nevertheless, through until 1934 the "thrusters," those who advocated an immediate move of American naval forces to the western Pacific, remained a dominant voice in the councils of those responsible for designing war plan Orange, the planning effort for a potential war with Japan. Nor did the "thrusters" entirely lose their voice in the councils of the navy over the period immediately before the war broke out, but they found themselves outnumbered by more cautious voices as the thirties wore on and as war with Japan became increasingly probable.

By the mid-1930s, more realistic voices among the navy's leaders came to dominate the picture of thinking about and planning for a war with Japan.[773] Nevertheless, the conundrum

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[770] John T. Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation, The General Board and the Design of the Fleet that Defeated the Japanese Navy* (Annapolis, MD, 2008), p. 24.

[771] Commander Chester W. Nimitz, "Naval Tactics," *Naval War College Review,* fall 1983; an abridged reprint of Nimitz's 1923 Naval War College thesis.

[772] For the difficulties the Russian Navy faced in its disastrous cruise from the Baltic to its disastrous defeat at the Tsushima Straits see among others: Denis warner and Peggy warner, *The Tide at Sunrise, A History of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York, 1974), pp. 402-426 and 494-520.

[773] But the "thrusters" remained a substantial faction among the navy's leaders, as the above discussion about Admiral Kimmel has suggested.

naval planners faced was that a campaign to seize the island bases needed either to reinforce or recapture Guam and the Philippines and eventually strike the Home Islands meant that the United States was would have to wage a long war, a war which they believed the American people might be unwilling to sustain. Quite simply the capture of the island bases in the Western Pacific required for the projection of military power was going to require a lengthy period. In that respect, they agreed with Yamomoto's analysis in 1941 that the American people would not support a long war. With such thinking, they were also undoubtedly being realistic, as the fact that the Congress of the United States renewed the draft by only a single vote in July 1941 underlined. The members of the House of Representatives took that vote in spite of the fact that the nation confronted the most serious strategic situation since the period immediately before the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter.[774]

The further the navy tested out and evaluated its concepts and the possibilities of a war across the Central Pacific, the more difficult problems, involving the capture of island bases, the supplying of naval forces at sea over great distances while underway, and the maintenance and repair of ships, aircraft, and island bases in the midst of ongoing naval operations, all raised their ugly heads. Some of these the navy could address at that time, but most the navy had to put on the back burner for solving later, if, and when, resources became available. But at least navy planners and strategists were aware of those issues. The most important impact that the Pacific's distances had on the navy's thinking was the increasing awareness among its officers that logistical issues were going to prove crucial in the conduct of a war against Japan. Thus, the treaty system, inaugurated by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, obviously increased that

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[774] At the time Congress barely renewed the draft, German panzer divisions were in the process of destroying a huge Soviet army group in the area on the central front and capturing Smolensk, two/thirds of the way to Moscow. Senior American military experts gave the Soviet Union only several weeks before it collapsed before the German onslaught.

awareness, since there was now no hope of building major naval bases in either the Central or Western Pacific before the war.

When the treaty regime finally collapsed in 1936, some within the navy pushed hard for building major naval bases in the Philippines and Guam, but Congress, as it does occasionally, saw matters in a more sensible light: such a program would have a disastrous impact on relations with the Japanese – which were increasingly difficult, but which had a considerable distance to go before the two nations were at war – would waste valuable taxpayer money, and made little strategic sense at least for the foreseeable future. Not surprisingly, the distances in the Pacific and what those distances involved in the projecting of American power across that ocean with no bases available came to dominate the thinking of American planners in the 1930s. As a result, the navy was intellectually prepared to wage a war that had to rest on logistic capabilities as the starting point for any war against Japan.

Yet, like a bad penny, in spite of any realistic analysis of the distances involved and the Japanese possession of the Mandate Islands, which lay across any route to the Western Pacific, the Philippines and Guam refused to go away. Here army generals, Leonard Wood and Douglas MacArthur in particular, played a pernicious role. For the most part the army as an institution and its planners cared little about addressing the possibility of saving the Philippines or fighting Japan. But in 1922, when navy planners drew the conclusion that the Philippines were indefensible, given the distances, Wood, governor general of the islands – his consolation prize for not getting the republican nomination for president in 1920 – squawked like a stuck pig to Washington.

The uproar led to the navy and its planners to back down from its reasonable strategic position. Not until the 1930s were navy planners in a position once again to revert to the more

sensible strategic position that the Philippines were indefensible in the short run. Unfortunately, in 1940 Douglas MacArthur, now a field Marshal in the Philippine Army and in charge of Philippine defense, would again muddy the waters and cause the diversion of substantial resources to the defense of his bailiwick, one that given the correlation of forces at the time was simply hopeless.[775]

The Treaty Regime, Unintended Effects, and the Navy

Beyond the normal cast of characters, whom historians have singled out in apportioning blame for the unpreparedness of America's military in December 1941, many were to point to the influence of the treaty regime, beginning with the Washington naval limitation treaty of 1922, with its restraints on the size of the navies of the major powers, as a major contributing factor for the disaster.[776] The United States did achieve battleship equality with the British and a ten-to-six ration in its favor with the Japanese. Ironically, in spite of what many have argued, the actual settlement proved quite favorable in the long run to the development of the fleet during the interwar period as well as contributing to more realistic strategic concepts, although that was neither the intent nor the perception of American diplomats in 1922.

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[775] He would also change the plans for the defense of Luzon and order that the supplies for the defense of Bataan be distributed all over Luzon, where the Japanese promptly gobbled them up in the first weeks of the campaign. The large numbers of American deaths on the Bataan death march were largely the result of the fact that they had been on a 1,000 calorie a day died for the previous three months, since MacArthur had had the food stock piles on Bataan moved out to support an extended campaign on Luzon.

[776] The political support for naval disarmament and severe limitations on new naval construction had to do with the belief that one of the major causes of the First World War had been the naval arms race of the decade immediately preceding the outbreak of war. In reality, the naval arms race among the powers had been largely the result of the increasing antagonism between the alliance systems of the Great Powers. Thus, the arms race was a symptom rather than a cause of the conflagration. See Ronald Spector, *The Eagle and the Sun, The American War with Japan* (New York, 1985), chpt.

There are a number of reasons why the Washington Treaty proved strategically and militarily beneficial. First, the treaties prevented the United States from resourcing major naval bases and facilities in either Guam or the Philippines, which, as the events of 1942 underlined, were basically indefensible. As Captain Frank Schofield indicated to an Army War College class in September 1923, the Washington Naval Treaties forced the navy to undergo a fundamental reassessment of its thinking about a future war with Japan: "Manifestly the provisions of the Treaty presented a naval problem of the first magnitude that demanded immediate solution. A new policy had to be formulated which would make the best possible use of the new conditions."[777] While it would take the navy's senior leaders almost a decade to give up the dream of fortified bases in the western Pacific from which to launch its fleet against the Home Islands, but the writing was on the wall, at least, for those willing to examine the strategic realities.[778]

The irony of the treaty regime is that, while it largely failed in its aim of limiting naval armaments, which had been the basis of the approach of the Harding and Hoover administrations, it proved beneficial in forcing the navy not only to alter the course of its strategic planning in more realistic directions, but also to develop a more capable and effective combat force. By restricting the navy to 15 battleships, already in the fleet, and with its moratorium on the building of new capital ships, the 1922 Washington Treaty forced the navy to focus on other areas of naval power. The treaty did allow the United States, Japan, and Britain to modernize their battleships as well as to add a further 3,000 tons to the displacement of those

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[777] Quoted in John T. Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation, The General Board and the Design of the Fleet That Defeated Japan* (Annapolis, 2008), p. 38.

[778] For the difficulties navy leaders had in accepting the strategic realities or the implications of the demilitarization of the western Pacific, see. Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange, The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 18997-1945* (Annapolis, MD, 1994).

ships for increased protection against submarine and air attack, which did have the advantage of making them more difficult to sink.

Thus, not surprisingly, the navy made a major effort to do precisely that, but the treaty in turn had a number of second and third order effects.[779] First, without the prohibition on new battleship construction, the navy might well have spent its money on new dreadnoughts instead of refurbishing and improving what it actually possessed. The modernization program for the battleships significantly improved their power plants, range, and the effectiveness of their armament. Moreover, the combination of thinking about the possibilities of a future war with Japan with the possibility that such a war might require the seizure of advance bases also forced the navy to think about other uses the battle fleet might serve. As the historian of the General Board has noted, "in this specific case the treaty system encouraged innovative operational thinking for using battleships in support of amphibious warfare."[780] The result of such thinking and initial testing were to have considerable consequences in the Pacific War.[781]

But the larger impact of the treaty regime lay in its unintended effect on the rest of the fleet. In effect, the money that would have gone to the construction of new battleships flowed into the construction of other platforms. The most obvious was the fact that the Washington Treaty allowed the conversion of the half-finished battle cruisers *Saratoga* and *Lexington* into aircraft carriers. Here again the General Board was a major player in pushing for the navy to complete the conversion of these ships, originally laid down as battle cruisers, into the kind of platform the navy required to test out more fully the possibilities inherent in taking large numbers of aircraft to sea with the fleet.

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[779] There is an excellent discussion of the General Board's influence over the modernization as well as the impact of that program on the navy as a whole in Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation*, chpt. 5.

[780] Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation*, p. 85.

[781] See below for further discussion of the creation of amphibious warfare development in the naval forces.

The navy's first carrier, the converted collier *Langley*, was both too small and too slow to provide the kinds of insights needed to understand how naval commanders might best utilize carriers and their attendant air power. The *Saratoga* and *Lexington* on the other hand were considerably faster than the battle fleet, and so, as soon as they joined the fleet the new carriers offered up the possibility of independent operations with ships, the weapons systems of which possessed unmatched lethality and striking power. But beyond the need to let the carriers act independently, the two big ships also indicated that large carriers would provide greater flexibility in employment than would small carriers.[782]

Even before the two great carriers joined the fleet, a number of senior officers, supported by the General Board, were pushing for more carriers, since the navy still remained substantially under the carrier tonnage allowed by the Washington Treaty. However, the political and economic climate that lasted through to 1934 made such suggestions impossible. Additional carrier construction was out of the question, no matter how supportive of the idea the General Board and navy leaders might be. Instead, for a period in the early thirties, the General Board considered the possibility of having the navy design and construct flying-deck cruisers, which would marry up the need for more cruisers with that of the need to supply additional air power for the fleet. Nothing came of the idea, because in 1934 the Roosevelt administration finally provided funding for naval construction.[783] What is particularly interesting about the General Board's discussion of the flying deck heavy cruiser was that its design thinking included an

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[782] The Japanese gained the same insight with the two battle cruiser hulls that they converted into the carriers *Kaga* and *Akagi*. The British, however, had no large battle cruisers under construction and so their carriers were of limited size and speed in comparison to the large carriers the Americans and Japanese possessed. For a careful discussion of the flawed nature of British carrier development see the nuanced discussion in Thomas Hone, Mark David Mandeles, and Norman Friedman, *American and British Aircraft Carrier Development, 1919-1941* (Annapolis, MD, 1999).

[783] The funding for new ships by the administration seems largely to have been motivated by a desire to provide jobs and stimulate the economy rather than to address the navy's need for new ships.

angled-deck, a concept which the Royal Navy first incorporated into carrier design in the period after the Second World War.

The Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931 had been the cause of some alarm among Americans, but not enough to persuade Herbert Hoover's or Franklin Roosevelt's administrations, mired as they were in the midst of the deep depression, to begin a gradual program of rearmament.[784] But by 1934 it was clear that the Japanese were not going to renew the Washington Treaty, while the Germans were already embarking on their strategically senseless program of naval rearmament. By using the argument of creating jobs, Roosevelt then authorized a modest program of naval construction. However, the outright refusal of the Japanese government to renew the naval limitation and treaty and their institution of a massive ship building program, then led Roosevelt to reply in 1938 with a massive American program that dwarfed the Japanese efforts and underlined how much the Washington Treaty of 1922 had been to Japan's advantage.[785] The arrival of the 1938 major fleet units and those of the 1940 Two Ocean Naval Act, especially the carriers, was to tip the correlation of forces in the Pacific decisively in favor of the United States beginning in July 1943.

The Treaty Regime, Unintended Effects, and the Creation of Amphibious Warfare

Perhaps the most important unintended impact of the "treaty regime" was its impact on the development of the concepts as well as the understanding necessary for the conduct of amphibious warfare. With the crossing out of Guam and the Philippines as major potential

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[784] Hoover administration had deeply imbued the prevailing academic nonsense that limitation of armaments was by itself a good thing and that the navy should not build any of the ships, such as cruisers and carriers which the Washington Treaty authorized.

[785] Something which most Japanese naval officers proved incapable of recognizing.

bases, as well the fact that they were much closer to Japanese naval power, the question was how was the navy going to acquire the bases that it needed to resupply the fleet, repair damaged ships, and project naval power against the Home Islands in the Central and Western Pacific. Simply put, the navy was going to have to capture those bases. And once the Japanese refused to renew the treaty regime, it was clear they were going to fortify their bases throughout Micronesia. Thus, a major part of the strategic problem was going to be how to capture those bases in successful amphibious landings against strong, prepared military forces. Nevertheless, until rather late in the game amphibious warfare only occasionally held the navy's interest, while most army generals could have cared less about the possibilities that that their soldiers might participate in such operations in time of war.[786]

The results of various amphibious operations in World War I had been somewhat ambiguous. The Germans had launched a successful amphibious operation against the Baltic Islands in 1917, but by that point in the war Russia's military forces were already in a state of general dissolution in a nation already wracked by revolution. The British experience in their landings at Gallipoli in April 1915 had been most disappointing. In effect, the tactical and technological performance of both the navy and army had been so dismal as to call into question the possibility of ever mounting a successful amphibious operation against a first-class enemy who held the shore line in strength and who possessed land lines of communications that could rapidly reinforce the battlefront. That, anyway, was the conclusion the British drew from their

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[786] There is an explanation for the navy's attitude, namely it had so many other issues with which it had to deal and was so short of resources that amphibious war justifiably ranked relatively low on its priorities. For the army's interests during this period see David E. Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers, Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945* (Ithaca, 2003).

experiences at Gallipoli, which served to reinforce the attitudes of most other military organizations.[787]

The exception to such thinking was, of course, the United States Marine Corps. In search for a mission that would justify its continued existence, the senior leaders of the corps had become interested in amphibious war as early as 1920 in their review of war plan Orange. The Commandant, Major General John A. Lejeune, turned the problem over to Major Earl H. Ellis, a brilliant and iconoclastic marine, who produced a deeply insightful paper in 1921: "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia," which Lejune endorsed in July 1921.[788] With that paper, one can date the onset of serious thinking about the projection of military forces from the sea in the American military.

Ellis's paper represented no more than a start with the nature of the problem sketched out. It was now an issue of putting flesh on the bare bones of a very thin skeleton. Adding to the difficulties the marines confronted in making headway with their augment for preparations for amphibious war was the fact that they found an increasing number of their limited troop strength committed to what today would be called peace-keeping missions in Central America and the Caribbean.

Providing impetus to such efforts in the early thirties was the cost-cutting efforts of the Hoover administration, which was slicing funding for the services in the face of the Great

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[787] Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel's comment that crossing the English Channel was just a matter of "a river crossing" pretty much sums up German thinking about and preparations for the possibility of amphibious war in the interwar period. See Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won, Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), p. 84 for further discussion about German planning for an amphibious landing on the British Coast in summer1940, code-named Operation SEALION. The British thinking about such operations was suggested in 1938 by the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Andrew Cunningham who reported that "at the present time could not visualize any particular [joint] operation taking place and they were, therefore, not prepared to devote any considerable sum of money to equipment for [joint] training" PRO CAB 54/2, DCOS /30th Meeting, 15.11.38., DCOS (Deputy Chiefs of Staff) Sub-Committee, p. 4

[788] For a clear discussion of the marine corps development of amphibious warfare see Allan R. Millett, "Assault from the Sea," in Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 70-78.

Depression. For a period these cuts threatened even to eliminate the marine corps.[789] But of greater importance was the change of foreign policy focus with the arrival of the Roosevelt administration in office in March 1933 with its emphasis on a "good neighbor policy" toward South America and the Caribbean. By the early 1930s the corps was able to focus increasingly on the problems involved in amphibious warfare. That shift in policy ended the American interventions in the area and provided the marine corps with the troop strength to participate in more extensive tests of amphibious doctrine and capabilities. In addition, the fact that the president was a longtime friend of the corps, dating back to the seven years that he had served as an assistant secretary of the navy under Woodrow Wilson's administration undoubtedly helped to secure the corps' survival.

The Schools at Quantico became the center of efforts to develop an effective doctrinal framework for amphibious warfare. Helping the marines in their efforts was the fact that they populated the various schools at Quantico with their best officers, a reflection undoubtedly of their efforts to mold a professional culture that mirrored the strengths of those of the navy and army.[790] The study of amphibious warfare at the Schools increased from 1925 through 1935 from 20 percent of the curriculum to 60 percent with a heavy emphasis on learning the actual lessons of British mistakes at Gallipoli, rather than attempting to prove that such operations were impossible, as was the case with the British.[791]

In 1931 institutional paranoia about being absorbed into the army reached the point that for a considerable period of time the Schools shut down, while the faculty and students devoted

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[789] Such a fate had befallen the French marines who had found themselves transferred from the navy to the army in 1900.

[790] For an outstanding study of the development of military professionalism in the marine corps in the first half of the twentieth century see Allan R. Millett, *In Many a Strife: General Gerald C. Thomas and the U.S. Marine Corps, 1917-1956* (Annapolis, MD, 1993).

[791] Millett, "Assault from the Sea," p. 74.

themselves entirely to the writing of a detailed manual on how to conduct amphibious operations in the face of significant enemy operations. By1934 the marines had produced the seminal doctrinal study, "Tentative Manual for Landing Operations," which provided the basic framework for amphibious warfare in Europe as well as in the Pacific.

Again as with all the innovations that contributed to conduct of American strategy by maritime forces across the Pacific, the devil of amphibious war was in the details. Not until the late 1930s as more funding became available with a worsening international situation did the pace of navy and marine corps amphibious exercises involving significant numbers and realistic scenarios occurred. Yet, even with increased resources, it was not until February 1940 that the marine corps' 1st Brigade possessed something equivalent to its wartime TO&E (table of organization and equipment), but the navy still had no attack transports; instead it had to substitute old battleships and converted destroyers to transport the amphibious force in efforts to work out the TTPs (tactics, techniques, and procedures). Nevertheless, whatever the difficulties the marines confronted in a lack of resources, the concept of amphibious warfare was far in advance of what was occurring elsewhere. As Allan Millett has pointed out:

> The debate over amphibious warfare in the United States did not have the same closed character that it had in Britain and Japan. Articles on the subject appeared with regularity in service journals and even occasionally in civilian journals. More importantly, Congress followed the discussions in the annual reports of the service secretaries and in Congressional hearings. Whenever someone in or out of office, military or civilian, criticized the marine corps, it opened the issue of

readiness for amphibious warfare.[792]

Nevertheless, as one of the historians of the fleet exercises during the interwar period has pointed out, amphibious warfare remained a "strategic afterthought" to most of the navy's leadership.[793] There is considerable justification in his criticism. Yet, there is also some justification for the navy's placement of amphibious warfare toward the bottom of its priorities. Perhaps the most important explanation has to do with the very complexity of the tactical and technological problems the navy had to solve just in projecting naval forces across the distances of the Pacific as well as in the face of Japanese resistance. Thus, the time, funding, and resources were simply not available to do the experimentation required for building effective amphibious forces.

But also important was the fact that the full complexity of amphibious operations could not really emerge until U.S. forces were actually engaged in storming positions held by the Japanese. Nevertheless, what the navy and marine corps had managed to do with scarce resources in the interwar period proved sufficient to establish a solid doctrinal base on which they could launch not only the great island hoping campaigns of World War II in the Pacific, but the great invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Southern Italy, and Normandy in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation.

War Gaming, Innovation, and the Navy's Culture

War gaming entered the picture as a particularly important factor in terms of the navy's

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[792] Millett, "Assault from the Sea," p. 78.
[793] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, p. 109.

development during the 1920s to a degree which had not been the case before the First World War. One of the seminal events in that development as well as the navy's overall innovation in the interwar period occurred when Admiral William Sims, returned from Europe where he had served as the commanding officer of America's naval forces against Germany. As his last assignment in the navy before retirement he chose to return to the presidency of the Naval War College, which he had left in 1916. Sims was a particularly strong advocate of the importance of professional military for the navy. In a conversation with the Secretary of the navy, he commented, "when you go back to Washington at least put the [war college] on the plane of a battleship [[in terms of funding]; establish a complement for the War College, and then write an order to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, and tell him to keep the War College filled, even if he has to diminish some unimportant ship's complement."[794]

While Sims's decision to return to the war college seems somewhat strange in terms of how today's navy views Newport, the Naval War College enjoyed an extraordinarily high reputation throughout the interwar period throughout the interwar period. The future Admiral Raymond Spruance not only was a student at the war college, but served two tours on the faculty of that institution without damaging his reputation in the rest of the navy or his career prospects.[795] Significantly, Spruance was not an exception. Future Admirals Joseph Reeves, Richard L. Connolly, and Richmond Kelly Turner, among others, all served tours on the faculty.[796] Service on the faculty not only furthered officers understanding of the tactical, operational, and strategic problems the navy was facing, but it also appears to have enhanced

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[794] Quoted in John H. Mauer, "The Giants of the Naval War College," *Naval War College Review*, September-October 1984.

[795] In the late 1990s the author checked the bios of the navy's admirals to discover that nearly half of that group of officers had attended neither a staff nor war college. Moreover, my friends at the war college have reported to me that over the past 40 years only one faculty member of the war college had been promoted to admiral.

[796] Interestingly, unlike the Army War College and the Command and Staff College, the Navy War College remained opened throughout the war under one of the most distinguished prewar admirals: admiral Edward C. Kalbfus.

promotion possibilities. Moreover, as a four-star admiral, Spruance, like Sims, chose to return from the Pacific to take up the presidency of the Naval War College at the end of his spectacular career in commanding Fifth Fleet in the last years of the war in the Pacific. Nimitz himself indicated in a postwar address to the students of the Naval War College in 1960 that the war plans he inherited at the start of World War II had included the shutting down of educational activities at Newport. Instead he had made considerable efforts not only to keep the war college open, but to increase its intake of officers.[797]

Sims' term as the president of the war college (1919-1922) was crucial for both the college and the navy in developing new concepts and understanding of the potential impact of new technologies, such as aircraft and submarines. He had been a maverick in the navy's officer corps before the First World War. As a lieutenant commander, unhappy with the navy's unwillingness to reform its inadequate gunnery system, he had written directly to President Theodore Roosevelt about the need to change the navy's gunnery practices. The resulting pressure from the top had then forced the navy to alter its gunnery practices. Nevertheless, Sims's career did not suffer for his temerity, largely one suspects because he was right and his innovations substantially improved the fleet's accuracy. The protection of friends in high places undoubtedly helped.

Almost immediately upon arriving at his new assignment Sims made clear his feelings on the future of the battleship. He argued that the navy should "arrest the building oof great battleships and put money into the development of new devices and not wait to ssee what other countries were doing." Moreover, he argued "that an airplane carrier of thirty-five knots and carrying one hundred planes,,, is in reality a capital ship of much greater offensive power than

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[797] Chester Nimitz, "An Address," Naval War College, 10 October 1960, Naval War College Library. George Marshall noted after the Second World War that he believed his biggest mistake during the conflict had been to shut Leavenworth down.

any battleship." [798]   As president of the Naval War College in the postwar period, Sims encouraged the development of a series of strategic and tactical war games that examined the implications of technological change on future conflicts involving naval forces. The insights provided by those war games had a major role in the navy's development during the period. Sims, himself, pushed the students to examine the possibilities in a wide variety of tactical and technical possibilities in a realistic fashion. His intellectual approach was of crucial importance both for the incorporation of new technologies as well as for its impact on the navy's culture.

In 1965 Nimitz best caught the contribution that the war games and his study at the Naval War College had made to the victory over the Japanese in a comment he made shortly before his death.

> The enemy of our war games was always – Japan – and the courses were so thorough that after the start of World War II – nothing that happened in the Pacific was strange or unexpected. Each student was required to plan logistic support for an advance across the Pacific – and we were well prepared for the fantastic logistic efforts required to support the operations of war.– The need for mobile replenishment at sea was foreseen – and [then] practiced by me in 1937...[799]

During the three years that Sims was at the college, he oversaw the creation of two important kinds of games: the strategic ones that examined the complexities of a war over the

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[798] Quoted in John H. Mauer, "The Giants of the Naval War College," *Naval War College Review*, September-October 1984.

[799] Quoted in John T. Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation, The General Board and the Design of the Fleet That Defeated the Japanese Navy* (Annapolis, MD, 2008), p. 162.

huge distances of the Pacific; and tactical board games which examined the potential interplay of fleets in combat. The latter, of course, could not fully explore the "mayhem of the close-in clashes of the Solomons where forces rapidly approached each other at point blank ranges, and ships combat lives were measured in minutes."[800] Nevertheless, the tactical war games did suggest to the participants that fundamental reality of war that American forces have once again discovered in Iraq and Afghanistan: the "enemy gets a vote."

As one commentator on war gaming has noted, Sims and the war games at Newport "contributed substantially to the development of ideas about how to employ the aircraft carrier."[801] What the games indicated was that the tactical framework of carrier operations needed to differ fundamentally from the dynamics of fleet gunfire engagements. Simply stated, the attrition equations developed by Frederick Lancaster best represented the relationship in gunnery duels between red and blue surface fleets. But the tactical games at Newport indicated that what mattered in terms of aircraft launched from carriers would be pulses of air power. Thus, the true measure of effectiveness would be how many and how quickly carriers could launch their aircraft in a single pulse from their decks and then, after the completion of their strike, recover and rearm those aircraft successfully in preparation of another strike.

Long after Sims had left the presidency of the war college, the navy continued to feel the influence of his emphasis on war gaming. In 1931 war gaming, Newport's students and faculty tested out a concept for a light carrier/cruiser combination that the navy's General Board, which provided the navy a sounding board for the development of new concepts and employment, was examining in its deliberations.[802] Its report on the war games suggested that "The CLV is a

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[800] Peter P. Perla, *The Art of Wargaming: A Guide for Professionals and Hobbyists* (Annapolis, MD, 1990), p. 76.
[801] Ibid., p. 70.
[802] The Board consisted of several admirals who had retired or were about to retire as well as a number of up-and-coming officers, detached from the fleet.

decided menace to any battle cruiser (or even battleship) that might be deployed in connection with enemy scouting forces."[803] Not surprisingly, not all elements of the navy were happy with the war college's report, but it added to a general consensus, even among the battleship admirals, that air power was going to prove a crucial enabler, if not for attacking the enemy fleet, at least for reconnaissance as to the enemy's location.

What is particularly interesting about both the fleet exercises and war games at Newport was the rigor and honesty with which the participants carried them out.   There was no school solution, no expected answer toward which the participants and the effort moved.[804] Here one is clearly dealing with the influence of the navy's culture as well as the success of individuals. Over the past three decades, while historians have become increasingly interested in the processes and problems associated with the effectiveness of military institutions, the various aspects of military culture have remained largely unexamined.[805] As this author and Barry Watts stated in another essay written for Andrew Marshall, "military organizations which have trouble being scrupulous about empirical data in peacetime may have the same trouble in time of war."[806] And that ability to evaluate the internal and external environment lies at the heart of all successful military cultures.

In this case the navy's culture during the interwar period appears to have been open to clear, honest evaluations of its war games, its fleet exercises, and the training and education of its officers. Along these lines the fleet exercises present particularly a useful example of the navy's willingness to grapple with what the evidence actually indicated, rather than what senior officers

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[803] Quoted in John T. Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation, The General Board and the Design of the Fleet that Defeated the Japanese Navy* (Annapolis, 2008), p. 117.

[804] The naval officers of the interwar period would have been appalled by the MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE exercise of 1999, run by Joint Forces Command, where the disastrous results for Blue were immediately overturned, because the results carried with them uncomfortable implications for the current force structure of the United States.

[805] Millett and Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, 3 vols.

[806] Watts and Murray, "Military Innovation in Peacetime," in Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period,* p. 414.

hoped it would show. As Admiral James Richardson, CINCUS (commander in chief U.S. Fleet) 1940-1941, commented in an oral interview after the war:[807] "The battles of the Fleet Problems were vigorously refought from the speaker's platform."[808] For example, in his critique of the 1924 fleet exercises, Vice Admiral Newton McCully not only criticized his own performance in not preparing for mine warfare, but introduced the possibility that the enemy might utilize special operations as something, to which the navy had to pay much closer attention.[809]

What is particularly interesting is that the navy's leaders did not limit these post-exercise critiques to a few of the more senior officers but, more often than not, included a wide selection of those officers who had been involved in the exercise, including junior officers. For example, the critique of Fleet Problem IX in 1929 took place before 700 officers, while the audience of Fleet Problem XIV totaled more than 1,000 officers.[810] The very size of the audience with large numbers of mid-level and junior officers in attendance provided even junior officers with a sense that the navy's senior leadership not only encouraged, but expected free and vigorous exchange of ideas and concepts among officers of different ranks. The impact was both direct and indirect on the overall culture of the officer corps and significantly influenced the willingness on the navy to incorporate new concepts and technologies into its approach both during the interwar period and after the war had broken out.

With such a large number of officers participating in these critiques, it was difficult, if not impossible, to obfuscate or distort the results to give a slanted picture of what had occurred. One historian of the fleet exercises has recently noted:

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[807] For obvious reasons King eliminated the title, when he took command of the navy, given the pronunciation of the acronym – "sinkus."
[808] Quoted in Alfred F. Nolfi, *To Train the Fleet for War, The U.S. Navy Fleet Problems* (Newport, RI, 2010), p. 40.
[809] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, p. 64.
[810] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, p. 40.

The conclusions [of the critiques], which were often quite frank, the lessons learned, and the recommendations usually incorporated excerpts of the individual reports, and at time entire individual reports, of the principal subordinate commanders. This was done even when the reports of subordinate commanders did not agree with the conclusions and recommendations made by CINCUS [Commander in chief US fleet] or the two fleet commanders. The comprehensive fleet problem report was published and widely circulated for study, evaluation, and comment.[811]

The publication and wide dissemination of the reports on the fleet exercises throughout the officer corps insured that bureaucratic obfuscation did not obscure the results.

Moreover, such was the navy's culture of honesty that senior officers, whose performance in the fleet exercises were sometimes less than optimal, could find themselves the target of scathing criticism not only in front of their peers, but in front of large numbers of junior officers. At the end of Fleet Problem VIII (1928) the commander in chief US fleet (CINCUS), Admiral Henry A Wiley "devoted ten of the 21 paragraphs of his general comments to often severe criticism of [the] Orange [fleet commander]," Rear Admiral George Day. In contrast, at the same time he praised Blue's "thorough preparation and forceful execution."[812] Unhappy with the critique of how his force had performed, Day attempted to challenge the exercises fundamental framework. Wiley, ended Day's efforts at equivocation with the sharp comment: "Commander, ORANGE is fighting the problem.[813] All of this took place not only before a large

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[811] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, p. 41.
[812] Quoted in Albert A. Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War: The U.S. Navy Fleet Problems* (Newport, RI, 2010), p. 102.
[813] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War,* p. 309.

audience of naval officers in Hawaii, but before Major General Fox Connor, one of the most outstanding army officers during the interwar period, and the mentor and tutor of Dwight Eisenhower early in that officer's career.[814]

Significantly, a weak performance in a command position during a major fleet exercise could have immediate results on an officer's career. Rear Admiral Louis Nolton, commander of the Blue fleet in Fleet Exercise X, mishandled his force so badly in the opening fleet engagement that he found himself removed from command of the fleet and relegated to serving as an umpire in the second portion of the exercise. Not surprisingly, CINCUS, Admiral William Pratt severely criticized Nolton for his disposition of his fleet and his tying of his aircraft to protecting the battle line. The chief umpire further criticized Nolton for his failure to use his aircraft to scout ahead for the enemy fleet.[815]

On a number of occasions the insights of these critiques were fed directly back into the lessons and war games at the Naval war College. In fact, the final critique of Fleet Exercise VII in 1927 occurred at Newport before the students and faculty. The insights the critique highlighted were of considerable significance in pushing the navy toward a more realistic understanding of what it needed to emphasize. In spite of the fact that the navy possessed only the slow and inadequate *Langley* before 1929 to represent a carrier force, Reeves was already arguing that fleet commanders should receive "complete freedom in employing carrier

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[814] Fox Conner's presence at the hot wash is particularly interesting, because it was more typical than exceptional. The traditional picture is that the army and the navy hardly ever talked to each other except in the most stilted fashion. In fact, the presence of officers like Conner at critical examinations of the navy's fleet exercises suggests a much closer relationship than historians have normally described. There is a larger point here, because mentorship of senior officers for the best and brightest of the junior officers has a major impact on how well senior commanders perform in war. In this regard, Admiral Clarence Williams, described by Miller as "the most farsighted of all the Orange Plan authors, mentored Commander Chester Nimitz throughout the period he was a student at the Naval War College.

[815] Craig C. Felker, *Testing American Sea Power, U.S. Navy Strategic Exercises, 1923-1940* (College Station, TX, 2007), pp. 53-55.

aircraft."[816] But that was only one of a number of prescient insights highlighted in this single exercise. Among other points that the exercise's critique highlighted were the conclusions that the navy needed more fleet problems and additional light cruisers, while the capabilities of the fleet's submarines needed significant upgrading.

We might also note that performance in these maneuvers often played a significant role in the prospect of senior officers for further advancement. In Fleet Exercise XIV, February 1933, Vice Admiral Frank Clark, widely seen as the next CNO, did not perform well as the commander of the Black Fleet. The post then went to Reeves, the most senior aviator in the fleet and perhaps the navy's most innovative officer, who was to render superb service in that post. These exercises, for the most part, suggested which officers would shine under the pressures of war, because all were under considerable pressure. They knew that their performance was being rigorously evaluated by their peers as well as their superiors.

Nevertheless, one should not believe that all of those who ran the navy in the interwar period were brilliant tacticians, who understood where the future was going. Even in a navy that valued rigor and intellectual discourse there were those who took their stance firmly in the past and who displayed no willingness to learn or adapt. In Fleet Exercise XVIII, April-May 1937, the commander of the Black fleet was Admiral Claude C. Bloch, COMBATFOR (commander battle force). Paying no attention to the air-minded officers on his staff, he kept the carriers tied closely to his battleships, because he believed that the role of aircraft was to provide aerial cover and to spot for his battleships. Thus, he had no interest in striking the enemy fleet with his carrier aircraft. Block had clearly learned nothing from Nolton's failure seven years earlier. Not surprisingly, Block's fleet paid for its admiral's obtuseness. In the judgment of the umpires the White Fleet mauled Block's force, sinking one of his carriers, a light cruiser, and seven

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[816] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet*, p. 95.

destroyers; of the remainder of his fleet he had two of his battleships, his two other carriers, a heavy and a light cruiser, and a destroyer all considered damaged.

None of this made the slightest impression on the admiral, who argued in the critique that "it is obvious that the decision to retain the carriers with the Main Body was sound."[817] There are also indications that after the exercise Bloch forced Vice Admiral Frederick J. Horne to recall a paper he had written urging that the navy emphasize an independent role for carriers. Since, the carriers had already served in such a role in previous exercises, Bloch's action was particularly obtuse. But the evidence of the exercises and the follow on critiques suggest that Bloch's unwillingness to learn from earlier fleet exercises or adapt to changing circumstances was the exception, even among the battleship admirals.

Yet, whatever the difficulties that some admirals might have had in adapting to the idea that the free exchange of ideas was an essential part of improving its future capabilities, the navy as a whole encouraged a culture that would prove adaptive and imaginative in facing the problems raised by the war in the Pacific. As the navy's premier thinker over the past several decades recently noted about Spruance and his staff under the pressures of war:

> As operational commander of hundreds of ships and aircraft, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance had the capacity to distill what he observed – and sometimes felt – into its essence and to focus on the important details by a mental synthesis. He would then charge his staff with comprehensive planning to achieve his purpose. Often the plan would be rent asunder, but it would maintain its "tyranny of purpose" – roughly the mission – as Spruance's staff and commanders adapted to

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[817] His other comments were equally obtuse. See Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War,* pp. 223-225.

the circumstances.[818]

At least as far as this author is concerned, Spruance's year as a student at the Naval War College and two tours on the faculty were instrumental in honing his native abilities to distill his peace and combat experiences into a coherent frame of reference. Once at war he was then able to form a picture that reflected reality rather than to attempt to force reality to hit his preconceptions.[819]

The Imperatives of Innovation: Newport and Fleet Exercises

Inevitably the implementation of naval strategy depends on the tactical and operational capabilities that the forces executing it have developed in peacetime. This involves the processes of concept development and the methods through which the organization incorporates new technologies into the actual employment of ships and aircraft at sea. More often than not such efforts represent a complex process. As is true with so much of history, the devil is again in the details. War gaming in the early 1920s at the Naval War College had indicated that pulses of air power off carrier decks would prove to be the determining factor in the carrier battles of the future. But it was one thing to talk about "pulses of air power," it was another to maximize the number of aircraft in each pulse. Thus, the navy needed to put that insight into practice. And in the process of turning insight into real capabilities, the Naval War College had a direct role in the development of the carrier deck procedures that would turn aircraft carriers into such effective

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[818] Captain Wayne P. Hughes, "Clear Purpose, Comprehensive Execution: Raymond Ames Spruance," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 2009.

[819] And served to make him one of the three great naval commander the U.S. Navy possessed during the Second World War – the other two being King and Nimitz.

weapons of war.

The key position in early innovation with the *Langley*, the navy's first carrier, was that of commander, aircraft squadrons, battle force. The officer who held that position would determine the developmental processes on the *Langley*, a collier the navy had converted to an experimental carrier with limited capabilities. That individual might have lacked the imagination and drive for this crucial task, had the navy's leadership made the wrong appointment. But the position went to Reeves. Interestingly he had little aviation background other than the fact that he had attended the aviation observer course at Pensacola. But he had been both a student and faculty member at Newport; in the latter capacity he had headed the tactics department, where he had become thoroughly familiar with the most advanced thinking, developed in the war games, about the possibilities that air power offered the navy.

With that background, Reeves set about in late 1925 to develop deck procedures for increasing the *Langley*'s striking power. This involved shortening the takeoff and recovery times for aircraft, creating an effective crash barrier, so that aircraft could land in a continuous stream without the deck crew of the Langley having to move each aircraft separately after landing down to the hanger deck below, and designing trip wires to bring aircraft to a halt as they landed. Within a year the *Langley* was able to launch an aircraft every 15 seconds and recover an aircraft every 90 seconds. Thus, Reeves was able to increase the usable complement of aircraft the *Langley* carried from one squadron of 14 aircraft to four squadrons of 48 aircraft. The fact that the Royal Navy failed to develop similar deck procedures throughout the entire interwar period suggests how crucial individuals as well as service cultures can prove in pushing forward as well as retarding the processes of innovation. It was Reeves's experiences with the war games at the Naval War College that led him to push so hard to improve the *Langley*'s capabilities to handle

greater numbers of aircraft.[820]

The initial problem with understanding how the navy might use carriers had to do with the fact that the *Langley*, as a former collier, was hardly the speediest ship in the fleet. In fact it was barely able to keep up with the battle line. Nevertheless, in spite of its lack of speed, in its initial exercises it was given the putative capabilities of the aircraft carriers that the navy was building. The Washington Treaty had allowed the navy to take the hulls of the two battle cruisers under construction, the *Lexington* and the *Saratoga,* and convert them into aircraft carriers, which would provide the navy not only with two very large carriers, but ships that were faster than any of the battleships in the battle fleet. But they would not be ready until the late 1920 and so the Langley had to serve as a test bed.

Completion of the carriers in the late 1920s entirely altered the complexion and framework of fleet exercises. In the first fleet exercise in which they operated in January 1929, the *Saratoga*, escorted only by a light cruiser, detached from the main Black Feet and launched a strike that caught the defenders of the Panama Canal completely by surprise.[821] Moreover, in that exercise, the use of the deck park concept along with crash barriers allowed the *Saratoga* to embark an air wing of 110 aircraft and 100 pilots.[822] These capabilities were the direct result of Reeves's experiments with the Langley. The unintended effect of that capability was that the large number of aircraft that carriers could now carry led Admiral William Moffet, head of the navy's Bureau of Aeronautics to push successfully for substantial increases in the training and combat establishment of naval air forces.

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[820] For an outstanding examination and comparison of the U.S. Navy's and the Royal Navy's considerable differences in the development of carriers and carrier aviation, see Hone, et al., *American and British Aircraft Carrier Development.*

[821] The exercise in which the carriers participated was Fleet Problem IX, 23-27 January 1929. Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, pp. 111-112.

[822] Watts and Murray, "Military Innovation in Peacetime," in Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period,* p. 402.

Thus, the impact of the appearance of the *Lexington* and *Saratoga* represented a major upgrade in their air power capabilities over what the *Langley* possessed. Their employment in fleet exercises immediately helped senior navy leaders understand the potential that seaborne air power already represented. This was the case with a number of the so-called battleship admirals as well as with the aviators. The fleet exercises in the period between 1929 and 1934 were particularly useful in pointing to the possibilities inherent in independent employment of carriers or carrier task forces. This was useful because tying the carriers to the battle fleet only served to minimize their much greater speed, as well as exposing them to chance encounters with enemy surface forces. The exercises also displayed a level of imagination that those in the Pacific in late 1941 could have used. Above all, the fleet exercises reinforced the lessons of the early war games at Newport of the crucial importance of getting the first blow in against the enemy's carrier force. The result of that lesson would show early in the war, particularly in the Battle of Midway, when attacking U.S. dive bombers would wreck three Japanese carriers, the heart of the enemy fleet, as the first pulse of air power off U.S. carriers struck.[823]

The impact of these exercises is particularly clear in the results of Fleet Problem X in 1930, when the Black Fleet's attacking aircraft caught the Blue Fleet's carriers and battleships by surprise. The Blue Fleet commander had tied the *Saratoga* and *Langley* closely to his battle fleet. Dive bombers from the Black Fleet's *Lexington* then rendered both carriers *hors de combat*, leaving Black's aircraft then to attack Blue's surface forces with impunity. An early post-war examination of aviation in fleet exercises noted that "the suddenness with an engagement could be completely reversed by the use of aerial power was brought home to the

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[823] The fourth Japanese carrier, U.S. aircraft would sink the *Hiryu* that afternoon.

fleet in no uncertain terms."[824]

A joint Army-Navy exercise in January 1932 involved a surprise attack by a carrier task force on Oahu that caught the pursuit aircraft of the Army Air Corps napping on the various airfields on the island. Similarly, Fleet Problem XIV in February 1933 began with the Black Fleet, representing Japan, launching carrier raids on the Hawaiian Islands in preparations for a Japanese move against Southeast Asia.[825] This would not be the only occasion that carrier aircraft would strike bases in the Hawaiian Islands during fleet exercises. In the 1938 Fleet Exercise, the future CNO, Ernest King would take the carrier *Saratoga* to the north west of Oahu and launch a surprise attack on the army air corps Hickam and Wheeler fields, putatively destroying most of the aircraft.

A recent history of the navy's fleet exercises points to Fleet Problem IX, January 1929, as the most significant of those conducted during the interwar period.[826] Thus, it is worth taking the time to examine its course and what it suggested. The opposing sides in the exercise were the Blue Fleet, largely consisting of the Atlantic fleet and the *Lexington*, and the Black Fleet, the Pacific fleet with the *Saratoga*. It was in this exercise that the *Saratoga*, acting independently, managed to get within Blue's defenses and launch a surprise attack on the Panama Canal. Subsequent operations in bad weather created the rather bizarre situation where the two carriers approached closely enough to each other, so that they putatively exchanged fire with their 8" guns.[827] Nevertheless, so impressed with carrier performance throughout the exercise were those

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[824] James M. Grimes, "Aviation in Fleet Exercises, 1911-1939," vol. 16, *U.S. Naval Administrative Histories of World War II* (Washington, DC, nd), p. 62.

[825] A number of the fleet exercises gave what happened on 7 December 1941 a distinct air of deja vu all over again. But what happened on that day, just as what happened on 9/11, was a matter of a lack of imagination on the part of those in charge.

[826] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, p. 119.

[827] Underlying the uncertainties involved in the construction of the *Lexington* and the *Saratoga* was the equipping them with 8" guns, apparently in the belief that after their aircraft had completed their scouting duties, the two carriers would join the battle line. That idea disappeared immediately upon their arrival in the fleet. Nevertheless, it

who wrote up the final report that they devoted half of its pages to discussions about the implications for the use of air power. The CNO, Admiral Charles F. Hughes, went so far as to testify to Congress later that year that on the basis of the exercise the *Lexington* and *Saratoga* were the "last ships he would remove from the active list."[828]

In the long term Fleet Problem IX underlined that independent carrier task forces were going to play a significant role in any future conflict. The exercise the next year further confirmed that insight. The Black Fleet commander, with the *Lexington* under his command, followed the path that its sister ship had blazed the year previously. With a longer leash, its dive bombers attacked the Blue Fleet, which possessed both the *Langley* and the *Saratoga*, and caught both carriers by surprise. The umpires ruled that the strike had disabled both carriers and their air power. The fact that Black's battle wagons were then able to use the air superiority the *Lexington*'s dive bombers had achieved to gain an advantage over Blue's battle line drove the implications of air superiority to virtually everyone. Black had achieved a decisive victory in the exercise. The bottom line was that the carrier force that launched the first blow was going to have a decisive advantage. From this point forward this was to be a fundamental principle of American carrier doctrine.[829]

But learning from these exercises was not merely a matter of grand tactical experiments during fleet exercises. Often relatively mundane matters provided important insights into what the fleet was going to need, should it come to a war with Japan. They influenced deeply the whole logistical structure of the navy that was so necessary for the waging of the sustained effort required by the unceasing pressure the navy applied against the Japanese in the last year and a

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was not until 1940 that their 8" guns were removed and more appropriate anti-aircraft weaponry added. Affecting the judgment of the ship designers at the time was a belief, quite correct, that the range and capability of the aircraft were still quite limited.

[828] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War*, pp. 109-117.
[829] Hone, Mandeles, Friedman, *American and British Aircraft Carrier Development*, p. 50.

half of the war. The war games in the last decade of the interwar period steadily lengthened, particularly those of the last five years. The increased length and activity of the exercises in turn underlined the logistical requirements that a fleet in heavy action during an extended campaign would require. As early as 1929, the exercises were suggesting that the refueling of ships at sea represented a major problem the navy was going to have to solve. In Fleet Exercise XVI in 1935 the *Lexington*, executing high speed operations over a period of five days had found itself critically short of fuel. During intensive air operations over the course of a single day the *Saratoga* burned up 10 percent of the fuel in its bunkers. By this point in the fleet exercises the message was clear: the navy was going to have to figure out how to carry out extensive refueling of carriers, while they were involved in major fleet operations.[830]

The lengthening of the fleet exercises in time during the late thirties also raised a number of important issues. The problem of refueling at sea the remainder of the fleet had reached a critical point during this period. Fleet Problem XVII saw the *Lexington* and *Ranger* experimented with refueling their destroyers, while two of the battleships and a number of their cruisers also refueled their destroyers.[831] These efforts also made clear that the carriers particularly were going to need the capability to refuel at sea from oilers, not only for their own movement, but also to feed the voracious appetite of their aircraft.

The corollary to that insight was that the navy was going to have to develop the ability to replenish ammunition and sustenance for the crews, while on extended operations. Nevertheless, it was not until Fleet Exercise XX that Admiral William Leahy, the CNO, over the objections of Admiral Bloch, ordered that extensive efforts be made to refuel the battleships and carriers, while they were underway. Not surprisingly, Nimitz, who had been involved in refueling

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[830] Nofi. *To Train the Fleet for War,* p. 203.
[831] Nofi, *To Train the Fleet*, p. 214

destroyers crossing the Atlantic during the First World War from an oiler, played the key role in developing the technology and conducting the test program to develop such capabilities.[832]

The General Board: Organizing for War

Much of the history written immediately after the Second World War tended to characterize the interwar navy as an organization dominated by the "big gun club," supposedly a hidebound group of battleship admirals, typified by the General Board. Given the costs of the war as well as what appeared to be the lack of readiness of much of the navy for the conflict, such a slant on history is not surprising, but it was unfair nevertheless. It reflected, of course, Monday-morning quarter backing at its worst. The historians of the immediate postwar period missed was the fact that, for those leading and developing the navy of the interwar period, the future remained uncertain, while the political and resource constraints on their decision making were considerable.

A recent and compelling history of the General Board has painted a quite different picture of that organization, which suggests that it served as a crucial enabler, transmitting and encouraging the dissemination of new developments, strategic issues, and the design of the fleet. The board was certainly not a collection of troglodytic retired admirals. Rather its members discussed major issues confronting the navy in a collegial, but forthright fashion. More often than not it foresaw the fundamental drift of where technology was taking naval power. In this regard the members of the General Board understood early on that air power was going to play an increasing important role in the future. How exactly to define that role as well as to

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[832] Thomas Wildenberg, "Chester Nimitz and the Development of Fueling at Sea," *Naval War College Review*,

understand its future possibilities was a difficult task, *particularly given what was known at the time.*

A further indication of the importance of the General Board was the fact that the navy's personnel system saw service on the board as career enhancing Thus a number of major figures in the navy's conduct of operations in the Second World War served as members of the board in the 1930s. King, Turner, and Thomas Kinkaid were all members during this period as mid-level officers. All were aggressive, ambitious officers, who aimed at achieving higher rank. Moreover, the General Board's efforts to wring the maximum out of the paucity of funds various administrations made available to the navy until 1938 resulted in pulling a number of officers from the fleet into its deliberations.

In the case of discussions about the flying deck cruiser, which attempted to expand the air resources available to the fleet and at the same time increase the number of cruisers in the fleet, the board sought out a wide variety of opinions.[833] The board's deliberations pulled King, Turner, Kinkaid, Mark Mitscher, John Towers, and Leahy in to participate in its discussions.[834] The design itself underlined the innovative characteristics of the navy's culture, because it included a slightly angled deck in the final design, a concept that the Royal Navy would not introduce until the 1950s and which the U.S. Navy would copy thereafter.[835]

Putting the Bits and Pieces Together: The Making of Military Strategy in the Pacific

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[833] The thinking about light deck carrier/cruisers did not necessarily go for naught. When the navy realized that it was going to receive a sufficient number of light cruisers, it converted a number of the excess hulls into light attack carriers.
[834] Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation*, p. 123.
[835] Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation*, p. 118.

The disaster of Pearl Harbor confronted the United States and its navy with the harsh reality that it was going to have to pay a heavy price for the years of easy going, placatory appeasement that its government had pursued.[836] Nevertheless, the Japanese attack brought in its wake two important advantages. First, it brought the American people wholeheartedly into the war, no matter how long it might take. Thus, the prewar qualms among many navy leaders about whether Americans would support a war long enough to allow the United States to mobilize its industrial strength disappeared in the oil-stained waters of Pearl Harbor. The American people were now in the war to the bitter end, united in a fashion only equaled in the North and the South during the American Civil War.

Secondly, the failure of leadership at Pearl Harbor allowed the president to make two crucial appointments. First, it opened the way for the appointment of a relatively junior admiral, Chester Nimitz, to the top naval position in the Pacific. In every respect, the navy and its educational system had combined with his own native ability to prepare Admiral Chester Nimitz for the extraordinary challenges of the Pacific war. The other crucial appointment that Roosevelt made in December 1941 was that of Ernest King, whose appalling personal life as well as his personality made him suitable for the highest positions only in the most desperate of times, which was precisely what the period after 7 December represented.[837]

In effect, the Japanese attack and the sinking of much of the battle fleet confronted the navy with no other choice other than the pursuit of a strategy of carefully husbanding its

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[836] Churchill accurately described these years in Britain as the "locust years."

[837] The author's co-author in the writing of *A War to Be Won*, Allan Millett described King in the following terms. "[King's] influence stemmed completely from his professional expertise and force of mind, not his character. The kindest thin one of his admirers and closest associates, Real Admiral Charles M. "Savvy" Cooke, Jr., could say was that King was "a man of action," while another intimate simply called King 'meaner than I can describe.'...Becoming an admiral improved King's behavior not a whit. He raged at subordinates in public, ruled his bridge with fear, and railed at incompetents and officers he thought too charming. He made life miserable for everyone around him, including his wife and seven children, by chain smoking, binge-drinking, and flagrant philandering. Yet his sheer mastery of every aspect of naval warfare and administration kept him moving from one challenging assignment to another, despite his personality. Murray and Millett, *A War To Be Won*, pp. 336-337.

resources and conducting constrained defensive operations, combined with a strategy of attrition against the Japanese. For the next year and a half, until the arrival of the fleet the Two Ocean Navy Act of 1940 was creating, the navy had to fight a war of improvisation. Thus, for the moment the dream of a great drive through the Central Pacific had to disappear, as the navy had to defend Midway, Hawaii, and the sea route to Australia. Moreover, it had to defend those crucial strategic areas against an enemy who possessed greater naval forces and for the time being considerable superiority in technology and tactics. Thus, the period until summer 1943 forced the navy to fight a defensive war, one which for the most part represented a conflict in which the navy reacted rather than acted.

The Imperial Navy, having made the major mistake of attacking Pearl Harbor, then proceeded to ignore U.S. forces except in Guam and the Philippines. Meanwhile, the *Kidō Butai,* the great Japanese carrier force, sailed away into the seas off Southeast Asia and then on into the Indian Ocean for the next six months. That period allowed the Americans the time needed to adapt to the fact they were up against a tenacious and effective opponent. The results showed first in the Battle of the Coral Sea and especially at Midway, although the disaster off Savo Island in early August 1942 suggested that the processes of adaptation had only begun.[838] Midway in terms of its historical impact was certainly a decisive battle in reversing the tide of the war in the Pacific, but it was not the decisive battle that Mahan and his adherents had predicted in either its finality or tactical form. The opposing fleets never saw each other. Moreover, the Battle of Midway took place over possession of an island, but unlike prewar planning the Americans found themselves on the defensive rather than the aggressors.

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[838] On the problems involved in adaptation in war see Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War, For Fear of Change* (Cambridge, 2011), particularly chapters 1, 2, and 8.

The success at Midway allowed King and Nimitz to throw the unprepared 1st Marine Division ashore at Guadalcanal.[839] On that island, with the support of marine, navy, and army aircraft flying off Henderson Field, an air strip largely constructed by the Japanese, the 1st Marine Division was able to put up a stubborn and effective defense.[840] That success rested to a considerable extent on Japanese overconfidence and their contempt for the fighting power of the Americans at sea, in the air, and on land. Midway should have provided a wakeup call for the Japanese, but unlike the publicity that Pearl Harbor received throughout the United States due to the efforts of the U.S. government, in the secretive governmental culture of Imperial Japan, the Imperial Navy not only failed to inform the Japanese Army and society of the disaster, but much of the navy itself remained in the dark.

If the Imperial Navy had made serious strategic mistakes in the Midway campaign in understanding its opponent, it proceeded to make even more serious ones in the Guadalcanal-Solomons campaign that followed. Instead of challenging the Americans with the full force of its battle fleet and what was left of the *Kidō Butai,* the Japanese committed their air, naval, and ground forces in drips and drabs, forces sufficient to push the U.S. Navy and the marines up against the wall, but never enough to finish them off. The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, which lasted from 12 through 15 November 1942, saw the Americans commit 24 warships to the fight, of which they lost two anti-aircraft cruisers and nine destroyers sunk, along with one battleship, three cruisers, and two destroyers damaged. In much the same way, as we have seen above, the Gray and Blue Fleets had slugged it out from 10 to 15 May 1934 in Fleet Exercise XV with

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[839] For the best study of the Guadalcanal campaign see the outstanding work by Richard Frank, *Guadalcanal, The Definitive Account* (London/New York, 1995).

[840] Here it is worth noting that the performance of the marines on Guadalcanal was as much about improvisation as about adaptation. Marine amphibious doctrine as developed in the 1930s had focused on seizing islands, not about defending them, and certainly not about defending an air strip, which in the early fighting on the island was what the marines confronted.

lessons that had prepared the navy to think about the complex problems of logistics, damage control, and battle damage repair.

By the time the battle for the Solomons was over, both sides had exhausted much of their prewar air and naval strength. By early 1943 the U.S. Navy was down to a single carrier, the *Enterprise*, in undamaged condition. However, while the Japanese were in equally serious straits, the full weight of American industry was about to reach the scales. Beginning in July 1943, an Essex class carrier with its fully trained air group reached the Pacific every month. By fall 1944 the main battle fleet in the Pacific – either Third or Fifth Fleet depending on whether Halsey or Spruance was commanding it – was larger than all the rest of the world's navies combined.[841] Interestingly, Spruance, in spite of the fact that he was not an aviator, proved to be the most perceptive and effective fleet commander in the war.[842]

During the Marianas campaign, Spruance understood that his primary *strategic* responsibility was to protect the landings, and that he should not take the *operational* risk of pursuing the Japanese carriers. Thus he kept his fleet and the supporting carriers in position to protect the amphibious forces landing on Kwajalein. Thus, while Spruance's air crews savaged the attacking Japanese aircraft in what became known as the "Marianas turkey shoot," most of the Japanese carriers escaped. Nevertheless, they were largely useless, since they had lost virtually all of their aircraft and air crews. At Leyte Gulf, Halsey, however, took that risk of chasing after the Japanese carriers, and steamed north after the Japanese carriers. Meanwhile he left San Bernardino Strait open for the main force of Japanese battleships and heavy cruisers to

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[841] Here the very size of the increases in fleet size that had begun with the massive wave of construction initiated with the two ocean navy of 1940 allowed the Americans to overwhelm the Japanese with sheer numbers. In comparison to the navy's size in 1940, American industry produced 50 percent additional battleships, 75 percent heavy cruisers, and 400 percent fast carriers. In addition, it produced a number of support vessels that almost beggars imagination and a huge fleet of merchant vessels. Miller, *War Plan Orange,* p. 353.

[842] Aficionados of the Royal Navy might argue that Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham was as Spruance as a naval commander, given his performance as commander of the Mediterranean fleet against an Italian fleet that was superior at least in numbers in 1940.

steam through. Only the incompetence of Japanese Admiral Takeo Kurita, who turned away in

the face of American escort carriers and destroyers, prevented a disaster from happening to the

landing force.

Admittedly, tactical and operational problems still had to be solved, especially in

attacking Japanese garrisons, once the navy's high command had decided on launching the

Central Pacific drive.[843] Tarawa underlined that the assumptions about the effectiveness of naval

bombardment before amphibious forces landed were considerably off the mark. The Japanese

defenses on Betio were formidable and the four-hour bombardment hardly neutralized the

defenders. There were too few amtracs (amphibious tractors), while the analysis of the barrier

reef proved inadequate at best. The resulting slaughter of the marines came as a nasty shock to

everyone concerned.[844]

Adaptation then quickly took place at the tactical level, but the Americans soon

confronted the fact that the Japanese were also adapting.[845] By Okinawa, they were no longer

defending the beaches, but instead held much of their force back to defend the southern half of

the island, where they inflicted terrible casualties on the attacking marines and soldiers. But it

was Nimitz who showed the greatest grasp of what the superiority in military power offered the

Americans at the operational level. Thus, over the opposition of his staff and operational

commanders, he ordered the jump from Tarawa and the Gilberts to Kwajalein at the far end of

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[843] King had picked up on the possibilities of a drive across the Central Pacific as early as his experiences at the war college in 1931. Miller, *War Plan Orange*, p. 337.

[844] It should have impacted on the thinking of those planning to execute the landing on the Norman coast. Despite the best efforts of George Marshall, who sent one of his best division commanders from the Pacific theater, Major General Charles "Pete" Corlett, who had led the 7th Division in the amphibious landings on Attu and Kwajalein to Europe to inform the planners about combat experiences in the Pacific, those in Europe had little interest in examining the lessons of that theater. As Bradley commented when briefed on the need for a longer naval bombardment before the landing, "anything that happened in the Pacific was strictly bush league stuff." The near disaster on Omaha Beach was the direct result. Murray and Millett,, *A War To Be Won*, p. 419.

[845] For the problems involved in adaptation in war see Williamson Murray, *Military adaptation in War, With Fear of Change* (Cambridge, 2011).

the Marshalls. Still, it is worth noting that as early as 1937, navy planners were already considering the possibility of bypassing Japanese island garrisons that were too heavily defended.[846]

By so doing, Nimitz caught the Japanese by surprise with their defenses largely unprepared. Meanwhile, the Japanese garrisons, given their logistical isolation, were incapable of supporting ground-based air power, most of which no longer existed, Thus, Japanese forces to the southeast of Kwajalein remained useless drains on manpower, isolated and incapable of impacting on the war's course. With the immense superiority of its carrier-based air power, the U.S. Navy was able to leap-frog its amphibious operations with increasing speed toward the Japanese Home Islands.

The landing and campaign in the Philippines did bring about the final defeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy and placed Japan in an absolutely hopeless strategic position. Yet, there is an irony in how the war ended. In spite of the ravaging of its cities, an almost total blockade of its ports and inland water transportation, and the obvious almost total superiority of America's military forces, the Japanese were resolutely prepared to mount a fanatical and murderous defense of the Home Island's. On the other hand the American's were prepared to launch a massive landing on Kyushu on 1 November 1945. Only the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki prevented the holocaust that would have ensued.[847]

The Navies That Failed: The *Kriegsmarine*

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[846] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, p. 351.

[847] By far and away, the best study on the ending of the war is Richard Frank's *Downfall* (New York, 1995), which examines the documents, especially the Magic military documents with great care. The result is a compelling argument that without the dropping of the bombs, the Japanese would not have surrendered and whatever the cost to the Americans would have suffered a self-inflicted genocide. For an extension of Frank's arguments in that the dropping of the atomic bombs saved huge numbers of Chinese, Australian, and Southeast Asian lives see Max Hastings, *Retribution, The battle for Japan, 1944-1945* (New York, 2009).

With the benefit of hindsight it is all too easy for historians to nit-pick the decisions of military organizations during an interwar period without understanding or taking into account the complexities and difficulties that military leaders and their planners confronted. The prewar U.S. Navy did make mistakes in its thinking and preparation for the war in the Pacific between 1920 and 1930. Nevertheless, it got things "right enough" so that when war came it was able to adapt fluidly and intelligently to the actual conditions of the war. In comparison to its opponents, it addressed the problems of adaptation far better at all three levels of war.

Thus, it might be useful for comparison purposes to make a few comments on the general failure of the *Kriegsmarine* (the German Navy) to prepare effectively for the coming war during the interwar period,[848] The German army did make considerable use of the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles to think through the problems of combined arms warfare. Nevertheless, the German Navy appears to have done little serious thinking about its role in a future war at least until 30 January 1933 when Hitler assumed power. The results showed clearly in the types of surface vessels and submarines the German Navy's leaders chose to focus on in the period between 1933 and the opening of the war in September 1939.

At the start of German rearmament, Hitler gave all three services a blank check to build up their force structure in any fashion they believed necessary, not just to return the Reich to great power status, but, as he made clear in his first meeting with Germany's senior military leaders, for a war of conquest aimed at destroying the entire framework of European great power

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[848] The Royal Navy's preparations for the Second World War were also much less impressive than the U.S. Navy's during the interwar period. But they did adapt to the actual conditions of the war far more quickly than did the Germans. See in particular, Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War, For Fear of Change* (Cambridge, 2011), chpt. 6.

relations that the Peace of Westphalia had created in 1648.[849] Despite the fact that Germany was in desperate financial and economic straits at the time, with approximately one/third of the nation's workforce unemployed, the three services embarked on maximum rearmament programs that had no relationship to what their sister services were doing or for that matter to the Reich's desperate economic situation. For the remainder of the 1930s until the conquest of France the German economy and financial situation flirted with collapse.[850]

Paying little heed to the results of the First World War, the *Kriegsmarine* under the dull, uninspiring leadership of Admiral Eric Raeder, attempted to rebuild the High Seas Fleet of 1914. Throughout Raeder's tenure, which lasted until January 1943, the Germans focused on building a large, big-gunned fleet. So rushed was the effort that the first two battle cruisers, the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau,* had to be armed with 11" guns, because the Reich's armament industry was still feeling the effects of the limitations that the Treaty of Versailles had imposed on the Reich in 1919. The follow on battleships, the *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz,* were supposed to set the stage for a battle fleet that would have resembled the High Seas Fleet in most particulars. Moreover, as late as 1943 the *Kriegsmarine* was designing battleships that would have been in excess of 100,000 tons and had they been sunk on the Dogger Bank, they would have had their decks awash. Interestingly, someone in the *Kriegsmarine*'s production bureau failed to cancel the engines for these monsters when the project was finally halted in early 1943. Thus, the engines were delivered in 1944.[851]

The *Kriegsmarine*'s war gaming for future fleet design seems to have largely followed

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[849] "Aufzeichnung Liebmann," *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte* 2, no. 4, October 1954.

[850] For an fascinating and thoroughly readable account of the Nazi War economy see the outstanding work by the British historian J. Adam Tooze, *The wages of Destruction, The Making and Breaking of the Nazi War Economy* (London, 2008); see also Williamson Murray. *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939, The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), chpt. 1.

[851] I am indebted to Professor Emeritus Gerhard Weinberg for this point.

along similar lines to that of the Royal Navy with replays of Jutland being the center of the action. As for the potential of aircraft carriers, Raeder dismissed them as "only gasoline tankers," while the navy's fleet commander suggested that land-based aircraft could do everything that carrier aircraft could.[852] Three of his big ship navy died with their flags flying each of them taking to their watery graves approximately 2,000 sailors.[853] Each of these ships, it is worth noting, contained sufficient steel for the production of well over 1,500 tanks. As Raeder honestly noted – for one of the few times in his life – at the beginning of the war, "Surface forces... are still so few in number that they.... can only show that they know how to die with honor."[854]

Not surprisingly, given the emphasis on the big fleet, submarines received relatively little attention from the *Kriegsmarine* in the prewar period. A relatively junior officer, Karl Dönitz was in charge of the submarine command. In the period after the Second World War, he enjoyed an unjustified reputation for competence and for being a "professional" officer rather than an out-and-out Nazi.[855] Recent scholarship, however, has almost entirely reversed the picture of Dönitz. In fact, the choices he made and his conduct of the U-boat war in the Atlantic suggest a ruthless, unimaginative tactician. In every respect, he was very much the product of a German military culture that valued tactics above all else in thinking about and conducting a future war.[856]

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[852] For further discussion see Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939; The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), pp. 45-47.

[853] The Bismarck was sunk in the North Atlantic in May 1941; the Scharnhorst was sunk off the North Cape in 1943; and the Bomber Command's "Tallboys" took out the Tirpitz in late 1944 along with most of its crew. The Gneisenau was wrecked while under repair in a dockyard in 1943 by Bomber Command. Thus, its crew survived, although most probably died later while serving in the U-boat fleet.

[854] Quoted in Murray, *The Path to Ruin*, p. 47.

[855] For his fanatic support of the Nazi regime right to the end of the war see Ian Kershaw, *The End, The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany* (New York, 2011).

[856] For one of the best studies on military culture, in this case German military culture, see Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practice of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

In the period during the *Kriegsmarine*'s buildup Dönitz conducted a number of exercises to refine the tactics of his U-boats in attacking convoys and merchant vessels, but beyond that he and his staff appear not to have conducted serious strategic of operational games to explore the problems of a commerce war against Britain's sea lines of communication in the Atlantic. His conception of such a war was that it would leave off where the U-boat war left off in 1918, namely in a close in war against the areas where the British slocs approach the coasts of the British Isles. Thus, the choice was for the Type VII U-boat of approximately 750 tons, rather than the Type XII boat of 1,200 tons. The Type VII was unsuitable for a commerce war even in the middle of the Atlantic, while it was absolutely the wrong boat to attack commerce on the east coast of the United States much less in the Caribbean.[857]

Serious war gaming would have suggested that once the U-boats posed a serious threat to the sea lines of communications near the British Isles, the British would make the major investments in air and naval forces to meet that threat. Once that occurred the U-boat war would have to move out into the central Atlantic, where it would confront vast oceans spaces and where it would become increasingly difficult to find convoys. In such a war, air reconnaissance and intelligence would become the crucial players.[858] Moreover, in the distances involved in reaching and staying on station, the Type XII boat, rather than the Type VII boat would prove far more effective. Yet, to the end of the war, the emphasis in German submarine production would remain on the latter boat rather than on the former.

Given the predilection of the Germans and Dönitz in particular, it is not surprising that the submarine forces emphasized tactics over all the more important issues involved in the

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[857] This was not only due to its short range and the relatively few torpedoes it could carry as a result of its size, but because its size prevented the installation of air conditioning made it a nightmare for crews operating it in warmer waters.

[858] For a discussion of the Royal Navy's adaptation to the U-boat offensive see Murray, *Military Adaptation in War,* chpt. 5.

operational and strategic employment of a U-boat force. If one examines pictures of Type VIIs and XIIs leaving their Breton lairs in 1942, three years after the war's outbreak, one is struck by the fact that their superstructures display nothing other than their periscopes – no radar, no complex radio gear. The comparison with the U.S. fleet boats of 1944, three years after the United States had entered the war, is graphic. Dönitz fought his war entirely within a tactical framework. When the sea lines of communication around the United Kingdom became too dangerous in spring 1941, he moved the battle out into the central Atlantic with a distinct lack of success. The failures of the U-boat war in the last half of 1941 – sinkings dropped from 300,000 tons per month to barely 100,000 tons – were largely the result of the fact that the British code breakers at Bletchley Park had broken into the high-level Enigma codes that Dönitz and his signals officers believed were invulnerable[859]

With the entrance of the United States into the war in December 1941, Dönitz moved his boats to the east coast of North America in spite of the fact that he had only three or four Type XIIs available. Thus alerted to the danger, the Americans then paid no attention to the lessons in anti-submarine warfare that the Royal Navy had already learned and for six months the Germans enjoyed what they called a "second happy time." But once the Americans got their act together along the east coast, the Germans moved on to the Caribbean where they enjoyed tactical success, but the lack of true ocean going boats meant that they once again enjoyed local and tactical success rather than strategic success.

The crucial defeat of the U-boats came in May 1943, when Allied force structure, tactics, technology, and intelligence all came together to overwhelm the German U-boats. In that month

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[859] During the last half of 1941 the British had for the first time broken into the Kriegsmarine's enigma codes and thus were able to move their convoys around the U-boat patrol lines with great success. For the best account see Patrick Beesley, *Very Special Intelligence: The Story of the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre, 1939-1945* (London, 2006).

alone, Allied convoy forces sank 40 U-boats, ending the Battle of the Atlantic to all intents and purposes. Unwilling to recognize defeat, Dönitz continued sending his boats out into the Atlantic, where the Allies continued to slaughter them. Thus, in the four months of 1945 the U-boat fleet nearly achieved the dubious success of losing nearly as many boats as the number of merchant ships that it sank.

Conclusion

In the largest sense then, Nimitz was right. The navy did foresee virtually every aspect of the Pacific War that it fought from 1943 through summer 1945. But that war followed a pattern as if the ironic gods of history had taken the kaleidoscope of prewar thinking, planning, concept development, and innovation, given the whole a huge shaking, and then allowed the pieces to play out over the three-and-a-half years of conflict in a fashion quite different from what the leaders and planning staffs of the prewar navy had expected.

Helmut von Moltke, the great Prussian general of the nineteenth century is reputed to have said that "no plan survives contact with the enemy." If that is true in a tactical sense, it is equally true in a strategic sense. But that does not mean that strategic planning and thinking in interwar periods represents a useless exercise. In fact, such efforts, if done intelligently and honestly, prepare military organizations to think through the actual problems that war brings in its wake. It, thus, informs them as to the important questions they must address. And there are no right answers, unless one asks the pertinent questions. Above all prewar planning suggested how to think about the problems involved in the conduct of military strategy in the vast distances of the Pacific Ocean.

But there is a caveat. The pieces of prewar planning, thinking, and perceptive innovation may well come back to guide, inform, and determine the strategic adaptations that must take place in wartime. There is a negative aspect to this as well as a positive. If a military force and its leaders have failed to prepare themselves and their forces with honesty, imagination, and a willingness to challenge fundamental concepts, then they will pay a dark price in the blood of their sailors, soldiers, marines, and airmen.[860] This is largely because such military organizations will attempt to force reality to fit the assumptions about war they have developed in peacetime, rather than adapt their preconceived notions to the reality they confront.

The naval defeat of the Germans in the Second World War reflected the general failure of their war gaming and intellectual preparation for the war they knew was going to come – since they were going to start it – to address the broader framework of war beyond that of the mere tactical or the first months of a future conflict.[861] Thus, Karl Dönitz and his prewar staff totally ignored the geographic problems posed by the expanses of the Atlantic Ocean, the potential impact that intelligence and technology might play in a great commerce war against a foe who would have to adapt or lose, and the fact that the British might put far more resources into the defensive battle than *Kriegsmarine* could match.[862] Instead he and his staff focused almost entirely on the tactics of attacking merchant ships in the immediate environs of the British Isles, while giving nary a thought to the possibility of what they were going to do if the battle were to

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[860] For military services that underline how disastrous military incompetence can be, the Italians in World War II offer a particularly graphic example. Well over 300,000 Italians soldiers, sailors, and airmen died in combat, so the Italian defeats had nothing to do with a lack of courage on the part of those on the sharp end.. For the causes of Italian military ineffectiveness see MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939-1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (Cambridge, 1986); and *Hitler's Italian Allies: Royal Armed Forces, Fascist Regime, and the War of 1940-1943* (Cambridge, 2000).

[861] This was true of all the German military services. See Williamson Murray, "The Problem of German Military Effectiveness, 1900-1945," in Williamson Murray, *War, Strategy, and Military Effectiveness* (Cambridge, 2011), chpt. 9.

[862] For a short discussion of the Battle of the Atlantic see Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, chpt. . Both Gerhard Weinberg and this author have come to the conclusion that the whole U-Boat campaign represented an enormous waste of German resources that could have been far better on the Luftwaffe and the German Army to maintain control of the continent and the air spaces over the Reich.

move out into the central Atlantic or even eventually to the east coast of the United States, much less the Caribbean.[863]

But war is also an activity where individuals play an enormous role in the outcome. One might note the correlation between performance in the last fleet exercises before the United States entered the war and performance of some of its leading officers during the war. Officers like Ernest King, Chester Nimitz, and Richmond Kelly Turner displayed the highest level of competence on staffs or in command, when given the chance in the various fleet exercises of the interwar period. Their performance identified them as highly competent both to their superiors as well as their contemporaries, while the very demanding nature of the exercises prepared them for command in war. Thus, their performance during the war should not have been a surprise to their fellow officers.

However, there is another side to the coin. In Fleet Problem XX in February 1939 Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews commanded the Black Fleet with the assigned strategic mission of preventing a European Fascist coalition's naval forces from landing a major expeditionary force in the Western Hemisphere against a nation described as Green (most probably Brazil). Should they succeed in doing so, the game's scenario indicated a coup would take place which would overthrow the pro-American government and replace it with a pro-Fascist dictatorship. Thus, it was clear that the crucially important strategic target had to be the convoy of troopships, bring an invading army, which, if it got through, would have major strategic implications for the security of the United States. However, in what was almost a fanatical adherence to Mahan, Andrews

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[863] Thus, the main emphasis on U-boat construction through 1944 was on the 750-ton Type VII boat which had neither the combat radius nor the torpedo capacity for a campaign that ranged to the western shores of the Atlantic and the Caribbean. Moreover, if one examines pictures of Type VII and XII boats three years into the war (circa 1942), one sees none of the technological aids that Americans subs possessed by 1944 (three years into the Pacific War).

went after the enemy fleet, and both the fleet and the convoy evaded his forces.[864]

Andrews's lived up to that less than satisfactory performance in his first and last assignment in the war, as commander of Eastern Sea Frontier, which was supposed to protect the east coast of the United States from U-boat attack. Admittedly, the resources at his disposal were minimal, but Andrews made not the slightest effort to learn from the experiences of World War I, not to mention, the experiences of the Royal Navy thus far in a conflict over the past two years. Instead, he plaintively recommended to King, that "no attempt be made to protect coastwise shipping by a convoy system until an adequate number of suitable vessels are available."[865]

In fact, Andrews's recommendation flew in the face of everything that wartime experience had thus far indicated and it resulted in a disastrous six-month period of sinkings along the east coast until King finally replaced Andrews and assumed the task himself along with his other duties. King's presence brought effective leadership to the task. The larger point here is that an effective military organization will eventually bring about the adaptations required in war and usually prevent individuals like Andrews from reaching the highest positions. The Andrewses and Kimmels were the exception in the officers who led the navy into the cauldron of the war in the Pacific. Nevertheless, every military force will possess such unimaginative officers at the highest levels. The crucial point is that to be militarily effective in a future war, the organizational culture must keep the number of such officers to a minimum. To a considerable extent the prewar U.S. Navy met that standard in preparing its officer corps for war.

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[864] The scenario had been designed by the president himself and undoubtedly drew on his extensive knowledge of history. In 1794 Admiral Lord Howe had the strategic mission of intercepting a major French grain convoy protected by what was left of the French Navy. Without that grain, the revolution in Paris might well have collapsed. Howe smashed the French fleet guarding the convoy, but nearly all the merchant ships got through, and the grain saved the revolution and its successor Napoleon too bedevil Europe for the next two decades.
[865] Quoted in Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, p. 77.

U.S. Grand Strategy in World War II

The history of American strategic decision-making before and during World War II is one of the best examples of a first-rate strategy transforming the great power status of a state. In 1935, with United States in the throes of the Great Depression, the nation's rise to superpower status seemed an unlikely proposition. Congress reflected the mood of a deeply isolationist public by enacting the first of a series of neutrality acts, intended to keep the nation out of another European conflict. The U.S. military, other than its navy, did not reflect the nation's latent power. World power was neither expected nor desired. Yet in the space of just a single decade, this situation completely changed. In 1945 the United States was one of the world's two acknowledged superpowers. Its powerful armed forces had played a major role in the allied defeat of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan in battles spanning the globe. Its economy was unchallenged as the most powerful in the world. U.S. diplomacy in large measure shaped the post-war world – a world the United States would dominate in nearly every major category of power and influence.

These developments did not happen accidentally. They were, rather, the result of foresight and the creation of a successful strategy that guided American actions, from the neutrality of the interwar period to final victory over the Axis powers in 1945. The architect of this success was President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a skillful politician who understood both domestic constraints and international realities in his crafting of American strategy. Roosevelt, ably advised by U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall and the other members of

the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, skillfully guarded America's neutrality, carefully managed its entry into World War II, and deftly shaped the contours of the post-war world—and did so without the huge bureaucratic national security structure that guides current administrations in their handling of foreign policy and military affairs.

America's isolationism and the relative weakness of other great powers conditioned strategic planning in the United States in the interwar period: Germany lay prostrate, internal difficulties consumed the Soviet Union, and Britain and France were unlikely adversaries. Only Japan seemed a potential enemy, but during the 1920s the Washington naval treaties, in the first real triumph for arms control in the modern world, significantly reduced the possibility of war in the Pacific.

Nevertheless, in the panoply of colored plans U.S. military officers prepared in the interwar period, War Plan Orange emerged as the most sensible in large part because it focused on a realistic enemy and a known strategic problem. Japanese acquisition of German territories in the Central and Western Pacific after World War I threatened the American line of communication to the Philippines in the event of war. War Plan Orange, approved in 1924, called for the army to hold Manila Bay while the navy gathered its strength for a decisive battle with the Japanese in the Western Pacific. The United States would then defeat Japan by destroying its air and naval forces, interdicting its economic lifelines, and blockading the home islands.[866]

As the 1930s progressed and Germany again became a serious threat to peace in Europe, U.S. strategic planners faced a period of great uncertainty. The possibility of European

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[866] Louis Morton, "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington, 1960), pp. 14-15. For a complete analysis of the development of War Plan Orange, see Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, MD, 2007).

intervention in the Western Hemisphere made its defense an important priority and undercut the assumptions underpinning War Plan Orange – namely, that the United States and Japan would fight a war against each other without allies. The Munich crisis of September 1938 spurred the Joint Army-Navy Board to reassess the basis of its strategic plans. It tasked the Joint Planning Committee to revisit the war plans in the event that German and Italian aggression in Europe and Japanese aggression in the Pacific were simultaneously to threaten American national security interests. The planners completed their work in April 1939. If the United States were to face simultaneous threats, the planners emphasized that U.S. forces should assume the strategic defensive in the Pacific while securing vital positions in the Western Hemisphere – particularly the Panama Canal and the Caribbean basin. For the first time, the planners highlighted the importance of securing the South Atlantic and the need to coordinate defensive measures with Latin American states. Defense of the Western Hemisphere made practical sense in order to defend America's critical strategic possessions while mobilizing its armed forces for total war. The planners also recommended the creation of a new series of war plans, in part based on the possibility that the United States would fight the next war with allies. The Joint Board approved the report of its planners, and in June 1939 ordered the preparation of the Rainbow series of war plans to explore the possibilities inherent in a coalition war.[867]

Planning for coalition warfare was greatly eased by continuous planning exercises at the Army War College in Washington, D.C. during the interwar years. The basic structure of U.S. strategy developed between 1934 and 1940 – defending the Western Hemisphere to allow for mobilization of the nation's military power; a coalition war with Britain; defeating Germany by bombardment and blockade, followed by massive ground operations on the European continent; and destruction of Japanese naval and air power followed by bombardment and blockade and, if

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[867] Morton, "Germany First," pp. 21-23.

necessary, invasion. These were not new concepts developed ad hoc once war began. Many of the participants in these exercises later went on to serve in the War Plans Division or in high level staff and command positions during World War II.[868]

The president was not content to allow the services to plan strategy in a vacuum. On 5 July 1939 Roosevelt transferred the Joint Army-Navy Board and the Joint Army-Navy Munitions Board into the recently established Executive Office of the President, which put the president in a position to directly affect strategic planning. This bureaucratic shift enabled the Joint Board to concern itself with the weighty questions of grand strategy, rather than minor issues of inter-service cooperation. This move also placed the president directly into the position of refereeing strategic disputes between the services.[869] Even with this addition to the president's executive office, a comparative handful of people advised the president on mobilization and war strategy.[870]

As war in Europe approached, the Joint Planning Committee developed five Rainbow Plans to guide U.S. strategy:

- Rainbow 1 assumed the United States would fight alone and would initially assume the strategic defensive to protect the Western Hemisphere north of 10 degrees south latitude (the bulge in Brazil). After U.S. forces secured the Atlantic approaches to the United States, the navy would concentrate in the Pacific for offensive operations against Japan.

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[868] Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis, MD, 2003).

[869] William Emerson, "Franklin Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief in World War II," *Military Affairs*, 22:4 (Winter, 1958-1959).

[870] For an examination of the formation and growth of the Executive Office of the President from 1939 to 2008, see Harold C. Relyea, "The Executive Office of the President: An Historical Overview," Congressional Research Service, 26 November 2008, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/98-606.pdf.

- Rainbow 2 assumed the United States would be allied with Britain and France, but would assume the strategic offensive in the Pacific and limit strategic commitments in Europe.

- Rainbow 3 assumed the United States would fight alone. Upon the outbreak of war, U.S. forces would immediately implement offensive operations in the Pacific against Japan. This plan mirrored War Plan Orange.

- Rainbow 4 mirrored Rainbow 1, except that the United States would ensure the defense of the entire Western Hemisphere due to the collapse of Britain and France. This plan operationalized the Monroe Doctrine.

- Rainbow 5 assumed the United States would be allied with Britain and France. After ensuring hemispheric defense, U.S. forces would project into the eastern Atlantic and conduct combined operations on the African and European continents to defeat Germany and Italy. The United States would assume the strategic defensive in the Pacific until the situation in Europe allowed the transfer of substantial U.S. forces to engage in a strategic offensive against Japan. Rainbow 5 came the closest to mirroring the eventual U.S. strategy in World War II.[871]

Given the rapidly changing international situation in the late 1930s, good planning was essential to maintaining strategic flexibility. In the mid-1930s the most likely scenario envisaged a war between the United States and Japan (Rainbow 3, or War Plan Orange). As Germany

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[871] Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942* (Washington, 1953), pp. 7-8.

rearmed and occupied the Rhineland (1936), Austria (1938), and Czechoslovakia (1939), increased caution dictated a more conservative plan (Rainbow 1). After the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Rainbow 2 seemed the most likely possibility. Just ten months later, the perilous condition of Britain after the collapse of France dictated extreme caution (Rainbow 4). Finally, the survival of Britain and Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union eventually led the western allies to choose "Germany first" (Rainbow 5) as their strategy.

Roosevelt's policy was to deter threats to vital U.S. national interests while mobilizing American industry to support the Western democracies. Upon the outbreak of war in Europe on 1 September 1939, Roosevelt declared U.S. neutrality and established an American security zone in the western Atlantic. He implicitly understood the vital importance of the Atlantic lifeline to the United States, both in terms of securing American trade and in denying a hostile power the ability to threaten the east coast of the United States with air and sea power.[872] The stated purpose of the U.S. Navy's "neutrality patrol" was to report and track belligerent aircraft, surface ships, and submarines. In practice, the patrol broadcast in the clear the locations of German submarines it encountered and thus gave the Royal Navy a hand in keeping the Atlantic shipping lanes open.[873]

Americans broadly supported the administration's use of the navy to protect U.S. neutral rights. Overcoming isolationist sentiment in the United States in an effort to support the Western allies was more difficult. After an abortive attempt in 1937 to enact a policy that called for the "quarantine" of aggressor nations, isolationist senators threatened impeachment. Roosevelt lamented to an aide, "It's a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead

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[872] Roosevelt had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1913 to 1920 and was therefore well attuned to the importance of seapower to U.S. security.

[873] B. Mitchell Simpson, III, *Admiral Harold R. Stark: Architect of Victory, 1939-1945* (Columbia, SC, 1989), p. 9.

– and find no one there."[874] Now that Europe was once again at war, the president found the going somewhat easier. On 21 September Congress approved an adjustment to the neutrality acts, which allowed belligerents to purchase war materiel provided they financed the purchases with cash and transported the goods on their own vessels. In practice only Britain and France had the foreign exchange reserves to buy war materiel. The Royal Navy's control of the Atlantic sea lanes also prevented Germany from benefiting from the new policy. "Cash and carry" was the beginning of a process that would in time turn the United States into the "arsenal of democracy."

Deterring Japanese aggression in the Pacific required a careful balancing act, one that ultimately failed. Japan assumed control over Manchuria in 1931 and since 1937 had been at war with China. With Britain, France, and the Netherlands committed to the war against Germany, their colonial empires in Asia appeared vulnerable. The U.S. Fleet and economic sanctions were Roosevelt's primary tools in moderating Japanese aggression in the Pacific. In April 1940 the U.S. Fleet sailed to Hawaii for annual fleet exercises.[875] Scheduled to return to its bases on the West Coast on 9 May, Roosevelt instead ordered the fleet to remain in Hawaii until further notice to deter Japanese aggression in the Netherlands East Indies and other Western colonial possessions. The fleet commander, Admiral James O. Richardson, complained often and loudly that stationing the fleet at Pearl Harbor would hurt its readiness and would do little to deter Japanese aggression. The president was neither convinced nor appreciative of the advice; he relieved Richardson on 1 February 1941 and replaced him with Admiral Husband E. Kimmel.[876]

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[874] Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York, 1994), p. 22.
[875] On 1 February 1941 the Navy Department abolished the United States Fleet and replaced it with a Pacific Fleet, commanded by Admiral Husband E. Kimmel; an Asiatic Fleet, commanded by Admiral Thomas C. Hart; and an Atlantic Fleet, commanded by Admiral Ernest J. King.
[876] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston, 1948), pp. 43-47.

Roosevelt's relief of Richardson is instructive, for in most cases the president was a good judge of talent. During a meeting on 14 November 1938 in the White House, Roosevelt opined that his goal for American aviation production was 10,000 aircraft per year. The president's unstated objective was not merely to augment the army air corps, but to produce aircraft with which to arm Britain and France.[877] He went around the room asking for concurrence, and when he came to Marshall the president said, "Don't you think so, George?"[878] Marshall thought the idea was unbalanced and vocally opposed the decision based on the adverse impact it would have on the rest of the rearmament program. As Marshall exited the room, the other attendees wished him well in retirement. But Roosevelt did not sack Marshall; rather, he promoted him to army chief of staff. Marshall accepted the position on the condition that he could speak his mind to the president, regardless of the unpleasant nature of the news.[879] Roosevelt concurred; he welcomed candid advice that contradicted his thinking, provided the advice was sound. In Richardson's case, Roosevelt most likely sensed that the admiral's argument rested on the basis of peacetime efficiency rather than on the strategic merit of stationing the fleet at Pearl Harbor.[880]

In 1940 the U.S. Fleet enjoyed rough parity with the Imperial Japanese Navy, but this situation would radically change within a few years. Carl Vinson, a Congressman from Georgia, was the prime mover for naval expansion. In 1938, after the Washington treaties limiting naval armaments expired, Vinson sponsored a bill authorizing a 20 percent increase in naval tonnage. When completed, this program would bring the U.S. Navy to 227 ships displacing 1,557,480

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[877] Emerson, "Franklin Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief," p. 185.
[878] Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Boston, 1989), p. 65.
[879] Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General, 1880-1939* (New York, 1963), p. 330. The president was suitably impressed, and as a mark of respect never called Marshall by his first name again.
[880] Simpson, *Admiral Harold R. Stark*, p. 60.

tons: 18 battleships, eight aircraft carriers, 46 cruisers, 147 destroyers, and 58 submarines.[881] After the outbreak of war in Europe, Vinson and Chief of Naval Operations Harold R. Stark collaborated on another bill that would raise the tonnage by a further 25 percent. This increase would ensure U.S. naval superiority against any single nation, but not against a coalition of powers.[882] A parsimonious Congress trimmed the expansion to 11 percent, but with U.S. shipyards already building near capacity, the cut was more apparent than real. On 15 June 1940 Roosevelt signed the bill into law.

The collapse of France dramatically changed the political equation in Congress. The United States now had to contend with the possibility that Germany would gain control of the French fleet, and that the Royal Navy might not provide a barrier to Nazi expansion into the Western Hemisphere should Britain sue for peace. On 17 June, just two days after Roosevelt had signed the latest naval expansion bill into law, Vinson introduced a two-ocean navy act in the House of Representatives. The bill called for a 70 percent increase in the tonnage of the U.S. Navy, a stunning 1,325,000 tons of new warships: 7 Iowa class battleships, 7 Essex class aircraft carriers, 29 cruisers, 115 destroyers, 43 submarines, and 20 auxiliary vessels. Vinson's committee was more than generous. Quite used to Congressional parsimony, Stark went out on a limb to recommend $50 million to expand naval shipyards; the committee tripled this amount. The navy was authorized 4,500 aircraft on 14 June; a day later an aviation expansion bill upped this number to 10,000. Vinson then increased that figure further to 15,000 on the floor of the House as the two-ocean navy act underwent debate. The House approved the bill on 22 June, just

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[881] Simpson, *Stark*, p. 25.
[882] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

one week after its introduction; Senate passage was nearly as rapid. On 19 July 1940 Roosevelt signed the measure into law.[883]

The Japanese could read Congressional legislation as well as the Navy Department. The two-ocean navy act pressured the Japanese to act more quickly in the Pacific, before the strategic balance tipped hopelessly against the land of the rising sun. By peacetime standards, the additional ships authorized by these acts would require six years to build, but the ship building industry was put on a wartime footing after the fall of France.[884] By 1943 the strategic naval balance in the Pacific would tip irrevocably in the favor of the United States, a fact known to both American and Japanese naval leaders. In other words, the ships that won the Pacific War were already on the slips under construction before the Imperial Japanese Fleet dropped the first bomb on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

The fall of France also sparked the mobilization of American industry and U.S. ground and air forces. In an effort to expand the nation's land forces to 1.4 million men by July 1941, Congress expanded the regular army to 375,000 soldiers and passed legislation activating the organized reserves and national guard for use in defense of the Western Hemisphere. An expanded munitions program aimed at equipping 2,000,000 soldiers by the end of 1941, while the aircraft industry would expand to produce 18,000 planes a year spring 1942.[885] When Congress passed the Selective Service Act on 16 September, for the first time in American history a peacetime draft would fill the expanded ranks of the army. American leaders did not know it at the time, but they had roughly 18 months in which to mobilize the nation for war. The

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[883] Ibid., pp. 40-42.
[884] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Battle of the Atlantic, September 1939-May 1943* (Boston, 1947), p. 28.
[885] Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943* (Washington, 1955), p. 29.

time was sorely needed; without a doubt the United States would have suffered many more setbacks had this grace period been shorter or nonexistent.

The manifest threat of Nazi expansionism accelerated other changes in U.S. policy as well. Roosevelt used his executive authority to support Britain short of committing the United States as an active belligerent, and he did so against the advice of his military advisers. On 15 May 1940 Winston Churchill sent his first message as prime minister to Roosevelt. "As you are no doubt aware," Churchill began, "the scene has darkened swiftly." Although the results of the battle for France were still uncertain, Britain was ready to continue the war alone if necessary. He then pleaded with the president for all manner of aid short of war: the loan of 40-50 older destroyers; the sale of several hundred modern aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, and ammunition; the ability to purchase materiel on credit once Britain exhausted her foreign exchange reserves; and a U.S. naval presence in Iceland and Singapore to deter German and Japanese adventurism.[886] In the next few months Roosevelt would act on a number of these proposals.

Roosevelt was intent on supporting Britain as a primary pillar in U.S. defense policy, while slowly trying to convince a reluctant, isolationist public to support further measures short of war. This policy was more than mere Anglophilia; Roosevelt understood that the longer Britain remained in the fight, the more time the United States would have to rearm. Britain had just evacuated the majority of its trained army from Dunkirk, but had left behind the vast majority of its arms, ammunition, and equipment. If British forces were to repel a German invasion, they needed war materiel – and fast. Roosevelt was determined to give the British at least part of what they needed.

While Roosevelt made his calculations, U.S. military planners reevaluated the strategic position of the United States, particularly in the event of the capture of the French and British

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[886] Winston S. Churchill, *Their Finest Hour* (Boston, 1949), pp. 24-25.

fleets by the Axis powers. This possibility worried them enough that Marshall and Stark recommended in a memo to the president on 27 June that U.S. forces should assume the strategic defensive in the Pacific, that the nation mobilize its resources to ensure hemispheric defense, and that the United States cease material aid to the allies.[887]

The president, however, rejected the military's call for suspension of arms shipments to Britain. He believed that American industry could meet British needs without seriously jeopardizing American rearmament, and that supporting the British in their war against the Axis was in the strategic interests of the United States. In early June the president overruled Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring to declare as "surplus" arms and ammunition that the government would sell to a private corporation, which would in turn sell them to a belligerent nation in what otherwise would be a violation of the Neutrality Acts. On 11 June 1940 the U.S. government sold 500,000 Enfield rifles with 129 million rounds of ammunition (22 percent of U.S. stockpiles), 80,000 machine guns, 25,000 Browning automatic rifles, 20,000 pistols, 895 75mm guns with a million rounds of ammunition, and 316 mortars to U.S. Steel Corporation, which in turn sold the items to the British government on the same day and for the same price. This bit of subterfuge succeeded in providing much-needed equipment to arm the British Army in its greatest time of need. As he signed off on the transfer, Marshall "somewhat righteously observed that he could only define these weapons as surplus after going to church to pray for forgiveness."[888] The grumbling of the brass undoubtedly reached the ears of Congress, for on 28 June it passed legislation that required the U.S. Army chief of staff to certify future transfers.

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[887] Morton, "Germany First," pp. 29-30.
[888] Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, p. 66.

Marshall limited shipments for the next year on the principle that all equipment was needed to fulfill the requirements of the army's Protective Mobilization Plan.[889]

Roosevelt's decision to supply arms to Britain in June 1940 went against the advice of nearly every one of his advisers. "There was no time in his Presidential career," notes Robert Sherwood, "when he met with so much opposition in his own official family or when his position in the country was less secure."[890] The decision was his alone, but he made it in the belief that Britain's survival would buy time for the United States to rearm. What is even more astonishing is that the president made this difficult decision in an election year with his own job on the line. In a commencement address at the University of Virginia on 10 June, he publicly committed the United States to supplying material aid to the allies fighting Germany and Italy. The media and the American people reacted favorably to his address.[891]

Woodring's opposition to the sale of arms to England was his final act as secretary of war. Roosevelt fired him on 20 June and replaced him with Henry Stimson, an internationalist Republican. For navy secretary, Roosevelt chose Frank Knox, Alf Landon's running mate on the Republican ticket in 1936. A master of domestic politics, Roosevelt chose them to counter Republican isolationism in a bipartisan fashion.[892]

The ink was hardly dry on the contract to sell surplus arms when Roosevelt looked for the next opportunity to aid Britain. On 2 September 1940 the president authorized the trade of 50 overage but serviceable destroyers in return for 99 year leases on a number of British air and naval bases in the Western hemisphere. Roosevelt bypassed an isolationist Congress by presenting the destroyer deal not as a sale (which would have required Congressional approval),

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[889] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 30-34.
[890] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York, 1948), p. 150.
[891] Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, pp. 67-69.
[892] Ibid., p. 71.

but as a trade (which did not). Americans approved of the destroyer for bases deal as being in the interests of U.S. security.[893] Indeed, the trade was not mere subterfuge to give more escort vessels to Britain; the United States badly needed bases to protect the Atlantic seaboard and Caribbean approaches to North America. In 1939 the navy was so desperate for airstrips that it leased Pan American Airways' facilities at Trinidad, Bermuda, and St. Lucia.[894]

The activity surrounding the presidential election consumed the administration in the fall of 1940. After Roosevelt's election for a third term, strategic decision-making accelerated rapidly. In early November, Stark reengaged Knox and Roosevelt on America's strategic options. Known as the "Plan Dog" memorandum, Stark's study represented the most comprehensive and clear statement of America's strategic options since the beginning of the war and was, in the view of one of the army's official historians, "perhaps the most important single document in the development of World War II strategy."[895]

Plan Dog was anything but routine staff work. The chief of naval operations was its primary author, although a study at the Naval War College by Captain Richmond Kelly Turner clearly influenced his thinking.[896] Stark completed the rough draft at home in a long day spent in his study. He then shared the paper with a group of naval planners, engaged in debate, and sharpened its conclusions. After a week Stark sent the memo to Marshall for review and concurrence to make it a joint army-navy document. The personal involvement of the nation's top two military officers in drafting Plan Dog gave it an authority that would otherwise be lacking in a more routine staff memo. On 13 November Knox sent the memo to Roosevelt, who

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[893] Ibid., p. 149.
[894] Simpson, *Stark*, p. 10.
[895] Morton, "Germany First," p. 35. Stark's analysis contained four strategic options, labeled A through D. Stark recommended option D, or "Dog" according to the military phonetic alphabet. Since the memo did not contain a subject line, it became known as "Plan Dog."
[896] Frederick D. Parker, "Introducing Purple," in *Pearl Harbor Revisited: United States Navy Communications Intelligence, 1924-1941* (Washington, 1994), p. 29, http://www.history.navy.mil/books/comint/ComInt-3.html#ComInt-13.

read it without comment. Given Roosevelt's recent pledge in the election to keep America out of the war, his silence on the strategic options for a war with the Axis powers was not unusual. But neither did he dismiss the memo outright. His silence gave the services tacit consent to make plans based on its conclusions.[897]

Stark was upfront with his assessment of the strategic situation. "If Britain wins decisively against Germany we could win everywhere," Stark concluded, but "if she loses the problem confronting us would be very great; and, while we might not <u>lose everywhere</u>, we might, possibly, not <u>win anywhere</u>."[898] Stark began the memo by outlining how the United States might find itself at war with one or more members of the Axis coalition, either alone or in alliance with Britain. He then enumerated America's vital national interests: the preservation of the territorial, economic, and ideological integrity of the United States and the Western Hemisphere, the continued existence of the British Empire, and a balance of power in Asia that would protect America's economic and political interests in the Far East.[899] The danger of a British collapse or Axis penetration of Latin America could not be discounted. In Asia, the bulk of the Imperial Japanese Army was committed to the war in China and to defense of the border with the Soviet Union, but Japanese aggression against the Netherlands East Indies was a significant threat. Stark then went on to outline the structure of War Plan Orange and the challenges involved in an offensive across the Central Pacific. Implementing War Plan Orange, in Stark's view, would jeopardize U.S. security interests in the Atlantic and limit America's ability to support Britain with arms and materiel.[900]

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[897] Simpson, *Stark*, p. 66.

[898] Harold R. Stark, Memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, 12 November 1940, Roosevelt Library, http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b01.html.

[899] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b03.html.

[900] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b14.html.

Stark went on to outline U.S. strategic options were it to fight a war with allies. He understood that if the United States were drawn into war with Japan, public opinion might very well draw U.S. forces toward the Pacific anyway: "Thus, what we might originally plan as a limited war with Japan might well become an unlimited war; our entire strength would then be required in the Far East, and little force would remain for eventualities in the Atlantic and for the support of the British Isles."[901] Nevertheless, the United States needed to examine its strategic options in the Atlantic theater. Stark concluded that a land offensive would be required to defeat Germany and for this, British manpower was insufficient. The United States would therefore have to send large land and air forces to fight in Europe.[902]

Stark appealed for a comprehensive and rational policy to guide U.S. actions in any future conflict. "With war in prospect," Stark wrote, "I believe our every effort should be directed toward the prosecution of a national policy with mutually supporting diplomatic and military aspects, and having as its guiding feature a determination that any intervention we may undertake shall be such as will ultimately best promote our own national interests."[903] Stark offered four possible courses of action to guide U.S. strategy:

A. Defense of the Western Hemisphere coupled with material aid to allies.

B. A major offensive against Japan coupled with a defensive effort in the Atlantic.

C. Balanced support of allied forces in both Europe and in Asia.

D. A major offensive in conjunction with British forces in the Atlantic coupled with a defensive effort in the Pacific. This option could very well include a major land offensive on the European continent.

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[901] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b16.html.
[902] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b17.html.
[903] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b18.html.

Stark concluded that until war appeared imminent, the United States should follow the course outlined in option A, but if the United States were to enter into the conflict, option D was the "most fruitful" for U.S. interests.[904] In conclusion, Stark recommended that U.S. military planners engage in secret staff talks with their British, Canadian, and Dutch counterparts to craft plans and ensure unity of effort in a future war involving the United States.[905]

It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of the Plan Dog memorandum on U.S. strategy in World War II. The Plan Dog memo was the only piece of written strategic guidance that President Roosevelt kept in his office during the war.[906] Plan Dog also crystallized the minds of the Joint Planning Committee on the criticality of defeating Germany first in the event of war. On 21 December the Joint Board approved the committee's recommendation to focus U.S. military resources on hemispheric defense, but if the United States entered the war, it should remain on the strategic defensive in the Pacific while focusing its effort in conjunction with the British against Germany and Italy. The guidance went as far as to state that even if the United States were to be forced into war against Japan, it should immediately enter the war against Germany and Italy as well.[907]

Roosevelt agreed to convene secret staff talks between American and British planners. In discussions prior to the staff conversations, the president concurred that the United States should limit its commitments in the Pacific. Roosevelt prohibited any naval reinforcement of the Philippines; he even gave the commander of the Asiatic fleet based in Manila discretionary authority to withdraw in the event of a Japanese attack. The president did not commit to a

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[904] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b24.html.
[905] Ibid., http://docs.fdrlibrary marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b26.html.
[906] Jim Lacey, *Keep from all Thoughtful Men: How U.S. Economists Won World War II* (Annapolis, 2011), p. 19.
[907] Morton, "Germany First," p. 39.

definitive strategy in the event of war, but he did reemphasize his commitment to supporting Britain to the greatest extent possible.[908]

The Anglo-American staff conversations took place in Washington from 29 January to 29 March 1941. During this period U.S. and British military planners hammered out the broad contours of an allied strategy for victory in a war the United States had not yet entered. The resulting agreement, known as ABC-1, established the basic guidelines for allied strategy in World War II. The British and American delegates agreed that in the event the United States entered the war, defeating Germany would be the primary allied objective and that this would be accomplished via military action in the Atlantic and European theaters. The future allies had different visions of the proper strategy for the Pacific, however. While they concurred on assuming the strategic defensive against Japan, the British emphasized the importance of Singapore in the defense of India, Australia, and New Zealand, while the United States had already for all practical purposes ceded the Philippines, Wake Island, and Guam as indefensible.[909]

The future allies agreed to sustain an economic blockade against the Axis powers, to subject Germany to aerial attacks, to knock Italy out of the war as early as possible, to subject Axis-held areas to raids, and to support resistance movements. After securing bases in the Mediterranean and gathering the requisite military forces there and in Britain, the allies would defeat the Wehrmacht in a climactic battle on the European mainland.[910]

Although not a binding agreement, ABC-1 formed the basis for further strategic planning under Rainbow 5. Work on Rainbow 5 had originally begun in May 1940, but had been put on the back burner after the fall of France seemed to invalidate the conditions under which the plan

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[908] Ibid., p. 40.
[909] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[910] Ibid., p. 44.

would be implemented. The survival of Britain, the Plan Dog memo, and the Anglo-American staff conversations resurrected Rainbow 5 as the center of U.S. planning efforts. Work proceeded rapidly, and by 30 April 1941 the army and navy had created a joint document that mirrored the ABC-1 agreement. A supplement to Rainbow 5, AWPD-1, provided the framework for a strategic bombing campaign against Germany. As usual, the president deferred approval of the document, but on the basis that he had not disapproved it, the services began to create specific plans to give substance to the strategy underpinning Rainbow 5.[911]

Plan Dog, ABC-1, and Rainbow 5 resulted in a policy-strategy match that gave direction to U.S. planning and mobilization for war. An official army historian, Louis Morton, concludes, "Made before American entry into World War II, in the context of a world threatened by Axis aggression in Europe and Asia, the judgment that Germany must be defeated first stands as the most important single strategic concept of the war."[912]

The best strategy for coalition warfare would do the future allies no good unless Britain could survive in the interim. Despite the measures of the Roosevelt administration to aid Churchill's government, by the end of 1940 Britain was running out of foreign exchange assets to pay for war materiel. To solve this dilemma, in December 1940 Roosevelt proposed a system of lend-lease, whereby the United States would provide (without payment) arms, ammunition, and materiel to belligerent nations when the president deemed the transfers as vital to the defense of the United States. He bolstered his case for the legislation with a fireside chat to the American people on 29 December in which for the first time he invoked the image of the United States as the "arsenal of democracy" in support of allied governments in their fight against Axis tyranny.

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[911] Ibid., pp. 45-47.
[912] Ibid., p. 11.

Despite the lofty rhetoric, the lend-lease legislation ran into a buzzsaw of isolationist opposition in Congress.[913] Even with the manifest threat from Europe becoming clearer, Roosevelt rowed against a strong tide of isolationist sentiment in American society. In September 1940 a group of notable figures in American life formed the "America First" committee, dedicated to keeping the United States out of foreign wars. Roosevelt took his case directly to the American people to educate them against the threat to America's vital national interests. By the time Congress passed the bill on 11 March 1941, support for it among Americans had risen from 50 to 61 percent.[914] Lend-Lease was a major part of the administration's policy throughout the war. In the next four years, the United States supplied a total of $50,000,000,000 ($720,000,000,000 in 2009 dollars) of war material, munitions, trucks, and raw materials to its allies, more than half to Britain.[915]

Roosevelt understood that in a democracy it was necessary to shape public opinion, while at the same time understanding just how far ahead of the people a leader could get and still maintain their support. In the spring of 1941, however, American public opinion was all over the map. A majority supported convoys into war zones in support of the British, but four out of five Americans wanted the nation to remain out of the war. Seventy percent felt the United States was already doing enough to support Britain. "Roosevelt recognized that with education he could command a national majority on convoys and even on direct involvement in the war," notes Doris Kearns Goodwin, "but he feared that this consensus would quickly vanish if a substantial

[913] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 228-229. The first witness before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs to testify against the lend-lease bill was Joseph Kennedy, who had recently resigned as U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom over an indiscreet interview with a reporter from the *Boston Globe*.

[914] Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, p. 215.

[915] Leo T. Crowley, "Lend-Lease," in Walter Yust, ed., *10 Eventful Years, 1937-1946* (Chicago, 1947), vol. 2, pp. 858-860.

portion of the people felt that he, rather than a recognized threat to national security, had compelled involvement."[916]

To establish the political basis for a potential war with Nazi Germany, Roosevelt and Churchill met on 9 August 1941 in Newfoundland. After five days of meetings and discussion, they issued a joint statement, known to history as the Atlantic Charter. The charter was Wilsonian in conception, a vision of a postwar world in keeping with American's penchant for moralistic foreign policy goals. The eight principles in the statement included a renunciation of territorial gains, the resolution of territorial disputes based on the wishes of affected populations, the people's right to choose their government and the restoration of sovereignty to those peoples that had been deprived of it, freedom of trade and equal access to raw materials, economic collaboration with the goal of improving labor standards and advancing social security, a peaceful postwar world that would establish "freedom from fear and want," freedom of navigation on the high seas, and general disarmament of aggressor nations "pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security."[917] The last point was the basis for the eventual establishment of the United Nations in 1945.

Roosevelt clearly aimed the Atlantic Charter at his domestic constituency. In a speech to Congress on 21 August, the president declared:

> Finally, the declaration of principles at this time presents a goal which is worth while for our type of civilization to seek. It is so clear cut that it is difficult to oppose in any major particular without automatically admitting a willingness to accept compromise with Nazism; or to agree to a world peace which would give

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[916] Ibid., p. 236.
[917] "Joint Statement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill," 14 August 1941, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/at10.asp.

to Nazism domination over large numbers of conquered nations. Inevitably such a

peace would be a gift to Nazism to take breath—armed breath—for a second war

to extend the control over Europe and Asia to the American Hemisphere itself.[918]

One way to view the Atlantic Charter is as part of Roosevelt's continuing assault on American isolationists. Roosevelt likened opposition to the charter to the tacit support of Nazi domination of much of Europe. The president was also intent on influencing the American people and their attitudes toward the support of the allies fighting Nazi Germany. If America ended up as a combatant, the allies' legitimate war aims were now in the open for all to see. It was a theme to which the president would return after the United States entered the war in his Fireside Chat to the American people on Washington's Birthday, 23 February 1942.[919]

The president needed all the domestic political support he could muster. Selective service was unpopular with the American public, and became more so as its expiration date neared. Draftees did not understand why they served, as the war in Europe seemed remote and unlikely to touch American shores. Roosevelt was loath to risk defeat in Congress by asking for the extension of the draft beyond one year, but Marshall was adamant that the risk to national security was too great. The departure of the draftees would tear apart the army. On the final day of the Atlantic conference in August 1941, the House extended the draft by a margin of one vote. Nevertheless, Roosevelt had chalked up yet another victory in preparing America for war.[920]

As hostilities in Europe continued, the Roosevelt administration established policies, often against the advice of American military leaders, which put the United States on a path to

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[918] "President Roosevelt's Message to Congress on the Atlantic Charter," 21 August 1941, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atcmess.asp.

[919] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Broadcast over a Nationwide and Worldwide Radio Hookup on the Occasion of the 210th Anniversary of George Washington's Birthday," 23 February 1942, http://www.mhric.org/fdr/chat20.html.

[920] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 366-367.

war. Roosevelt's strategy was to aid the nations fighting Germany while building up U.S. power in the Western hemisphere, extending America's security zone further east into the Atlantic, and deterring Japanese aggression in the Pacific through economic sanctions and the forward positioning of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. As the year progressed, Roosevelt ordered the navy into an undeclared war against the *Kriegsmarine* in order to protect merchant shipping in the Atlantic Ocean.

Lend-lease would do little good if German U-boats sunk the materiel shipped across the Atlantic. Roosevelt understood the need for the newly created Atlantic Fleet to convoy lend-lease goods to Britain, but he could not get too far ahead of public opinion on this issue. The president instead ordered the U.S. security zone pushed further east, while ordering Stark and the commander of the Atlantic Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King, to begin planning for convoy operations. [921] On 24 April the navy began observation patrols in a security zone that encompassed Greenland and extended to Iceland and the Azores. The president followed up this action a month later by declaring an "unlimited national emergency."[922] The president had some grounds for concern. On 21 May a U-boat sank the American freighter *Robin Moor* in the South Atlantic, while the German battleship *Bismarck* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* sortied into the North Atlantic. Ironically, the British sank the *Bismarck* on 27 May, the same day that Roosevelt made his declaration.

The next step was to include Iceland in America's expanding defensive perimeter. British forces occupied Iceland in May 1940; in April 1941 the Royal Navy began to base escort vessels at Hvalfjorour to protect convoys transiting the North Atlantic, the same month that U.S. forces occupied Greenland. The British wanted U.S. forces to take over the defense of Iceland to release

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[921] Simpson, *Stark*, p. 85.
[922] The nation had been in a "limited national emergency" since September 1939.

their forces for use elsewhere. The government of Iceland invited U.S. troops onto the island on 1 July 1941. President Roosevelt immediately directed marines to land, followed shortly thereafter by army forces numbering 5,000 troops. Both Stark and Marshall opposed Roosevelt's order to station U.S. forces in Iceland on the grounds of operational efficiency. Neither officer wanted to use scarce marine and regular army forces in such a remote location.[923]

The expansion of the security zone was not a practical solution to protecting lend-lease convoys; for that, naval escorts for convoys were required. Isolationist senators were wary of U.S. ships escorting convoys, which would potentially result in a clash with the *Kriegsmarine* in the Atlantic. Despite the political risk, in a meeting on 9 July 1941 Roosevelt directed Stark and King to arrange for the protection of U.S. convoys plying the waters between North America and Iceland. U.S. planners did not formally schedule ships of other nationalities into these convoys, but they could join if they wished. The navy made the convoy schedules known to the British and Canadians; in this manner King's forces ended up providing much needed convoy escort services to the British at a moment when the Royal Navy was heavily taxed by German U-boats. The arrangement went into effect on 26 July, putting the United States and Germany on a collision course in the Atlantic.[924]

Between September and December 1941, the fought an undeclared war against the *Kriegsmarine*, while Roosevelt marshaled the American people toward supporting greater security measures short of war. On 4 September 1941 the *USS Greer* made contact with a German U-boat, which fired two torpedoes at the American destroyer. The *Greer* responded with

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[923] Simpson, *Stark*, p. 87. Congressional legislation prohibited the army from deploying draftees outside the Western Hemisphere, so the War Department would have to deploy scarce regular army troops to defend Iceland.

[924] Ibid., pp. 88-92. The U.S. and Royal Navies developed more precise arrangements at the Atlantic Conference in August. The U.S. Navy coordinated convoys with the Canadian and Royal navies, which would pick up responsibility for escort south of Argentia (in the case of the Canadian Navy) and at a previously coordinated mid-ocean meeting point, or MOMP (in the case of the Royal Navy). See Ernest J. King, *Fleet Admiral King* (New York, 1952), pp. 343-344.

depth charges. Although the torpedoes missed the destroyer, it had been fired upon first and without warning. In a radio address on 11 September, Roosevelt labeled the attack an act of piracy and declared that from then on U.S. vessels would attack Axis warships without warning if they ventured into the American security zone in the Atlantic.[925] Roosevelt's "shoot on sight" order had the practical effect of removing any remaining restrictions on the American vessels escorting convoys in the Atlantic.

Another confrontation was not long in coming. On 17 October a U-boat torpedoed the *USS Kearny* as it escorted convoy SC-48 through the waters of the Atlantic. The crippled destroyer was able to make it to Iceland for repairs, escorted by the *USS Greer*. Two weeks later German torpedoes sent the *USS Reuben James* to the bottom of the Atlantic as it escorted convoy HX-156, resulting in the loss of 115 American sailors. Public attitudes now shifted to support increased action against German U-boats. Roosevelt, not content with merely reading polls and swaying with the wind of public opinion, had successfully turned the American people away from isolationism and toward increased support for the allies. On 7 November 1941 Congress passed an amendment to the neutrality acts that allowed the arming of merchant ships, and on 13 November passed another that allowed them to enter war zones. American ships could now convoy lend-lease aid all the way to Britain, and do so for much of the journey under the protection of the navy. The question now was how and when the United States would become a formal belligerent.

By late fall 1941 worldwide developments had significantly altered the strategic situation. Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941 brought the Russian colossus into the conflict against Germany. In late summer, following a visit by presidential adviser Harry

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[925] Morison, *The Battle of the Atlantic*, p. 80. As Morison notes, "Thus ended the embarrassing position for the United States Navy of carrying the responsibility for protecting wide expanses of the North Atlantic, without authority to shoot."

Hopkins to Moscow, Roosevelt ordered the War Department to develop a plan to aid the Soviet Union. After coordination with the British and the Russians, Roosevelt formally extended lend-lease aid to Stalin's government on 7 November 1941 by declaring the survival of the Soviet Union as vital to the defense of the United States.[926]

By the late fall of 1941, events in Asia had also come to a head. More than a year earlier on 2 July 1940, in retaliation for the Japanese seizure of northern Indochina, Congress passed (at Roosevelt's urging) legislation that embargoed exports to Japan of machine tools, aviation gasoline, and iron and steel scrap. The embargo had little effect on Japanese behavior. A year later on 25 July 1941, Japanese forces entered southern Indochina. Roosevelt responded by freezing Japanese assets in the United States and extending export restrictions to cover all commodities (including oil); the president again acted against the advice of Marshall and Stark, who understood that the decision likely meant war.[927]

To avert hostilities either the United States would have to alter its foreign policy, or Japan would have to moderate its expansionist aims in Asia. Neither prospect, according to historian Samuel Eliot Morison, was "humanly possible."[928] Japan had stockpiled enough oil for approximately a year of military operations.[929] The army and navy chiefs knew that U.S. armed forces were not yet fully prepared for a major war, and that forward based forces in the Philippines, Guam, and Wake Island were vulnerable to a concerted Japanese assault.[930] The inability of the United States to defend the Philippines in the event of a major Japanese attack was "largely a matter of distance; one could demonstrate the proposition with a map of the

[926] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 99-102.
[927] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 64.
[928] Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, p. 63.
[929] Ibid., pp. 63-64.
[930] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 78.

Pacific and a pair of dividers."[931] The program to strengthen these forces was far from complete when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. The long period of pre-war planning and preparations had finally come to an end in the midst of a military crisis of the first order.

The situation was far from bleak. The Japanese had sunk a number of battleships, but the Japanese had not touched the American carriers and few of their cruiser and destroyer escorts; the excellent U.S. submarine force was ready for action; and the fleet repair and oil storage facilities on Oahu were untouched. Furthermore, in a little more than a year the fleet carriers and fast battleships authorized by Congress in 1938 and 1940 would begin to appear in force, irrevocably altering the naval balance in the Pacific.[932] In the weeks that followed the Japanese strike, Roosevelt committed the United States to the defense of the Southwest Pacific. The Philippines would be reinforced as far as practicable, but the War Department planners understood that the islands would most likely fall in a matter of months. Nevertheless, the U.S. military put in motion steps to secure the line of communication to Australia and to build a base of operations there to support future operations.[933] Finally, the Japanese "sneak attack" filled the American people with a deep resolve for revenge. Overnight, isolationism in the United States collapsed as a political force. Hitler's declaration of war four days later brought America into the war in Europe as an active belligerent and thereby solved the problem of implementing the "Germany first" strategy.

In the weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government was in considerable disarray. Roosevelt relieved Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant General

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[931] Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, p. 149.
[932] On 7 December 1941 the U.S. Navy possessed seven fleet carriers and one escort carrier; by the end of 1943 it would possess 50 carriers of both types, to include fleet carriers of the new Essex class.
[933] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, pp. 87-88.

Walter C. Short, the navy and army commanders in Hawaii directly responsible for the disaster at Pearl harbor. In March 1942 the president reassigned Stark as commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe. In December 1941 Roosevelt brought in the team that would command U.S. forces in the great conflict to come: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz assumed duties as commander-in-chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (as a submariner, he took command in a ceremony on the deck of the submarine *USS Grayling*), while the highly capable but irascible King became commander-in-chief, United States Fleet and, after Stark's reassignment, chief of naval operations. Interestingly, the president kept Marshall and General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, the chief of the army air forces, in their positions despite some evidence that at least Marshall had not adequately supervised Short's preparations for the defense of Hawaii.[934] On the whole Roosevelt had a good eye for talent, a discernment that stood him in good stead throughout his four terms in office.

In mid-December 1941 Churchill and his military commanders crossed the Atlantic for the Arcadia conference with their American counterparts in Washington. The allies confirmed the conclusions of ABC-1 as the initial basis for their strategy in the war.[935] Beyond that basic agreement, Arcadia did little to operationalize the strategy to defeat Germany. The British, haunted by memories of the Great War and desirous to retain their empire, argued for a strategy of "tightening the ring" around Germany through peripheral operations, particularly in the Mediterranean. American military leaders doubted that such operations could defeat the Wehrmacht, but given the lack of planning for an alternative approach, agreed in principle for the moment to a strategy of limited operations. In the near term, the Americans agreed with British proposals to secure the Atlantic sea lanes, prosecute operations in Egypt and Libya,

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[934] Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division* (Washington, 1951), p. 78.
[935] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 99.

support the Soviet Union with arms and supplies, conduct a strategic bombing campaign against the German homeland, and encourage resistance movements in occupied Europe.[936]

What exactly the allies would do after marshaling their military strength was an issue of much contention. The American people (not to mention their navy) clamored for revenge against Japan, and Roosevelt struggled to contain this emotional response to the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. The British raised the possibility of an invasion of North Africa, but U.S. military leaders objected to the operation as a diversion motivated by British political goals that would do little to defeat Germany. Domestic political concerns were on Roosevelt's mind; he stated that it was "very important to morale, to give this country a feeling that they are in the war…to have American troops somewhere in active fighting across the Atlantic."[937] The conference ended without decision on invading North Africa, although the British supported the operation, which also clearly intrigued the president.

At Arcadia American and British leaders also established the combined chiefs of staff as a coordinating mechanism to distribute military resources and map allied strategy. The base of the combined chiefs of staff would be in Washington, unless the principals traveled to one of the nine wartime conferences held among the allies during the war. The formation of the combined chiefs of staff required U.S. military leaders to meet to coordinate American policy and strategy. For this purpose, the old coordinating mechanism of the joint board was clearly insufficient. The first meeting of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff was held on 9 February 1942. The group consisted of Marshall, Arnold, and Stark (until his departure to London, after which King took his place). In July 1942 Roosevelt appointed Admiral William D. Leahy as chief of staff to the president and he became the group's de facto chairman. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff operated without

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[936] Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York, 1994), pp. 424-425.

[937] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, pp. 104-105.

formal Congressional charter, which allowed Roosevelt great flexibility in the assignment of their duties.[938]

The joint chiefs of staff formed a joint planning staff to correspond with the British Joint Planners; together they constituted the combined staff planners, responsible to the combined chiefs of staff. The system did not mature until 1943; until then, most planning in the United States occurred in the War and Navy Departments and was coordinated outside of official joint channels.[939]

The crisis brought on by the Japanese offensives in the Pacific resulted in the bulk of U.S. Army troops and aircraft early in 1942 being sent to Hawaii, Australia, New Caledonia, and other islands in the South Pacific. The allies could wait for U.S. troops to reach England since they could delay plans for future operations against Germany; on the other hand, failure to defend the line of communication from Hawaii to Australia and the bases in those locations could result in the expansion of the zone of Japanese control. Through most of 1942, therefore, "Germany first" was a strategy in name only. Brigadier General Dwight Eisenhower (at the time serving on the War Department's operations staff) summed up the army's frustration in his diary entry of 22 January 1942, "We've got to go to Europe and fight – and we've got to quit wasting resources all over the world – and still worse – wasting time. If we're to keep Russia in, save the Middle East, India and Burma; we've got to begin slugging with air at West Europe; to be followed by a land attack as soon as possible."[940] The primary obstacle in this regard, according to Eisenhower, was not the British but the United States Navy. "One thing that might help win this war is to get someone to shoot King," Eisenhower opined to his diary.[941]

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[938] King, *Fleet Admiral King*, pp. 366-367.
[939] Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack* (Washington, 1951), p. 5.
[940] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 156.
[941] Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 30.

The primary obstacle was not King's strategic concepts, but the paucity of American military resources. On 5 March 1942 King wrote a memo to Roosevelt in which he outlined his ideas for American strategy in the Pacific. Race played a part in his thinking. Australia and New Zealand were "white man's countries" that the United States could not allow to fall to the Japanese "because of the repercussions among the non-white races of the world." The United States had to hold Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, and the line of communication that linked them together across the South Pacific (Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia, Tonga, New Hebrides, and the Ellice Islands). Once these key points were secure, U.S. forces could begin to drive into the Solomons and the Bismarck Archipelago. These offensives would draw Japanese forces in from elsewhere, and in due course shift the strategic momentum in the Pacific War.[942] The strategy was sound – if the United States could afford the resources to execute it.

Marshall and his advisors were more concerned about coming to grips with the Wehrmacht. After the Arcadia conference Marshall ordered Eisenhower and his staff to prepare a strategic plan to operationalize Rainbow 5. On 1 April Eisenhower presented his concept, which included a build-up of forces in England (BOLERO) and an invasion of Northwest Europe in 1943 (ROUNDUP). A branch plan, SLEDGEHAMMER, would commit Allied forces to an invasion in 1942 should either a German or Soviet collapse appear imminent. BOLERO was designed to position 1,000,000 men in 48 ground divisions and 5,800 combat aircraft in Britain for a major invasion of Northwest Europe in 1943.[943] The plan in this form lasted just two months. It was first scaled downward, and then superseded by other strategic priorities that were a matter of great contention between British and American military leaders.

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[942] King, *Fleet Admiral King*, p. 385.
[943] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, pp. 16-19.

The army's faith in the direct approach, at least for the near term, was misplaced. The key question in 1942 was whether the Soviet Union could survive the next German onslaught once the ground dried in late spring, and the Wehrmacht resumed offensive operations against the Red Army. Provided the Soviet Union survived, an allied invasion could wait; if it could not, then the limited numbers of forces available to invade the continent of Europe in 1942 would not make a difference anyway. "BOLERO-ROUNDUP was an aberration, a one-front strategy in a multifront war, a resort to force without finesse, when finesse was most needed to make up for lack of force," notes one historian. "For all the potency of the legend it left behind, its real impact on Allied strategy was slight."[944]

Roosevelt was cognizant of the need to support the Soviet Union via lend-lease aid and by engaging German forces. "It must be constantly reiterated," the president stated, "that Russian armies are killing more Germans and destroying more Axis materiel than all the twenty-five united nations put together."[945] In June 1942 the president and his advisors were thinking in terms of establishing air superiority over France, followed by an invasion with the limited forces available. The British objected to any operation that would likely end in another withdrawal, such as had already occurred at Dunkirk, Norway, Greece and Crete. SLEDGEHAMMER would be so limited, they argued, that the 25 German divisions then in France could contain the invasion force without affecting the war on the Eastern front. Furthermore, the execution of a limited invasion in 1942 would put at risk the larger operation (ROUNDUP) in 1943. Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff offered other alternatives, such as an invasion of Norway to open up the northern route of supply to the Soviet Union, or an invasion of North Africa.[946]

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[944] Richard M. Leighton, "OVERLORD Revisited: An Interpretation of American Strategy in the European War, 1942-1944," *American Historical Review* 68:4 (July 1963), p. 937.
[945] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 221.
[946] Ibid., pp. 234-235.

As British objections to SLEDGEHAMMER grew, Roosevelt revisited the idea of invading North Africa with his military advisers. The joint chiefs remained cool toward the plan, but they fought a losing battle against Roosevelt and Churchill. On 21 June 1942, in the midst of strategy discussions at the White House, Churchill received word of the fall of Tobruk to Rommel's forces. The British defeat in Libya in summer 1942 put the Suez Canal and the British position in the Middle East at risk. BOLERO was not dead, but it was on life support. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to plan for operations in Northwest Europe, but stated that offensive action was essential in 1942. If SLEDGEHAMMER was not practical, then the best alternative was GYMNAST, an invasion of North Africa.[947]

Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff soon took SLEDGEHAMMER off the table. On 8 July 1942 Churchill wrote to Roosevelt, "No responsible British general, admiral, or air marshal is prepared to recommend 'Sledgehammer' as a practicable operation in 1942."[948] Churchill made it clear that for the British, the options were an invasion of either North Africa or Norway, or continued inaction in the Atlantic theater.[949] Marshall and King continued to press for SLEDGEHAMMER, but more as a means of salvaging ROUNDUP for 1943 than because they thought that a cross-Channel attack in 1942 was viable. They and their planners thought in terms of a single, massive offensive into Northwest Europe; they had not yet considered a multi-front war against Germany in both Northwest Europe and the Mediterranean. If the British failed to support BOLERO-ROUNDUP, they argued in a 10 July memo to the president, the United States should shift its main effort to face Japan in the Pacific.[950] For the U.S. Joint Chiefs of

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[947] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p. 26.
[948] Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston, 1950), p. 434.
[949] Ibid., p. 435.
[950] Leo J. Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa (TORCH)," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington, 1960), p. 183.

Staff, the options in Europe were BOLERO and either SLEDGEHAMMER or ROUNDUP, or nothing at all.

Roosevelt was the only person who could overcome the impasse between the British and American strategic conceptions. Roosevelt flatly rejected his military advisers' call for shifting the main effort against Japan. A focus on the war in the Pacific would clearly jeopardize "Germany first" – the primary pillar of American strategy. The president instead sent Hopkins, Marshall, and King to London to broker an agreement with the British that would result in American troops engaging in combat somewhere across the Atlantic by the end of 1942. His guidance specifically ruled out a diversion of the American effort to the Pacific, since defeating Japan would not defeat Germany and would make German domination of Europe more likely. To make his point even more clear, the president signed the guidance memo as "Commander in Chief," a rarity in presidential communications. Roosevelt had a clearer view of the strategic imperative driving Allied strategy than his military leaders. He insisted that American forces engage in combat against Germany before the end of the year in order to forestall public pressure to turn American attention to the war against Japan.[951]

With the Americans in disarray, the British position prevailed. The British Chiefs of Staff argued, reasonably enough, that the Germans had enough strength in France to contain an allied invasion force without drawing strength away from other theaters, while the allies would have difficulties in sustaining an expeditionary force in France given shortages of logistical units, shipping, and landing craft.[952] Furthermore, the possibility of defeat and another Dunkirk were real. Due to Roosevelt's insistence on action in 1942 and British solidarity, the American

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[951] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 603-605.
[952] Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa (TORCH)," p. 182.

delegation in the end reluctantly agreed to an invasion of North Africa, now christened Operation TORCH.

Marshall and King held out hope for reconsideration of TORCH and pushed to defer a final decision on the operation until 15 September. To forestall delaying tactics in both Whitehall and the U.S. War and Navy Departments, Hopkins urged the president to set a firm date for the execution of the operation, preferably no later than 30 October 1942. Roosevelt concurred and told Hopkins to relay the message to Churchill.[953] Marshall and King feared that TORCH would preclude launching ROUNDUP in 1943, and in the end they were right, but for the wrong reason.

Marshall and King attempted one last-ditch effort to forestall TORCH. They wanted the president to admit that by choosing to undertake TORCH, he was abandoning ROUNDUP. Roosevelt would not be deterred. On 30 July he announced that he had decided "that TORCH would be undertaken at the earliest possible date" and that "he considered that this operation was now our principal objective."[954] BOLERO and ROUNDUP were put on the back-burner. Stimson, Marshall, and the War Department planners only grudgingly accept this reality. Marshall openly believed that TORCH contributed to a defensive strategy of encirclement, but would do little to defeat Germany.[955]

Marshall and his planners were wrong in their assessment of TORCH. The invasion ultimately secured North Africa, opened the shipping lanes in the Mediterranean, thus freeing up nearly 3,000,000 tons of allied shipping and providing bases from which to execute future operations against the southern European littoral. Although the initial invasion engaged French forces, Hitler's decision to hold onto Tunisia consigned over a quarter million German and

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[953] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 611-612.
[954] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 283.
[955] Ibid., p. 297.

Italian forces to allied prisoner of war camps when the campaign concluded in early May 1943. This was a haul of Axis prisoners that rivaled the Red Army's triumph at Stalingrad, not to mention the Axis aircraft and shipping sacrificed for the sake of maintaining a toehold in Africa.

British intransigence and Roosevelt's sagacity in forcing TORCH on the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff undoubtedly saved the allies from a disastrous defeat in France. One need look no further than the ill-fated Dieppe raid in August 1942, the U.S. failure at the Battle of Kasserine Pass in February 1943, and the disastrous air battles over Germany in the fall of 1943 to see that an early invasion would have been a bloody and likely catastrophic affair for the allies. Operation TORCH was a godsend to the American army, which went through difficult growing pains in North Africa.[956] Additionally, the allied command apparatus was much more smoothly functioning and its senior commanders seasoned in the crucible of battle by mid-1944.

The problem for the allies in 1942 was not the attraction of the Mediterranean, but the pull of the Pacific on U.S. resources. In 1942 the allies were unable to adhere to their commitment to resource the "Germany first" strategy. By the end of the year nine of the 17 army divisions overseas were in the Pacific, along with nearly a third of the air combat groups. The requirement for service forces to maintain extended lines of communication resulted in the deployment of 346,000 army troops to the Pacific, a total that nearly equaled the 347,000 deployed to the United Kingdom and North Africa.[957]

The navy's serendipitous victory at Midway in June 1942 created strategic equilibrium in the Pacific and relieved pressure on Roosevelt accede to the wishes of the American people to place additional emphasis on the war against Japan. To take advantage of the opportunities created by Midway, on 25 June, King proposed to Marshall that the 1st Marine Division, then en

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[956] See Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions* (Lawrence, KS, 1999), Chp. 4, and Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943* (New York, 2002).
[957] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 359.

route to New Zealand, launch an offensive in the Solomons. After debates over a competing army plan and additional haggling over who would command the forces involved, on 2 July the joint chiefs of staff issued a directive for the operation, envisioned as the first stage in a three-phase campaign to seize Rabaul.[958] On 5 July reconnaissance aircraft located a new Japanese air base on Guadalcanal, which made the pending operation even more critical as Japanese bombers based there could potentially interdict the U.S. line of communication from Hawaii to Australia. King pressed for the operation to begin on 1 August over the objections of MacArthur and Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific area, who thought the operation premature.

King won the argument, although he agreed to delay the operation by six days to allow for more preparation, as the 1st Marine Division was just arriving in Wellington, New Zealand, and needed time to sort itself out prior to loading on invasion transports.[959] The gamble paid off, as the marines quickly seized Guadalcanal and its vital airstrip from a completely unprepared Japanese garrison, and then grimly held on for several months against ferocious Japanese counterattacks.

Meanwhile, the Japanese seizure of Buna and Gona on the northeast coast of New Guinea convinced General Douglas MacArthur to send Australian troops and the U.S. 32nd Infantry Division across the Owen Stanley Mountains to seize the outposts. The Guadalcanal and New Guinea operations occasioned a five month battle of attrition in the South and Southwest Pacific, operations that altered the strategic momentum of the war against Japan. The pressing needs of this theater, however, led to ad hoc reinforcement of the effort without a "careful calculation of

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[958] John Miller, Jr., *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive* (Washington, 1949), pp. 11-18.
[959] Ibid., p. 31. The 1st Marine Division leadership was led to believe they would receive several months in New Zealand in which to train their forces for future operations. In fact, the unit was immediately committed to combat upon arrival, which makes its victory at Guadalcanal all the more remarkable.

strategic goals in relation to logistical capabilities."[960] In short, the Pacific War soaked up service troops at a prodigious rate.

Part of the problem in the Pacific was the lack of a unified command structure. Although the principle of unity of command is widely recognized, the United States found it difficult to implement in the war against Japan. Naval matters were of primary importance in the Pacific, but the towering figure of MacArthur in Australia made the appointment of a navy admiral as supreme commander problematical. The joint chiefs of staff instead assigned MacArthur as commander of the Southwest Pacific theater, and Nimitz as commander of the Pacific Ocean Areas. The army and navy would conduct campaigns in their respective areas and would coordinate on matters of mutual interest, particularly concerning the allocation of airpower and naval resources.[961]

Despite the convoluted command arrangements, the limited offensives in the Pacific now played into the hands of War Department planners. They saw three possibilities for continued operations after TORCH: an air offensive against Germany, a cross-Channel assault, or continued operations in the Mediterranean region. Since army planners understood, based on logistical shortfalls, that a large-scale invasion of Northwest Europe would be delayed into 1944, they viewed continued operations in the Mediterranean to clear the shipping lanes to Suez and knock Italy out of the war as a logical follow-on to TORCH. But they also believed these operations to be secondary to the main effort (in the future) of a cross-Channel attack. In the meantime, then, army planners argued that diversion of forces to the Mediterranean could be matched by similar diversion of forces to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. This logic served as a check on British aspirations for increased support for operations in the Mediterranean, since the

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[960] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 390.
[961] Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory* (New York, 1973), pp. 161-162.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff could always respond by sending forces to the Pacific instead.[962] Indeed, King made the most of this leverage in inter-allied conferences. "King is said to have had his eye on the Pacific. That is his Eastern policy," lamented British Rear Admiral C. E. Lambe. "Occasionally he throws a rock over his shoulder. That is his Western policy."[963]

British and American military leaders debated their strategic concepts again at the Casablanca conference in January 1943. By this point the allies understood that a lack of resources limited their strategic options, particularly regarding a cross-Channel invasion in 1943. The chief of the British Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, noted at Casablanca, "The shortage of shipping was a stranglehold on all offensive operations and unless we could effectively combat the U-boat menace we might not be able to win the war."[964] Use of shipping for lend-lease to the Soviet Union, along with shipping for operations in the Mediterranean and the Pacific, competed with Marshall's desire to hoard it for BOLERO-ROUNDUP. Until the allies won the Battle of the Atlantic, one of the most basic questions of strategy – what means would be available to execute planned operations – could not be answered with any precision. According to the official U.S. Army history of the logistical effort in World War II, through mid-1943 shipping "remained perhaps the most baffling single question mark in the whole logistical equation."[965] Indeed, Marshall's estimation of 48 divisions in England for ROUNDUP in 1943 was a mirage; at Casablanca allied leaders understood the potential number to be only half of that figure.[966] Even had enough divisions been amassed by the full execution of

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[962] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 367.
[963] Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, p. 7.
[964] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, pp. 39-40.
[965] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 712.
[966] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p. 37.

BOLERO, lack of landing craft and cargo shipping made an invasion in 1943 problematic at best.[967]

Even if shipping and landing craft were available in larger numbers, the munitions and other war materiel necessary to conduct extensive operations in Northwest Europe would not be available until spring 1944. As early as December 1941, War Production Board statistician Stacy May warned that the United States could realize only three-fourths of the Victory Program by September 1943.[968] This stark assessment ruled out an invasion of Northwest Europe in 1943, something that Marshall knew going into the Casablanca conference. In November 1942, JCS planners informed Marshall that the army supply program would have to be cut by 20 percent due to insufficient industrial capacity to realize it.[969] As a result, a sufficient U.S. troop basis for an invasion of Northwest Europe would not be fully realized until spring 1944. Due to the cutback in production estimates, Marshall did not object vigorously to the postponement of a cross-Channel invasion at Casablanca.

Simply put, the conditions were not set for a cross-Channel attack in 1943. The Battle of the Atlantic had yet to be won and the allied air forces had yet to achieve air supremacy over the skies of Western Europe. The former goal was achieved in May 1943, while the latter was not attained until May 1944 when the Luftwaffe fighter force finally cracked. The allies launched the cross-Channel invasion at the right time, despite the protestations of the members of the War Department's operations division, who felt that the United States had made a serious strategic error in not launching ROUNDUP in 1943.[970] Indeed, despite the complaints of Brigadier General Albert C. Wedemeyer that the British got their way at Casablanca because of superior

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[967] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, p. 186.
[968] Lacey, *Keep from all Thoughtful Men*, p. 90.
[969] Ibid., p. 135.
[970] Leighton, "OVERLORD Revisited," pp. 925-927.

staff work, a cross-Channel invasion in 1943 under any realistic scenario was unlikely to succeed. "In early 1943 it was all too easy to forget how flimsy had been the logistical basis of the original BOLERO-ROUNDUP plans of March and April 1942," write the official U.S. Army historians of the logistical effort. "The logistical estimates of the Casablanca planners, it almost immediately appeared, were just as flimsy."[971]

The question at Casablanca, then, was how to best capitalize on the successful allied invasion of North Africa. The British argued, with some justification, that further Mediterranean operations would force the Germans to disperse their strength to defend a number of strategically important points such as Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica, Greece, and Italy. By knocking Italy out of the war, the allies would also force the Germans to move forces into the Italian peninsula. Opening shipping lanes through the Mediterranean to Suez would economize approximately 225 ships that would otherwise have to be used on the extended journey around Africa. Arnold saw the advantage in seizing air bases in southern Italy for use in the strategic bombing offensive against Germany. Marshall conceded that using troops already in the Mediterranean for operations there would save on shipping that would otherwise be needed to bring them back to England.[972]

The combined chiefs of staff agreed that after the allies cleared the Germans and Italians out of North Africa, Sicily would be the next objective. Operation HUSKY would free the Mediterranean shipping lanes, divert German strength from the eastern front, and pressure Italy to surrender. The allies also agreed to execute Operation POINTBLANK, a combined bomber offensive against Germany, with the aim of achieving "the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial, and economic system and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally

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[971] Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 686.
[972] Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944* (Washington, 1959), pp. 23-25.

weakened."[973] Arnold and his planners saw the advantages in having one more year of bombing before the execution of a cross-Channel attack, but only to blast the Germany economy to ruin.[974] Allied air leaders did not see the link between the strategic bombing campaign and the attainment of air superiority over Europe at this time. To begin planning for a cross-Channel invasion, the allies agreed to establish a planning staff, led by Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan.[975]

At the beginning of the war U.S. planners, conditioned by the experiences of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, thought in terms of a single land campaign against Germany. Only after Casablanca did they realize that the Mediterranean would remain an active theater of war until the allies had defeated Germany and Italy, and that a cross-Channel invasion would be in addition to, not a replacement for, ongoing operations elsewhere.[976]

Once the allies committed forces to North Africa, the logic of subsequent operations to maintain the strategic initiative in the Mediterranean, clear the sea lines of communication to the Suez Canal, knock Italy out of the war, and pressure German forces in the region followed a logical process that in retrospect is still valid. Perhaps the most significant shift in U.S. strategy was the increased effort put into the Pacific in 1943. King wanted to maintain the initiative in the Pacific to ensure that the Japanese would not be able to turn their defensive perimeter into an impregnable bastion.[977] Marshall supported King and in return King supported Marshall in his insistence that a cross-Channel attack should be the top allied priority. Ironically, the postponement of OVERLORD into 1944 enabled more resources to be put into the Pacific

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[973] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p. 45.
[974] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 28.
[975] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p. 44.
[976] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 30.
[977] Leighton, "OVERLORD Revisited," p. 928.

against Japan. Rather than "Germany First," the U.S. strategy in World War II by default became a balanced effort to defeat both Germany and Japan nearly simultaneously.

The most significant policy decision at Casablanca was Roosevelt's call for unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. Despite the president's later protestation that he announced the policy at a news conference on the spur of the moment, the written record says otherwise. Roosevelt held carefully prepared notes as he spoke, and these notes included a paragraph calling for the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy, and Japan. On the other hand, Churchill admitted after the war that the first time he heard the term unconditional surrender was at the news conference when Roosevelt discussed the allied war objectives with the media. It is quite possible that the president deliberately kept Churchill in the dark, not wanting to subject the policy to the cauldron of the allied conference table. The purpose, however, was clear: to hold the allies together until the end of the war, and to ensure that German and Japanese leaders could not claim in the future to their people that their armed forces were not defeated on the battlefield. There would be no *Dolchstosslegende* in this war.[978] For U.S. military planners, unconditional surrender meant a singular focus on the military task of destroying the Axis armed forces. After Casablanca, many of the objectives of forthcoming campaigns fell to U.S. military leaders to resolve in allied councils.

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were adamant that limited offensives in the Pacific were necessary to keep the Japanese from consolidating their defensive perimeter. The campaigns in Guadalcanal and New Guinea had caused enormous attrition of Japanese combat power. On 21 March 1943 the joint chiefs approved the isolation of the main Japanese base at Rabaul (Operation CARTWHEEL) and the beginning of a complementary offensive in the Central

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[978] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 696-697.

Pacific, which would begin at Tarawa Atoll in November 1943.[979] These dual offensives would seize advanced bases from which to prosecute the air and naval war against Japan, liberate the Philippines, and position U.S. forces within striking distance of the Japanese homeland.

The allies met in conference again at the Trident conference in Washington, D.C. (12-25 May 1943) as the North African campaign wound down. They agreed to mount a cross-Channel invasion with a tentative date of 1 May 1944. This agreement masked substantial strategic differences in the British and American conceptions for the campaign in Northwest Europe. The British believed the allies should undertake such an operation to administer the final blow to a fundamentally weakened Wehrmacht. U.S. military leaders, on the other hand, viewed the invasion of Northwest Europe as the primary means of destroying the German armed forces. The British sought a Waterloo rather than a Passchendaele; the Americans looked forward to a campaign along the lines of Grant's 1864-1865 overland campaign in Virginia or Pershing's offensive in the Meuse-Argonne region during World War I.

In the meantime, the allies would continue to wage the anti-submarine war, prosecute the combined bomber offensive (supplemented by attacks from the Mediterranean once the allies seized airfields within range of Ploesti and southern Germany), and support lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union. In the Pacific, American forces would mount twin drives across the Central and Southwest Pacific, retake the Aleutian islands of Attu and Kiska, and intensify submarine warfare and carrier raids against Japanese shipping and bases. In the China-Burma-India Theater, the allies would bolster the capacity of General Claire Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force, continue operations to open a land route to China, and prepare plans for an amphibious invasion along the west coast of Burma. In the Mediterranean, they agreed to plan for future operations to eliminate Italy from the war, although only with the forces then in theater, minus four American

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[979] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, pp. 31-33; King, *Fleet Admiral King*, p. 434.

and three British divisions that the allies would withdraw and redeploy to England in preparation for a cross-Channel attack.[980]

The successful invasion of Sicily achieved the strategic objectives set forth by the allies for the campaign: it opened the Mediterranean shipping lanes, forced Germany to divert forces from the Eastern Front to Italy, and caused Italian resolve to waiver.[981] Mussolini's government soon collapsed, an event that opened up a number of possibilities. At the Quadrant conference in Quebec (August 1943) the combined chiefs of staff authorized Eisenhower to invade the Italian mainland (Operation AVALANCHE), but only with the forces currently in the Mediterranean. These forces would be sufficient to establish air bases in Italy as far north as Rome, to seize Sardinia and Corsica, and to invade southern France in support of a cross-Channel attack. The allies would rearm up to 11 French divisions for the campaign, while supporting guerrilla forces in the Balkans and France. Beyond these objectives, the joint chiefs remained firm that the allies should apply no more effort in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, they argued that the further north the allies advanced in Italy, the easier the German defensive problem became as shortened lines of communication and a shorter coastline required fewer forces for defense. In the view of the joint chiefs, the primary achievement of the conference was the allied confirmation of the date for the cross-Channel invasion (1 May 1944) and their approval of the tentative plan, now code-named Operation OVERLORD.[982]

At Quebec the combined chiefs of staff approved the Central Pacific drive from the Gilberts to the Marianas, along with MacArthur's drive up the New Guinea coast and into the Admiralties and Bismarck Archipelago. U.S. forces would neutralize Rabaul and let Japanese

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[980] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, pp. 126-145.
[981] After the invasion of Sicily, Hitler called off Operation ZITADELLE, the offensive against the Kursk salient, in order to provide reinforcements for the Mediterranean.
[982] Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, pp. 243-248; Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, pp. 227-229.

forces there wither on the vine. Allied discussions over the Pacific War revolved around access to landing craft more than the availability of ground forces. Brooke and the British Chiefs of Staff on the whole supported these operations, since they would leave the mass of American ground forces available for employment in Europe.[983]

In fall 1943, further operations in the Mediterranean competed directly with a spring 1944 cross-Channel invasion as alternative priorities for allied forces. By then operations in the Mediterranean had largely achieved the stated goals of the campaign. The allies had cleared North Africa of Axis forces, secured the shipping lanes to Suez, established air bases from which allied bombers could reach Ploesti and southern Germany, and knocked Italy out of the war. German forces were tied down in the defense of Italy, southern France, and the Balkans. Further offensive operations in Italy would not change these conditions. The question became, then, what was the purposed of continued operations in the Mediterranean in late 1943? As U.S. planners saw the situation, further operations in the Mediterranean at that point competed directly with preparations for a cross-Channel invasion in 1944.

After summer 1943, allied strategy in the Mediterranean was anchored to operations in the Italian peninsula. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff resisted further reinforcement of the Mediterranean theater, which meant that allied commanders would have to make do with the forces on hand in the region. Aside from the Italian campaign there were enough divisions to support, at most, one more major operation in the region. From January to May 1944 this was the Anzio beachhead. At Eisenhower's insistence, after the seizure of Rome the invasion of southern France took priority over other possibilities.

At the Cairo Conference (Sextant, 22-26 November 1943), British political and military leaders pressed their American counterparts for continued operations in the Mediterranean

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[983] Ibid., pp. 255-256.

theater. Churchill argued (incorrectly and unsuccessfully) that the allies could materially assist the Soviets by continued operations in Italy, support to resistance movements in the Balkans, and through new ventures in the eastern Mediterranean, beginning with the seizure of the island of Rhodes. The operations in the eastern Mediterranean would require the retention of landing craft that would cause a delay in OVERLORD until July 1944.[984] Roosevelt saw clearly that the Rhodes operation, if executed, would inevitably lead to British calls for the liberation of Greece.[985] The Americans refused to commit to a course of action in Cairo but privately remained steadfast; in their view, OVERLORD was the overwhelming priority for the allies in 1944 and they were not about to be talked into postponing it for what they viewed as the sake of British imperial interests in the Mediterranean and the Balkans.[986]

The presence of Chiang Kai-shek at Cairo brought into focus allied strategy on the mainland of Asia. Britain wanted to recapture Burma, but largely on its own to atone for the shameful defeat suffered its forces had suffered at the hands of the Japanese in 1942. The United States put great stock in opening up a land route to China to turn its vast manpower reserves into actual combat power to destroy the bulk of the Imperial Japanese Army on the Asian mainland. Chiang Kai-shek sought to preserve his forces for the coming post-war struggle against Mao Tse-tung and the communists. The allies could never reconcile these disparate objectives. "In Eisenhower's command," notes Robert Sherwood, "harmonious and wholehearted co-operation was possible because British and American objectives could be summed up in one word – 'Berlin.' In Southeast Asia, on the other hand, the British and Americans were fighting two

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[984] Richard M. Leighton, "OVERLORD versus the Mediterranean at the Cairo-Tehran Conferences," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington, 1960), pp. 264-265.

[985] Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, p. 310.

[986] Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), p. 166.

different wars for different purposes, and the Kuomintang Government of China was fighting a third war for purposes largely its own."[987]

Marshall emphasized the need to train and equip the Chinese Nationalist armies for use against Japan and operations in Burma (with Commonwealth, Chinese, and a few American troops) to open the Burma Road.[988] The joint chiefs of staff pushed for an invasion of the west coast of Burma (BUCCANEER) to drive out the Japanese. It was essential, in their view, to keep the Chinese in the war. Chinese manpower would tie down the bulk of the Imperial Japanese Army, while China's proximity to Japan provided U.S. bombers airfields from which to launch attacks against the Japanese home islands.[989] The British felt (correctly) that the Americans overestimated the Chinese war effort and potential as a base from which to launch attacks against Japan.[990]

The British Chiefs of Staff instead proposed diverting landing craft allocated to BUCCANEER to support operations in the Aegean Sea. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, tired of continued British efforts to expand operations in the Mediterranean, exploded. "Before we finished," the affable Arnold recalled, "it became quite an open talk with everybody throwing his cards on the table, face up." Lieutenant General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, the U.S. commander in the China-Burma-India Theater, reported the exchange in starker terms: "King almost climbed over the table at Brooke. God, he was mad. I wished he had socked him."[991] American strategists, notes one historian, regarded the Balkans "with something akin to the superstitious dread with which medieval mariners once contemplated the unknown monster-infested reach of

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[987] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 773.
[988] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, pp. 349-350.
[989] William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York, 1950), p. 202; King, *Fleet Admiral King*, p. 420.
[990] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 356.
[991] Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, p. 305. Known to his colleagues less than affectionately as "Blowtorch," King had a well-deserved reputation for his vicious temper. He hardly cared. "When the going gets rough, they call on the sons of bitches," King is reputed to have remarked. Ibid., p. 7.

the Western Ocean."[992] On 24 November when Churchill again attempted to convince the combined chiefs of staff of the desirability of the proposed operation to seize the island of Rhodes, Marshall exclaimed, "Not one American soldier is going to die on [that] goddamned beach."[993]

Less than a week later in Tehran, it was Stalin's turn to weigh in on allied strategy. The Soviet leader offered to enter the war against Japan after Germany was defeated and then came down decidedly on the side of launching OVERLORD in the spring, supported by a subsidiary invasion through southern France (ANVIL). He also pledged a contemporaneous Soviet offensive in the east to support the cross-Channel invasion.[994] Stalin's views aligned with Roosevelt's, and together they prevailed over Churchill's preference for new ventures in the eastern Mediterranean.[995] The president understood full well that Churchill's designs to enter Europe via the Balkans would antagonize Stalin, who clearly viewed Eastern Europe within the Soviet sphere of influence. Roosevelt was a realist in this regard; he was willing to cede Soviet influence in Eastern Europe for more important objectives elsewhere.

The Tehran Conference was a significant watershed in American military policy during World War II. Stalin's insistence on a cross-Channel invasion in May 1944 resulted in the allied designation of OVERLORD and its subsidiary operation, ANVIL, as the supreme operations for 1944 – not just in Europe, but worldwide.[996] For two years the Pacific War had drawn nearly as many resources as the war in Europe. The allies would finally support the "Germany first" strategy with ample resources. The British peripheral strategy was all but dead, replaced by

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[992] Leighton, "OVERLORD Revisited," p. 932.
[993] Ibid., p. 307.
[994] Herbert Feis, *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1957), p. 263.
[995] The British left Tehran still convinced that an operation against the island of Rhodes was possible, but Turkish demands for excessive military aid soon convinced Churchill to abandon his plans in the Aegean.
[996] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 378.

operations designed to engage and destroy the Wehrmacht in the heart of Northwest Europe. OVERLORD would take priority, with ANVIL as a supporting operation. Operations in Italy and elsewhere in the Mediterranean would continue, but only with the resources already allocated to the theater.[997] The American strategy of defeating the Wehrmacht in a direct approach in Northwest Europe would be put to the test.[998]

The limiting factor in the strategy of the Western allies in 1944 was the shortage of landing craft, particularly landing ship, tanks (LSTs). In November 1943 during the Tehran conference, there were fewer than 300 LSTs to service the requirements of the Mediterranean theater, the Pacific theaters, and a cross-Channel invasion of Northwest Europe.[999] Early in January 1944 Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery and Eisenhower revised the OVERLORD plan to put five divisions ashore by sea on D-Day, along with three divisions to be dropped by parachute and glider. This decision required additional landing craft to support the operation. Something had to give. In the end Roosevelt resolved the issue (again, by overruling the joint chiefs) by canceling BUCCANEER. King agreed to divert some landing craft production from the Pacific to the European theater, while Eisenhower eventually decided to make OVERLORD and ANVIL sequential, rather than simultaneous, operations.[1000]

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[997] Shortly before Christmas 1943, Churchill revived a proposal for an amphibious turning movement around German lines in southern Italy at Anzio (Operation SHINGLE). He appealed to Roosevelt to allow a three-week delay in the movement of landing craft from the Mediterranean to England to support the operation. Roosevelt concurred, but in light of promises made to Stalin at Tehran, made it clear that operations in the Mediterranean could not be allowed to delay OVERLORD or ANVIL. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, p. 330.

[998] Five days after the conclusion of the Tehran conference, Roosevelt named Eisenhower to lead the allied forces in OVERLORD. Knowing that Marshall expected to lead the invasion force, Roosevelt told him, "I feel I could not sleep at night with you out of the country." Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 803.

[999] Leighton, "OVERLORD Versus the Mediterranean at the Cairo-Tehran Conferences," p. 259. At Tehran Marshall told Soviet Marshal Kliment Voroshilov: "My military education and experience in the First World War has all been based on roads, rivers, and railroads. During the last two years, however, I have been acquiring an education based on oceans and I've had to learn all over again. Prior to the present war I never heard of any landing-craft except a rubber boat. Now I think about little else." Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 784.

[1000] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, pp. 165-173.

The successful execution of OVERLORD put in place the endgame for U.S. strategy in Europe. The final decision was whether or not to proceed with the invasion of southern France. Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff opposed an American-French invasion, preferring instead on a continued offensive in Italy and operations in the Balkans. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff left the decision largely in Eisenhower's hands. Eisenhower remained firm. He valued ANVIL as a means to secure another port through which to pour men and materiel, to open up another avenue of advance to Germany, and as a conduit for support to the Maquis.[1001] Eisenhower was correct on all three counts.[1002] Moreover, ANVIL's opening up of the Rhone River Valley to allied logistics proved crucial to supporting the Western Front on the German Frontier until the Canadians finally opened up the Scheldt and Antwerp in late fall.

The final two wartime conferences at Yalta (4-11 February 1945) and Potsdam (17 July-2 August 1945) established the political contours for the post-war world. At Yalta, Roosevelt (with a pro-forma nod in a "Declaration of Liberated Europe" to the principles of the Atlantic Charter) continued to bend to Stalin's demands for what amounted to a free hand for the Soviet Union to dominate Eastern Europe in return for cooperation in the war against Japan, an orderly occupation of Germany, and Soviet participation in the United Nations.[1003] Churchill's postwar criticism that the United States and Britain should have opposed Soviet aggrandizement in the region ignores the fact that when the leaders met in the Crimea, the Red Army was poised on the Oder River, only 70 kilometers from Berlin, while Allied forces had just finished defeating the Wehrmacht in the Ardennes. The western leaders were in no position to make demands of Stalin.

[1001] Maurice Matloff, "The ANVIL Decision: Crossroads of Strategy," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington, 1960), pp. 392-394.

[1002] Eisenhower's decision to proceed with ANVIL proved critical to relieving the logistical burden on allied troops in France caused by the British failure to open the Scheldt Estuary in September 1944, after the British XXX Corps had seized intact the port of Antwerp.

[1003] "Protocol of Proceedings of Crimea Conference," 24 March 1945, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1945YALTA.html.

At Potsdam, President Harry S. Truman and Prime Minister Clement Attlee saw more clearly the extent of Stalin's duplicity in honoring the Yalta agreements, but there was little they could do to budge the Soviet leader given the strength of the Red Army in Europe. The outlines of the Cold War were beginning to take shape.

The final strategic decisions in the Pacific were not so clear. Belatedly, Marshall and his planners came to the conclusion that their desire to use Chinese troops and bases as a major prong in the campaign to defeat Japan was little more than wishful thinking. At the second Cairo conference (4-6 December 1943), American military leaders reluctantly acquiesced to the cancellation of major amphibious operations in Burma in order to provide more landing craft for OVERLORD. The United States would henceforth defeat Japan via the Pacific route.

King viewed the Marianas as "the key to the western Pacific."[1004] Seizure of these islands would provide bases from which to interdict the Japanese lines of communication, provide air bases from which to bomb Japan, and perhaps bring about a decisive battle with the Imperial Japanese Navy. The joint chiefs agreed. In February 1944 planners concluded that 12 groups of B-29 bombers could be based in the Marianas, making an air offensive from China unnecessary. The China-Burma-India theater soaked up enormous numbers of service troops due to the primitive nature of the lines of communication. All supplies had to be flown over the "Hump" to China, which made the operations based there incredibly inefficient.[1005] To make matters worse, in the spring of 1944 the Japanese army in China overran the airfields from which B-29s could attack the Japanese homeland. The China-Burma-India Theater from this point forward became a backwater of American strategy, important only for its value in tying down the majority of the Imperial Japanese Army on the Chinese mainland.

[1004] King, *Fleet Admiral King*, p. 444.
[1005] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 445. The Ledo Road was not completed until January 1945, much too late to affect the course of the war.

On 11-12 March 1944 the joint chiefs of staff decided that the Southwest and Central Pacific drives would converge in the Philippines, but gave priority to the Central Pacific approach in order to seize the key air bases in the Marianas for the commencement of a strategic bombing campaign against Japan.[1006] Whether U.S. forces would seize Mindanao or Leyte and then bypass Luzon to seize Formosa was still an open question. Carrier raids on Mindanao from 9-14 September 1944 showed the weakness of the Japanese position in the southern Philippines. Admiral William "Bull" Halsey recommended to Nimitz that the initial landings be made on Leyte in the central part of the islands instead. For two days messages buzzed back and forth across the Pacific to Quebec, where the joint chiefs were attending the Octagon conference. On 14 September the Joint Chiefs, MacArthur, and Nimitz agreed to advance the invasion timetable by two months and to invade Leyte on 20 October 1944.[1007] King favored bypassing the northern Philippines in favor of an invasion of Formosa, but the shortage of service forces in the Pacific decided the issue in favor of the liberation of Luzon, a task that MacArthur felt was necessary in any case due to the moral obligation of the United States to liberate the Philippine people.[1008] U.S. forces in the Central Pacific would instead invade Iwo Jima and Okinawa.[1009]

The annihilation of the Wehrmacht and the forces of Imperial Japan in the campaigns of 1944-1945 was the result of a carefully crafted grand strategy that established the conditions for total victory over the Axis powers. The two atomic bombs dropped on Japan – a decision made by Roosevelt's successor, President Harry S. Truman – merely added exclamation marks to an outcome that was already all but certain. The United States and the Soviet Union, reluctant belligerents and unlikely allies – had emerged as the arbiters of global destiny.

[1006] Ibid., pp. 455-459.
[1007] King, *Fleet Admiral King*, pp. 571-572.
[1008] Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1964), pp. 197-198.
[1009] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p. 531.

Fleet Admiral William Leahy put an appropriate post-script on the conflict when he noted that on V-J Day, "What the people of the United States, and of the entire world, were celebrating was the definite end of a war which started in 1914, had a temporary adjournment for further preparations from 1918 to 1939, and which had been fought to this successful conclusion for the past six years."[1010]

By just about any measure, American strategy in World War II was astonishingly successful. The United States suffered fewer per capita losses than any other major power that fought the war and exited the conflict in better shape than other nations in just about every measure of power and influence.[1011] How were America's political and military leaders able to engineer this outcome?

Americans commonly view World War II as a conflict in which U.S. political leaders gave the military a great deal of leeway in designing the strategy that defeated the Axis powers. Nothing could be further from the truth; indeed, political direction was absolutely essential to the successful crafting of strategy before and during the war. Initially, Roosevelt subordinated the readiness of U.S. forces to his program of aid to active belligerents in the war against Germany. If he had agreed to the advice from his military advisers, the United States would have severely curtailed programs such as cash and carry and lend-lease, with a detrimental impact on the ability of Great Britain to remain in the war. After Pearl Harbor, had Roosevelt put the strategic direction of the war in the hands of his generals and admirals, either the United States would have suffered an enormous setback in a premature cross-Channel invasion, or the U.S. main

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[1010] Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 437.

[1011] Only the Soviet Union had a larger army, but its air force, navy, and economy were substantially weaker than those of the United States.

effort would have shifted to the Pacific – with dire ramifications later in the war.[1012] The myth that Roosevelt turned over the strategic direction of the war to the joint chiefs is a reflection of the increasing convergence of their views in 1944 and 1945, as opposed to the earlier period in which the president's views were often at odds with those of his generals and admirals.[1013]

Roosevelt's quest for options in strategic planning clashed with the desire of military leaders to determine a single course of action that they could then resource and organize in finite detail. The president may have exasperated the joint chiefs with his hesitancy to make decisions, but this seeming indecisiveness masked a deeper need to retain strategic (and political) flexibility. When required, Roosevelt could make quick and decisive decisions – witness his orders in July 1942 that resulted in the adoption of the invasion of North Africa as allied strategy.

Roosevelt initiated or approved all major American strategic decisions in the war, to include the priority of defeating Germany first, the undeclared war against German U-boats in the Atlantic in 1941, lend-lease, the invasion of North Africa, and the unconditional surrender policy. After Pearl Harbor, the president overruled his military advisers on thirteen strategic decisions. [1014] He guided American strategy by allowing the joint chiefs of staff to direct U.S. forces, but intervened when necessary when they strayed from his desired course. Roosevelt held firm to his support of Britain, never wavered from the priority of defeating Germany first, and eventually supported an invasion of Northwest Europe, but only after allied forces took advantage of more immediate and promising opportunities in the Mediterranean region. In assessing Roosevelt's role in World War II, one must agree with the official army historian who

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[1012] Had the United States put its main effort in the Pacific, the war in Europe would have extended into 1946, and may very well have ended with an atomic bomb being dropped on Berlin. The extension of the Holocaust would most likely have resulted in the deaths of millions more Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and other undesirables of Hitler's new order.

[1013] Emerson, "Franklin Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief," p. 193.

[1014] Leighton, "OVERLORD Revisited," p. 929.

concludes, "Every President has possessed the constitutional authority which that title indicates, but few Presidents have shared Mr. Roosevelt's readiness to exercise it in fact and in detail and with such determination."[1015]

To accomplish his objectives, Roosevelt carefully managed relations among the allies and his own military advisers. His aim was to win the war against the Axis powers as quickly as possible, while maintaining alliance harmony in order to ensure cooperation in the post-war world. These goals worked against Churchill's desire to play balance-of-power politics, a game for which the American people had no stomach. Having educated the American people on the need to destroy Hitler's Germany, it is unlikely that Roosevelt could have persuaded them to fight the conflict for anything less than total victory. Roosevelt's decision to announce unconditional surrender at Casablanca was an attempt to keep the coalition intact and the American people in the fight to the end. Roosevelt understood the fragile nature of the allied coalition, and most likely believed that only a demand for unconditional surrender could keep the three major powers together. It was an inspired policy, albeit one that proved problematic in execution.

Through the mists of history, the Anglo-American alliance during World War II is popularly seen as close and cordial. Yet the veneer of cooperation hides very real and significant disagreements on strategy that played out in the nine inter-allied strategic conferences held during the war. Although the allies on the whole reached consensus, they only achieved such outcomes after intense and often bitter discussion. The more debate and conflict over the strategy, the better it turned out. Intense debates forced the various sides to present the logic behind their strategic concepts and to defend them against sharp questioning. Criticism often

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[1015] Mark S. Watson, *The War Department: Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington, 1950), p. 5.

emanated from inter-service rivalry as much as from inter-allied discord. "The history of Allied conferences would be simpler if one could speak of an American case and a British case," writes Forest Pogue, Marshall's biographer. "In actuality one finds the Americans against the British, the Army and Air Forces against the Navy, and the Navy against MacArthur, with Marshall attempting to find a solution somewhere between."[1016] These forceful debates prevented an outbreak of groupthink and allowed the best strategic concepts to flourish. In the end the United States and its allies won a multi-front war – a rarity in military history.

American strategy was opportunistic. Once Roosevelt made the decision to invade North Africa, the joint chiefs of staff saw the logic in continuing operations in the Mediterranean to seize Sicily, knock Italy out of the war, and then to launch a subsidiary invasion of southern France. War production would not support a major 1943 invasion of the European continent in any case. Likewise, as the war progressed the joint chiefs of staff supported an advanced timetable of operations in the Pacific to take advantage of Japanese weakness. America's aim was not to become globally dominant, but a series of incremental decisions made over time resulted in that outcome.

U.S. military leaders focused their strategic thinking on the expeditious defeat of the Axis powers. When political and military objectives collided, they invariably focused on the military goal of the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. As the end of the war in Europe neared on 28 April 1945, Marshall wrote to Eisenhower, "Personally and aside from all logistic, tactical or strategical implications, I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political purposes."[1017] Roosevelt's untimely death just prior to the end of the war resulted in the military view prevailing as the allies closed in on Berlin and Tokyo.

[1016] Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory*, p. 206.
[1017] Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, pp. 532-534.

One final note on U.S. strategic decision-making in World War II is in order. The United States was capably served by the officers who worked in the service and joint planning divisions. In retrospect it is amazing how a relative handful of officers performed the tasks required to craft strategic plans and policy in the greatest war in history. During the interwar period no more than a dozen officers were assigned to the War Plans Division of the U.S. Army General Staff, most of them majors and lieutenant colonels. Yet these officers fulfilled the duties inherent in joint and service strategic planning, mobilization, and exercises.[1018] The key to their performance was solid and thorough professional military education. Officers assigned to the Army War College participated in planning exercises that mirrored studies conducted by the War Plans Division. The habit of thinking about war at the national strategic level "explains in part how American officers, whose command experience of skeletal units was typically at lower levels, were capable of stepping into key positions near the apex of political power and into high command with a great degree of confidence and competence."[1019] Military education explains how the small interwar military produced such excellent strategists. It is a lesson the U.S. military would do well to emulate today.

[1018] Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 29.
[1019] Ibid., p. 158.

American Grand Strategy and the Unfolding of the Cold War 1945-1961

In early 1947, on George Washington's Birthday, Secretary of State George Marshall told an audience at Princeton University that "I doubt seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and deep convictions regarding some of the basic international issues of today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the Fall of Athens."[1020] Marshall was drawing an analogy between the emerging Cold War of his time and the "war like no other" that had been of such pivotal importance in the Greek world 2400 years earlier.[1021] Such analogies from a previous and relatively familiar war can provide a useful intellectual point of departure for assessment of the nature of a war upon which one is embarking, especially if that war seems quite peculiar at first sight.

Without due regard to differences as well as similarities, however, simple analogies can be a treacherous guide to action. Even when the similarities seem compelling, moreover, one ought to bear in mind the jibe of social-science methodologists that "anyone can draw a straight line between two dots." We can gain greater analytical power by connecting a greater number of dots in patterns that are more complex but that still exhibit key factors to guide assessment of the dynamics of a conflict as it unfolds and selection of courses of action for winning that conflict. The premise of this essay is that one can insightfully evaluate American grand strategy in the Cold War in terms of generic factors of success gleaned from previous big wars—not just the Peloponnesian War, but also such wars as those between Rome and Carthage in the ancient world and Britain and France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (the Napoleonic

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[1020] As quoted in Walter Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton, NJ, 1987), p. 3.
[1021] Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How The Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York, 2005).

War above all) as well as the two world wars of the twentieth century. As that sample suggests, "big wars" are those violent conflicts between great powers that are fought for high political stakes, that have both sides seeking to put together and sustain coalitions, that spread across multiple theaters, and that involve the use of many instruments of power and influence.

My thesis is that there are four recurring keys to success in big wars:

- the winning side does a better job of building and maintaining a cohesive coalition;

- the winning side does a better job of developing and integrating different instruments of military power and non-military influence;

- the losing side engages in egregiously self-defeating behavior, usually in one form or another of strategic overextension;

- the winning side does a better job of cultivating, exploiting, and sustaining economic superiority (at least in modern big wars).

These are *generic* keys to success that, according to my premise, typically weigh heavily in the outcome of a big war.

Along with the common features of big wars, each big war of course has its myriad of distinctive features. Thus, there may also be *idiosyncratic* elements of success in each war that deserve to be added to the list of generic keys to success for that particular case. We should expect the balance of generic keys to success and idiosyncratic elements of success to vary from case to case. Even in cases where generic keys to success are quite important, as in this essay's interpretation of the Cold War, the distinctive features of the case manifest themselves in the particular ways in which the four generic keys play themselves out. That is especially true with the Cold War, whose most distinctive feature in relation to previous big wars was that the two

principal belligerents never *openly* engaged in conventional military operations against each other. Non-military elements of success were more important in the Cold War than in other big wars under consideration in this volume.

Such a patterned approach to grand strategy is by no means deterministic. As Clausewitz stressed, in thinking about war the most to which one can intellectually aspire is a sense of probabilities, never certainty.[1022] Not only should one bear in mind that generic keys to success may fall well short of accounting for 100 percent of the outcome, but one should also never lose sight of the role of contingency and choice. The outcome of a big war--indeed any war--is hard to predict and never foreordained. What ultimately counts for most in the outcome of a big war is the strategic choices the belligerents make. Thinking in terms of generic keys to success simply directs our attention to the types of choices that will probably have the most important strategic consequences.

In applying my patterned approach to the unfolding of the Cold War from the mid-1940s to the early 1960s, this essay will take regard of three underlying questions:

- To what extent did American leaders focus on the factors that I posit as keys to success in big wars?

- To what extent were they guided by broad strategic assessments and general strategic concepts in making decisions related to these factors?

- To what extent did their decisions play out with increasing strategic effectiveness over time?

My overall answer to these three questions is: "to a considerable extent, but…." That "but" is especially pertinent with regard to the third question. American leaders were remarkably focused

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[1022] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1989, p. 167.

on, and doing a reasonably good job with, the four keys to success in a big war, but they seem to have lost sight of a "theory of victory" that might ultimately bring the Cold War to an end on political terms highly favorable to the United States. Their most important strategic concept, "containment," which in its earliest form had considerable promise as a strategy, as a way of bringing about the "mellowing" or the "break-up" of the Soviet Union, had become a policy, an end in itself, by the early 1960s. Not until the early 1980s did a focus on winning the Cold War re-emerge at the top of the American government.

Strategic Concepts and Strategic Assessments

From 1940, when American leaders began seriously thinking about projecting power on a truly global scale, to the end of the Cold War a half-century later, the most idiosyncratic feature of U.S. grand strategy was the importance placed on general strategic concepts as a potential guide to the selection of particular courses of action. Eliot Cohen has extolled this feature with regard to U.S. strategy in the Second World War.[1023] John Gaddis has done the same, and very elaborately, for U.S. strategy in the Cold War.[1024] In the Second World War, the key concept was the Europe-first strategic priority adumbrated by Admiral Harold Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, in his Plan Dog memorandum of November 1940 as the offshoot of his assessment of an international environment made quite threatening to American national security by Nazi Germany's conquest of France and attack on Britain.[1025] An important subsidiary concept,

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[1023] Eliot Cohen, "The Strategy of Innocence? The United States, 1920-1945," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 463-464.
[1024] See especially John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2005).
[1025] Memorandum of 12 November 1940, by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Stark, addressed to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and passed on to President Franklin Roosevelt, Box 4, President's Safe Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde, Park, NY.

which I have recently highlighted in relation to American wartime strategy against Japan, was attrition of adversary capabilities while the long process of mobilizing overwhelming military power from American economic potential was coming to fruition. The notion of attrition was articulated by President Franklin Roosevelt to the public, to military commanders, and to allies, and it rested on his assessment of the foreshortened peak of German and Japanese mobilization.[1026] Both concepts had a part to play in the subsequent story of the Cold War. The attrition of Soviet economic capabilities became prominent toward the end of that story. The Europe-first concept carried over into the Cold War from the beginning, not least because of the policymaking roles played in 1947-1961 by two American military leaders of the Second World War, George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower. But that strategic priority became subsumed in a larger concept of containment. And that overall concept came to have another important subsidiary concept, nuclear deterrence. All these concepts were connected to strategic assessments of adversaries, environments, and situations.

Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of American strategy as it unfolded during the early Cold War was a series of assessments and reassessments of the Soviet Union and the U.S.'s conflict with it:

- George Kennan's "Long Telegram" of February 1946;

- Kennan's "X" article in *Foreign Affairs* July 1947;

- Paul Nitze's NSC 68, circulated in April 1950;

[1026] Bradford A. Lee, "A Pivotal Campaign in a Peripheral Theater: Guadalcanal and World War II in the Pacific," in *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theaters of Naval Warfare*, ed. Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (London, 2011), pp. 84-98; "Address of the President Delivered by Radio from the White House," 23 February 1942, at www.mhric.org/fd/chat20.html; Roosevelt to General Douglas MacArthur, May 6, 1942, RG 4, Box 15, MacArthur Papers, MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk, VA; and Roosevelt's remarks at the first plenary meeting of the Tehran Conference on 28 November 1943, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran 1943* (Washington, D.C., 1961), p. 488.

- Eisenhower's Solarium exercise initiated in May 1953 and culminating in NSC 162/2 of October 1953.

The items on this list have been the subject of much discussion, most of all by diplomatic historians who have interpreted these documents in terms of the development and intensification of a cold war that, many of them judge, might well have been avoided, or at least attenuated, if the United States had adopted a more conciliatory posture vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. From a strategic perspective, however, it makes sense to assume that a formidable array of factors made a cold war highly likely after the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II.[1027] If so, rather than try to prevent the conflict after the fact, students and practitioners of grand strategy may well find it more intellectually rewarding to look in these documents for the emergence of American concepts for prevailing in the conflict without fighting a hot war. Ultimately, the point of strategy is to win in some sense, not simply to co-exist with an implacable adversary.

What lay behind Kennan's famous Long Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in early 1946 was his contempt for futile attempts at negotiating diplomatic compromises with the Soviets, most recently by his boss, Secretary of State James Byrnes, at the Moscow conference of foreign ministers in December 1945.[1028] Kennan would have been even more disquieted if he had had full knowledge of the intellectual disarray about how to handle the Soviets that prevailed among professional diplomats back in the State Department.[1029] What Kennan provided in his telegram was an assessment of the deep, intertwined cultural and ideological roots of efforts by the Soviet Union's elite to expand its power outward and to undermine the cohesion of the

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[1027] Colin Gray, "Mission Improbable: Fear, Culture, and Interest: Peace Making, 1943-1949," in *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War*, ed. Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 265-291.

[1028] George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950* (Boston, 1967), pp. 283-295.

[1029] For some manifestations of the disarray, see Robert L. Messer, "Paths Not Taken: The United States Department of State and Alternatives to Containment, 1945-1946," *Diplomatic History*, 1.4, Fall 1977, pp. 297-319.

United States and other Western nations. He gave general reasons to believe that Americans could successfully deal with this burgeoning Soviet problem, but he did not at this point offer specific strategic concepts for doing so.[1030]

An assessment oriented toward "knowing the enemy" is an important step toward a strategy for dealing with the enemy.[1031] Kennan's X article of 1947 stretched that step beyond his telegram of 1946 in a way that should command the close attention of those interested in grand strategy.[1032] For there, to his assessment of the traditional strategic culture of the Russian elite and the foreign-policy implications of Marxist-Leninist ideology, which was akin to an academic guide to understanding, he added an even more important assessment of the Stalinist political system, which was a practical guide to action. As I have suggested elsewhere, to "attack the enemy's political system" is ultimately the most important strategic concept for winning a war or prevailing in a long-term competition.[1033] To engage in such an "attack" with a reasonable hope of success, it is necessary to identify the vulnerabilities of the "system." Kennan did that through the clever intellectual maneuver of turning the tools of Marxist analysis against the Stalinist regime: "…Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay…."[1034] Those "seeds"— what Marxists would call "contradictions" and strategists would call "critical vulnerabilities"—Kennan found aplenty, in the regime's messianic outlook, its "uneven development" of heavy industry to the neglect of agriculture and consumer goods, the severe strains in the relationship between the regime and the mass of the

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[1030] Kennan's Long Telegram of 22 February 1946, is in Department of State, *Foreign Relations…1946*, vol. 6, pp. 695-709.
[1031] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford,1963), p. 129.
[1032] X [George Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs,* 25, July 1947, pp. 566-582.
[1033] Bradford A. Lee, "Strategic Interaction: Theory and History for Practitioners," in *Developing Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century*, ed. Thomas G. Mahnken (Stanford, CA, 2012), chap. 3.
[1034] X, "Sources," p. 580.

people, and the enormous potential for instability when it came time for the transfer of power after Stalin's death, in the absence of any settled mechanism for succession.[1035]

The external behavior of the regime masked its internal vulnerabilities. To describe its outward expansion, Kennan used the vivid metaphors of "a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable force," and of "a fluid stream" that "filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power." [1036] There was no point in foreign diplomats trying to reason with their Soviet counterparts, and any negotiated arrangement in the near term would only represent a temporary "tactical maneuver" on the part of the leadership in Moscow. But, equally, there was no need for the United States to contemplate a spasm of military violence to prevent further Soviet expansion, for Stalin was not reckless as Napoleon and Hitler had been.[1037] If over the long run the adversaries of the Soviet Union could counter its external expansion with a purpose as steady and sustained as that which motivated it, the internal vulnerabilities of the Soviet system could be unmasked.

Here emerged the strategic concept of "containment" that, in due course, gave an unusual degree of coherence to the American side of the Cold War. Kennan defined it as "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy...."[1038] In his article, he did not go on to specify the courses of action that he had in mind. Later he complained that those who played up the role of the military instrument in supporting containment misconstrued his words "contrary force" and "counter-force." There is no doubt that Kennan was professionally

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[1035] Ibid., pp. 576-580, 582.
[1036] Ibid., pp. 574-575.
[1037] The Soviets were "more sensitive to contrary force, more ready to yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front when that force is felt to be strong, and thus more rational in the logic and rhetoric of power." Ibid., p. 575.
[1038] Ibid., p. 576.

and temperamentally inclined to play up the importance of non-military instruments. But during the gestation of his article, when he was a faculty member at the new National War College in Washington, he was more attuned to military instruments than he was to be later. Indeed, at the war college, he worked on concepts for the rapid deployment of joint military task forces "capable of delivering at short notice effective blows on limited theaters of operation far from our own shores."[1039] What is more, the X article grew out of a memorandum that he prepared for Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, to whom Kennan was indebted for advancing his career, first by circulating the Long Telegram around the highest levels of the US national security establishment, then by involving himself in Kennan's assignment to the war college, and finally by helping him become the first head of the new Policy Planning Staff at the State Department.[1040] Kennan had good reason in 1947 to give due regard to the role that the military instrument could play in conjunction with non-military instruments.

Kennan was by no means content to outline a strategy--as containment was in its original formulation--without attaching it to a policy. As the political objectives of the intense 10-15 year contest with the Soviet Union that he contemplated, he held out the prospect of "the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."[1041] In Clausewitzian parlance, the former represents an unlimited political objective; the latter, a limited one. When the mellowing of the Soviet political system came to pass in the late 1980s, and the break-up followed in the early 1990s, Kennan complained yet again. In wanting no part of the credit for the outcome, he was not being modest;

[1039] Kennan, *Memoirs*, p. 311. For other, non-military subjects that occupied Kennan's mind at the National War College, see Giles D. Harlow and George C. Maerz, ed., *Measures Short of War: The George F. Kennan Lectures at the National War College 1946-47* (Washington, D.C., 1991).

[1040] For the Kennan-Forrestal relationship, see David Mayers, "Containment and the Primacy of Diplomacy: George Kennan's Views, 1947-1948," *International Security*, 11.1, Summer 1986, pp. 129-133; Wilson D. Miscamble, *George Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton, N J, 1992), pp. 10, 27-28, 109-114; and John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York, 2011), pp. 218-219, 232, 239, 252, 258-262, 271.

[1041] X, "Sources," p. 582.

rather, alienated from what he saw as the heavy-handed applications of containment from the time of NSC-68 in 1950 to the Reagan Administration in the 1980s, he was being disingenuous. The political outcome was truly what he had anticipated in 1947, albeit delayed by a generation. It was a remarkable achievement to lay out a strategy and a policy for the emerging Cold War in the way that Kennan did in his X article. It would be even more remarkable to find in his article a coherent and plausible theory of victory connecting the strategy and the policy. By "theory of victory," I mean in this context a realistic set of assumptions by which envisioned courses of action would translate into the desired political endgame. How would the effects of containment play out in the Soviet political system? What would ultimately cause the mellowing or break-up of that system? How exactly would the systemic vulnerabilities that he had identified manifest themselves in a chain reaction of cause and effect? Kennan's answers to those questions were not altogether clear in what he wrote. Elsewhere I have interpreted containment as a strategy of denial. [1042] Containing Soviet expansion would deny the Soviet leaders "incremental dividends"—periodic successes that would lend credence to their ideological conceit that time was on the side of communism and that would accumulate political capital for their political system among the people over whom they ruled. Denied such successes, Kennan suggested, Soviet leaders would become frustrated, and "…no mystical, Messianic movement—and particularly not that of the Kremlin—can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs."[1043] He did not spell out the mechanisms by which that psychological effect would play out in the Soviet political system, though one might infer that it would manifest itself in a succession struggle.

[1042] Lee, "Strategic Interaction."
[1043] X, "Sources," p. 582.

Instead of going on after July 1947 to develop further his embryonic theory of victory, Kennan proceeded to pull back from its logic after being confronted with powerful counter-arguments laid out to the general public by the journalist Walter Lippmann, "U.S. journalism's best-known pundit" of the era.[1044] Kennan respected him for his formidable intellect and perhaps also because the two men saw similar strategic pathologies in the mass democratic culture of the American political system.[1045] Emotionally insecure in the face of any criticism, Kennan was all the more stung by the pointed critique of a kindred spirit. Put in terms used by strategists later, Lippmann's basic point was that Kennan had not done a good *net assessment*, which must involve an analysis of the two sides' strengths and weaknesses in relation to each other.[1046] On the one hand, according to Lippmann, Kennan's assumption about the psychological susceptibility of the Soviets to frustration was dubious, and his lack of explicit focus on the political impact of the Red Army in the middle of Europe was debilitating to an appropriate policy-strategy match. On the other hand, Kennan's assessment of the American side amounted to little more than wishful thinking. Lippmann emphasized that the nature of the American political, economic, and military systems would badly constrain the agility necessary to execute Kennan's strategy of applying "counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points…." Trying to do so in response to "the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy" would, moreover, give the initiative to the adversary. In the parlance of Sun Tzu, the Soviets

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[1044]*Time Magazine*, 22 September 1947. Lippmann's critique appeared in a long series of *New York Herald Tribune* columns that were collected in Walter Lippmann, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, 1947). The title of his book did much to publicize the notion of a "cold war," which had previously been used by George Orwell and Bernard Baruch. For a convenient summary of Lippmann's counter-arguments against Kennan, see Walter Lippmann, "The Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, 65.4, Spring 1987, pp. 869-884.

[1045] For Lippmann's views on American political culture, see Patrick Porter, "Beyond the American Century: Walter Lippmann and American Grand Strategy, 1943-1950," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 22.4, December 2011, pp. 557-577. Kennan's similar views are brought out nicely in Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*.

[1046] Though net assessment has achieved strategic prominence as a result of Andrew Marshall's work at the Pentagon since the 1970s, its *locus classicus* is in speeches by the Athenian leader Pericles and the Spartan leader Archidamus at the onset of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York, 1996), pp. 45-47, 80-85.

would be able to attack their enemy's strategy and alliances better than the Americans could do to them, by applying pressure in places where containment was most vulnerable.[1047] There would be many such places because, as Lippmann pointed out, containment would require the United States to form coalitions in different, far-flung theaters with countries that did not have effective political systems. The upshot would likely be mounting frustration, and mounting costs, on the American side much more than on the Soviet side. Rather than dissipate energy on implementing containment hither and yon, Lippmann's proposed course of action was to focus on getting the Red Army, along with the American and British armies, out of the heart of Europe by negotiating a diplomatic settlement with the Soviets that would center on the reunification of Germany.

Kennan never published, nor even sent to Lippmann, a rebuttal that he wrote in 1948.[1048] Tellingly, during that year, Kennan's proposed courses of action gravitated in Lippmann's direction. He focused on restricting containment only to areas of vital interest to the United States, even though doing so cut against the "denial" logic of the X article's theory of victory. More curious still, he fell for Lippmann's fantasy of an early, grand diplomatic settlement of the German issue, even though in the Long Telegram and the X article he had highlighted the futility of such high-stakes negotiations with the Soviets, at least until they underwent long-term "mellowing." Kennan lost the confidence that Marshall's successor Dean Acheson initially had in his judgment.[1049] After two very good years, 1946 and 1947, it turned out that Kennan's mercurial brilliance was better suited to scholarly contemplation than strategic practice.

[1047] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, pp. 77-78. For different ways of attacking the enemy's strategy, see Lee, "Strategic Interaction."

[1048] The letter, dated 6 April 1948, is in the Kennan papers at Princeton University. There is a good summary of it in David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 116-119.

[1049] Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, pp. 327-336, 341-343, 347-351; and Miscamble, *Kennan*, pp. 145-154.

The next path-breaking assessment of the Cold War by American grand strategists was the NSC-68 document put together in April 1950 by Paul Nitze, Kennan's successor as head of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department. Kennan looked askance at this assessment, and so have many diplomatic historians since the document was declassified and published in the *Naval War College Review* in 1975.[1050] They saw in it much inflation of the Soviet threat, militarization of containment, and hyper-ideological salesmanship. All that was indeed there, but from the perspective of strategic practitioners and strategic theorists alike, NSC 68 deserves a new and more empathetic look.

The greatest of all strategic theorists, Carl von Clausewitz, averred: "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish…the kind of war on which they are embarking…."[1051] The Cold War was still in its infancy in early 1950, but Nitze and his collaborators, most of whom he had inherited from Kennan's staff, had a strong sense of its nature. As one can see from their report, they recognized that it involved very high political and ideological stakes, expanding coalitions on both sides, multiple theaters, a multiplicity of instruments of power, and a contest of economic production. They also knew that it differed from previous big wars in its degree of ideological intensity and in the implications of what they called "weapons of mass destruction" now possessed by both superpowers. It was indeed the Soviet test of a nuclear device in 1949, followed by President Truman's directive in early 1950 to develop thermonuclear weapons, which had led to the establishment of Nitze's State Department-Defense Department committee to produce the NSC-

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[1050] "NSC 68: A Report to the National Security Council," 14 April 1950, *Naval War College Review* 27.6, May/June 1975, pp. 51-108. The NSC-68 report was then reprinted in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1977), pp. 235-312. My page citations will be to this *Foreign Relations* volume. For an early example of reactions by diplomatic historians, see Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat," *International Security*, 4.2, Autumn 1979, pp. 116-158.
[1051] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 88.

68 report. That document explicitly referred to "the strategy of the cold war." The point of such a strategy was to win without fighting a very hot war.

Winning in this context, as in all wars, meant achieving the nexus of political purposes and political objectives that falls under the label "policy." Contrary to what some historians have supposed, NSC 68 did not represent a major departure from Kennanesque precedent in the realm of policy.[1052] Historians often confuse policy and strategy, and that is especially easy to do so far as containment is concerned. In NSC 68, as in the X article, containment is still a strategy--ways and means to achieve a political end--not a policy--that is to say, not an end in itself (as it was subsequently to become). In NSC 68 the political end remained what it had been in the X article: a major change in the Soviet political system that would wind down the Cold War. Containment in the defensive or reactive sense so conspicuous in the X article was a way of bringing about that change. But as Kennan subtly indicated in public in 1947 and then more vigorously propounded inside the government in 1948, there ought to be "political warfare" (his preferred term) that would challenge in non-military ways Soviet control over its emerging imperium.[1053] Such proactive political warfare was part and parcel of a strategy (in the words of the X article) "to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate" and "thus promote the tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the mellowing of Soviet power."[1054] Likewise, Nitze and his collaborators in NSC 68 wanted to "induce a retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence" in a way that, in conjunction with blocking "further expansion of Soviet power," would "so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet

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[1052] My conclusions on this issue have more in common with Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 1992), pp. 355ff, than with Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap.4.

[1053] Sarah-Jane Corker, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy: Truman, Secret Warfare and the CIA, 1945-53* (London, 2008), chap. 3.

[1054] X, "Sources," p. 582.

system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards." [1055] Though it might seem at first sight that alternative policies—"containment" and "rollback" or "liberation"—were at odds with each other, a more penetrating insight suggests that Kennan and Nitze were trying to combine reactive and proactive elements in an augmented *strategy* of containment. [1056]

It is in the realm of strategic means, rather than strategic ways or political ends, that NSC 68 made a big departure from the Kennan of the X article and the pre-1950 posture of the Truman Administration more generally. NSC 68 addressed all manner of non-military means for waging a cold war, but stood out for its new thinking about military means. One can best understand its contribution here in the context of another major element of sound strategic thinking derived from Clausewitz: the importance of strategy being in line with policy. [1057] Nitze and his collaborators perceived that an alarming gap was opening up between American policy and American strategy, even if containment were merely regarded as a policy of "holding the line" against Soviet expansion. In their view, once the Soviet Union developed nuclear weaponry, the United States could no longer count on nuclear deterrence to maintain the political status quo.

What would it take to close the gap between policy and strategy? To answer that question, a forward-looking net assessment was necessary. NSC 68 presented the first noteworthy high-level net assessment by the U.S. government in the Cold War. Kennan's assessments had focused on Soviet intentions. Military planners were wont to focus on

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[1055] NSC 68, *Foreign Relations…1950*, vol. 1, p. 252.
[1056] The words "roll back" appear on p. 284 of NSC 68, *Foreign Relations…1950*, vol. 1. The use of military force to roll back North Korea in the fall of 1950, discussed later in this essay, was a significant departure from a strategy of containment. Both Kennan and Nitze opposed that adventure in military rollback. See Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York, 2009), p. 119.
[1057] Clausewitz, *On War*, books 1 and 8.

capabilities. Nitze and his collaborators broadened the scope to include both capabilities and intentions--and on both sides. As Nitze later said, "[t]here is always an inter-relationship between capabilities and intentions."[1058] In 1950 he did not like what he saw as he looked forward. Drawing on CIA estimates, he envisaged a Soviet "fission bomb stockpile" of 200 by mid-1954. He also noted evidence of Soviet activities directed toward producing thermonuclear weapons. And he assessed a Soviet bomber capability sufficient to put 80-120 bombs on targets in the United States four years from the time of the NSC-68 report.[1059] All this projected nuclear potential would come on top of existing Soviet conventional-military forces that, according to estimates of the Joint Chiefs of Staff summarized in NSC 68, were already sufficient, even in the event of an American nuclear response, "[t]o overrun Western Europe, with the possible exception of the Iberian and Scandinavian Peninsulas; to drive toward the oil-bearing areas of the Near and Middle East; and to consolidate Communist gains in the Far East…."[1060] At present, according to NSC 68, the United States and its allies did not have sufficient military power to make containment more than a "bluff" and yet "there are indications of a let-down of United States efforts under the pressure of the domestic budgetary situation…."[1061] Given that the NSC-68 report imputed far-reaching intentions to the Soviet Union and given that the projected increase in its nuclear capabilities would put "new power behind its design," the risk was that Soviet strategy by the mid-1950s would go beyond current efforts at "infiltration" and "intimidation." In the worst case, the Soviets might launch a nuclear surprise attack on the United States. At the very least, they would be in a much better position to engage in "piecemeal

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[1058] Paul Nitze, "The Development of NSC 68," *International Security,* 4.4 Spring 1980, p. 175.
[1059] NSC 68, *Foreign Relations…1950*, vol. 1, p. 251.
[1060] Ibid., p. 249. While historians have rightly pointed out the inflation of the Soviet threat in NSC 68, it is worth noting that, even with partial opening of Soviet archives since the end of the Cold War, we remain somewhat uncertain of Soviet intentions and even more uncertain of Soviet capabilities as of 1950 and, indeed, at most points after that as well.
[1061] Ibid., pp. 253, 261.

aggression against others" or much more effective coercion of American allies than hitherto. In those cases, the United States would face "the risk of having no better choice than to capitulate or precipitate a global war…."[1062]

To ward off such a grim prospect, NSC 68 strenuously advocated a major build-up of American conventional and nuclear forces. In addition to bringing US capabilities in line with commitments, it argued for major new assistance to allies, the object of those commitments, so that they, too, could increase their military capabilities.[1063] It did not hazard an estimate of the budgetary cost to the United States government of this build-up of means, but it made quite clear that the cost would be high. It did not justify the cost simply in terms of a growing threat arising from a deteriorating balance of power. It also highlighted the political stakes of the Cold War in such terms as "the fulfillment or destruction… of this Republic" and "of civilization itself."[1064] In a quintessential statement of strategic rationality, Clausewitz had declared that carrying on a conflict only made sense if the "value of the object" exceeded the cost in magnitude and duration of effort.[1065] Nitze and his collaborators wanted to make sure that those officials in the United States government likely to oppose a military build-up had in mind the value of the object at stake.[1066]

From a strategic perspective, what seems most striking, or puzzling, about NSC 68 is not impassioned rhetoric in the service of strategic rationality—after all, Clausewitz had stressed that

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[1062] Ibid., pp. 263-264.
[1063] Ibid., pp. 282-284.
[1064] Ibid., p. 238.
[1065] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 92.
[1066] As Secretary of State Acheson later wrote: "The purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the mass mind of 'top government' that not only could the president make a decision but that the decision could be carried out." Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), p. 374.

passion and rationality were intermixed elements of war.[1067] Rather, in hindsight, there seems to be much uncertainty, and perhaps some lack of imaginative forethought, in NSC 68 about what the burgeoning effects of "weapons of mass destruction" would mean for deterrence. Nitze and his cohort assumed that the interaction between a nuclear-armed United States and a nuclear-armed Soviet Union would be dangerously unstable (at least for the several years ahead discussed in NSC 68). They thought that possession of nuclear weapons would make Soviet leaders more reckless (as arguably was the case with Nikita Khrushchev in the late 1950s and early 1960s). They perceived that there would be an incentive to strike first in the new nuclear age (before there had emerged a concept and a capability for an assured second strike in response). The Soviets might be tempted by the advantages of a surprise nuclear attack, and the Americans, despite their new Central Intelligence Agency and what was soon to become the National Security Agency, might be susceptible to surprise, as at Pearl Harbor (and as indeed was to happen in multiple cases of non-nuclear surprise between 1941 and 2001, including twice in 1950 in Korea). But would not extreme Soviet risk-taking, nuclear and non-nuclear, be deterred by the prospect of catastrophic nuclear retaliation by the United States? Nitze had been centrally involved in the decision to develop thermonuclear weapons and had some foreknowledge of how much more destructive a hydrogen bomb would be than an atomic bomb.[1068] Perhaps the key piece to the puzzle lies in NSC-68's positing of 1954 as the year of maximum danger. Maybe Nitze foresaw that by 1955 the United States would have a deployed capability to deliver thermonuclear bombs against the Soviet Union (as proved to be the case).

[1067] Clausewitz's key notion of a "trinity" (*On War*, p. 89) identified, as I would paraphrase its aspects, rational political purpose, creative talent in dealing with chance and the dynamics of interaction, and passions arising from violent enmity as the three fundamental elements of war.

[1068] Paul Nitze, with Ann M. Smith and Steven L. Rearden, *From Hiroshima to Glastnost: At the Center of Decision-A Memoir* (New York, 1989), chap. 5.

The peak of danger would then be surmounted (at least until the Soviets had their own similar thermonuclear capability).

In any event, the engagement between deterrence and containment in NSC 68 was a troubled one. Later, on the verge of the so-called 1954 peak, strategies of nuclear deterrence and a policy of containment were matched in a durable, if doleful, marriage. The next major reassessment of American grand strategy, the Eisenhower Administration's NSC 162/2 document arising from the Solarium project of 1953, was a crucial match-maker for that marriage.

The Solarium deliberations that Eisenhower initiated after becoming President in 1953 represented a major reassessment of grand strategy.[1069] With vast experience and great confidence in his own judgment, the new president no doubt had a good idea of where he wanted the reassessment to end up—with an overall concept in which containment would be augmented by some calibrated degree of pressure on Soviet alliances (rather than directly on the Soviet political system), wedded more openly to extended nuclear deterrence (to prevent not only a Soviet attack in the main European theater but also a recurrence of anything like the Korean War in a peripheral theater), and supported by a diminished level of military spending (bringing an end to the NSC-68 surge) that a free-market American economy and an unregimented political system could sustain for an indefinitely long time.[1070] But Eisenhower's self-confidence was by no means so overweening as to incline him toward slighting the thoughts of others. He had long valued the process of planning, which could elicit new concepts, examine various alternative courses of action, and, if properly led, build teamwork and "buy-in" among key players as well.

[1069] Written by one retired U.S. Army general about another, Douglas Kinnard's book *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management* (Lexington, KY, 1977), chp. 1, provides a good overview of the circumstances in which Eisenhower led the reassessment of 1953.

[1070] The best analysis of Eisenhower's policy and strategy is in Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (Oxford, 1998).

He established three Solarium task forces and gave different guidance to each one. He saw the groups as both competitive and complementary.[1071]

Task Force A, headed (and dominated) by Kennan, the only civilian among the leaders of the three groups, was to make a case for carrying on with the augmented containment that had developed since 1947, even though Republican campaign rhetoric in 1952, some of it coming from Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, had derided that key concept. Eisenhower no doubt hoped that Kennan's presentation of Task Force A's report in July 1953 to a gathering of high-level officials, with Dulles in a front-row seat, would be an educational experience for the secretary of state and other new policymakers.[1072] The president also hoped that the case made by Kennan's team would provide supporting fires for the cuts in military expenditure that Eisenhower envisaged. It turned out that Task Force A (and still less the other task forces) did not cooperate on this front.[1073]

Task Force A imparted another twist that Eisenhower likely did not welcome. Still evidently bearing the imprint of Lippmann's critique of containment, Kennan made a vigorous case for an immediate diplomatic initiative to bring about a unified, independent, and rearmed Germany from which both NATO and Soviet military forces would be withdrawn, at least to coastal enclaves if not altogether. While this initiative was under way, so should be the rearmament of Germany—separate from either the European Defense Community (EDC--which France had proposed in 1950) or NATO (in which West German rearmament was to take place

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[1071] My commentary on the work of the three task forces is based on the reports that they produced in July 1953. Those reports, not yet published, are at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas. I thank Colin Jackson for providing me with copies.

[1072] Earlier in 1953, Dulles had informed Kennan that there would no longer be a place in the State Department for the father of containment. Kennan delivered his presentation in July 1953 with an eye on Dulles and with a degree of *Schadenfreude*. See Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, p. 487, and Kennan's recollections in William B. Pickett, ed., *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), p. 19.

[1073] "A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'A' of Project Solarium," 16 July 1953, pp. 38-56.

from 1955 on). Imaginative as always, Kennan made a clever exposition of how such an initiative would put the Soviets on the horns of a dilemma and, in the best case, might lead to their withdrawal from Austria and Poland, not just from East Germany. Diplomacy could thus serve as a way of attacking the Soviet alliance. But what would Kennan's diplomatic twist mean for the American alliance in Europe? Task Force A emphasized, early on in its report, the supreme importance for the United States of alliance cohesion, especially since it detected numerous signs since 1951 of some trans-Atlantic divergence in attitudes within NATO. Later in its report, when Kennan pushed forward his German hobby horse, Task Force A had to concede that France and Britain would object to the unification of a rearmed Germany outside the control of the Western alliance.[1074] Eisenhower could not have contemplated such a diplomatic initiative in 1953 with equanimity. Already, after Stalin's death in March 1953, the new American president had responded cautiously to suggestions about having a four-power conference on Germany, among other issues, lest it impede progress toward German rearmament as part of the EDC.[1075]

Task Force B, headed by Major General James McCormick, Jr., a leading Air Force authority on nuclear weapons, had for its assignment the completion of a line of containment around the Soviet bloc that had so far been established only in the NATO area and the Western Pacific. To deter Soviet bloc military forces from advancing anywhere beyond that extended line, there was to be an explicit threat of "general war"— that is to say, of a nuclear response by the United States directly against the Soviet Union, even if it was one of the Soviets' allies that made the military advance. Members of this task force had very much in their minds the avoidance of regional wars such as the Korean War, which was just coming to an end in July

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[1074] Ibid., pp. 12-14, 69, 86-96.
[1075] Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look National Security Policy* (New York, 1996), p. 28.

1953. They counted on nuclear deterrence to prevent, as they vividly put the point, "a series of costly peripheral wars, each one of which leads only to another."[1076] Otherwise the United States would become increasingly overextended and in the end undermine itself by trying to maintain the "desirable levels of all types of forces that would be needed to fight the variety of possible wars the Soviet Union might choose to force upon us."[1077] Recommending the public declaration of a continuous "line of no aggression," without any gaps around the existing perimeter of the Soviet bloc, they hoped to avoid a recurrence of what had happened in 1950, after Secretary of State Dean Acheson had publicly excluded South Korea from the American defense perimeter in the Western Pacific. Unlike Kennan in the X article, they did not hold out the prospect that containing communist aggression all around Eurasia, in this case by nuclear deterrence (which Kennan had not mentioned in his 1947 publication), would lead to a major change in the Soviet political system. They merely did "not reject the possibility" that in the long term there might be an evolution in Soviet strategy away from aggressive tendencies.[1078]

There were two questions that Task Force B maneuvered around gingerly, but that were bound to loom large both for President Eisenhower and for America's allies. First, in the event of a breach of the line of containment, say, in a place that was of peripheral importance from a NATO perspective, would the United States actually follow through on its declaratory posture, especially since a "general war" would be "terribly destructive even to the victor," given Soviet possession of nuclear weapons?[1079] Second, as the Soviets attained "atomic plenty"--the task force optimistically assessed a Soviet lag of five-to-ten years behind the United States in nuclear

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[1076] "A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'B' of Project Solarium," 16 July 1953, p. 18.
[1077] Ibid., p. 54.
[1078] Ibid., p. 23. Even Kennan's Task Force A did not wax eloquent about the prospect of a major change in the Soviet political system. Rather, it simply noted the possibility of Soviet rulers' "adjusting their objectives to those of peaceful co-existence with the Free World." Report of Task Force A, p. 18.
[1079] The "terribly destructive" quotation is on p. 12 of Task Force B's report.

destructive power--would the heavy reliance on extended deterrence lose whatever credibility that it might have had early on?[1080]

That the United States needed to be well on its way to winning the Cold War before the Soviets attained "atomic plenty" was the basic thrust of Task Force C, led by Vice Admiral Richard Conolly, President of the Naval War College. Whereas Task Force A assumed that time would remain on the side of the United States as it continued a policy of containment, and Task Force B assumed that growing Soviet nuclear capabilities would not negate an American strategy of nuclear deterrence in support of containment, Task Force C asserted (without discernible evidence beyond communist success in China) that the United States was losing the Cold War and that its prospects would get ever dimmer, unless it greatly stepped up its pressure on the Soviet bloc by all means short of "general war."[1081] Successes in attacking the enemy alliance (to borrow the parlance of Sun Tzu again) would divert the Soviets away from expansion and toward preservation of their own bloc as it came under increasing pressure.[1082] Though at first American allies "would draw back in terror at the thought of our adopting a policy that would risk war," an accumulation of American successes would "produce a climate of victory encouraging to the free world."[1083] Kennan in 1947 had adumbrated the psychological effects on the Soviet political system that might arise if American strategy denied it incremental dividends; Task Force C six years later anticipated a psychological resurgence of the "free world" in the Cold War that might arise if American strategy generated incremental dividends. Criticizing

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[1080] See Ibid., p. 12, for the assessment of the Soviet lag. Note on p. 34 of the report, for example, how Task Force B did not come to grips with the issue of credibility.

[1081] Task Force C defined the Cold War as "every form of military and political conflict *short of* a general war of global scope with our principal adversary, the U.S.S.R. itself." In such conflict, it asserted, "one is either winning or losing"—there could be no stable balance or stalemate. See "A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'C' of Project Solarium," 16 July 1953, pp. 9, 11.

[1082] This notion foreshadowed the concept of "competitive strategies" developed two decades later in the Cold War by Andrew Marshall. For the role of diversionary effects in competitive strategies, see Lee, "Strategic Interaction."

[1083] "Report…by Task Force 'C,'" pp. 1, 19, 21.

Task Force A for offering "no end product of the present conflict" and Task Force B for providing "an objective only in a negative way"—the denial of further communist advances—Task Force C trumpeted "a true American Crusade" to win the Cold War.[1084]

Truth to tell, the endstate envisioned by Task Force C was more indistinct than that sketched by Kennan in his X article six years before, but it seemed to include a "final breakdown" of the Soviet political system.[1085] In the three-phase plan for victory presented by Task Force C in a report of nearly 300 pages, what stood out much more prominently was its emphasis on bringing about a Soviet withdrawal from East Germany and either undermining the Chinese communist regime or driving it apart from the Soviet Union. Though the report said much about the potential importance of a combination of diplomacy, propaganda, economic measures, subversion, shows of force, and even military operations against the People's Republic of China (either by the United States, if a truce did not end the Korean War, or by the Nationalist Chinese), the courses of actions laid out were not connected by a plausible theory of victory to the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and still less to the demise of the Soviet political system. A reader who made it through an analysis, buried deep in the report, of possible reactions by the Soviets and corresponding risks for the United States might well have come away with the impression that the courses of action proposed by Task Force C would mean an intensified coalition struggle on both sides whose outcome would be hard to foresee.[1086]

From Eisenhower's perspective, the threat to the cohesion of the Western alliance was the first of three strikes against Task Force C's more extreme ideas; the other two were that they

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[1084] Ibid., pp. 70-72.
[1085] Ibid., p. 69.
[1086] Ibid., pp. 232-243.

would raise the risk of general war and would require a new surge in military expenditure.[1087]

Still, from the outset of his administration, the President had shown interest in doing more by way of covert operations inside the Soviet bloc, and at the end of the presentation of the Solarium reports in July 1953, he directed that members of the National Security Council staff, in consultation with members of the task forces, put together a synthesis of the best ideas from all three reports. That proved to be no easy task. The process of synthesis was further complicated by the need to take account of two other sources of ideas. One source was the incoming Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom Eisenhower had also asked for strategic concepts. Under the leadership of their new chairman, Admiral Arthur Radford, they played up the overextension of American military forces abroad and called for the redeployment especially of ground forces back to the United States. That idea was bound to raise the specter among allies of a relapse of the United States into Fortress America.[1088] The other source of ideas was from budget-cutters, Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and Budget Director Joseph Dodge, who insisted that the ability of the American economy to sustain the Cold War in the long run depended on the restoration of a balanced budget as soon as possible, which in turn required major reductions in military expenditure.[1089]

The friction generated by so many competing ideas meant that the search for a synthesis dragged on for more than three months—double the time that it had taken the Solarium task

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[1087] Two staffers who worked for Eisenhower, General Andrew Goodpaster and Robert Bowie, later recollected that the president was not keen on "rollback." Goodpaster said that Eisenhower put him on Task Force C to have "somebody with some common sense" making sure that the group "didn't go completely off in their analysis." Pickett, ed., *Oral History*, pp. 22, 24, 30.

[1088] See Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1953-1954*, vol. V, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, D.C., 1986), pp. 14-21; and Admiral Arthur W. Radford, *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: The Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford*, ed. Stephen Jurika, Jr. (Stanford, CA, 1980), chp. 23.

[1089] The budget-cutting campaign of Humphrey and Dodge can be followed in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954*, vol. 2, part 1 (Washington, D.C., 1984); and Richard M. Leighton, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look 1953-1956*, vol. 3 of *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, D.C., 2001), chps. 7-9.

forces to develop their ideas in the first place. The upshot, NSC 162/2, emerged at the end of October 1953.[1090] Not surprisingly, it represented more of a lowest common denominator of bureaucratic compromise than of the highest quality strategic thought. It lacked the conceptual verve of what Kennan and Nitze had produced earlier in the Cold War. But it was much less intellectually insipid than the so-called strategic documents that emanated from the ponderous national-security bureaucracies of the U.S. government after the Cold War was over.[1091]

Containment loomed large in NSC 162/2, much as it had in the Truman Administration's strategic approach, but by October 1953 it was far down the path toward being a policy, an end in itself, moving ever more distant from its starting point as a strategy, a way of bringing about either the break-up or mellowing of the Soviet political system. NSC 162/2 rejected an aim of trying "to dictate the internal political and economic organization of the USSR."[1092] It held out some hope that over time the revolutionary zeal of the Soviet leadership might slacken and that, if the United States and its allies were able to maintain their strength and cohesion, the Soviet Union might become willing to negotiate "acceptable" agreements, "without necessarily abandoning its basic hostility to the non-Soviet world."[1093] References to "the long pull" suggest that whereas Kennan in 1947 anticipated that the Cold War might wind down in a decade or so, the Eisenhower Administration in 1953 was assuming perhaps a generation or more of strategic conflict. Accordingly, NSC 162/2 put nearly as high a priority on economic staying power as on military power. The trade-off between the two priorities heightened the emphasis on being able

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[1090] NSC 162/2, as approved by President Eisenhower on October 30, 1950, has been reprinted in *Foreign Relations…1952-1954*, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 577-597.

[1091] Elsewhere I have characterized those documents as "pious bureaucratic expressions of other-worldly aspirations." See Bradford A. Lee, "Teaching Strategy: A Scenic View from Newport," in *Teaching Strategy: Challenge and Response*, ed. Gabriel Marcella (Carlisle, PA, 2010), p. 115.

[1092] *Foreign Relations…1952-1954*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 595.

[1093] Ibid., p. 581.

to inflict "massive retaliatory damage" with nuclear weapons—more bang for the buck, as it were.

There was also conspicuous emphasis on the importance of allies for helping the United States to meet its defense needs at a reasonable cost.[1094] Of course, the accumulation of security commitments to allies threatened overextension. NSC 162/2 conceded what the JCS had claimed: "As presently deployed in support of our commitments, the armed forces of the United States are over-extended…." But it did not accept the JCS call for strategic redeployment: "any major withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe or the Far East would…seriously undermine the strength and cohesion of the coalition."[1095] What is more, NSC 162/2 envisioned an extension of the line of containment. A careful reader could infer that soon the only gaps in that line would be on the southern rimland of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China: one would be Afghanistan; the other would be the area between Pakistan and Indochina. But after following the line-drawing of Task Force B that far, NSC 162/2 did not endorse the idea that the United States should issue a public declaration that aggression across the line by the Soviets or their allies would mean general war. NSC 162/2, in response to JCS urging, did say that "[i]n the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be available for use as other munitions."[1096] That did not mean, however, that American military leaders could count on using nuclear weapons in any war. Eisenhower wanted to decide in a given case how to respond. He did not want to be the prisoner of a prior pronouncement, especially since over time, as NSC 162/2 pointed out, "increasing Soviet atomic capability may tend to diminish the deterrent effect of U.S. atomic power against peripheral Soviet aggression."[1097]

[1094] *Ibid*., pp. 582-583.
[1095] Ibid., p. 593.
[1096] Ibid., p. 593.
[1097] Ibid., p. 581.

In the last section of the document, under the heading "Reduction of the Soviet Threat," NSC 162/2 circumspectly addressed the issues raised and the instruments brandished by Task Force C. It accepted that "the United States should take feasible political, economic, propaganda and covert measures…to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR, impair Soviet relations with Communist China, complicate control in the satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc." But the point of imposing such "pressures" was to "induce the Soviet leadership to be more receptive to acceptable negotiated settlements."[1098] The point, in other words, was not to implode the Soviet political system.

My excursion through a series of assessments reveals just how self-conscious and highly conceptual the American approach to grand strategy was in the 1940s and 1950s. One would be hard pressed to find a comparable approach by belligerents in other big wars. It also reveals how prominent in the strategic thinking of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were concerns about the four key success factors identified at the beginning of this essay. The main changes from the Truman era to the Eisenhower era took the form of heightened emphases. There was even more explicit concern with the maintenance of American economic superiority from 1953 on, in part because there was a greater expectation of a more protracted Cold War. There was a renewed concern about strategic overextension, given the experience of the Korean War. To sustain containment without overextension, there was an even heavier weight placed on integrating nuclear deterrence into the American military posture; and to augment containment without incurring great cost or much extra risk, there was to be enhanced effort to combine more effectively covert operations, propaganda, and other non-military instruments of influence. And, not least, there was a preoccupation with making sure that American courses of action did not cut

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[1098] Ibid., p. 595.

against the cohesion of the coalition that had emerged under the Truman administration and that was to be extended under the Eisenhower administration.

Coalitions

In my patterned approach, the single most important key to success in a big war is courses of actions that make for a cohesive coalition. Containment of Soviet expansion, or communism more generally, obviously required for its effective implementation anti-communist coalitions against the Soviet Union and its allies or associated movements. For a cohesive coalition to emerge against the Soviet Union, not only the United States but also its other major allies-to-be had to break with their primary historical traditions of policy and strategy.[1099] Who could have predicted at the end of the Second World War that all the following momentous changes would occur in international politics? Americans would get over their deep-rooted fear of entangling alliances and of a large peacetime military establishment. Rather than relapse into isolationism, American leaders would be willing to sustain a forward military presence on the rimlands of Eurasia as long as might be necessary in a Cold War whose duration remained uncertain. The British would get over their past reluctance to accept a continental commitment in Europe, make a military alliance with both France and Germany rather than play them off against each other and, like the Americans, put troops on the ground in support of allies before a hot war actually occurred. The Germans would get over their *Sonderweg* (the special path) self-image and their recurrent hegemonic impulses, tolerate the partition of the unified nation-state that Bismarck had

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[1099] On this point, and on other points in my discussion of coalitions in the early Cold War, I elaborate here on the analysis in Bradford A. Lee, "The Cold War as a coalition struggle," in *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*, ed. Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (London, 2008), pp. 146-157. For a major work by an historian of American foreign policy who gives due regard to the coalition issue, see John Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, 1997), chp. 7.

created, and accept a subordinate place in a multilateral Western alliance rather than maneuver between West and East for maximum unilateral advantage. The French would move toward a consensus that the Germans were no longer their primary enemy, accommodate a reindustrialized and rearmed West Germany, and trust the British and the Americans to be more reliable allies than in the past. The Japanese would come down to earth from the mystical notion of *kōdō* (the imperial way) that had justified their expansion in Asia, back away from the quest for strategic autonomy that had propelled them into the Pacific War, and accept an extended American military presence on their soil after a long period in which the thrust of Japan's history was to keep foreigners at arms' length. Australia would carry through on the reorientation of its strategic posture from depending on British protection to depending on American protection, a reorientation toward which they had been jolted by the disaster at Singapore in 1942, but which they did not complete until 1957.

That all this happened in the first decade or so of the Cold War owed much to the looming of a very palpable Soviet threat. Steeped in Leninist ideological notions about "contradictions" between capitalist powers, Stalin had supposed at the end of the Second World War that there would be violent conflicts among the United States, Britain, and other imperialists. But Stalin's own imperialism soon put the Soviet Union at the top of the enemy's list of all major powers other than the new People's Republic of China.[1100] Still, for coalitions truly to be cohesive, more than recognition of the same primary enemy is necessary. The members of a coalition must also cluster around a common political objective. The defensive aspect of containment served that purpose quite well for the Cold War alliances that developed under the leadership of the United States. On the other side of the Cold War, the Soviets had to

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[1100] For brilliant insight into how Stalin ended up with a different outcome than he initially expected, see William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York, 1982).

put war plans for offensive operations against Western Europe under a nominally defensive cover in order to make them palatable to their Warsaw Pact allies.[1101] Shared political purpose facilitates strategic coordination, a further important element of coalition cohesion. The United States and its allies, especially its NATO allies, were able to agree on and periodically revise basic military concepts to deter and, if necessary, fight against attacks by the Soviet Union and its allies. NATO instituted elaborate mechanisms for coordination, with the broadest multilateral scope in the history of alliances. The Soviets meanwhile were hesitant about turning the Warsaw Pact into a tight-knit multilateral institution. When Eisenhower left office in 1961, there was a huge gap between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in their functioning as cohesive military alliances.

Looking at coalitions in the early Cold War along such lines and comparing them to coalitions in previous "hot" big wars, we could go on to put together a general theory of coalition cohesion useful for the education of practitioners. But for the immediate purpose of this essay, we must look at the unique history of the formation of the early Cold War coalitions in order fully to understand differences in degrees of cohesion. Historians of American foreign policy have tended to overlook the crucially formative role played by the British policymaker Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in Clement Attlee's Labour government from 1945 to 1951. Consider the major milestones on the path to a Western alliance clustered around the notion of containment:

- the American decision in early 1947 to give aid to Greece and Turkey, which was embellished in public by the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine;

[1101] There is material on Soviet/Warsaw Pact war planning in Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991* (Budapest, 2005).

- the Marshall Plan that arose from Secretary of State Marshall's speech at Harvard in June 1947;

- the establishment of a West German state in 1949 out of the British, American, and French occupation zones;

- the formation of NATO in 1949.

The first, third, and fourth items on this list arose primarily from initiatives by Bevin that served to nudge forward his American counterparts.[1102] The British Foreign Secretary's role in the formation of NATO was especially prominent. Thus, as a Norwegian historian has emphasized, American leadership of a Western coalition was the result of invitation.[1103] By contrast, the Soviet bloc in Europe was the result of imposition. The way in which the two coalitions formed had ramifications for their different degrees of cohesion thereafter. The American coalition never had to confront the sort of violent uprisings that exploded in East Germany in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956.

There were, of course, recurrent strains in the NATO alliance, as in all alliances. Notwithstanding the interest of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations in coalition cohesion, some of the most important strains were generated by shifts in the American strategic posture. One major shift occurred after the surprise attack by North Korea on South Korea in June 1950, when there was widespread fear that further communist aggression might follow in Europe. Secretary of State Acheson presented, in a rather heavy-handed way, the famous package deal whereby the United States would deploy four additional divisions in Europe and

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[1102] For Bevin's approach to the United States about Greece and Turkey, see Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945-1951* (London, 1983), pp. 368-370; for Bevin and the merging of Western occupation zones in Germany, see Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany, and the Origins of the Cold War (*Oxford, 1993); and for Bevin and the origins of NATO, see John Baylis, *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO, 1942-1949* (Kent, OH, 1993).

[1103] Geir Lundestad, "'Empire' by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research*, 23.3, September 1986, pp. 263-277.

assign an American general to serve as SACEUR, if the European allies would agree to West German rearmament and build up their own forces. The idea of rearming the former enemy so soon was bound to cause consternation, especially on the part of the French. But by the spring of 1952 this challenge to cohesion appeared to have been surmounted. The United States and its allies had agreed on ambitious conventional force levels for the defense of West Germany and had also agreed in principle to the European Defense Community (EDC) that the French had proposed as a politically clever (but militarily dubious) solution to the problem of West German rearmament. The prospect of restored cohesion proved to be ephemeral. The NATO allies stalled out at around half the promised force levels, and successive French governments failed to obtain parliamentary ratification of the EDC treaty. By mid-1954, Acheson's successor John Foster Dulles was furious with France. But at the end of 1954, this second challenge to coalition cohesion had also been surmounted. The British and French had converged on a much more straightforward way of integrating a rearmed West Germany into NATO, and NATO had also accepted a new strategic concept that embraced the emphasis that the Eisenhower Administration put on massive nuclear retaliation.[1104]

Once again, the cohesion was to dissipate, bit by bit, year by year, until once again it was restored. In 1955, a NATO exercise simulated the use of 335 tactical nuclear weapons with the result of an estimated casualty toll of 1.7 million Germans killed, 3.5 million incapacitated, and countless more stricken with radioactivity. News of that estimate not only ignited controversy in

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[1104] For the NATO strategic concept, MC 48 of November 1954, see Gregory W. Pedlow, ed., *NATO Strategy Documents 1949-1969* (Brussels). The most thoroughly researched account of the development of this concept is Robert Allen Wampler, "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain and the foundations of NATO strategy, 1948-1957," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1991. For the French and British roles in West German rearmament, see Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Policy for West German Rearmament* (Cambridge,1991); Georges-Henri Soutou, "France and the German Rearmament Problem," in *The Quest for Stability: Problems of West European Security 1918-1957*, ed. R. Ahmann, A.M. Burke, and M. Howard (London, 1993), pp. 487-512; William I. Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), chps. 5-6; and Michael Creswell, *A Question of Balance: How France and the United States Created Cold War Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

West Germany; it also caused Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to think more deeply about what the actual execution of the nuclear strategy favored by the United States would mean for the country that he governed. [1105] In 1956 a press leak of the so-called Radford Plan, according to which the JCS Chairman was advocating major cuts in American ground forces, caused Adenauer to question just how committed the United States was to the defense of West Germany.[1106] In 1957, the Soviets' launch of the Sputnik satellite was an alarming indicator of an emerging ICBM capability that, together with the thermonuclear bomb that they had already tested, diminished the credibility of American nuclear strategy. Adenauer was not sure which to fear more: the Americans' evident willingness to use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet attack on West Germany or their possible unwillingness to risk the destruction of their own cities on behalf of their front-line ally. What Adenauer was sure about was the need to shore up deterrence by getting some degree of West German control over nuclear weapons. But pursuit of that ambition would put strain on coalition cohesion, not least because it might provoke the Soviet Union. And, indeed, in 1958 Nikita Khrushchev instigated a Berlin crisis, in part because he feared the prospect of growing West German power and the possibility of a West German finger on the nuclear trigger.[1107] The Berlin crisis was the greatest test of the cohesion of NATO in the entire Cold War. It came at a time and place calculated to put maximum pressure on that cohesion. But by 1960 NATO had emerged intact from the first round of the crisis. Khrushchev had backed off

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[1105] Hans Speier, *German Rearmament and Atomic War: The Views of German Military and Political Leaders* (Evanston, IL, 1957), chp. 10; and Annette Messemer, "Konrad Adenauer: Defence Diplomat on the Backstage," in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945*, ed. John Lewis Gaddis *et al.* (Oxford, 1999), p. 242.

[1106] Klaus Schwabe, "Adenauer and Nuclear Deterrence," in *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence 1953-1965*, ed. Wilfried Loth (London, 2004), pp. 38-39.

[1107] For the issue of "nuclear sharing" in NATO, especially with regard to West Germany, see the provocative interpretation in Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), chps. 5-7.

from the threat that had started it; he waited until John F. Kennedy became President to resume the crisis.

The Soviet leader, it turned out, had a much greater problem with coalition cohesion than the United States did. For he had to avert the collapse of his most economically advanced ally, East Germany, as skilled workers streamed out of the country through West Berlin into the much more economically vibrant West Germany. He eventually achieved his minimum objective, to preserve East Germany, but he did not achieve a more ambitious objective, to prevent the further rise of West Germany and perhaps pry it apart from its coalition partners. On the other side of Eurasia, Khrushchev also was in throes of a bigger problem of coalition cohesion than was Eisenhower. The alliance that Stalin had made with the People's Republic of China in 1950 was coming apart by 1960.

Meanwhile, the alliance that the United States had made with Japan was holding up better under the challenges that it faced. In terms of US coalitions embracing the main defeated powers of the Second World War, Japan as well as Germany, Stalin had proved to be the Soviet Union's worst enemy in the Cold War. For it was his decision to support the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950 that convinced the United States not only to turn NATO into a full-fledged military alliance that would include a rearmed West Germany but also to make a military alliance with Japan. To be sure, even before the Korean War, as China was falling to Mao Zedong's communists in the late 1940s, the Truman Administration (prompted by George Kennan) had already begun to build up Japan as a bulwark of containment in East Asia. To ensure bipartisan support for American policy, Acheson in the spring of 1950 had asked Dulles to take charge of working out a transition from the US occupation of Japan to a subsequent US-

Japan security relationship. The Korean War gave a great impetus to that process.[1108] The upshot in 1951-1952 was a soft peace treaty with Japan that ended the occupation and a hard security treaty that allowed the United States to maintain forces and bases on Japanese territory for an indefinite period and with minimal restrictions. Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, among the many bitter former enemies of Japan, were unhappy about the softness. They got a consolation prize, also in 1951: their own formal security treaties with the United States.

Late in the Truman Administration and early in the Eisenhower Administration there was an expectation among American policymakers and even more among military strategists that Japan would be willing to rearm on nearly the same scale as was contemplated for West Germany.[1109] Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru pointed out that in 1946-1947--before the Cold War had come to East Asia--the U.S. occupation authority had imposed a constitution on Japan that forbade any resort to war and any restoration of military forces. Hoping to entice him to reconsider, the Americans bestowed military aid on Japan in 1954. Yoshida gladly took the money, but gave ground slowly on rearmament. He seemed quite content for his nation to depend entirely on the United States for its security. Japan had risen as a modern power in the late nineteenth century under the mantra "Rich Nation, Strong Army." The latter had outpaced the former, with disastrous results in the Second World War. Yoshida wanted Japan to rise again by concentrating first, foremost, and perhaps forever on the "Rich Nation" goal.[1110]

Nevertheless, not all Japanese leaders were ready to cast aside the "Strong Army" tradition. From 1957 to 1960, a new Japanese Prime Minister, Kishi Nobusuke, wanted

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[1108] Aaron Forsberg, *America and the Japanese Miracle: The Cold War Context of Japan's Postwar Economic Revival, 1950-1960* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), chp. 2.

[1109] John Swenson-Wright, *Unequal Allies? United States Security and Alliance Policy Toward Japan, 1945-1960* (Stanford, CA, 2005), pp. 188ff. The United States envisioned a Japanese army of ten divisions, as compared to a West German army of 12 divisions.

[1110] Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, NY, 2007), pp. 14-15, 29-37.

rearmament in tandem with a revision of the 1951 Security Treaty to make it less unequal. American policymakers were receptive.[1111] Kishi had a decisive leadership style that projected well in Washington but did not play so well in Tokyo, and while the Americans were willing to overlook the fact that their occupation authority had imprisoned Kishi as a war criminal for serving as Munitions Minister in General Tōjō's cabinet, his opponents in Japan were not willing to forget his past. When Prime Minister Kishi rammed the new security treaty through the Diet in 1960 over the obstructionism of the Socialist opposition, rushing to do so before a scheduled visit by Eisenhower, huge demonstrations brought him down and kept the president from showing up. Americans were shocked by this tumultuous challenge to their alliance with Japan. But it turned out that Japanese were shocked, too. Kishi's successor, Ikeda Hayato, was determined to calm the storm, make amends with the United States, and make Japan rich. Elections in November 1960 confirmed that there was still a substantial, if silent, conservative majority in Japan.[1112] The main American alliance in Asia had surmounted its biggest challenge in the early Cold War.

Along with the disappointment of hopes for Japanese rearmament, the United States fell short of its desire to see a multilateral Pacific alliance emerge as a facsimile of NATO. Japan shunned any strategic role beyond its own territory, and the newly independent nations of East Asia shunned any strategic ties with the imperial power that had conquered and colonized them. The United States ended up serving as the hub from which several bilateral alliances (or trilateral, in the case of the ANZUS alliance) radiated across the Pacific. The Eisenhower Administration added two spokes, one with South Korea (ROK) at the end of the Korean War in

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[1111] For a sympathetic treatment of Kishi, with much interesting analysis of Japanese party politics, see Tetsuya Kataoka, *The Price of a Constitution: The Origin of Japan's Postwar Politics* (New York, 1991), chps. 7-8.
[1112] George R. Packard III, *Protest in Tokyo: The Security Treaty Crisis of 1960* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), remains the best English-language account of the demonstrations and their aftermath.

1953 and one with the rump Republic of China (ROC) during the first Taiwan Strait crisis in 1954-1955. These alliances were two-faced. One face looked to contain China; the other face looked to restrain Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek from trying to reunify their countries through the use of force.[1113] Both alliances served both of the purposes that the United States intended quite well, though not without some dramatic tensions between the Eisenhower Administration and prickly Asian partners.[1114]

In making these two security treaties Eisenhower and Dulles were turning what had developed as informal coalitions under Truman and Acheson into formal alliances. A greater, but ill-fated, innovation on the part of the Eisenhower Administration took the form of multilateral treaty organizations in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, areas along the Eurasian rimland in which the Truman Administration had not gotten so deeply involved. The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), established in 1954, and the Baghdad Pact, consummated in 1955 (without formal American adherence), were from the American perspective an exercise in the drawing of containment lines such as had been envisioned in Task Force B of Project Solarium and in NSC 162/2.

The need for a new containment line in Southeast Asia became urgent with the French debacle in Indochina in 1954. The problem with SEATO as an underwriter of containment was that it did not embody the key elements of coalition cohesion. For the Americans, their primary enemy in Southeast Asia was China, and their political objective was to contain that enemy first and foremost. The other members of SEATO, however, were fearful of getting dragged into a

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[1113] For historical details and theoretical analysis of the second face, see Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* 34.3, Winter 2009/10, pp. 158-196.

[1114] Frustrated by Rhee's efforts to undermine an armistice in the Korean War, American political and military leaders in the summer of 1953 entertained a plan to replace him with a military government. Cooler heads prevailed, and the idea of a coup was superseded by the offer of a security treaty to gain his acquiescence in the agreement with the Chinese and North Koreans. See John Kotch, "The Origins of the American Security Commitment to Korea," in *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953*, ed. Bruce Cumings (Seattle, WA, 1983), pp. 239-259.

war with China by American impetuosity (evidence of which they saw in the response of the United States to the Taiwan Strait crisis that broke out as SEATO was being formed). Each of them was more wrapped up in its own specific problems than in the general American project of extended containment. Australia saw SEATO as a way of somehow reconciling its ANZUS security treaty with the United States and its ANZAM security organization with Britain (which the British formed because they had been excluded by the Americans from ANZUS). The Australians were to be disappointed that the United States did not want SEATO to include any overarching institutional apparatus for strategic planning along the lines of NATO. Even farther away from Southeast Asia than Australia, Pakistan was focused on India as an enemy and sought ways to siphon more military aid out of the United States. The Philippines was preoccupied with finishing off the Huk insurgency. Thailand feared Chinese-supported insurgency in its own country. France, having failed to defeat a Chinese-supported insurgency in Indochina, was on its military way out of the region, but wished to preserve a residual political influence there. Britain, spent after six years of counterinsurgency in Malaya, three years of conventional operations in Korea, and four years of a NATO build-up in Europe, wanted the United States to take on a greater burden-sharing role in support of British interests in Southeast Asia.[1115]

The Americans were quite reluctant to commit ground forces to help SEATO allies deal with local security problems. Their strategic concept for regional security in Southeast Asia was to deter Chinese expansion and, if deterrence failed, respond to Chinese aggression by waging nuclear war against the PRC homeland, not by fighting on the ground wherever the aggression

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[1115] Archivally-based scholarly work on SEATO is sparse, but I have benefited from Roger Dingman, "John Foster Dulles and the Creation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization in 1954," *International History Review* 11.3, August 1989, pp. 457-477; David Lee, "Australia and Allied Strategy in the Far East, 1952-1957," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 16.4, December 1993, pp. 511-538; and Kevin Ruane, "SEATO, MEDO, and the Baghdad Pact: Anthony Eden, British Foreign Policy and the Collective Defense of Southeast Asia and the Middle East, 1952-1955," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 16.1, 2006, pp. 169-180.

took place.[1116] They counted on SEATO to provide political backing in such a contingency. They also hoped for SEATO support for their effort to build up and sustain a new state in South Vietnam. Given the lack of genuine cohesion in SEATO from the outset, it is no wonder that the alliance was of no help to the United States later, after 1959, when the Vietnamese communists renewed their insurgency to bring about the unification of their country. It is noteworthy, though, that Ho Chi Minh had his own problems with coalition cohesion: unification of Vietnam under his leadership had been denied to him at the Geneva Conference in 1954 partly because of pressure from his Chinese and Soviet allies to agree to a compromise.[1117]

While SEATO proved to be disappointingly ineffectual in Southeast Asia, the Baghdad Pact proved to be downright counter-productive in the Middle East. The idea was to have a "northern tier" containment line of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan against the Soviet Union. Britain backed up the line. The United States, though involved in the formation of the pact, did not join it, because at a time when Arab nationalism was on the rise, American policymakers thought it would be impolitic to be so formally and openly associated with Britain, which had long been the primary imperial power in the Middle East. And, indeed, the leading anti-British Arab nationalist, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, reacted very negatively to the formation of a new coalition that he saw as a threat to his transnational ambitions and as a tool of British imperialism.[1118] The Eisenhower Administration was further rattled by a new Soviet effort in 1955 to gain influence in the Middle East through arms sales and economic aid.[1119] Khrushchev

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[1116] Matthew Jones, "The Radford Bombshell: Anglo-Australian-US Relations, Nuclear Weapons and the Defence of South East Asia, 1954-57," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 27.4, December 2004, pp. 636-662.

[1117] Chen Jian, "China and the Indochina Settlement at the Geneva Conference of 1954," in *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis*, ed. Mark Atwood Lawrence and Fredrik Logevall (Cambridge, MA, 2007), pp. 240-262.

[1118] Burton I. Kaufman, *The Arab Middle East and the United States: Inter-Arab Rivalry and Superpower Diplomacy* (New York, 1996), pp. 19-21.

[1119] Robert J. McMahon, "The Illusion of Vulnerability: American Reassessments of the Soviet Threat, 1955-1956," *International History Review* 18.3, August 1996, pp. 603-606.

had jumped over the northern tier by non- military means. Eisenhower and Dulles were caught in a predicament: on the one hand, they wanted to support their British allies; on the other hand, they wanted to keep Nasser from aligning with the Soviets. The turning point came with the famous Suez crisis of 1956, when Eisenhower decided to stop the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in its tracks by exerting economic pressure on the British and their co-conspirators. This turning point was followed by a curious zigzag. Having in effect saved Nasser's regime, the Eisenhower Administration in 1957 pursued a policy of containment against Nasser.[1120] It did not go well. In 1958, what Lippmann had warned about in 1947—the dangers of coalitions with unstable governments—came to pass. There were military coups in both Iraq and Pakistan, and American relations with those two pillars on the northern-tier containment line deteriorated. From an American perspective, the situation in the Middle East was in utter disarray. But the setbacks for the United States did not necessarily translate into gains for the Soviet Union. The new regime in Iraq and Nasser in Egypt turned hard against the communists in their countries.[1121] With the benefit of hindsight, a story arc comes into view. The Truman and Eisenhower Administration did a remarkably good job of forming a cohesive multilateral coalition in Europe, the most important theater of the Cold War. They also did rather well in the second most important theater, East Asia, in making and sustaining bilateral coalitions with Japan, South Korea, and the Republic of China. But as the Eisenhower Administration tried to extend containment lines farther south on the western and eastern rimlands of Eurasia, the challenges became much more difficult to surmount. In Southeast Asia and the Middle East the Americans were showing up in the wake of British and French imperialism. They were dealing with newly independent countries whose leaders stood out more for their nationalist passions than for their

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[1120] Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004).

[1121] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 127.

ability to build stable and effective modern states. Even when those leaders were anti-communist, they were not necessarily good strategic partners for a policy of containment.

If by 1954 policymakers no longer shared the theory of victory embedded in the X article of 1947—that denying incremental dividends to the Soviets wherever they (or their allies or associated movements) encroached on the non-communist world would lead to the mellowing or break-up of the Soviet political system—one has to ask: what might be the payoff for American grand strategy of extending containment to Southeast Asia or the Middle East? The answer by American strategists would have pointed to a negative objective, avoiding the risk of dominos falling. But what if the dominos were being toppled by someone other than the Soviets? American policymakers by 1954 were already aware—to a degree that many historians have slighted—that what Mao did was not simply a function of Moscow's leadership, what the Vietnamese communists gained was not simply an outgrowth of Chinese help, and what Nasser aspired to achieve was not aligned with a communist agenda. They still felt that they had to contain instability before it spun dynamically out of all control.

There was another conundrum. As the Eisenhower Administration made the extension of containment a central thrust of its foreign policy, it created friction with core allies. Britain and Japan, for example, shuddered whenever the United States seemed to approach the brink of nuclear war in confrontations with China. As the American presence swelled in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, it displaced the British and the French. Anthony Eden as British Foreign Secretary in 1952-1955 and then as Prime Minister in 1955-1956 made a desperate effort to restore his country's position as a global power on an equal plane with the United States and the Soviet Union. From a British perspective, the way that Eisenhower and Dulles cut down that effort was stunning, even if Eden's successor Harold Macmillan quickly fell back into line

behind the United States.[1122] From an American perspective, the story revealed here is that of a tradeoff between maintaining a cohesive coalition in the most important theaters of the Cold War and building a more extensive coalition in new theaters.

Instruments of Power and Influence

The second key to strategic success lies in developing and integrating different forms of military power and non-military influence. The early Cold War was an especially notable period for the springing into action of such instruments. In the military arena, American strategic leaders had to come to grips with the new and very difficult issue of what role nuclear weapons should play in support of their policy. In the non-military realm, they had to consider how to make use of diplomacy, political warfare, and economic instruments. As we evaluate their chosen courses of action, the challenge is to figure out the strategic effects of what they did.

It would take a book-length analysis to trace how the use of all these instruments played out from 1945 to 1961. In an essay more limited in space, it makes sense to concentrate on the integration of military instruments—conventional and nuclear—and the one non-military realm—that of economic instruments—in which the strategic effects were arguably the most positive from the perspective of American grand strategy. The quintessential non-military instrument, diplomacy was eventually to play a crucial role in bringing the Cold War to an end, but it was unable to prevent the intensification of the Cold War from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. A grand diplomatic settlement would have had to involve compromises over the divided countries—Germany, China, and Korea—but the ideological gap between the two sides made

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[1122] Note the lamentations about American policy in D. Cameron Watt, "Demythologizing the Eisenhower Era," in *The 'Special Relationship': Anglo-American Relations Since 1945*, ed. Wm. Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (Oxford, 1986), pp. 65-85.

that very difficult indeed. Even if diplomats had been able to negotiate the composition of coalition governments or agree on "third force" leaders for these divided countries, such formulas for reunification would likely have dissolved into conflict quite soon. When war broke out in Korea, it took two years of negotiations simply to agree on the terms of a truce, even though both sides were paying a high cost in lives and treasure as they fought on. When crises erupted over Germany and China, diplomacy played a role in defusing them, but not in removing the underlying problems that had given rise to the crises. Where, then, did the exercise of diplomatic influence matter most for the United States in early Cold War? The answer is: with friends, not foes. The diplomatic instrument linked up with the first key to success in a big war— coalitions—by bringing Germany and Japan from occupation into alliance and maintaining cohesion in NATO by reconciling or finessing conflicting national interests.[1123]

What about political warfare? In Kennan's use of the term, it covered both covert operations, such as efforts to subvert a communist regime, and overt operations, such as propaganda. The Soviets by the late 1940s had much experience in political warfare, and American officials believed that the United States had to catch up with them and turn this double-pronged instrument to its advantage. There ensued much American activity but not much coordination among different organizations engaged in the activity.[1124] There were some intriguing concepts for how to attack a communist political system by operations short of war, but no obvious success in doing so. The only regimes successfully subverted during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations—in Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954—were not led by

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[1123] For the role of diplomacy in the transition of Germany and Japan, see Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), and Richard B. Finn, *Winners in Peace: MacArthur, Yoshida, and Postwar Japan* (Berkeley, 1992).

[1124] As primary sources have become available on these activities, a flood of historical descriptions of them has swelled. For recent examples, see Corke, *US Covert Operations*; Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY, 2000); and Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS, 2006).

communists. In the uprisings in Hungary in 1956, Radio Free Europe's Hungarian broadcasts from Munich encouraged insurgents in a manner at odds with the Eisenhower Administration's aversion to taking risks in support of the rebellion.[1125] American words and deeds at some crucial junctures of the Cold War were better aligned on the Western side of the Iron Curtain. For example, the flow of American economic aid to Europe under the Marshall Plan was well-supported by a propaganda campaign about the American way of life, though one should not be too quick to presume that targeted audiences were as receptive to the messages as they were to the money.[1126] As for covert operations, the one with the most significant positive payoff for American grand strategy took place in Italy, when the CIA and others secretly channeled money to Christian Democrats and other anti-communist groups to ensure that the Italian Communist Party, itself heavily subsidized by the Soviet Union, did not win the elections of 1948. A hostile Italy, on the southern flank of NATO as it emerged as a genuine military alliance, would have posed a serious geostrategic problem for the Western coalition. Again, however, one should not be too quick to assume that American covert financing was the key to Christian Democratic electoral success.[1127]

Because diplomacy was ineffective in dealing with the key political issues of the early Cold War, and because the specter of a nuclear conflagration made the risk of a hot war between the United States and the Soviet Union seem so terrifying to American political leaders, one

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[1125] Charles Gati, *Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, CA, 2006), chps. 3 and 5. A survey by the United States Information Agency of 1,000 Hungarian refugees after the revolt found that more than half believed Radio Free Europe broadcasts "gave the impression" that United States would intervene militarily. Chris Tudda, "'Reenacting the Story of Tantalus: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Failed Rhetoric of Liberation," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7.4, Fall 2005.
[1126] See Brian Angus McKenzie, *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan* (New York, 2005).
[1127] Kaeten Mistry, "Approaches to Understanding the Inaugural CIA Covert Operations in Italy: Exploding Useful Myths," *Intelligence and National Security*, 26.2-3, April-June 2011, pp. 246-268. For new evidence from Soviet archives about the communist side of the Italian elections, see Elena Agi-Rossi and Victor Zaslavsky, *Stalin and Togliatti: Italy and the Origins of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, CA, 2011).

should not be surprised that American strategists explored unconventional ways of gaining competitive advantage. But the strategic effects of their efforts in this regard seem not to have been conspicuous on the Soviets and their bloc. Rather, the effects were more evident in the formation and maintenance of the American coalition. We should not be surprised, here either, to find that relationship between two keys to success in a big war. After all, it is easier to have influence on those already inclined to agree with one's larger political purposes. But such affinities may not count for so much in the absence of a favorable balance of military power and favorable prospects for economic well-being. That justifies our giving the closest attention to the military and economic instruments of power and influence and to the ways in which they were integrated.

In the military realm, in most past big wars, it had been ground operations and naval operations whose integration had been crucial for strategic success. In World War II it had proven of critical importance to add various types of air operations into the mix. In the Korean War, the one conventional conflict in which the United States intervened militarily in the early Cold War, combining all three instruments of war remained a key to success. When American commanders did that well, as at Inchon in September 1950, they gained a pivotal advantage. When they fell short in this respect, they either met with operational setbacks or missed opportunities to achieve potentially decisive effects, as in the late spring and early summer of 1951.[1128]

In the larger Cold War, the most important aspect of integrating instruments for strategic leaders was to figure out the proper balance between nuclear weapons and conventional military instruments. To accomplish that, they had to think about aligning ends, ways, and means in a

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[1128] Colin Jackson, "Lost Chance or Lost Horizon? Strategic Opportunity and Escalation Risk in the Korean War, April-July 1951," *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 33.2, April 2010, pp. 255-289.

coherent manner. From a military perspective, the primary end was containment. The primary military way to support that end was deterrence. But if deterrence should fail, American leaders needed ways to defeat the Soviet Union in what would likely be a hot war. Both the Truman Administration and, much more, the Eisenhower Administration also showed recurrent interest in compellence, ways of getting the Soviets or Chinese to back away from threatening courses of actions in a crisis or in the Korean War. All the while, they had to engage in the assurance of America's allies. The combination of nuclear and conventional means necessary for these ways to play out with a high probability of strategic success was already looming as expensive in the late 1940s, and the pressure to spend more would grow apace as the Soviets built up their nuclear arsenal in the 1950s. In this fiscal crunch, something had to give way.

In May 1948, during the lead-up to the Berlin blockade that the Soviets imposed the next month, there was the first striking manifestation of the crunch. Early in the month, JCS planners briefed Truman on a war plan that featured the dropping of 50 atomic bombs on 20 Soviet cities in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe and the Middle East.[1129] The president was appalled. Having authorized the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japanese cities in 1945, he never again wanted to face another such decision.[1130] He directed the JCS to develop an alternative plan to use only conventional forces. But in mid-May, he put a low ceiling on the defense budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 1950, which effectively foreclosed a build-up of

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[1129] David Alan Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," *The Journal of American History*, 66.1, June 1979, p. 68. For a description of the war plan, see Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans 1945-1950* (New York, 1988), pp. 89-94. The plan did envision, along with a nuclear offensive, defensive operations by conventional forces in Western Europe.

[1130] See the comments by Truman on several occasions to the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (which had custody of atomic weapons in the late 1940s), as recorded in the diaries of David Lilienthal, *The Atomic Energy Years 1945-1950* (New York, 1964), pp. 307, 342, 391, 474.

conventional forces necessary to counter the Red Army without the use of atomic weapons.[1131] A fiscally conservative Truman was determined to keep government expenditures in line with revenues and, if possible, generate a budgetary surplus to pay down the high levels of government debt incurred during the Second World War. That made it hard to keep military means fully in line with strategic ways.

Moreover, the Republicans on Capitol Hill had passed a tax cut that reduced the revenues available for the budget, Truman had his own domestic priorities that raised expenditures, and the defense budget got squeezed as a result. After the precipitous military demobilization of 1945-1947, the ceiling that the president imposed in 1948 for FY 1950, and the even lower one that he set in 1949 for FY 1951, left room only for a strategy of nuclear deterrence. Truman seemed content with that in early 1949: "the atomic bomb was the mainstay and all he had;…the Russians would have probably taken over Europe a long time ago if it were not for that."[1132] When the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic device later that year, Truman responded by approving a major step-up in the American nuclear program, but before the Korean War he showed little intention of approving the parallel surge in conventional forces that NSC 68 recommended.

The North Korean attack on South Korea and the Chinese rollback of American forces brought about the only major across-the-board increases in the US military's conventional forces in the period covered by this essay. By the end of 1950 the president had directed the implementation of the great bulk of the NSC-68 program.[1133] Yet scarcely a year passed before

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[1131] Steven L. Rearden, *The Formative Years 1947-1950*, vol. 1 of *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, ed. Alfred Goldberg (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 327. Chapters XI-XIII of this volume provide detailed accounts of the making of the military budget before the Korean War.
[1132] The quotation is David Lilienthal's paraphrase of what Truman said to him on 9 February 1949. Lilienthal, *The Atomic Energy Years*, p. 464.
[1133] For documents on the implementation of NSC 68, see Nelson Drew, ed., *NSC-68: Forging the Strategy of Containment* (Washington, D.C., 1994).

the surge of conventional rearmament began to subside, for political and economic reasons, even as the burgeoning of nuclear capabilities continued onward and upward.[1134] If Truman had successfully run for re-election in 1952, the military posture (though not the rhetoric surrounding it) of his next term might well have been as oriented toward nuclear weapons as that of the Eisenhower Administration in its first term.

Eisenhower, along with his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, devoted much more thought to the role of nuclear weapons than Truman and his advisers had. They also talked much more about them in public. Their public rhetoric gave rise to a conceptual trident, with each of the three prongs taking on a catchy label: massive retaliation, brinksmanship, and the New Look. The reality of their strategy as it unfolded over time was more complex than the simple terms of public debate indicated.

The broadcast of Dulles's speech at the Council of Foreign Relations in January 1954 stimulated the debate when he said that to "contain the mighty land power of the Communist world," the "local defense" of forces of the American coalition "must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power." Using words put into the speech by Eisenhower, he went on to say that the administration would "depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate instantly by means and at places of our choosing."[1135] Political critics interpreted that to mean any communist aggression across a containment line would automatically trigger an

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[1134] On the leveling off of conventional rearmament, see Walter S. Poole, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, vol. 4: *1950-1952* (Washington, D.C. 1998), chp. 4. For the continuing build-up of nuclear capability, see David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security*, 7.4, Spring 1983, pp. 22-24.

[1135] *New York Times*, 12 January 1954; and Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DC, 1999), p. 83.

American nuclear blitz on the USSR or the PRC. Academic analysts reacted with inquiries into the issue of what made a strategy of nuclear deterrence credible or incredible.[1136]

Dulles by no means believed in an all-or-nothing approach toward which excessive reliance on massive nuclear retaliation might lead.[1137] He appreciated the need for an array of means that would support flexibility in ways of responding. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* that followed his speech, he made clear that the United States "must not put itself in the position where the only response open to it is general war" and that the Eisenhower administration was not thinking of "turning every local war into a world war."[1138] Putting the primary importance on coalitions that he did, Dulles was sensitive to the risk posed by a reckless nuclear posture for coalition cohesion. In his view, a posture that left the enemy uncertain about how and where the United States would respond embodied a credible deterrent. He was quite interested in using nuclear weapons for compellence as well as for deterrence. In a crisis, brinksmanship—threats to use nuclear weapons in certain eventualities—might not only stop adversaries from taking further military steps, but also coerce them to back away from what they were already doing. He thought newly developed tactical nuclear weapons, which he played up as precise and relatively "clean" in the damage that they would cause, were an especially appropriate instrument of brinkmanship.[1139]

[1136] A seminal inquiry was William W. Kaufmann, "The Requirements of Deterrence," *Military Policy and National Security*, ed. William W. Kaufmann (Princeton, NJ, 1956), chp. 1.

[1137] For insight into Dulles's views about nuclear weapons, I have benefited from John Lewis Gaddis, "The Unexpected John Foster Dulles: Nuclear Weapons, Communism, and the Russians," in *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War*, ed. Richard H. Immerman (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp.47-77; Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, *passim*; and Neal Rosendorf, "John Foster Dulles' Nuclear Schizophrenia," in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb*, pp. 62-86.

[1138] John Foster Dulles, "Policy for Security and Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 32.3, April 1954, pp. 353-364.

[1139] In March 1955, at a particularly tense point in the first Taiwan Strait crisis, Gerard Smith (Dulles's adviser on atomic affairs) cautioned the Secretary of State that tactical nuclear weapons were not in fact precise or clean. Matthew Jones, "Targeting China: U.S. Nuclear Planning and 'Massive Retaliation' in East Asia, 1953-1955," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10.4, Fall 2008, pp. 60-61.

While Dulles did much of the talking in public about nuclear weapons, it was Eisenhower who did the deciding about their role, Like the Secretary of State, the president had great faith that nuclear deterrence would work, at least in the sense of preventing major military attacks on the United States or its allies by the Soviet Union or China. But the views of Eisenhower and Dulles about deterrence began to diverge significantly by 1956 as the Soviet nuclear capability to inflict damage on the American homeland loomed ever larger. All along, Eisenhower had talked with great conviction about the extraordinary horror of nuclear warfare--at NSC meetings, to all manner of allies, to the public, at the United Nations, and to the Soviets.[1140] But before he received briefings in 1956 about the likely casualties if there were to be a thermonuclear war in mid-1958, he had hung on to another conviction--the United States could win such a war, in the narrow military sense that it could destroy Soviet capability and will to carry on the fight without suffering utter destruction of its own homeland.

However, the briefings, while noting American nuclear strikes in 1958 could do much more damage to the Soviets than the United States would suffer from Soviet strikes, estimated that between one-half and two-thirds of the American population would be killed or injured. Such carnage, Eisenhower now concluded, rendered any concept of victory meaningless.[1141] Dulles, who since 1954 had already been oriented toward a more flexible deterrent posture than massive retaliation, now tilted even farther in that direction, fearing as he did that neither adversaries nor allies would any longer regard as credible the deterrent threat of a massive American use of nuclear weapons in response to aggression. He became more and more interested in the feasibility of limited war, even in Central Europe, as a way of bolstering

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[1140] Gaddis, *We Now Know*, pp. 226-230.
[1141] Eisenhower diary entry, 23 January 1956 in *Foreign Relations…1955-1957*, vol. 19, p. 187; Andrew P.N. Erdmann, "'War No Longer Has Any Logic Whatever': Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Thermonuclear Revolution," in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb*, pp.106-107; and Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York, 1998), pp. 62-63.

deterrence.[1142] Eisenhower, for his part, clung all the more tightly to the idea that for deterrence to work it had to be clear to everyone that the United States would respond instantly and massively to any major Soviet attack, especially in Central Europe. In his strongly held view, once the United States and USSR began fighting over a political object of high value, with passions erupting on both sides, it was absurd to suppose that either side would limit its military effort to conventional forces and tactical nuclear weapons. The dynamics of interaction would lead quickly and inexorably to a maximum thermonuclear effort on both sides.[1143] Eisenhower's key assumptions were that the Soviet leadership had the same image of interaction and had a sufficient degree of rationality to avoid the suicidal risk of war. He did not want to keep the Soviets guessing about how the United States would react; he wanted them to be certain.

Thus, from Eisenhower's perspective, investing in instruments of flexible response might erode, not enhance, deterrence. Those investments would also be extremely expensive. The main focus of the New Look at the outset of the Eisenhower Administration was to provide for national security at the lowest possible cost. The primary approach to economizing on the military budget was to reduce ground forces. At first, that was not hard to do. The end of the Korean War led to the sort of "downsizing" of ground forces that the United States has done after every war. Forces in Korea and Japan were demobilized or redeployed. The number in South Korea went from more than 300,000 in 1953 to less than 60,000 in 1955.[1144] Meanwhile,

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[1142] Memorandum of Conversation, 7 April 1958, in National Security Archive, "The Nuclear Vault: Special Collection-Key Documents on Nuclear Policy Issues, 1945-1990," at http://gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/special/index htm. In the Clausewitzian tradition, "limited" refers to the scale of political aims; in the parlance of the 1950s, "limited war" denoted the scale of military effort. See, for example, Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York, 1957). Dulles's views on nuclear strategy were closer to those of Kissinger and other critics of the Eisenhower Administration than was realized at the time.

[1143] My interpretation of Eisenhower's views hews closely to that of Erdmann, "'War No Longer Has Any Logic Whatever,'" and of Craig, *Destroying the Village*.

[1144] William Stueck, "Reassessing U.S. Strategy in the Aftermath of the Korean War," *Orbis*, 53.4, Fall 2009, p. 585.

Eisenhower hoped to make cuts in the number of American troops in Europe.[1145] Concerns about the reaction of NATO allies made that much harder to do. From 1956 to 1960, the Eisenhower Administration did carry out a numerical reduction of about 10 percent in Germany.[1146] But it kept five and two/thirds combat-ready US Army divisions on the Central Front despite that numerical reduction, despite the withdrawal of a division by both the British and the French, and despite the standing up of seven German divisions by 1960 (on the way to 12 by 1965).[1147] The part of the New Look vision that foresaw the waning of conventional forces thus scarcely materialized. The part that foresaw the waxing of nuclear forces did materialize to a mind-boggling degree. Eisenhower presided over the development of a plethora of new platforms and launchers and the increase of the US nuclear stockpile from a little more than 1,000 weapons when he entered office to more than 20,000 when he left office.[1148] The upshot from a budgetary perspective was not what the New Look envisioned. Over an eight-year period in which real GDP increased by one-fifth, defense outlays never fell below 9.25 percent of that increasing GDP. The average annual ratio of defense outlays to economic output was greater than under any other American president during the Cold War.[1149]

Did all that spending pay off? What strategic effects did the conglomeration of American military forces and instruments produce? The answer to those questions depends on an assessment of Soviet and Chinese policy aims. In Bolshevik strategic culture there was a tendency to conceive of minimum and maximum aims. In the Cold War, the maximum aims

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[1145] Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, p. 148.

[1146] There is a table of US troop numbers in Germany in Hubert Zimmerman, "The Improbable Permanence of a Commitment: America's Troop Presence in Europe during the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 11.1, Winter 2009, pp. 4-5.

[1147] See the table on NATO force levels in John S. Duffield, *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture* (Stanford, CA, 1995), p. 234.

[1148] See the Natural Resource Defense Council's "Archive of Nuclear Data," at http://www.nrdc.org.

[1149] My calculations use data on the websites of the Office of Management and the Budget in the White House and the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce.

arose from ideological visions of the long-term supersession of capitalism by communism around the globe. The best recent historical overviews based on research in communist primary sources confirm that ideology was indeed important to Stalin, Mao, and Khrushchev.[1150] They do not show an inclination on the part of those three leaders to risk nuclear war in the short term to accelerate the long-term global expansion of communism that (as Kennan had pointed out) their ideological doctrine saw as destined to emerge from the "contradictions" of capitalism and imperialism.

At the other end of the scale, the minimum aims were anchored in national-security interests and fears. The Soviets put a high value on defending their control of the territorial security buffer that the Red Army's success in the Second World War had delivered into Stalin's iron grip. Mao put a high value on consolidating his control of what the success of the People's Liberation Army in the Chinese Civil War had delivered into his grasping hands. If this two-level sketch of aims captured the whole picture of Soviet and Chinese foreign policy, then one might argue that all the United States needed was a minimal nuclear and conventional-force deterrence posture to discourage miscalculation or opportunism in Moscow and Beijing.

But a simple distinction between minimum and maximum aims leaves out a lot, most of all the issue of divided countries, which is where the danger of nuclear war was greatest from the late 1940s to early 1960s. The division of Germany left the Western sectors of Berlin isolated in the east, and gave rise to two Berlin crises. Stalin and Mao supported the reunification of Korea under the control of Kim Il-sung, thus fuelling the Korean War. And Mao wanted to reunify China by taking over Taiwan, which provided the backdrop for two crises in which the United

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[1150] Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA, 1996); Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007); Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (New Haven, CT, 2011); Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001); and Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ:,, 2008).

States ended up closer to the brink of nuclear warfare than at any other time in the 1950s. Control of key pieces of territory was not all that was at stake in these dramatic events of the Cold War. Stalin, Mao, and Khrushchev were also interested in attacking the American alliances in Europe and East Asia that constituted the political sinews of containment.[1151]

In exploring the deterrent and compellent effects that American nuclear and conventional forces might have produced, one needs to consider the pattern of behavior that runs through the two Berlin crises (1948 and 1958-1960), the two Taiwan Strait crises (1954-1955 and 1958), and the Korean War.[1152] The hot war in Korea was the outlier. There was no prewar American effort at deterrence. The war happened because Stalin miscalculated that the United States would not intervene when North Korea invaded South Korea. There was also no serious intrawar American effort to deter China from intervening in the fall of 1950, and even as the Chinese forces routed U.S. Army forces Truman did not follow through on a vague threat that he might use nuclear weapons.[1153] The upshot was the most intense, sustained conventional combat of the Cold War. In all the other cases, the Soviets or Chinese initiated a "limited probe" or "controlled pressure."[1154] The crises ended when they ceased probing or pressing. What stands out is the

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[1151] This aspect of Soviet and Chinese policy deserves more attention than it has received. Haslam, *Russia's Cold War*, throws some new light on the subject with regard to the USSR. As for the PRC, Mao from 1950 on perceived that the United States encircled China on three fronts—Korea, Taiwan, and Indochina—and wanted to break up that encirclement. See Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," *The China Quarterly*, 121, March 1990, pp. 106-108.

[1152] Making inferences from patterns of behavior is necessary so long as research in Soviet and Chinese primary sources has not generated any definitive conclusion about the significance of deterrent or compellent effects in the crises of 1948-1960. The two major inquiries into the role of deterrence and compellence in those crises were written before Soviet and Chinese primary sources became available: Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York, 1974); and Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC, 1987). For a pioneering work based on Chinese primary sources, see Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, NY, 1992). It focuses on misperceptions rather than on strategic effects.

[1153] John Gaddis has emphasized how significant, and perhaps surprising, Truman's decision not to use nuclear weapons was. He also shows the restraining influence of the British in late 1950. See his "Conclusion" in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb*, p. 269, and his piece on "The Origins of Self-Deterrence: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons, 1945-1958," in John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 115-123.

[1154] George and Smoke, *Deterrence*, pp. 543ff.

calculated control of risk on the part of Stalin, Mao, and Khrushchev. The explanation for the limits on their probes and pressures is not far to seek. According to one estimate, the United States nuclear stockpile had 110 weapons in 1948, 369 in 1950, 2,063 in 1954, 9,822 in 1958, and 20,434 in 1960. The Soviet Union had 0 in 1948, 5 in 1950, 150 in 1954, 869 in 1958, and 1,605 in 1960.[1155] Unlike the United States, the Soviets were deficient in delivery systems. As late as 1960 they had just two ICBMs deployed, and their bomber force was vulnerable to being destroyed on the ground—"sitting ducks," in the words of Andrew Marshall at the time.[1156] Khrushchev bluffed and boasted about Soviet nuclear capabilities. He was able to deceive Americans and Chinese alike. But Eisenhower was fooled less than others, while Mao was distrustful of Soviet assurances of support in any event. Most important of all, Khrushchev knew the truth about the nuclear gap between the United States and the Soviet Union.[1157]

While American nuclear superiority was not enough to keep Soviet and Chinese leaders from taking steps that produced a crisis, it did serve to make them calibrate their actions rather carefully. The deterrent effect of nuclear weapons is clear to this extent. It is less clear why the Soviets and Chinese ended up backing off in each case. Were there compellent effects at work at the end of crises? If so, did they arise from Soviet or Chinese fear of "punishment" by American nuclear forces or from "denial" by American conventional forces?[1158] Eisenhower and Dulles believed that threats to use nuclear weapons finally compelled the Chinese to agree to cease fighting in Korea in July 1953. The consensus of historians is that the threats were weak signals that did not get through clearly to the PRC leadership. In early spring 1953 when the Chinese

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[1155] National Resources Defense Council, "Archive of Nuclear Data." There is a slightly different set of estimates in Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, p. 181.
[1156] Ibid. The Marshall quote is from p. 182 of Trachtenberg's book.
[1157] There is a vivid account of Khrushchev's "Potemkin strategy" in Gaddis, *We Now Know*, pp. 238-257.
[1158] For the distinction between deterrence and compellence, see Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT), pp. 69-91. For "denial," see Glenn Snyder, *Deterrence by Punishment and Denial* (Princeton, NJ, 1959); Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); and Lee, "Strategic Interaction."

decided to give way on the issue that had stalemated truce negotiations since late 1951—the American opposition to forced repatriation of enemy prisoners of war—the threat that weighed on their minds was a major US amphibious operation behind their lines.[1159]

In two other cases, compellence through denial by conventional forces seems to have been of even more decisive importance. The ability of American and British aviators to sustain a massive airlift of supplies into West Berlin led Stalin to end his blockade of that urban outpost in the spring of 1949.[1160] In the second Taiwan Straits crisis, by the early fall of 1958, an enormous deployment of US naval forces and their help in supplying Chiang Kai-shek's ground forces on the island outposts under attack created the conditions in which Mao decided to relax the military pressure and engage in diplomatic talks.[1161] The only case in which nuclear compellence may have played a key role was in the previous Taiwan Strait crisis of 1954-1955. In March 1955, Dulles and Eisenhower made clear nuclear threats; the next month brought Chinese moderation.[1162] In the final case, the Berlin crisis of 1958-1959, military instruments played no direct role. Khrushchev made a diplomatic threat and, in 1959, the United States was able to parry that threat with a limited degree of diplomatic flexibility.[1163]

[1159] Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, pp. 131-136.

[1160] Haslam, *Russia's Cold War*, p. 107.

[1161] On the scope of US conventional-force operations in the crisis, see Bruce A. Elleman, *High Sea Buffer: The Taiwan Patrol Force, 1950-1979* (Newport, RI, 2012), chp. 8; and Jacob Van Staaveren, "Air Operations in the Taiwan Crisis of 1958" (USAF Historical Division Liaison Office, November 1962), available in "The Nuclear Vault" of the National Security Archive at http:www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb249/index.htm. The United States, in addition to its own large deployment of forces, provided Chiang's air force with advanced air-to-air missiles that gave ROC pilots a big edge in the battle for air superiority. Marc S. Gallichio, "The Best Defense is a Good Offense: The Evolution of American Strategy in East Asia," in *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960*, ed. Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye (New York, 1990), p. 78.

[1162] Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, pp. 220-222. For a contrary view, see Gordon H. Chang and He Di, "The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" *American Historical Review*, 98.5, December 1993, pp. 1500-1524.

[1163] Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ, 1991), chp. 5; and William Burr, "Avoiding the Slippery Slope: The Eisenhower Administration and the Berlin Crisis, November 1958-January 1959," *Diplomatic History*, 18.2, Spring 1994, pp. 177-205.

A reasonable conclusion about the integration of American military instruments in the unfolding of the Cold War would be that nuclear deterrence kept threatening situations manageable for conventional forces. In turn, compellence through denial by conventional forces kept crises from escalating to nuclear warfare. Though the brinksmanship in crises was nerve-racking for American allies, the resolution of a series of crises short of catastrophic war had the effect of assuring those allies that alignment with the United States continued to make strategic sense. Without the combined effects of deterrence, compellence, and assurance that the integration of different forms of military power made possible, there might have been fighting without winning rather than winning without fighting.

Among non-military means, the greatest American comparative advantage was with the economic instrument. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations saw in it ways to hurt foes, help friends, and sway those caught between the two sides of the Cold War. The primary way to use the economic instrument against enemies was to deny them access to something of material value. In the last decade of the Cold War, American pressure on the Soviet economy was to play an important role in bringing about the long-awaited "mellowing" of Soviet foreign policy. But in the early Cold War, the impact of American restrictions on the Soviet economy was much more modest. One reason for the difference is that the Soviets were not as vulnerable as they later became to economic pressure, because they did not yet need large amounts of hard currency to import food and because their government-budget revenues and foreign-exchange reserves did not yet depend critically on high energy prices.[1164]

Another reason is that, early on, American strategic leaders seem not to have thought as carefully and creatively about the "negative" use of the economic instrument as their successors

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[1164] Yegor Gaidar, *Collapse of an Empire: Lessons for Modern Russia*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (Washington, DC, 2007) is a pioneering study of Soviet economic vulnerabilities in the 1980s.

did much later.[1165] In any case, the restrictions that they did impose on economic intercourse with the Soviets were the object of resistance from Allied governments who wanted commercial considerations to weigh more in the balance with security considerations. The basic restrictions were on goods that would contribute to Soviet war-making potential. The American list of prohibited goods was longer than the Allied list drawn up by a new multilateral institution, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM). Europeans were much more dependent on trade to the east than Americans and also more inclined to suppose that a mellow Soviet foreign policy might arise from expansion of trade rather than restriction of trade. The British were especially keen on making their views known in Washington. In order to maintain coalition cohesion, Eisenhower ended up relaxing the American posture and getting less negative with the economic instrument against the Soviet Union.[1166]

Restrictions on trade with China were another matter. Because of Chinese military intervention in the Korean War, the multilateral embargo on the PRC was much tighter than on the USSR, and the American embargo was absolute. But after the war was over, Britain (and Japan as well) sought to loosen the restrictions. In 1957 the British unilaterally decided that their trade with China should be on the same basis as their trade with the Soviet Union. Other governments followed their lead. Maintaining coalition cohesion on this front was not so simple for Eisenhower, because a more relaxed American posture would arouse Congressional criticism

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[1165] For the distinction between "negative" and "positive" uses of the economic instrument, see Diane B. Kunz, "When Money Counts and Doesn't: Economic Power and Diplomatic Objectives," *Diplomatic History*, 18.4, Fall 1994, pp. 451-452. The sharpest negative use by the United States in the early Cold War was against allies, in the Suez Crisis of 1956. See Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991).
[1166] There is a succinct analysis in Alan B. Dobson, "From Instrumental to Expressive: The Changing Goals of the U.S. Cold War Strategic Embargo," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12.1, Winter 2010, pp. 98-104. There is much more detail in Philip J. Funigello, *American-Soviet Trade in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), chps. 2-5.

and also might cause problems with South Korea, Taiwan, and South Vietnam. [1167] Notwithstanding this growing disarray in the multilateral application of the trade restrictions, the leading scholar of the embargo has argued that negative use of the economic instrument did have positive strategic effects for the United States. Trade restrictions against the PRC in the 1950s pushed it into even closer economic dependence on the USSR.

Having to depend on the Soviets in the economic realm, as in the nuclear arena, did not sit well with a restive and rambunctious Mao Tse-tung, who had the grandiose vision of catching up to the United States economically within a decade if he deviated radically from the Soviet model. The upshot was a rift in the Sino-Soviet alliance and the Great Leap Forward into what proved to be economic disaster for China.[1168] A counter-argument would be that Mao was fully capable of descending into self-defeating behavior on his own, regardless of whether he faced external pressure.

What about the positive use of the economic instrument? We need to consider two ways of making it work in relation to allies and the non-aligned. One is to provide direct economic aid to them. The more indirect approach is to construct an international economic order from which they can benefit. The United States did both, with much more energy and creativity than with the negative use of the economic instrument as the Cold War unfolded.

The Marshall Plan, proposed in 1947 and implemented in 1948-1951, has long stood out as a success story for American grand strategy. Under this plan, officially known as the European Recovery Program (ERP), the United States provided to the countries of Western Europe $13 billion (about $120 billion in 2012 prices), the great bulk of which was in the form

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[1167] Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, CA, 2001), chps. 5 and 7; and Dobson, "From Instrumental to Expressive," pp. 108-109.
[1168] Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, pp. 218-236, 258, 274-276.

of grants, not loans. That amounted to about 2 percent of the GDP of the United States and of the West European countries as a whole. During the Marshall Plan era, industrial production in the recipient countries increased by more than 50 percent.[1169] There has been much debate in retrospect among economists and historians about whether the direct economic effects of ERP aid were all that many participants and observers at the time supposed them to be.[1170] At the least, in narrow economic terms the Marshall Plan allowed the recipients of aid to maneuver around impediments to growth such as balance-of-payments crises, fiscal crunches, and shortages of raw materials in key industries.

But for students of grand strategy, it is the political effects of the Marshall Plan that demand closer attention. One needs to consider those effects at two levels: the international balance of power in Europe and the domestic balance of power in the political systems that received the aid. Diplomatic historians see the Marshall Plan as consolidating the division of Europe in the Cold War.[1171] The flow of U.S. aid and surge of West European growth happened at the same time that the British, Americans, and French were engaged in the diplomacy that led to the creation of West Germany and the formation of NATO. Coalition cohesion in the service of a balance of power increased with the integration of different instruments of power and influence. The flow of resources from the richer patron to the poorer partners served as an important lubricant of that cohesion, as it had in big wars in the past. On the other side of the new European dividing line, one could see a stark contrast. While the United States was injecting

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[1169] Barry Eichengreen, "Lessons from the Marshall Plan," a "Background Case Note" prepared in April 2010 for the World Bank's *World Development Report* of 2011.

[1170] The most substantial revisionist study is Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-1951* (Berkeley, CA, 1984). The best overall assessment of economic effects is J. Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen, "The Marshall Plan: History's Most Succesful Structural Adjustment Program," in *Postwar Economic Reconstruction and its Lessons for the East Today*, ed. Rudiger Dornbusch *et al*. (Cambridge, MA, 1993), pp. 189-230.

[1171] See the symposium on the Marshall Plan in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7.1, Winter 2005.

$13 billion in aid into Western Europe in 1948-1951, the Soviet Union was extracting an estimated $20 billion in reparations and seizures from Eastern Europe in 1945-1956.[1172]

Not only was the European military balance more favorable to the West in 1951 than it had been in 1947, the prospects for domestic political stability were brighter. Those two developments were connected. A coalition cohesive enough to contain the Soviet Union and its bloc required political leaders in states allied with the United States who were willing to remain aligned and able to maintain majority support in their democratic political systems. The Marshall Plan helped make Western European politics conducive to the tenure in office of such leaders. American material support and especially the Korean War boom had the same effect in Japanese politics. In Germany and Japan, where socialist parties wanted their countries to be neutral bystanders in the Cold War, it was vital for the sake of international coalition cohesion to forestall left-of-center electoral triumphs. With regard to France and Italy, where communist parties were powerful, international coalition cohesion depended on keeping these instruments of Soviet policy out of majority domestic coalitions. Even before the Marshall Plan, Christian democratic and socialist leaders in Italy and France had been able to eject Communist Party leaders from governing coalitions.

But if the sense of economic crisis that was so palpable in Europe in 1947 had been validated by a sharp downturn into economic depression or a prolonged period of economic stagnation, democratic socialists might well have turned leftward and entered into "popular fronts" with communists capable of becoming the ruling majority (as had happened in France in 1936). First, the prospect and then the reality of American economic aid helped to preclude such a worst-case scenario in all political systems allied with the United States. Furthermore, by

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[1172] Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), pp. 124-126, 283-284. See also Austin Jersild, "The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger: 'Catch Up and Surpass' in the Transnational Socialist Bloc, 1950-1960," *American Historical Review*, 116.1, February 2011, pp. 109-132.

attaching conditions to the Marshall Plan aid and keeping issues of economic productivity (rather than class conflict) at the center of politics in allied countries that received the aid, the Americans who executed the ERP helped to bring about a best-case scenario. There was sustained economic growth for two decades that kept West European socialist parties and trade unions anchored in the political mainstream and that redounded to the political advantage of centrist and center-right leaders who were committed to alliance with the United States.[1173]

Harry Truman, like many American leaders after him, wanted to replicate the payoff of the Marshall Plan elsewhere. In January 1949, point four of the president's inaugural address for his second term envisaged a proliferation of U.S. foreign aid far beyond Europe. A theory of modernization was to develop around foreign aid in the following decade or so. Injections of capital into developing economies would stimulate growth. Economic growth would in turn facilitate nation-building. Stable, democratic countries all over the world were the desired endstate.[1174]

As usual, reality was much more complex than theory. Friction abounded. It was hard to sustain support for foreign aid on Capitol Hill. Injections of foreign aid were not only less than envisioned, but also less stimulating to developing economies than expected. Newly independent countries did not have the institutional infrastructure that Western Europe and Japan had to enable growth to take off. Further complicating affairs, Khrushchev jumped into the arena in the

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[1173] My thoughts on the political effects of the Marshall Plan have been carried along by a stream of Charles S. Maier's writings, most notably "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," *International Organization*, 31.4, Autumn 1977, pp. 607-633; "Supranational Concepts and National Continuity in the Framework of the Marshall Plan," in *The Marshall Plan: A Retrospective*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann and Charles Maier (Boulder, CO, 1984), pp. 29-37; "Introduction: 'Issue then is Germany and with it Future of Europe," in *The Marshall Plan and Germany*, ed. Charles S. Maier and Gunter Bischof (New York, 1991), pp. 1-39; and "The Making of 'Pax Americana': Formative Moments of United States Ascendancy," in *The Quest for Stability: Problems of West European Security 1918-1957*, ed. R. Ahmann, A.M. Birke, and M. Howard (Oxford, 1993), pp. 389-434.

[1174] For an attempt by an historian to trace the development of modernization theory in this period, see David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ, 2010). See also Bevan Sewell, "Early Modernisation Theory? The Eisenhower Administration and the Foreign Policy of Development in Brazil," *English Historical Review*, 125.517, December 2010, pp. 1449-1480.

mid-1950s with his own effervescent foreign-aid initiatives targeted at states not aligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union[1175]. By the early 1960s Khrushchev and Mao were competing to support "wars of national liberation" in the Third World. For states facing insurgencies, or a more direct Chinese threat, it was no easy matter to attend to national security and develop a modern economy at the same time.

Of the more than 30 newly independent countries in which the United States got deeply involved, only two—South Korea and Taiwan—became both prosperous and democratic during the Cold War.[1176] They did not attain that state of affairs until the 1980s, long after Truman and Eisenhower had passed from the scene and long after their own heydays as recipients of American aid. Indeed, their economic rise owed more to trade than aid. Following the path marked out by Japan, they plugged their economies into the new international economic order whose foundations the United States had laid in the early Cold War and then labored to build on thereafter, not always with the willing collaboration of its European allies. [1177] In this construction project, the Americans not only served as the provider of security, but also as the lender of first resort for most of its partners and the export market of first resort for many of them, especially for the East Asian partners. And not least, the United States was the pioneer of

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[1175] Khrushchev's brandishing of the economic instrument in the Third World caused considerable alarm in the Eisenhower Administration. Robert J. McMahon, "The Illusion of Vulnerability: American Reassessments of the Soviet Threat, 1955-1956," *International History Review*, 18.3, August 1996, pp. 591-619.

[1176] Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 404.

[1177] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), chp. 6, sketches the big picture. The difficulties of construction are filled in by Jim Lacey, "The economic making of peace," in *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War*, ed. Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 293-322; Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*; and Francine McKenzie, "GATT and the Cold War: Accession Debates, Institutional Development, and the Western Alliance, 1947-1959," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10.3, Summer 2008, pp. 78-109.

the technological frontier toward which it beckoned others to follow in a process of what economists call "convergence."[1178]

That is the long-term international success story for the American economic instrument. If its opening act featured the "golden age" that Western European economies enjoyed in the first half of the Cold War, its denouement in East Asia was the transformation of East Asia during the second half of the Cold War from a cockpit of conflict to a dynamo of economic growth, a transformation that even the People's Republic of China got caught up in after Mao died. In 1961, however, no one in Washington had an inkling of what lay ahead. For the short-term story in East Asia during the 1950s was one of more limited and tenuous payoffs from the use of the economic instrument. It allowed the Eisenhower Administration to maintain coalitions with its local partners. It gave the administration some measure of control over the military posture of those partners. It did not give them much leverage over the behavior of the French with regard to the people of Indochina or over the domestic policies of the new authoritarian mandarins of the old Confucian political culture—Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, and Ngo Dinh Diem.[1179] Those coalition relationships repeatedly brought the United States to the verge of a major pitfall in the course of big wars: strategic overextension.

Strategic Overextension

[1178] For the technological frontier and economic convergence toward it: Lee, "Economic Productivity and Long-Term Strategic Competition."

[1179] To trace the travails of the relationship between the United States and Diem would take us beyond the scope of this paper. For two quite different views of how that relationship played out, see James M. Carter, *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State Building, 1954-1968* (Cambridge, 2008); and Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965* (Cambridge, UK, and New York, 2009).

In a conflict it is not enough to think about what you are going to do to your enemies and do with your friends. You must also think what enemies might do to you. In big wars new enemies may arise to challenge you in new theaters. If you fail to contest what they do, the balance of power may turn against you in the larger war. But if you fight in new theaters, you may end up strategically overextended. Perhaps George Marshall in his reference to the Peloponnesian War in early 1947 was thinking about the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily in 415-413 BC. In his personal experience, the opening of new theaters by both sides in the Second World War had a crucial impact on the outcome of the war as a whole. Indeed, arguably both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan defeated themselves by overextending into too many theaters. A similar argument could be made for Germany in the First World War and France in the Napoleonic War. In the Cold War, the Soviets were more prudent. Beyond the primary theater of Europe, it was the military actions of Soviet allies or associated movements that opened almost all new secondary theaters, until the Soviets finally—and fatally—did so in Afghanistan in 1979. In each case, the United States had to decide how to react, with the fate of actual or potential allies at stake and with possibility of strategic overextension weighing on the minds of American strategic leaders.

In principle, the strategic concept of containment could have served as a powerful guide to American decisions about where and when to contest new theaters. In practice, reasonable arguments of a general nature could be made either for extending containment everywhere that a major threat arose or for limiting containment to places deemed vital to the security of the United States and its core allies.[1180] In retrospect, a more refined analytical framework, not a single concept open to different interpretations, is necessary to evaluate decisions to contest new theaters with military force:

[1180] Lee, "The Cold War as a Coalition Struggle," p. 153.

- Will you be fighting the principal enemy in a new place or (as with Athens in Sicily) a new enemy? If the latter, be wary of adding to your enemies' list.

- Can you be operationally effective in the new theater? To answer that question, an assessment should be done of the theater environment as well as of any new enemy. In that assessment, pay special attention to whether you can control, militarily or diplomatically, outside access to the new theater; whether you will have friendly and competent local partners when you get there; and whether your adversaries can confront you with a type of warfare for which you are ill-prepared. Your assessment should give you a good sense of likely costs and risks.

- At the same time, you should ask: What is the strategic importance of the new theater to the larger war? If you are operationally successful there, what payoff will such operational success deliver in relation to your overall strategic effort? Assess such potential benefits as relative attrition; positional advantage; access to new resources; and political, psychological, or coalition "spillover" effects.

- Even if likely costs outweigh likely benefits, consider scenarios in the event that you do not contest the new theater. How might the balance of power in the larger war tilt against you?

- Even if likely benefits seem to outweigh likely costs, consider "opportunity costs." Could assets to be deployed to a new theater bring a bigger strategic payoff elsewhere?

We can apply the most relevant parts of this framework to the following important American decisions in the early Cold War: the decision not to intervene militarily in the Chinese Civil War in 1947-1948; the decision to intervene militarily in the Korean War in late June 1950; the

decision to plunge deep into North Korea in the fall of 1950; the decision not to intervene militarily in the French Indochina War in 1954; and the decision to stand behind the Republic of China in the Taiwan Strait crises of 1954-1955 and 1958.[1181] None of these decisions involved a foregone conclusion, and each carried the risk of strategic overextension or other self-defeating behavior.

The risk of American overextension was most conspicuous in China, because Chiang Kai-shek had been an ally in the Second World War and because his country was so potentially important. Shortly before Secretary of State Marshall made the decision not to intervene militarily on a larger scale in the Chinese Civil War, the president had enunciated what became known as the Truman Doctrine, which was on its face a declaration of extended containment. "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States," Truman told Congress (and other audiences), "to assist free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." He did not put geographical restrictions on this statement, though he did indicate that "our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid." [1182] When extraordinary amounts of such aid proved insufficient to prevent a stunning reversal of military momentum from the side of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang forces to that of Mao's communist forces from 1947 on, there was a case to be made for involving American military forces in the fray, if only to serve as operational advisers (a role that might well have expanded, as in Vietnam later) or to salvage a partition of China at, say, the Yangtze River (rather than at the Taiwan

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[1181] In an essay forming part of a larger volume, available space does not permit coverage of all US decisions from 1945 to 1961 about opening or contesting new theaters. Notable omissions in this essay are China in 1950-1951, Lebanon in 1958, and Laos in 1959-1960.

[1182] Truman's speech and archival documents relating to it are at www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/index.php.

Strait). Marshall nonetheless ruled out, with Truman's concurrence, any such American military contestation of the China theater.[1183]

With one exception, Marshall's reasoning aligned well with my framework for thinking about new theaters. At a time when the Soviets were becoming much more adversarial in Europe, he did not want to take on a new enemy in China, the burgeoning communist forces there, especially since it was not yet altogether clear that Mao was closely aligned with Stalin. At a time when postwar demobilization and occupation duties in Germany, Austria, and Korea had drastically reduced the available combat power of the U.S. Army, he doubted that the United States could be operationally effective in a vast China theater where the forces pitted against each other numbered in the millions. Especially once the Chinese Communists gained control of the Manchurian theater, it would be impossible to deny them access to Soviet support.

On the other side of the civil war, from recent personal experience (his mediation mission to China from late 1945 to early 1947), Marshall knew that Chiang would be neither competent nor cooperative as a local partner. He feared that the costs of military intervention would far exceed any strategic payoff, and as a longtime advocate of the Europe-first priority he surely assumed that scarce resources deployed to China could bring a greater strategic payoff if employed on the other side of the world. What Marshall evidently did not consider was the possibility that Mao, once having gained control of China, would ally with Stalin and become an almost co-equal adversary of the United States for the next two decades of the Cold War.

Through a multi-dimensional chain reaction, the American decision not to militarily contest Mao's drive to power in China generated very soon another decision about a nearby theater: whether or not to intervene militarily against the North Korean invasion of South Korea

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[1183] The best analysis of decision-making in this China case is Ernest R. May, *The Truman Administration and China, 1945-1949* (Philadelphia, PA, 1975), which includes primary-source documents.

in June 1950. If one considers assessments of South Korea's relative lack of strategic importance by the Pentagon in 1947 and MacArthur in 1949, plus the withdrawal of American occupation troops from South Korea in 1948-1949, and perhaps above all the exclusion of South Korea from an American offshore "defense perimeter" by Acheson in his famous speech of January 1950, it would seem that American military intervention in the Korean theater was by no means a foregone conclusion.[1184] Yet in this case there was no hesitation to contest the new theater on the part of Truman and Acheson. Morally outraged by the North Korean surprise attack, the President's reaction was impulsive. He does not seem to have thought much, if at all, about the elements of assessment highlighted in my framework. He does not even seem to have thought in terms of the new-fangled concept of containment. Instead he fell back on old-fashioned notions of collective security and recollections of how its failure in the 1930s had led to the Second World War. Acheson, who had a strong influence on Truman's decisions, thought more about the relationship of Korea to the larger Cold War and to the concept of containment of the Soviet Union. Assuming that Stalin was behind the attack (we now know that he did not come up with the idea, but did come to support it in crucial ways), the Secretary of State had to assess whether it was a test or trap. If it was a test, and if the United States did not intervene decisively in Korea, there would be an elevated probability of a follow-on attack elsewhere, quite possibly in Europe. If it was a trap, and if the United States was baited into overextension in Korea, that, too, would raise the probability of aggression in another theater. The "test" assessment won out over the "trap" assessment.[1185]

[1184] See, for example, Ernest R. May, *"Lessons' of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (Oxford, , 1973), chp. 3.

[1185] Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford, 2006), Part IV, provides much useful information on how Acheson responded.

Until September 1950 American policy and strategy in the Korean War were improvised. The decision that month to plunge into North Korea was not improvised. Neither did it simply represent the outbreak of "victory fever" after the success of the amphibious operation at Inchon. Rather it was the outcome of an intense two-month debate (often passed over in silence by historians) that began in the State Department in July 1950 and soon drew in the new national-security institutions of the American government, including the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency, which did not distinguish themselves by the quality of their assessments of either the theater environment or the potential adversaries. There was no consensus reached in the debate about whether the reward to the United States of a unified Korea was worth the risk of third-party intervention.

The arguments for eliminating the North Korean regime were that doing so would punish aggression, please the South Koreans, and preclude another invasion attempt by Kim Il-sung in the future. There was not a well-developed counterargument about how, even if the Soviets or Chinese did not counter the military advance to the north, the postwar security of a unified Korea that extended to the Yalu River might well require a large and protracted commitment of American troops along a border with China and the Soviet Union of more than 500 miles. Such a commitment would cut against plans to bolster NATO in Europe, the primary theater of the larger Cold War. The final directive to MacArthur patched together in the National Security Council (another new institution) was a messy bureaucratic compromise.[1186] Its restraining verbiage—halt the northward offensive if and when there were signs of Soviet or Chinese intervention—the theater commander proceeded to ignore. He assured Truman, in their only face-to-face meeting, that air interdiction could slaughter Chinese Communist forces if they attempted to come into the theater. He also held out the hope that American troops would be out

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[1186] For the debate and the resulting compromise, see *Foreign Relations…1950*, vol. 7, pp. 393-782 *passim*.

of Korea by Christmas.[1187] Instead, Chinese forces intervened on a large scale, lured MacArthur into an operational trap, and inflicted the worst military setback that American forces have ever suffered. The subsequent protraction of the Korean War until July 1953 compounded the costs of the most egregious overextension of the early Cold War.

Eisenhower determined to avoid any repetition of such overextension. But he was also determined to avoid the loss of territory to communism. Those cross-cutting negative objectives made for an excruciating predicament whenever he had to face a decision about contesting a new theater with American military forces. His first such decision came in 1954, when the French military effort against the Viet Minh in Indochina was on its last legs. If the United States intervened militarily to save the French, it would have to deal with a new enemy, the Vietnamese communists, and if China chose also to intervene, with an old enemy in a new place. Given the geography of Southeast Asia, there was little that the United States could do to interdict Chinese access to the theater. The terrain of the theater worried Eisenhower as well. He doubted that American forces could operate effectively in the jungles of Indochina.[1188] As for local partners, the United States had already experienced trouble working with the French, who did not think much of American military advice and who had long resisted American political pressure to grant independence to the Associated States of Indochina. That resistance forfeited the opportunity that Americans saw for eliciting greater indigenous support against the communist insurgents.

From Eisenhower's perspective, Indochina was not of great strategic value in and of itself. But he feared that if it fell to communism, there would be significant repercussions in

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[1187] Notes compiled by General Omar Bradley of a meeting at Wake Island, 15 October 1950, in Ibid., pp. 949, 953.

[1188] Richard H. Immerman, "Between the Unattainable and the Unacceptable: Eisenhower and Dienbienphu," *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana, IL 1987), p. 123.

Asia. Indeed it was at this juncture in spring 1954 that he first talked about the "domino theory" in public.[1189] His options were to use force to prevent the first domino from falling or to set up what became SEATO to prevent further dominos from falling. He conflated the two options for a while by seeking coalition support from the British and from Asian states in the region for immediate military intervention, in the first instance to relieve the Viet Minh siege of a remote French garrison at Dien Bien Phu—"hell in a very small place," as Bernard Fall called it.[1190] When Eden and Churchill refused to go along, Eisenhower decided against the use of force, which left the SEATO option as his fallback position. Here as elsewhere, coalition considerations reigned supreme in Eisenhower's mind.

If Eisenhower had decided on military intervention, how might it have played out? As a carrier aviator, JCS Chairman Radford was an enthusiastic advocate of air strikes against the Viet Minh besiegers of Dien Bien Phu. Eisenhower showed some interest in that idea, no doubt because it promised to be cheap in cost and low in risk. General Matthew Ridgway, the army chief of staff, pointed out that air power could not resolve the fundamental strategic problem in Indochina, which went far beyond what happened to a remote French garrison. To thwart the Viet Minh, according to Ridgway, the United States would need to commit at least seven U.S. divisions to the theater.[1191] Eisenhower surely did not need Ridgway's pointers to see the bigger picture of the Indochina situation. The president had no intention of committing any number of American divisions. He thought it more appropriate to solicit divisions from Asian countries in the region.[1192] Even supposing that he could have persuaded them to send troops to Indochina, one has a hard time imagining that those forces would have had much chance of success against

[1189] Eisenhower press conference, April 7, 1954, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954* (Washington, DC, 1960), pp. 381-390.

[1190] Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dienbienphu* (Philadelphia, 1967).

[1191] David M. Petraeus, "Korea, the Never-Again Club, and Indochina," *Parameters,* December 1987, p. 65.

[1192] Immerman, "Between the Unattainable and the Unacceptable," p. 142.

the more experienced (and probably better-led) Viet Minh forces. If they failed, then Eisenhower would have come under pressure to send American reinforcements after all. As later American leaders discovered, Indochina was a place made for overextension.

The next challenges for Eisenhower about intervening in a secondary theater arose along the China coast between Vietnam and Korea. The Taiwan Strait crises of 1954-55 and 1958 were unlikely to produce overextension in the form of major intervention by American ground troops. The PRC bombardment of small ROC-held islands, Quemoy (Jinmen) and Matsu (Mazu), just off the Chinese mainland, triggered the crisis. If that bombardment were to be followed by resolute Chinese amphibious assaults, it would likely take heavy American air strikes, probably delivering nuclear bombs, to compel Mao to cease and desist. The danger of overextension in such an eventuality would take the form of nuclear escalation drawing in China's ally, the Soviet Union, and carrying the risk of attacks on, or at least the alienation of, key American allies, Japan and Britain.

Because Quemoy and Matsu were hard to defend, Eisenhower in both Taiwan Strait crises hoped eventually to persuade Chiang Kai-shek that it was in the ROC's interest to evacuate the islands or at least regard them as expendable.[1193] But Chiang was not a cooperative local partner. After the first crisis, he proceeded to put even more troops on Quemoy and Matsu—one-third of the Nationalist Army's divisions by 1958. The American president felt himself to be on the horns of a painful dilemma. If he allowed Quemoy and Matsu to fall to Mao, the shock to the morale of the ROC military and to the legitimacy of the ROC regime might

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[1193] The best detailed studies of American policy and diplomacy in the two Taiwan Strait crises are by Robert Accinelli: *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996), chps. 8-10; and "A Thorn in the Side of Peace: The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis," in *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin (Cambridge, MA:, 2001), chap. 4. For good glimpses into Eisenhower's thinking, see his letter to Winston Churchill, March 29, 1955, and his long memorandum for Dulles, April 5, 1955, both in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, vol. 16: *The Presidency: The Middle Way*, ed. Louis Galambos and Daun Van Ee (Baltimore, MD, 1996), pp. 1639-1642, 1654-1659.

somehow lead to the end of Chiang's rule in Taiwan, the loss of a key geo-strategic link in the "first island chain" (the maritime segment of the American containment line in the Western Pacific), and the fall of other "dominos" in Asia. If, however, a wholehearted commitment on his part to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu led, either by provoking Mao or encouraging Chiang, to a hot war between the United States and China, the collateral damage to American relations with much more important allies might prove to be profound.

Eisenhower was able to avoid impalement both in 1954-1955 and in 1958. As he suspected, Mao did not want a war with the United States any more than the president did with China. The PRC leader had multiple purposes in instigating the two Taiwan Strait crises. Both of them were useful for domestic political mobilization.[1194] That was the only purpose actually fulfilled. Both crises were also ways of testing the willingness of the post-Stalin Soviet leadership to support the People's Republic of China in its quest to reunify Chinese territory and rupture American encirclement. That purpose backfired in the end. Soviet support was lukewarm in 1954. As Sino-American tensions rose in early 1955, Mao concluded that China needed its own nuclear weapons. The Soviets agreed to help the Chinese develop them. But in the 1958 crisis, Mao's cavalier utterances about nuclear war appalled Khrushchev, who then proceeded to end Soviet support for the Chinese nuclear program.[1195] Dulles's hope that, under pressure, rifts would open up in the Sino-Soviet alliance thus came to fruition.

Mao's Sun Tzuian hope that he could attack American alliances did not work out so well in 1954-1955. In his view, the first crisis was supposed to put a stop to negotiations between

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[1194] Chen Jian, *Mao's China*, pp. 169-175. For a more detailed analysis of Mao's domestic-political purposes in 1958, see Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), chp. 6.

[1195] John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, CA, 1988), pp. 22-42, 60-72; Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1970), pp. 469-470; and Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glastnost Tapes*, ed. Jerrold L. Schechter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston, 1990), pp. 147-150.

Chiang's government and the Eisenhower administration for a US-ROC security pact. Mao's belligerence actually had the effect of accelerating its completion. In 1958, Mao conceived of a further Sun Tzuian stratagem of attacking American strategy. He told his colleagues in early September that Quemoy and Matsu made for an "iron noose" into which the Americans had overextended and by which he could cause them further strategic problems.[1196] Around the same time, he evidently told Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko that if the United States responded with a nuclear attack on China, Chinese forces would lure American troops deep into the countryside.[1197] Unlike MacArthur in 1950, Eisenhower did not fall into a trap. He was able to evade the perils of fatal overextension.

Imprudent military plunges into new theaters are not only the form of strategic overextension that may have self-defeating consequences in the cold-war variant of big wars. A cold war, after all, is a long-term competition that is only occasionally punctuated by hot wars in different theaters that pit "proxies" or partners of one side against partners and, in some cases, the principal power of the other side. In such a long-term competition, another form of strategic overextension may materialize when the resources that one or the other of the principal powers devotes to the military and non-military instruments that they use in their competition with each other outrun the economic base from which governments must extract those resources. Walter Lippmann, early in the Cold War in his critique of containment, and Paul Kennedy, late in the Cold War in his best-selling book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, both warned of this

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[1196] Mao 's speeches to the Supreme State Council, 5 and 8 September 1958, in "New Evidence on Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1958: Chinese Recollections and Documents," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, pp. 215, 217; Chen Jian, *Mao's China*, p. 187. For more on Mao in relation to Sun Tzu's concepts, see Lee, "Strategic Interaction."
[1197] Andrei A. Gromyko, *Memoirs* (New York, 1989), pp. 251-252.

self-defeating danger.[1198] Eisenhower needed no such warning, mindful as he was of the need for a balance between strategic efforts and economic considerations. The issue that loomed large over time was whether or not economic expansion could keep pace with what the grand strategy required as competitive US-USSR interaction evolved dynamically.[1199]

Economic Superiority

In the world wars of the twentieth century, economic superiority rose in relative importance among the keys to big-war success. In the Second World War it was a trump card for the United States, which turned its vast economic potential into both military power projected across the Atlantic and Pacific and supplies shipped to its allies on a scale that dwarfed what Britain had done in either the Napoleonic Wars or the First World War. Equally remarkable, the United States achieved something that no other great power had ever managed in a big war: at the end of the Second World War its economy was twice as large as it had been at the beginning. By contrast, the economies of both the future allies and the future enemies of the United States were as little as half the size in 1945 that they had been in 1939.[1200] We have already considered what the United States did to help its old and new friends recover. We now need to evaluate American economic performance in relation to its main enemy in a cold war that was to be more than ten times longer than the period of American belligerency in the Second World War. The former posed different economic challenges than the latter for the United States. A multi-year surge of

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[1198] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, 1987); and Samuel P. Huntington, "Coping with the Lippmann Gap," *Foreign Affairs*, 66.3, 1987/1988, pp. 453-477.

[1199] For an even broader perspective, see Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000).

[1200] Charles S. Maier, "The Making of 'Pax Americana': Formative Moments of United States Ascendancy," in *The Quest for Stability*, p. 406.

production for military purposes, such as had taken place in the Second World War, might turn out to be necessary (on a smaller scale) at some junctures in the Cold War, as indeed it was in the early 1950s and the early 1980s. But multi-decade sustainability of growth was even more important. The key economic challenges in the early Cold War for the United States were to avoid a recurrence after the Second World War of the Great Depression of the 1930s; to bring down the great volume of public debt run up from 1941 to 1945; to manage some reasonably stable balance between levels of inflation and employment; and, above all, to achieve enough long-term growth in productive capacity to ensure that the Soviet Union could not catch up.

The Soviets were not discouraged by the relative economic outlook at the end of the Second World War. Their top expert on capitalist economies, Eugene Varga, predicted in good Marxist fashion that within a few years the United States would face a new "crisis of overproduction" that would result in another Great Depression.[1201] His Marxist optimism was mirrored by bourgeois pessimism among American economists, especially those influenced by Keynesian theory. As the demobilization of military personnel and the decline of military spending proceeded apace, they anticipated massive unemployment arising from shrinking aggregate demand. Many of them thought a short-term economic downturn would be followed by long-term economic stagnation.[1202] Economic reality, as is so often the case, confounded predictions based on economic theory. There was no new depression, only a small dip in 1946 and 1947. Unemployment remained under 4 percent in both years. The national-income accounting that developed along with Keynesian theory can help us see that pent-up consumer

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[1201] See the summary of Varga's argument in Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy*, p. 84.
[1202] Robert W. Fogel, "Reconsidering Expectations of Economic Growth After World War II from the Perspective of 2004," *IMF Staff Papers*, 52, 2005, pp. 7-9.

demand and an unprecedented surge of net exports (whose purchase overseas was facilitated by foreign aid) came close to making up for a sharp decline in government spending.[1203]

Avoidance of a depression made it easier for the Truman Administration and then the Eisenhower Administration to lessen the burden of public debt. The story of how gross Federal debt fell steeply from its FY 1946 peak of 121.7 percent of GDP under the Truman Administration has not yet found its historian. Such an inquiry ought to be stimulated by recent analysis of historical data by the economists Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff, who have concluded that "median growth rates for countries with public debt over 90 percent of GDP are roughly one percent lower than otherwise; average (mean) growth rates are several percent lower."[1204] Gross Federal debt did not fall below 90 percent of GDP until 1951. At first sight, it may seem odd that the crossover point came during the Korean War, when military spending put the Federal budget back into deficit after the surpluses of the late 1940s. The explanation is that wartime price rises inflated nominal GDP and thus reduced the proportionate burden of the stock of debt. After the Korean War was over, even though the price level became more stable again, gross federal debt shrank steadily under the Eisenhower Administration to 55.2 percent of GDP in FY 1961, not because of a fall in the nominal stock of debt, but rather because of a rise of almost 30 percent in nominal GDP from FY 1954 to FY 1961. Real GDP (i.e., adjusted for inflation) rose over 20 percent in that period.[1205]

[1203] For the export story, see Jason E. Taylor, Bharati Basu, and Steven McLean, "Net Exports and the Avoidance of High Unemployment During Reconversion, 1945-1947," *Journal of Economic History* 71.2, June 2011, pp. 447-454.

[1204] Carmen M. Reinhart and Kenneth S. Rogoff, "Growth in a Time of Debt," *American Economic Review* 100.2, May 2010, pp. 573-578. Reinhart and Rogoff are the authors of a much-discussed work of historical economics that deals with the relationship between debt and financial crises: *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton, NJ, 2009).

[1205] My data are drawn from tables provided on the websites of the Office of Management and the Budget in the White House and the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce.

From a Keynesian perspective, the macroeconomic policy of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations has long been seen as stodgy, and their macroeconomic performance as far from spectacular, because the two presidents put a high priority on balancing the budget and were not predisposed to embrace new ideas for countercyclical management. Since most full-fledged Keynesian economists supported (and some served in) Democratic administrations, that judgment was especially pronounced with regard to the Eisenhower era. It found expression in the slogan of the Kennedy campaign in 1960 that it was time to get the country moving again. But perspectives change with the passage of time. In the early twenty-first century, the formidable husband-and-wife team of Christina and David Romer revisited the 1950s.[1206] They discovered that macroeconomic policy under the Eisenhower Administration did in fact bear the imprint of the new macroeconomic concepts pioneered by Keynes and other academic economists in the 1930s and 1940s and that, notwithstanding three short recessions between 1953 and 1961, the performance of the American economy in that period was, overall, reasonably good.[1207] If a "misery index" adding together unemployment rates and inflation rates on an annualized basis had been constructed for that period, it would have shown single-digit readings on a remarkably consistent basis.

What about the long-term outlook for the expansion of the productive capacity of the American economy in relation to the Soviet economy? Keynes famously quipped that "in the long run, we are all dead," as a way of trying to get economists and policymakers to focus on the short run. This quip is inappropriate for the Cold War in economic (and thermonuclear) terms.

[1206] Christina D. Romer and David H. Romer, "A Rehabilitation of Monetary Policy in the 1950s," *NBER Working Paper 8800* (Cambridge, MA, 2002). Christina Romer, the top economic historian of modern American business cycles, served as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Obama Administration. David Romer is his generation's leading theorist of long-term economic growth.

[1207] Christina Romer went on later to revisit the 1960s in a presentation to the Economic History Annual Meeting in September 2007 at the Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library. She concluded that the much more aggressive pursuit of expansionary macroeconomic policy in that decade was "a mistaken revolution."

Long-run economic success mattered greatly in the Cold War, because as Eisenhower said in his famous Farewell Address, "unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration."[1208]

All through the 1950s there were attempts to assess the Soviet-American economic balance. Nitze's NSC 68 in 1950 highlighted the 4:1 disparity between the size of the two economies in making the case that the United States could afford a big surge of rearmament, and it held out a quasi-Keynesian hope that more military spending would accelerate the growth rate of the American economy. Kennan's Task Force A in Project Solarium in 1953 presented a number of graphs and tables assessing the current state of the economy and projecting estimates out to the early 1960s. The most important of those projections was that American GNP would grow at an annual rate of 3.6 percent in 1952-1962, while Soviet GNP would achieve a 6.0 percent growth rate. Lest that comparison undercut Task Force A's case that time was on the side of the United States, a graph in the report showed (for the benefit of mathematically challenged readers) that because of the big disparity in the current size of the two economies, the gap between the aggregate output of the American economy and that of the Soviet economy would widen over the next decade, despite the superior Soviet growth rate.[1209] In late 1954 a NATO study broadened the assessment of economies. It calculated that in 1952 the total output of all NATO countries (with West Germany included) was four times greater than the total output of the Soviet bloc (with China excluded). It projected that the Soviet bloc's output would grow

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[1208]   Dwight   D.   Eisenhower,   "Farewell   Address,"   17   January   1961,   at www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19610117%20farewell%20address.htm.
[1209] The economic section runs from p. 44 to p. 56 of Task Force A's report. Graph B1 comparing the American and Soviet economies follows p. 44.

about 1.75 times as fast as NATO countries' output. But it concluded that in 1972 NATO output would still be 2.75 times larger than Soviet bloc output.[1210]

Outside official circles, by the end of the 1950s there was increasingly pessimistic concern in the United States that higher levels of economic growth would enable the Soviet Union to overcome American economic superiority in the next generation, as Khrushchev boasted. Writing in the 1990s to dispel American anxiety about Japanese and Chinese economic competition, Paul Krugman likened it to the anxiety about Soviet economic competition in the Khrushchev era.[1211] In 1960, Townsend Hoopes (soon to be a government official) cited CIA Director Allen Dulles about an apparent acceleration of Soviet growth to a 9.5 percent annual rate in the 1950s and warned that Soviet boasting had to be taken seriously.[1212] In the 1961 edition of the most widely-read economics textbook, Paul Samuelson forecast that Soviet national output might well exceed American national output by 1984 (a year with Orwellian overtones).[1213] In fact, over the next generation of the Cold War, both Soviet and American economic performance deteriorated. Then, in the final decade of the Cold War, the United States began to bounce back, while the Soviet economy and, with it, the Soviet political system collapsed.

It turned out that insights for understanding key aspects of what would ultimately happen in the Cold War economic competition were developed by academic economists in the 1950s. Warren Nutter, foreshadowing what dissident Soviet economists would highlight later, analyzed how Soviet economic data overstated the growth rate of industrial output. His own reworking of

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[1210] Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Images of the Adversary: NATO Assessments of the Soviet Union, 1953-1964," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11.2, Spring 2009, pp. 95-96.

[1211] Paul Krugman, "The Myth of Asia's Miracle," *Foreign Affairs,* 73.6, November/December 1994, pp. 62-78. As an example of the concern about Soviet growth in the late 1950s, Krugman cited Calvin B. Hoover, "Soviet Economic Growth," *Foreign Affairs,* 35.2, January 1957, pp. 257-270.

[1212] Townsend Hoopes, "The Persistence of Illusion: The Soviet Economic Drive and American National Interest," *The Yale Review* 49.3, March 1960, pp. 326.

[1213] Alex Tabarrok, "Soviet Growth and American Textbooks," 4 January 2010, at www.marginalrevolution.com

the numbers detected a slowing of that growth rate in the second half of the 1950s.[1214] Robert

Solow, who did not have the Soviets in mind, pointed out the importance of changes in total

factor productivity in accounting for long-term economic growth.[1215] Most sources of growth in

total factor productivity were quite unlikely to be sustainable in the Soviet economy, but could

be periodically reinvigorated by entrepreneurship and technological change in the American

economy. One could infer from a seminal 1954 article by Arthur Lewis about the relationship

between the agricultural and industrial sectors of developing economies that one important

source of increases in productivity under Stalinist economic planning, the movement of labor

from farm to factory, would sooner or later dissipate in the Soviet Union.[1216] Poking further into

the technical arcana of insights into long-term economic growth would take us beyond the

purview of this essay, but it is worth noting that they remain important for assessing long-term

strategic competition between the United States and China in the twenty-first century.[1217]

So What?

This essay has examined both thought and action on the American side of the early Cold War

from 1945 to 1961. The thought took the form of strategic assessments and strategic concepts.

The action took the form of efforts to develop and sustain cohesive coalitions, to develop and

integrate the use of different instruments of military power and non-military influence, to contest

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[1214] G. Warren Nutter, *Growth of Industrial Production in the Soviet Union* (Princeton, NJ, 1962), pp. 11-51, 220, 223-224, 286-287. I thank Andrew Marshall for reminding me of Nutter's work. It was known to other economists by 1960, well before the publication of the book that I have cited.

[1215] Robert M. Solow, "Technical Change and the Aggregate Production Function," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 39.3, August 1957, pp. 312-320.

[1216] W. A. Lewis, "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour," *The Manchester School*, 22.2, May 1954, pp. 139-191.

[1217] Bradford A. Lee, "Economic Productivity and Long-Term Strategic Competition in the Asia-Pacific Region," an essay for a volume being edited by Thomas G. Mahnken and Dan Blumenthal.

new theaters without self-defeating overextension, and to exploit and sustain economic superiority. The thought represents the idiosyncratic aspect of American grand strategy in this period. The action replicates the generic keys to success that one can find by looking for strategic patterns in previous big wars, from the Peloponnesian War to the Second World War.

The story that emerges from my new look at thought and action is one of relative success in grand strategy. For all of the Truman Administration's floundering with the Chinese Communists in new East Asian theaters, on balance the strategic position of the United States relative to the Soviet Union was more advantageous when Truman left office in January 1953 than when he had met with Stalin at Potsdam in July 1945. Thanks in part to Stalin's self-defeating actions, the relative advantage stood out above all in terms of coalitions, the first and foremost key to success in a big war. And for all of the Eisenhower Administration's frustrations in integrating nuclear weapons and other new instruments into its grand strategy and in trying to extend containment into the Third World, on balance the strategic position of the United States relative to the Soviet Union was more advantageous when Eisenhower left office in January 1961 than when he had taken over from Truman eight years earlier. That story of relative American success in the early stage of the Cold War was not to be sustained over the middle stage of the Cold War in the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than the incremental improvement in the American strategic position during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, there was to be decremental declension from one administration to another over the following two decades. That sad story was played out under both Democratic and Republican presidents who were served by what were thought to be the "best and brightest" thinkers and practitioners of their time.

This stark juxtaposition of relative success and failure invites us to ponder what makes for good grand strategy. One obvious place to look is in the nature of the strategists themselves.

Good leadership is easy to invoke as a magic wand, but is hard to investigate in search of its essence. Three basic elements worth exploring are temperament, intellect, and experience. Truman had the temperament to make difficult decisions when necessary, and his intellect was improved by his interest in history. He lacked experience, but could count on the two best secretaries of state during the Cold War, Marshall and Acheson. Eisenhower was the only president during the Cold War to combine all three elements to a high degree. To those who question his intellect, it is worth noting that, according to George Kennan (with his formidable intellect), at the high-level Solarium gathering of July 1953 Eisenhower exhibited "a mastery of the subject matter and a thoughtfulness and a penetration that were quite remarkable...President Eisenhower was a much more intelligent man than he was given credit for being."[1218] His successors in the White House came to office sorely lacking in one or more of the basic elements of leadership highlighted here.

Another obvious place to look for the underpinnings of good grand strategies is in the institutional processes in which the strategists are embedded. The Truman administration was responsible for developing much of the new institutional infrastructure through which American grand strategy was conceived and executed in the Cold War. The new institutions failed badly in their first major "hot war" test in Korea in the second half of 1950. Not until after that did Truman begin to involve himself more seriously in the workings of that infrastructure. Eisenhower, by contrast, was determined from the outset to strengthen the infrastructure, to make the institutional processes more systematic, and to play a central role in discussions with the

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[1218] Quoted verbatim in Pickett, ed., *Oral History*, p. 20.

major bureaucratic barons as they collectively wrestled with the most important strategic issues.[1219]

Strategists in the Kennedy Administration fancied that such a methodical approach would get in the way of their putative creativity and agility. The result from that administration onward was the descent of the American institutional machinery into a bureaucratic friction that Clausewitz in the early nineteenth century, when he used the friction metaphor to describe war, could scarcely have imagined. By the early twenty-first century, well-informed policy wonks in Washington looked back nostalgically to the Eisenhower Administration for better practices, with particular interest in the Solarium strategic deliberations of 1953.[1220]

No one should try to gainsay that leadership attributes and institutional processes are important in making for good grand strategy. Also standing out for consideration are the material resources that leaders and institutions take as inputs and try to convert through grand strategy into desired political outcomes; the more ineffable "strategic culture" that may permeate the minds of the leaders and the practices of the institutions; and the influence of foreign partners. But a less obvious place to discover in search of good grand strategy has emerged front and center in this essay: Clausewitz's illumination of the importance of understanding the nature of the war on which strategists are embarking. Achieving such understanding is often easier said than done, but American strategists in the early Cold War did it well. In this case, as in others, once one understood the nature of the war, the easier it became to assess its likely dynamics of interaction and grasp the probable keys to success.

[1219] For a good comparison of Truman and Eisenhower in this regard, see Jeffrey G. Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945-1955* (Stanford, CA, 2009), pp. 329ff.

[1220] See, for example, Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "Effective National Security Advising: Recovering the Eisenhower Legacy," *Political Science Quarterly*, 115.3, Autumn 2000, pp. 335-345; Michele A. Flournoy and Shawn W. Brimley, "Strategic Planning for National Security: A New Solarium Project," *Joint Force Quarterly,* 41.2, 2006, pp. 80-86; and Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, *Regaining Strategic Competence: Strategy for the Long Haul* (Washington, DC, 2009).

This essay has run through a list of four such keys. But strategic practitioners should not delude themselves that winning a war is a straightforward matter of following a check list. For as this essay has shown, there were in the early Cold War, as in other big wars of the past, conundrums to puzzle over within each item on the list and trade-offs to work out across the different keys to success. Efforts to make coalitions more extensive often had the effect of making the relationship between the United States and its most important allies less cohesive. As more and more instruments of military power and non-military power came into play, the harder it became to integrate them conceptually and coordinate them institutionally. A general concept of containment was not easy to translate into specific choices about when, where, and how to open or contest new theaters or domains of operations. Macroeconomic stability in the short term did not necessarily go hand in hand with economic dynamism in the long run. Efforts to economize on military spending by giving a prominent role to nuclear deterrence or to political warfare sometimes strained alliance cohesion. Overextension in new theaters threatened macroeconomic stability in the short term, though it paid off in the long-term vitality of the international economic system that the United States constructed in tandem with its alliance structure.

To juggle adroitly different keys to success and to handle wisely difficult trade-offs, practitioners need to be reasonably good thinkers themselves, but there is a role in grand strategy for thinkers who are not temperamentally well-suited to be practitioners, as arguably proved to be the case with George Kennan. For example, in principle, academic thinkers should be able to develop broad strategic concepts that could play the role that containment did in the Cold War, though in practice they have not been able to do so with any degree of significant success since the end of the Cold War. They should be able to provide deeper insight into what makes for a

cohesive coalition than they have been able to do so far. They should be able to provide realistic theories of influence for new instruments in new domains, such as cyberspace in the twenty-first century, theories that go beyond the "arm-waving" that is much in evidence now about the information domain of strategy. Those with a good grasp of military capabilities and concepts should be able to enhance operational and strategic understanding of when it makes sense to open or contest new theaters in an ongoing war or a new arena of interaction in a long-term strategic competition. And, not least, those with a good grasp of economic history and theory should be able to build on the work of Paul Kennedy and others about the complex, reciprocal relationship between long-term economic vitality and long-term strategic success.[1221]

All these intellectual tasks are quite challenging. It is hard to meet the challenges in the realm of pure abstraction. They need to be comprehended and confronted in relation to actual or anticipated conflicts against clearly acknowledged adversaries. Thinkers, like practitioners, have to understand, as Clausewitz emphasized, the conflict in which they are getting involved, "neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."[1222]

[1221] Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. See also Lee, "Economic Productivity and Long-Term Strategic Competition."
[1222] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 88.

The Reagan Administration's Strategy toward the Soviet Union

It has become fashionable in some quarters to argue that the U.S. government is incapable of formulating and implementing a consistent strategy. In fact, it has done so on a number of occasions. During the Cold War, for example, the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan administrations all consciously pursued coherent strategies for competing with the Soviet Union. It is the latter case that forms the subject of this essay. Ronald Reagan and a handful of his close advisors formulated a coherent strategy toward the Soviet Union between 1981 and 1983 and implemented that strategy consistently throughout the remainder of his eight years in office.

This strategic approach rested on a careful net assessment of relative Soviet and American strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it acknowledged more than previous presidential administrations enduring American strengths and Soviet weaknesses. Reagan's policy and strategy represented a sharp break from that of its predecessors, in that it sought not to contain the Soviet power, but rather to address the domestic sources of Soviet foreign behavior. The Reagan administration pursued this strategy consistently throughout its two terms in office. The shifts that occurred resulted from the inevitable adjustments needed to implement the strategy in the face of bureaucratic, Congressional, and allied constraints as well as responses to changes in the strategic environment, particularly the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union.[1223]

[1223] For another view, see James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A History of the End of the Cold War* (New York, 2009). Although Mann concedes the basic continuity of strategy throughout Reagan's eight years in office, he makes a lot of changes between his early and later years in office.

This chapter begins by describing Reagan's assumptions about the U.S.-Soviet competition and how they differed from the Cold War orthodoxy of containment. It then critically analyzes the Reagan administration's formulation of strategy, emphasizing the role of the National Security Council (NSC) staff during the administration's first two years in office. Specifically, the next section explores the drafting of two National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) and three speeches between 1981 and 1983: NSDD-32, the classified national security strategy, and NSDD-75, the classified strategy for competing with the Soviet Union, as well as Reagan's Notre Dame, Westminster, and "Evil Empire" speeches. The third section describes the implementation of these strategies during the remainder of the Reagan administration. The chapter concludes with reflections upon the experience and lessons for the future.

What follows is based largely upon archival sources as well as memoirs of the participants. It is of necessity incomplete, as not all relevant documents have been declassified. However, the information now available is sufficient to describe in detail the formulation and implementation of the Reagan administration's strategy.

Understanding the Nature of the Competition

In the United States grand strategy, which attempts to enlist all the instruments of national power in pursuit of a common set of objectives, is presidential strategy; only presidents have the power and influence to unite the national security bureaucracy behind a common endeavor. This, in turn, requires a president who thinks strategically in terms of power and how it can be wielded competitively and purposefully. It also requires what Peter Rodman termed "presidential command." It is insufficient for a president to declare or decree; to implement

strategy he must work actively to ensure that his cabinet members and the bureaucracies they oversee faithfully execute his will.[1224]

Ronald Reagan entered office in 1981 with a clear electoral mandate to change the course of American foreign policy. He also possessed a view of the U.S.-Soviet competition that was at odds with the Cold War consensus, and even with the beliefs of many members of his own party.

U.S. national security policy throughout the Cold War rested upon four widely shared but implicit assumptions. Even though each would be proven false with the collapse of the Soviet Union, they had held sway over the U.S. national security community in the decades that preceded it. The first was that the Soviet Union was a permanent feature of the international system. Indeed, beginning in the late 1970s many if not most strategists saw the Soviet Union as getting stronger, as evidenced by its military buildup and increasingly adventurous activity in the Third World, culminating in the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.[1225]

The second assumption was that there was little the United States and its allies could do to change the nature of the Soviet regime. Some liberals pinned their hopes on the convergence of the Soviet Union and the West, a theory that rested both on the ability of the Soviet regime to become more democratic and the West to become more socialistic. Nonetheless, they saw the process of convergence as organic; its proponents believed there was little that the United States could do to foster democracy in the Soviet Union. To the contrary, they believed that attempts to do so would lead to a backlash.

A third assumption was that efforts to confront the Soviet regime would lead to crisis and potentially a catastrophic conflict. To reduce friction, leaders needed to meet at summits and

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[1224] Peter Rodman, *Presidential Command* (New York, 2009).
[1225] For a taste of this literature, see Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1984).

conclude diplomatic agreements. According to this logic, the arms control process played a large role in reducing superpower tension.

Fourth and finally, given the futility of efforts to change the Soviet regime and the dangers of confrontation, the wisest strategy was to contain Soviet expansion while seeking to accommodate the Soviet Union within the international order.[1226] Over time, it was hoped, containment and conciliation would lead to the mellowing of Soviet behavior. However, the link between containment and changes in Soviet behavior was asserted more often than it was argued.[1227]

Reagan was a heretic who rejected the Cold War orthodoxy.   He came to office with a different set of assumptions about the Soviet Union. He possessed an innate optimism about the United States and a commensurate pessimism about the Soviet Union. He thus weighed the balance between the United States and Soviet Union differently than many others, including many in his own party.

First, he rejected the notion that the Soviet Union was a permanent feature of the international system. Whereas for decades the United States had focused on how to live with communism and treat the Soviet Union as an equal, he had emphasized the transitory character of the communist regime. As early as 1975, Reagan had termed communism "a temporary aberration which will one day disappear from the earth because it is contrary to human nature."[1228] Such statements, often dismissed as rhetoric, in fact reflected the future president's deep convictions.

[1226] Richard Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger* (New Haven, CT, 2003), pp. 162, 189.
[1227] One prominent exception is X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 3, July 1947.
[1228] Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York, 2005), p. 217.

Second, Reagan believed that the United States had much greater leverage over the Soviet Union than many others credited it with. Indeed, he grasped that the Soviet Union was in the throes of a terminal illness.[1229] He saw the powerful American economy as a weapon that the United States could wield against the Soviet Union. He also believed as early as 1977 that the United States could use the attraction of western economic prosperity to in effect create *de facto* allies among Soviet citizens who wanted a better life for themselves and their children. Reagan became convinced that the Soviet economy "was a basket case, partly because of massive spending on armaments… I wondered how we as a nation could use these cracks in the Soviet system to accelerate the process of collapse."[1230] He also saw the Soviet regime as vulnerable in the realm of ideas. In his view, détente had failed as a strategy precisely because it had failed to apply America's strengths against these weaknesses.[1231]

Third, Reagan was willing to accept greater risk in standing up to the Soviet Union than the mainstream counseled. He did not shy away from confronting the Soviet leadership, either in word or in deed. As discussed at greater length below, the administration's confrontational rhetoric and actions alarmed the Soviet leadership even if it did not, as some have argued, bring the superpowers to the brink of war.

Finally, and most fundamentally, he sought not to contain Soviet power but to transform the Soviet regime. Reagan sought to create a fundamental change in the character of the Soviet Union by pushing the communist regime to confront its weaknesses.[1232] In so doing, he turned the United States away from the strategy of containment that it had followed in one form or another throughout the Cold War.

[1229] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 164.
[1230] Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford, 2005), p. 351.
[1231] Ibid., p. 352.
[1232] Ibid., p. 354.

Developing Political Objectives

Although Reagan brought a set of ideas about the U.S.-Soviet competition with him to Washington, he spent much of his first year in office formulating the policies that would guide his administration's strategy in the years that followed. The effort was fitful, however, hampered by divisions within the administration, a weak staff, and Reagan's style of collegial decision making.

Reagan's advisors divided into two groups when it came to their assessment of the U.S.-Soviet competition. Some, such as William P. Clark, Caspar Weinberger, William Casey, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Ed Meese, believed that the United States could and should exert considerable leverage over the Soviet Union. Others echoed these views, including key members of the National Security Council staff, such as Richard Pipes, Thomas Reed, and Gus Weiss, defense officials such as Fred Iklé, Richard Perle, and Andrew Marshall, and members of the intelligence community, such as Henry Rowen and Herb Meyer. Other advisors, by contrast, believed that the Soviet Union was strong and that competition with the United States would endure, including George Shultz, Robert McFarlane, Michael Deaver, James Baker, George H.W. Bush, and Nancy Reagan.[1233] In formulating policy, Reagan tended to play these groups off one another.[1234]

Reagan's initial organization of his national security team further hindered policy formulation. He disliked the way Henry Kissinger had developed the National Security Council staff into a center of personal power, and he looked to Secretary of State Alexander Haig to take

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[1233] William E. Pemberton, *Exit with Honor: The Life and Presidency of Ronald Reagan* (Armonk, NY, 1997), p. 149.
[1234] Gordon S. Barrass, *The Great Cold War: A Journey Through the Hall of Mirrors* (Palo Alto, CA, 2009), p. 264.

the lead in formulating foreign policy.[1235] By contrast, Reagan's first National Security Advisor, Richard V. Allen, enjoyed limited access to and influence over the president. It soon became clear, however, that Haig did not share many of Reagan's convictions. Moreover, his prickly personality annoyed Reagan and alienated many close to him.

Reagan favored a relaxed, collegial form of decision making. What was most important to him was that decisions reflect his core beliefs; he left implementation to his subordinates. In the words of Richard Pipes, Reagan "was concerned with the 'what', not the 'how'," a propensity that would hurt the president during his second administration.[1236] The attempt on Reagan's life on March 30, 1981 and his long convalescence further slowed progress in formulating policy.

From his early days in office, Reagan gained a greater appreciation of the weakness of the Soviet economy. Director of Central Intelligence William Casey brought Reagan raw intelligence on the Soviet Union that portrayed economic stagnation.[1237] Special National Intelligence Estimate 3/11-4-81, completed in November 1981, concluded that Soviet economic performance had deteriorated to a point that military expenditures left few resources for raising the living standards of Soviet citizens. It also highlighted the Soviet Union's dependence on Western technology and credits.[1238] The chairman of the National Intelligence Council, Harry Rowen, further argued that the Soviet empire was placing a considerable burden on the Soviet economy.[1239]

[1235] Thomas C. Reed, *At The Abyss: An Insider's History of the Cold War* (New York, 2004), p. 229.
[1236] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 164.
[1237] Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1994), p. 4.
[1238] SNIE 3/11-4/81, "Dependence of Soviet Military Power on Economic Relations with the West," 17 November 1981, available at http://www.foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed May 28, 2012).
[1239] Reed, *At The Abyss,* 240.

Casey's special assistant, Herb Meyer, previously an editor of *Fortune* magazine, undertook a series of sensitive vulnerability assessments of the Soviet economy that revealed its susceptibility to outside pressure. As a result, Casey believed that the United States and its allies could compound Moscow's difficulties by restricting credit, tightening export controls, and imposing embargoes on critical materials that supported the Soviet oil and gas industry.[1240] Such intelligence pointed the way to an approach to competing with the Soviet Union. As he wrote in his private diary on 26 March 1981, "Briefing on Soviet economy. They are in very bad shape, and if we can cut off their credit they'll have to yell 'uncle' or starve."[1241]

Both in public and in private, Reagan began to articulate his vision of a very different U.S.-Soviet relationship. Speaking at the University of Notre Dame's commencement on 17 May, Reagan proclaimed, "The West won't contain communism, it will transcend communism. It won't bother to…denounce it, it will dismiss it as some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written."[1242] Many at the time rejected the speech as pure rhetoric. In fact, it represented the president's opening public bid to reorient U.S. national security policy.

Reagan also began formulating a different approach to the Soviet Union in private. At a July 1981 NSC meeting, Reagan decided that "the overriding objective of U.S. Policy toward the Soviet Union will be to blunt and contain Soviet imperialism. This goal involves raising the costs and risks of Soviet expansion and, to the extent feasible, encouraging democratic processes

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[1240] Pipes, *Vixi*, 157.

[1241] Quoted in Schweizer, *Victory*, 6.

[1242] Ronald W. Reagan, "Address at Commencement Exercises at the University of Notre Dame," 17 May 1981, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan, 1981* (Washington, D.C., 1982), p. 434.

in the USSR."[1243] Of note was Reagan's emphasis not only on confronting Soviet adventurism abroad, but also attempting to address its domestic roots.

Matching Strategy to Policy: Strategy Formulation

Reagan's strategy for competing with the Soviet Union marked a break with the past. Rather than being constrained by the perceived limits of American power, it was defined by a sense of the weaknesses inherent in the Soviet regime. Carrying out such a change of course required that Reagan exercise "presidential command" to ensure that both presidential appointees and career civil servants carried out his will.

In formulating strategy, Reagan had to contend with two groups that held views quite different than his. First, he faced opposition from so-called "realists", exemplified by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. The realists argued that the Soviet Union was a state like any other, and that the United States should treat it as such. In particular, they believed that Washington should base relations with Moscow on the Kremlin's external actions rather than its internal behavior. Second, he had to contend with conservatives, many within his own party, who emphasized Soviet strength and American weakness. Particularly in Reagan's second term, many on the right attacked Reagan for allegedly going soft on communism.[1244] Reagan and his advisors also had to overcome resistance, both passive and active, from elements of the U.S. national security bureaucracy, among the most fervent defenders of the Cold War orthodoxy.

Efforts to match policy to strategy got underway in earnest in 1982 and were spurred by the replacement of Richard Allen by William Clark as assistant to the president for national

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[1243] Richard Pipes, Memorandum for Richard V. Allen, "East-West Policy Study: Final Version," July 16, 1981, Box 5, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (RRPL), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), p. 1.
[1244] Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan.*

security affairs on 4 January 1982. Unlike Allen, Clark was a longtime confidant of Reagan who had served as a justice of the California Supreme Court before being appointed deputy secretary of defense at the outset of the administration. Clark agreed to take the job of national security advisor on the condition that he would enjoy unfettered access to the president and would be able to organize a new, more powerful NSC staff.[1245] Clark saw his job as playing Joseph to Reagan's pharaoh. As he saw it, his role was "the conversion of [the president's] philosophy to policy."[1246] In this task he was supported by a number of NSC staffers, including Thomas Reed, Roger Robinson, and Richard Pipes.

NSDD 32

Two documents – National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 32, entitled "National Security Strategy," and NSDD 75, entitled "U.S. Relations with the USSR" – collectively served as the strategic blueprint of the Reagan administration. Other NSDDs played a supporting role, including NSDD 48, "International Economic Policy;" NSDD 54, "U.S. Policy toward Eastern Europe;" and NSDD 66, "East-West Relations and Poland Related Sanctions."

The Carter administration had produced a classified national security document, Presidential Directive (PD)/NSC-18, "U.S. National Strategy," on 24 August 1977. Despite its title, the directive had really only focused on the military dimension of the U.S.-Soviet competition. The document argued, "In the foreseeable future, US-Soviet relations will continue to be characterized by both competition and cooperation, with the attendant risk of conflict as well as the opportunity for stabilizing US-Soviet relations." Under Carter, the United States

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[1245] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 232.
[1246] Ivo H. Daalder and I. M. Destler, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office* (New York, 2009), pp. 144-145.

sought Soviet assistance in resolving regional conflicts as well as involving "the Soviet Union constructively in global activities, such as economic and social developments and peaceful non-strategic trade."[1247]

The Reagan administration failed to formulate a similar statement of its national security policy and strategy during its first year in office. However, on 1 February 1982, Clark, his deputy Robert McFarlane, and NSC staffer Thomas C. Reed met with Reagan to discuss the need for a formal presidential directive on national security policy.[1248] Four days later, Reagan signed National Security Study Memorandum 1, which directed a review of U.S. national security objectives and the impact of Soviet power and behavior on them.[1249]

Reagan chose Reed to lead the effort with the assistance of Colonel Allan Myer. Reagan had known Reed for a long time and trusted him to represent his views. Others involved in the process included Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Fred C. Iklé, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy Richard Perle, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Laurence Eagleburger, and several other aides.[1250]

Reed's interagency group (IG) met for the first time in the White House Situation Room on 18 February.[1251] Over the course of several months, the IG drafted a nine-part study. Reagan received regular updates on the study's progress in the form of memoranda, read each section of the study as they were drafted, discussed them with his advisors, and provided comments and

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[1247] Presidential Directive/NSC-18, "U.S. National Strategy", 25 August 1977, pp. 1-2.
[1248] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 235.
[1249] William P. Clark, Memorandum, "National Security Study Directive (NSSD) 1-82, U.S. National Security Strategy," 5 February 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Study Directives (NSSDs), Box 1, RRPL, NARA.
[1250] Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War* (New York, 2002), p. 154.
[1251] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 236.

recommendations. On 16 April, the National Security Council discussed and approved the first five sections of the study; it met again on 27 April to consider the final four.[1252]

Reed later recalled that conducting the study was difficult, because the national security bureaucracy disliked the idea of presenting the president options. Instead, they sought to hand over a predigested consensus. Reed, however, knew the president's mind and sought to preserve his ability to make substantive decisions.[1253] The resulting study, NSSD 1-82, "U.S. National Security Strategy," ran 87 pages and was divided into three parts: national objectives and the international environment, implementing strategies, and the military component of national security strategy.

The document began with four broad and uncontroversial purposes for U.S. national security strategy:

- "To preserve the political identity, framework, and institutions of the United States as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution."

- "To protect the United States – its national territory, citizenry, military forces, and assets abroad – from military, paramilitary, or terrorist attack."

- "To foster the economic wellbeing of the United States, in particular, by maintaining and strengthening nation's industrial, agricultural, and technological base and by ensuring access to foreign markets and resources."

- "To foster an international order supportive of the vital interests of the United States by maintaining and strengthening constructive, cooperative relationships and alliances, and

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[1252] William P. Clark, Memorandum for the President, "U.S. National Security Strategy," 26 April 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Study Directives (NSSDs), Box 1, RRPL, NARA.
[1253] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 236.

by encouraging and reinforcing wherever possible and practicable, freedom, rule of law, economic development and national independence throughout the world."[1254]

Where the document began to diverge from past studies was in its assessment of American and Soviet strengths and weaknesses. Its appraisal of the Soviet Union is notable for the emphasis it placed on Soviet vulnerabilities. These included the "serious structural weaknesses" of Soviet and Warsaw Pact economies as well as the fact that "the appeal of communist ideologies appears to be decreasing throughout much of the world, including the Soviet bloc itself."[1255] Moreover, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had revealed the limits of Soviet power projection, and non-Russian nationalities within the Soviet empire were becoming restive.[1256]

The study envisioned pursuing U.S. national objectives through "an interlocking set of strategies." As its authors noted, "The various instruments of U.S. national power and the strategies for their use do not stand alone; rather, they are inextricably linked and, to be effective, must be mutually supportive."[1257] The study also contained a balanced appraisal of Soviet military power. Although it acknowledged the Soviet military buildup of the 1970s, it also highlighted the fact that the Soviets possessed a number of military vulnerabilities, including the unreliability of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact allies, general-purpose forces that had difficulty dealing with unforeseen and quickly changing circumstances, and logistical vulnerabilities. The study pointed out that the Soviet bomber force was old, its SSBNs relatively noisy, and its anti-submarine warfare capability inadequate. Moreover, it assessed that their strategic air defenses

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[1254] NSSD 1-82, "U.S. National Security Strategy," April 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 1, OA 91311, NSDD-32, RRPL, NARA, p. 1.
[1255] Ibid., p. 2.
[1256] Ibid., p. 2.
[1257] Ibid., p. 8.

would perform poorly against low-altitude penetrating aircraft.[1258] Each of these vulnerabilities would subsequently serve as the target of competitive strategies to exploit them.[1259]

The study also emphasized Soviet economic shortcomings, including low economic growth and stagnating standards of living "owing to the growing defense burden and inefficient investment practices."[1260] It also noted that the Soviet economy was consuming increasing amounts of energy at higher cost. Although oil exports represented a large source of hard currency for the Soviets, they were declining. As a result, the study concluded that it might be increasingly difficult for the Soviet Union to sustain growth in military spending.[1261]

The study also highlighted the challenges the Soviet Union faced as a multinational empire. It noted that turmoil on the borders of the Soviet Union had reinforced the regime's obsession with the need for order on its frontiers. Moreover, it emphasized internal unrest and insurgency among Soviet clients across the globe.[1262]

The document concluded with both a warning but also the promise of a transformed relationship: "the decade of the eighties will pose the greatest challenge to the survival and well-being of the U.S. since World War II. Our response to this challenge could result in a fundamentally different East-West relationship by the end of the decade."[1263]

Reagan signed NSDD 32 on 20 May 1982. Although an unclassified version of the strategy was never released, the thinking behind it was outlined in two speeches: one by Clark at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. on 21 May and one by

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[1258] NSSD 1-82, p. 12.
[1259] See, for example, Gordon S. Barrass, "U.S. Competitive Strategy During the Cold War" and John A. Battilega, "Soviet Military Thought and the U.S. Competitive Strategies Initiative" in Thomas G. Mahnken, editor, *Developing Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History, and Practice* (Palo Alto, CA, 2012).
[1260] NSSD 1-82, p. 13.
[1261] Ibid., p. 13.
[1262] Ibid., p. 13.
[1263] Ibid., p. 4.

Reed to AFCEA on 16 June.[1264] In his speech, Clark made it clear that the United States should

exploit Soviet economic weakness, noting, "We must also force our principal adversary, the

Soviet Union, to bear the brunt of its economic shortcomings."[1265] Although Clark's speech

represented a clear signal of a change in strategy, it received little media coverage. Richard

Halloran of the *New York Times* and Michael Getler of the *Washington Post* wrote stories about

Clark's speech, but the NSC staff lamented that the media had missed its central point.[1266]

NSDD 75

Whereas NSDD-32 provided an overall strategic framework for the Reagan

administration, NSDD-75 applied that framework specifically to the Soviet Union. The

document has received its share of accolades. Paul Kengor has called it "probably the most

important foreign-policy document by the Reagan administration, institutionalizing the

president's intention to undermine the Soviet communist empire."[1267] NSC staffer Norman

Bailey has dubbed it "the strategic plan that won the Cold War."[1268] The primary author of

NSDD-32, Tom Reed, called it "the blueprint for the endgame" and "a confidential declaration

of economic and political war."[1269]

The author of NSDD 75 was Richard Pipes with the assistance of Roger Robinson.

Pipes, a Polish émigré, was a professor of history at Harvard who served as the NSC's director

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[1264] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 237.
[1265] "National Security Strategy," speech to be delivered by Honorable William P. Clark, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 21 May 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 1, OA 91311, NSDD-32, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, National Archives and Records Administration, p. 5.
[1266] Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge*, p. 167.
[1267] Paul Kengor, "Crucial Cold War Secret," *The Washington Times*, 13 January 2008.
[1268] Norman A. Bailey, *The Strategic Plan that Won the Cold War: National Security Decision Directive 75* (McLean, VA, 1998).
[1269] Kengor, "Crucial Cold War Secret."

for Eastern European and Soviet Affairs during the first two years of the Reagan administration; his office also included Paula Dobriansky, who would later serve as Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs in the George W. Bush administration, and Dennis Blair, who would rise to the rank of Admiral and serve as Commander of U.S. Pacific Command and then Director of National Intelligence in the Barack Obama administration.[1270] Like Reagan, Pipes had been arguing for years that the Soviet Union was in decline. As he later wrote, "Because Reagan knew what he wanted but could not articulate his feelings in terms that made sense to foreign policy professionals at home and aboard, I took it upon myself to do so on his behalf."[1271]

Pipes painted a picture of a Soviet empire stretched to its limits, vulnerable to ethnic strife, and lacking political legitimacy. Such a view, whose veracity became apparent within a decade, was nonetheless radical in the early 1980s, and it earned him ostracism among the foreign policy community. Indeed, *The Washington Post* declared, "for rank hysteria in scholarly garb, it's hard to top Harvard prof Richard Pipes."[1272]

Pipes was one of a relatively small group of people who shared the belief that the Soviet Union was structurally weak, that the Soviet elite had lost faith in the communist system, and that the U.S.-Soviet competition was moving into areas where the Soviets could not compete.[1273] Others who felt the same way included William Odom, Fritz Ermarth, and Wolfgang Leonhardt.[1274]

The genesis of NSDD 75 predated NSDD 32's approval. Within days of joining the NSC staff, Pipes asked Allen for permission to draft a paper on U.S.-Soviet relations. Although Allen

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[1270] Pipes, *Vixi*, pp. 149-150.
[1271] Ibid., p. 194.
[1272] Quoted in Schweizer, *Reagan's War*, p. 156.
[1273] Barrass, *The Great Cold War, p.* 252.
[1274] Richard Pipes, Memorandum for Richard V. Allen, "A Reagan Soviet Policy," 21 May 1981, Richard E. Pipes Files, Box 4, RRPL, NARA.

agreed, the State Department opposed the idea of the NSC leading such an effort, and toward the end of February 1981 Secretary of State Alexander Haig commissioned Paul Wolfowitz to draft a strategy paper instead.[1275] In early March, State convened the first Senior Inter-Agency Group (SIG) meeting to discuss the subject.

Later that month, Pipes received the first copy of the State paper. As he recalled, "It was predictable State Department boilerplate, the product, undoubtedly, of many hands. It spelled out how we were to react to Soviet aggression but avoided any suggestion of initiatives."[1276] Pipes' NSC colleague, Carnes Lord, was even more blunt in his evaluation: "In general, I found the draft study banal, lacking in rigor and precision, too general to have any real policy utility, and substantively deficient in some important respects."[1277]As Pipes wrote to Allen on 30 March,

> None of this strikes me as bold, innovative, or likely to succeed. *We must put the*
> *Soviet Union on the defensive*. I cannot express the central idea of a Reagan
> Soviet policy more concisely. To do so, we must turn the tables on them and
> exploit their internal difficulties which are steadily worsening. State is not
> capable of thinking in such terms. I propose that we duly comment on their paper
> and then shelve it in order to proceed with out own undertaking.[1278]

Pipes offered to draft a paper to "supplement" the State Department draft. As he later wrote, "My intention was to articulate the theoretical rationale of his Soviet policy in the hope

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[1275] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 194.
[1276] Ibid., p. 194.
[1277] Carnes Lord, Memorandum for Richard Pipes, "Comments on East-West Policy Study," April 9, 1981, Richard E. Pipes Files, Box 4, RRPL, NARA, 1.
[1278] Pipes, *Vixi*, pp. 194-5.

that it would serve as the foundation of an official document."[1279] The resulting draft, written in

May 1981, was entitled "A Reagan Soviet Policy."[1280] It advanced four central propositions.

The first was that communism was inherently expansionist. That would change only when the

Soviet regime collapsed or at least was thoroughly reformed. Second, economic difficulties and

imperial overstretch confronted the Stalinist model with a profound crisis. Third, the successors

to Brezhnev were likely to be split into "conservative" and "reformist" factions.[1281] Fourth, and

finally, he argued that "It is in the interest of the United States to promote the reformist

tendencies in the USSR by a double-pronged strategy: <u>assisting pro-reform forces</u> inside the

USSR and <u>raising for the Soviet Union the costs of its imperialism</u> elsewhere by a very

determined strategy."[1282]

In Pipes' view, there was an intimate relationship between the political and economic

situation within the Soviet Union and its foreign policy. Moreover, he believed that it was

impossible to cope with the external manifestations of Soviet power without coming to grips

with their internal origins. [1283] Such a view was controversial among academics and

policymakers. As Robert Legvold wrote in 1982,

> Pipes is wrong in assuming that there is a clear-cut division between two camps
>
> [in the Soviet Union]. Any U.S. policy designed to assure that some non-existent
>
> group of 'moderates' will come to power is a chimera. It is conceivable that
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> vigorous, sometimes bellicose anti-Soviet policies on the part of U.S. authorities

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[1279] Ibid., *Vixi*, p. 194.

[1280] Richard Pipes, "A Reagan Soviet Policy," May 1981, Richard E. Pipes Files, Box 4, RRPL, NARA.

[1281] Indeed, three years before the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Pipes was focused on the prospect of generational change in the Soviet leadership. That having been said, Pipes may have overestimated the ability of outsiders to understand the dynamics within the Soviet leadership.

[1282] Pipes, "A Reagan Soviet Policy," p. 1.

[1283] Ibid., "A Reagan Soviet Policy," p. 5.

could vindicate and strengthen their hard-line rivals. This is precisely what some

Soviets hint might happen.[1284]

Pipes argued for "frustrating" the Soviet leadership's strategy. As he later wrote, "it was a hopeless undertaking to try to prevent its [communism's] further spread at the periphery: one had to strike at the very heart of Soviet imperialism, its system."[1285] This, in turn, required pairing external pressure on the Soviet Union with internal pressure on the regime itself. As he wrote, "It makes perfect strategic sense to exert maximum possible internal pressure on the Soviet regime, i.e., to supplement external deterrents with a major effort aimed at stimulating anti-expansionist, reformist forces inside the Communist bloc."[1286]

Pipes submitted the manuscript to Allen in May 1981. However, it languished on Allan's desk for several months. It was not until September that he convened a small group to discuss the draft. Around Thanksgiving, Allen forwarded the draft to Reagan, who wrote on the cover of the manuscript that it was "very sound."[1287]

Clark's appointment as National Security Advisor in January 1982 breathed new life to the formulation of a strategy for competing with the Soviet Union. Clark shared Pipes' belief that it made little sense to resist Soviet aggression if U.S. policy strengthened the regime internally by subsidizing the Soviet economy.[1288] As a result, Clark asked Pipes to draft the terms of reference for a new NSSD on U.S.-Soviet relations in the hope that Reagan would sign a NSDD in April. As it turned out, NSDD 75 was not signed until the following January.[1289]

[1284] Cited in Ibid., Vixi, p. 161.
[1285] Ibid., p. 198.
[1286] Pipes, "A Reagan Soviet Policy," p. 2.
[1287] Pipes, *Vixi*, pp. 195, 197.
[1288] Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge*, p. 170.
[1289] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 198.

Pipes forwarded the draft terms of reference to Clark on 10 March, 1982. He argued that the State Department's East-West policy study suffered from "two fundamental flaws." First, it was heavily centered on the military dimension of the U.S.-Soviet competition and the problems of containment. By contrast, it provided no guidance as to the ultimate objectives of U.S. policy. That is, it viewed containment as an end to itself rather than a means to achieve a greater end. Second, it was too long and unwieldy to serve as the basis of U.S. strategy.[1290] As a result, although Pipes included some of its points in the terms of reference, his draft represented an essentially fresh approach. Although the document assigned the chairmanship of the interagency group dealing with the study to the State Department, Pipes warned Clark that it would be an unworkable arrangement. In his view,

> The differences between State and Defense on the subject of long-term policies toward the Soviet Union are profound and very hard to reconcile… It seems to me that if we are going to be serious about tackling the fundamental questions, rather than confining ourselves to issues where consensus is easy to obtain, then the NSC alone is capable of providing the needed arbitration."[1291]

Pipes' concerns were warranted. The State Department argued that there was no need for a NSSD on U.S.-Soviet relations. Rather, all that was needed was an update to the East-West Policy Study.[1292]

[1290] Richard Pipes, Memorandum for William P. Clark, "Terms of Reference of NSSD on Policy Toward the Soviet Union," March 10, 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Study Directives (NSSDs), Box 1, RRPL, NARA, p. 1.

[1291] Pipes, "Terms of Reference of NSSD on Policy Toward the Soviet Union," pp. 1-2.

[1292] L. Paul Bremer, III, Memorandum for Mr. William P. Clark, "Wheeler-Bremer Memorandum on this Topic of March 26, 1982," Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Study Directives (NSSDs), Box 1, RRPL, NARA.

As the formulation of strategy proceeded in secret, Reagan continued to articulate a new approach in public. The two tracks were, however, intertwined. Reagan's next major speech on U.S. strategy toward the Soviet Union, delivered to members of the British Parliament in Westminster on 8 June 1982, drew both on NSDD 32 and Pipes' policy paper.[1293] The speech, drafted by presidential speechwriter Tony Dolan, was a rhetorical masterpiece. In it, Reagan used Marxist theory to portray a Soviet Union in crisis:

> In an ironic sense Karl Marx was right. We are witnessing today a great revolutionary crisis, a crisis where the demands of the economic order are conflicting directly with those of the political order. But the crisis is happening not in the free, non-Marxist West, but in the home of Marxist-Leninism, the Soviet Union. It is the Soviet Union that runs against the tide of history by denying human freedom and human dignity to its citizens. It is also in deep economic difficulty. The rate of growth in the national product has been steadily declining since the fifties and is less than half of what it was then… What we see here is a political structure that no longer corresponds to its economic base, a society where productive forces are hampered by political ones.[1294]

It was a public acknowledgement that Reagan understood the Soviet Union's perilous circumstances.

[1293] Reed, *At The Abyss*, p. 237; Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 197.
[1294] Ronald W. Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament," June 8, 1982, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan, 1982*, Volume I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 744.

On 20 August 1982, Clark forwarded the Terms of Reference for NSSD 11-82, "U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union" to Reagan, emphasizing that

> The draft goes beyond previous policy formulations bearing on U.S.-Soviet relations in that it requires us to show concern not only for Soviet political and military <u>behavior</u>, but also for the <u>system</u> that makes behavior of this kind possible. This approach calls on us to adjust our policies toward Moscow in such a manner that instead of helping the further consolidation of the totalitarian and imperialist elements in the USSR, we promote the less aggressive, more domestically-oriented forces.[1295]

The following day, Reagan approved the document and initiated a review of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union chaired by the NSC.

Several aspects of the terms of reference stand out. First, the review was to take a broad view of the U.S.-Soviet competition, "with emphasis on its non-military aspects." Second, it was overtly strategic, in that it was meant to determine "the political, economic, military and ideological means at our disposal for achieving favorable changes in Soviet international behavior, including assessment of the costs and obstacles involved in using them." Third, it reflected Pipes' belief in the link between the internal composition of the Soviet regime and Soviet external behavior: "The review will proceed on the premise that Soviet international

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[1295] William P. Clark, Memorandum for the President, "Terms of Reference for NSSD on 'U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union'", August 20, 1982, Box 5, RRPL, NARA.

behavior is determined not only by the external environment but also by political, economic, social, and ideological features of the Soviet system itself."[1296]

The NSC staff convened an interagency group led by Deputy Secretary of State Walter Stoessel to conduct the review, with assistant-secretary level participation from the Department of Defense, joint chiefs of staff, CIA, Department of Treasury, Department of Commerce, International Communication Agency, Department of Agriculture, and NSC Staff.[1297] The study was meant to assess the likelihood of change in the Soviet system, Soviet internal and external vulnerabilities and strengths, the balance of internal forces making for continuity or change, meeting the Soviet challenge in the short and long term, measures to shape the Soviet environment, and recommended policies for the United States.

At the group's first meeting on 27 August, the State Department distributed an outline for the review that differed considerably from what the president had approved. The State Department also tried to restrict drafting of the NSDD to State and CIA. Paula Dobriansky, who attended the meeting for the NSC staff, suggested to Clark that the NSC should draft the introduction and objectives sections of the directive.[1298]

Haig's resignation on 25 June 1982 allowed Clark to assert the NSC's authority. He authorized Pipes to take the lead in drafting the directive on U.S.-Soviet relations.[1299] At the working level of the government, there was considerable unease about the "offensive" rhetoric of the draft directive as well as the promotion of internal change in the Soviet Union as a U.S.

[1296] National Security Study Directive Number 11-82, "U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union," August 21, 1982, Box 5, RRPL, NARA, p. 1.

[1297] William P. Clark, Memorandum, "National Security Study Directive on U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union," 21 August 1982, Box 5, RRPL, NARA.

[1298] Paula Dobriansky, Memorandum for William P. Clark, "NSSD 11-82: U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Union," 30 August 1982, Box 5, RRPL, NARA.

[1299] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 200.

objective.[1300] A number took their dissatisfaction to the press. As Strobe Talbott subsequently wrote, "Speaking privately, [some] Administration officials, especially professional diplomats and intelligence analysts with long experience in Soviet affairs, not only disavowed the notion that the United State could manipulate Soviet internal politics, but they expressed confidence that the Soviets recognized such theorizing for what it was: idiosyncratic, extremist, and much confined to the fringes of government."[1301]

Nonetheless, by November 1982 the members of the interagency group had agreed on the substance of the strategy. State had agreed to concede on the crucial point that attacking the Soviet system should be a goal of U.S. strategy. In return, State got the NSC to concede that there were limits to the ability of the United States to promote change within the Soviet system.[1302]

The response to NSSD 11-82 and draft NSDD were completed on 7 December 1982. Its language represented a victory of Reagan's appointees over the bureaucracy. In line with Pipes' terms of reference, it argued that any strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union had to take account of the impact on the internal development of the Soviet Union. Based on that premise, it put forward the following long-term objectives for the United States: "(1) the decentralization and demilitarization of the Soviet economy; (2) the weakening of the power and privileged position of the ruling Communist elite (*nomenklatura*); (3) gradual democratization of the USSR."[1303]

[1300] Thomas W. Simons, Memorandum for Richard Burt, "Your Participation in IG on NSSD 11-82, Tuesday November 2, 10:00am", n.d., Richard E. Pipes Files, Box 5, RRPL, NARA.
[1301] Strobe Talbott, *The Russians and Reagan* (New York, 1984), pp. 74-75.
[1302] Pipes, *Vixi*, pp. 200-201.
[1303] Response to NSSD 11-82, "U.S. Relations with the USSR," December 6, 1982, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 3, OA 91287, NSDD-75, RRPL, NARA, p. 1.

The report was sanguine regarding the ability of the United States to effect changes in Soviet internal politics in the near to middle term. However, its authors argued, "it is also possible that carefully designed and implemented U.S. policies could have an important, if marginal, beneficial impact on Soviet internal developments." As a result, the United States needed to compete effectively with the Soviet Union in the international arena and "undertake a coordinated, long-term effort to reduce the threat that the Soviet system poses to our interests."[1304] The United States also needed to engage the Soviet Union in dialogue and negotiations in an effort to reach agreements based upon strict reciprocity and mutual interest. Moreover, all three tracks had to be implemented simultaneously and sustained over the long term.[1305]

In line with previous assessments, the NSSD 11-82 study emphasized the Soviet Union's economic decline, noting that the Soviet Union was experiencing the lowest growth rate since the end of World War II. It also catalogued sources of popular discontent, including the perceived decline in the Soviet standard of living, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the growing consciousness of ethnic minorities. The authors portrayed a growing malaise in Soviet society that reflected an underlying loss of commitment to the Soviet system and government.[1306]

In the view of the report's authors, "An overriding issue is the extent to which Moscow's international posture will be affected by a growing preoccupation with the country's great, and growing, domestic problems." They argued that Soviet economic and social problems would provide the Soviet leadership a strong impetus for systemic change over the decade of the 1980s.[1307]

[1304] Ibid., p. 2.
[1305] Ibid., p. 2.
[1306] Ibid., pp. 5-7.
[1307] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

The report examined three alternative scenarios for the future of the Soviet Union. The study termed the first, a military coup, "highly unlikely" given the extent of Communist Party control. By contrast, the study's authors believed that the second scenario, a return to one-man rule, was "possible." The third scenario, liberalization of the Soviet system, was rated "a less likely prospect" because the authors felt that control mechanisms, economic leverage, and the patriotism and passivity of the population would allow the Soviet leadership to continue to rule. However, they conceded that the outlook was less predictable in the late 1980s, "as the gap between economic performance and leadership expectations widens, as the basis for optimism about future economic performance erodes, and as the generational change in the Soviet leadership takes hold."[1308] In particular, the authors noted that the views of the younger generation of Soviet leaders (such as Mikhail Gorbachev, although neither he nor any of his cohort was singled out by name) were unknown.

The authors concluded that although the United States enjoyed limited leverage to effect change within the Soviet Union, "U.S. policies… may be able to exacerbate weaknesses in Soviet foreign and domestic policy."[1309] As a result, they argued that the implementation of U.S. strategy should attempt to shape the environment in which Soviet decisions are made.[1310]

The NSSD 11-82 study served as the basis of NSDD 75, a draft of which Clark transmitted to Reagan on December 16, 1982. In forwarding the study and draft directive, Clark highlighted the fact that the goal of exerting "internal pressure on the USSR" represents a new one. As he emphasized, "It has always been the objective of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union to combine containment with negotiations, but the attached document is the first in which the United States Government adds a third objective to its relations with the Soviet Union,

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[1308] Ibid., pp. 18-19.
[1309] Ibid., pp. 20-21.
[1310] Ibid., p. 24.

namely encouraging antitotalitarian changes within the USSR and refraining from assisting the Soviet regime to consolidate further its hold on the country."[1311]

Although the interagency study had forged a basic consensus over U.S. strategy toward the Soviet Union, the use of economic instruments remained controversial. As a result, the draft directive contained two provisions that divided Reagan's advisors. The first was a statement that the United States should "induce the USSR to shift capital and resources from the defense sector to capital investment and consumer goods."[1312] Whereas the Office of the Vice President, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Department of Commerce supported this language, the State, Agriculture, and Treasury departments objected. The second controversial statement was that the United States should "refrain from assisting the Soviet Union with developing natural resources with which to earn, at minimal cost to itself, hard currency."[1313] Whereas the Office of the Secretary of Defense, NSC Staff, and Office of the Vice President supported the language, the Commerce Department joined State, Treasury and Agriculture in objecting to the language.

Reagan decided to delete the two controversial points at an NSC meeting on 16 December 1982. His stated rationale was that they would leak and provide propaganda for the Soviet Union.[1314] More likely, he was concerned over allied willingness to go along with such efforts.

Although Reagan somewhat weakened the use of economic instruments against the Soviet Union, he expanded the directive's use of technology transfer restrictions against the Soviet Union. The draft NSDD had contained language to prevent "the transfer of critical

[1311] William P. Clark, Memorandum for the President, "NSSD 11-82: Draft NSDD and IG Study," 16 December, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 3, OA 91287, NSDD-75, RRPL, NARA.
[1312] Ibid., p. 2.
[1313] Ibid., p. 2.
[1314] Pipes, *Vixi*, p. 201.

technology and equipment that would make a substantial contribution directly or indirectly to Soviet military power." At the meeting, United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick recommended omitting the word "critical," thus broadening the scope of the policy. The secretary of defense, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and national security advisor concurred, whereas the secretaries of State, Commerce, and Treasury disagreed. In the end, Reagan sided with those who favored the broader wording.[1315]

The president signed National Security Decision Directive 75, "U.S. Relations with the USSR," on 17 January 17, 1983. The directive contained clauses that ran counter to the tenets of Cold War national security strategy. Rather than punishing unacceptable Soviet behavior, it sought to induce changes in the nature of the Soviet regime on the premise that it was the source of Soviet behavior. The directive stated that "U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union will consist of three elements: external resistance to Soviet imperialism; internal pressure on the USSR to weaken the sources of Soviet imperialism; and negotiations to eliminate, on the basis of strict reciprocity, outstanding disagreements."[1316] At noted above, the second objective, internal pressure on the Soviet Union to weaken the Soviet regime, represented a major departure from containment.

The directive laid out three tasks to achieve these objectives:

- "To contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism by competing effectively on a sustained basis with the Soviet Union in all international arenas."

- "To promote, within the narrow limits available to us, the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced."

[1315] William P. Clark, Memorandum, "NSDD 75 on 'U.S. Relations with the USSR'", January 17, 1983, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 3, OA 91287, NSDD-75, RRPL, NARA.
[1316] NSDD 75, "U.S. Relations with the USSR," 17 January 1983, p. 1.

- "To engage the Soviet Union in negotiations to attempt to reach agreements which protect and enhance U.S. interests and which are consistent with the principle of strict reciprocity and mutual interest."[1317]

The second task represented a major change as well. For the first time, U.S. strategy was aimed not merely at containing Soviet power, but reforming its source.

The directive went on to outline a multi-dimensional strategy with military, economic, and political components to put both external and internal pressure on Moscow. It put particular emphasis on:

- "sustaining steady, long-term growth in U.S. defense spending and capabilities;"

- "creating a long-term Western consensus for dealing with the Soviet Union;"

- "maintenance of a strategic relationship with China, and efforts to minimize opportunities for a Sino-Soviet rapprochement;"

- "building and sustaining a major ideological/political offensive which, together with other efforts, will be designed to bring about evolutionary change of the Soviet system;"

- "effective opposition to Moscow's efforts to consolidate its position in Afghanistan;"

- "blocking the expansion of Soviet influence in the critical Middle East and Southwest Asia regions;"

- "maintenance of international pressure on Moscow to permit a relaxation of the current repression in Poland and a longer-term increase in diversity and independence throughout Eastern Europe;" and

- "neutralization and reduction of the threat to U.S. national security interests posed by the Soviet-Cuban relationship."[1318]

[1317] NSDD 75, p. 1.

Although NSDD 75 was a classified document,[1319] its thrust appeared in Reagan's speech to the annual convention of the National Assembly of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida on 8 March 1983, the so-called "Evil Empire" speech. In that speech, he termed the Cold War a "struggle between right and wrong and good and evil." He further said, "I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written."[1320]

Implementing the Strategy, 1983-1988

The Reagan administration implemented the strategy outlined in NSDD 32 and NSDD 75 throughout the remainder of its two terms. Indeed, there was much more continuity to the Reagan strategy than some historians admit. Formulating the strategy had involved forging a bureaucratic consensus behind a revised assessment of the U.S.-Soviet balance and a more expansive set of political objectives. Implementing it required the Reagan administration to contend not only with bureaucratic opposition, but also Congressional and allied constraints. Implementing the strategy thus led to tactical, though not strategic, adaptation.

One set of constraints involved Congressional funding of the Reagan administration's initiatives. Although Congress funded a large-scale increase in defense expenditure, a number of programs, including the MX ICBM and the Strategic Defense Initiative, were controversial -- so, too, were the administration's support of the Nicaraguan *contras* in Central America.

[1318] NSDD 75, p. 8.

[1319] Of note, the FBI determined that Soviet intelligence was trying to get a copy of the document. Message, From Director FBI, To NSC Staff Attn: Ken De Graffenreid, DTG 211908Z APR 83, RRPL, NARA.

[1320] Ronald W. Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Assembly of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida," 8 March 1983, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan, 1983*, vol. I (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 364.

Another set of constraints derived from America's allies, particularly those in Europe. On the one hand, a number of key European leaders, including Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl, were supportive of the Reagan administration's strategy. Moreover, the deployment of U.S. *Pershing II* medium-range ballistic missiles and *Gryphon* ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe in the face of Soviet intimidation was a key demonstration of allied resolve. On the other hand, Europeans were reluctant to give up the fruits of détente with the Soviet Union, including expanded East-West trade. As a result, U.S. efforts to exert economic leverage over the Soviet Union by, for example, blocking the construction of the trans-Siberian oil and gas pipeline, triggered an acrimonious debate within Europe.[1321]

Military Competition

The military competition with the Soviet Union was a central element of the Reagan strategy. NSDD 75 called for the United States to modernize its armed forces, with particular emphasis upon the development and acquisition of advanced technologies to provide it leverage against the Soviet Union and to impose costs on the Soviet economy. In so doing, the U.S. government exploited Soviet fears, reported by the CIA, of being outpaced technologically by America's military forces.[1322]

Significantly, NSDD 75 emphasized Soviet perceptions of the military balance; U.S. modernization was to be designed to ensure that "Soviet calculations of possible war outcomes

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[1321] Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, pp. 248, 283.

[1322] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "The Soviet Defense Industry: Coping with the Military Technological Challenge," SOV 87-10035DX, July 1987, p. iii.

under any contingency must always result in outcomes so unfavorable to the USSR that there would be no incentive for Soviet leaders to initiate an attack."[1323]

The Reagan administration witnessed the wholesale modernization of U.S. conventional and nuclear forces.[1324] During the presidential transition, the Reagan team had planned a 5 percent real increase in defense spending. However, the Carter administration requested an increase of that magnitude during its last days in office. As a result, the incoming Reagan team pushed a 7 percent increase to emphasize that Reagan favored more defense than his predecessor.[1325] In October 1981, Congress approved a defense expenditure of $1.5 trillion over five years, including the fielding of 100 MX (later *Peacekeeper*) intercontinental ballistic missiles, 6 *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines armed with 96 *Trident* D5 submarine launched ballistic missiles, 3,000 air-launched cruise missiles, and 100 B-1 bombers.

The United States also adopted a more aggressive operational posture, including naval and air operations along the borders of the Soviet Union. U.S. actions clearly alarmed the Soviet leadership. In May 1981, KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov became concerned that the United States was preparing for nuclear war with the Soviet Union. As a result, the Soviet leadership tasked the KGB and GRU to cooperate on Operation RYAN, an unprecedented effort to collect indicators of U.S. preparations for nuclear war.[1326]

In modernizing the U.S. armed forces, the United States increasingly exploited its lead in the rapidly developing field of information technology. In 1975, the year that Microsoft was founded, the first personal computer (PC) hit the market; by 1981, annual PC sales in the United

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[1323] NSDD 75, p. 2.
[1324] See Thomas G. Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War Since 1945* (New York, 2008), ch. 4.
[1325] Michael Kramer, "Electoral Collage: The Budget Crunch," *New York Magazine,* 15 Nov. 1982, p. 31.
[1326] Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, p. 278.

States topped one million.[1327] The growth of information technology, in turn, spawned the development of new sensors and surveillance systems such as the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircraft, precision-guided munitions (PGMs) such as the Multiple-Launch Rocket System (MLRS), Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), and the *Copperhead* artillery-launched PGM, and command and control networks to link them together.

The Soviet general staff was concerned about the development of advanced PGMs such as those being developed under the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's Assault Breaker program. The United States helped foster this perception by rigging advanced PGM tests to deceive the Soviets.[1328] Soviet observers saw PGMs as approaching nuclear weapons in effectiveness. Indeed, some Soviet leaders saw the development of advanced conventional weaponry as presaging a revolution in warfare. As Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, wrote in 1984:

> Rapid changes in the development of conventional means of destruction and the emergence in the developed countries of automated reconnaissance-and-strike complexes, long-range high-accuracy terminally guided combat systems, unmanned flying machines, and qualitatively new electronic control systems make many types of weapons global and make it possible to sharply increase (by at least an order of magnitude) the destructive potential of conventional weapons,

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[1327] Ibid., p. 249.
[1328] Ibid., p. 275.

bringing them closer, so to speak, to weapons of mass destruction in terms of effectiveness.[1329]

American developments demanded a response – one that the Soviet economy was manifestly unable to provide. In 1985, there were perhaps 50,000 PCs in the Soviet Union, compared to 30 million more advanced ones in the United States.[1330] As Ogarkov told an American visitor, "In America, small children play with computers… For reasons you know well, we cannot make computers widely available in our society. We will never catch up with you in modern arms until we have an economic revolution. And the question is whether we can have an economic revolution without a political revolution."[1331]

In 1985, NATO mated emerging technologies with the doctrine of Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA). Drawing upon the U.S. AirLand Battle doctrine, FOFA envisioned using advanced sensors and strike systems to allow NATO forces to launch a counter-attack deep into Poland. Two years later, to the consternation of the Soviets, NATO demonstrated this capability during an exercise dubbed *Certain Strike*.[1332]

Reagan's announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative on 23 March 1983 marked an even more explicit bid to use U.S. technology to compete with the Soviet Union. As he put it:

Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today.

[1329] Quoted in Barry D. Watts, *Long-Range Strike: Imperatives, Urgency and Options* (Washington, D.C., 2005), p. 34.
[1330] Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, p. 317.
[1331] Ibid., p. 293.
[1332] Ibid., pp. 338-339.

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?

I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.[1333]

The U.S. National Intelligence Council assessed that the Soviet Union would encounter technical and manufacturing problems in developing and deploying countermeasures to SDI. As one September 1983 memorandum put it, "[t]hey are likely to encounter technical and manufacturing problems in developing and deploying more advanced systems. If they attempted to deploy new advanced systems not presently planned, while continuing their overall planned force modernization, significant additional levels of spending would be required. This would place substantial additional pressures on the Soviet economy and confront the leadership with difficult policy choices."[1334]

In late 1983, in the midst of growing superpower tension, Soviet concern escalated further. Soviet fears of a U.S. nuclear attack were heightened by the NATO exercise Able

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[1333] Ronald Reagan, "Announcement of Strategic Defense Initiative," March 23, 1983, at http://www.missilethreat.com/resources/speeches/reagansdi html (accessed 16 August 2005).
[1334] NIC M 83, 10017, "Possible Soviet Responses to the US Strategic Defense Initiative," September 12, 1983, viii, available at http://www foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed 28 May 2012).

Archer 83, which was to simulate a future war in Europe, including the use of nuclear weapons.[1335]

The first report of the Soviet war scare reached the United States several months later, courtesy of Oleg Gordievsky, a Soviet KGB officer who was spying for the British Secret Intelligence Service.[1336] The National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Fritz Ermarth, concluded that "We do not believe [Soviet activity] reflects authentic leadership fears of imminent conflict."[1337] Subsequent information confirmed that the Soviets were concerned not that the United States was about to launch a war against the Soviet Union, but rather that the combination of Soviet economic and technological weakness and Reagan policies were turning the correlation of forces against Moscow.[1338] The war scare nonetheless highlighted the dangers of superpower miscalculation and induced greater caution in Washington.

The challenge of U.S. advanced technology appears to have had a marked impact on Soviet leaders. In the words of Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, "[o]ur leadership was convinced that the great technical potential of the United States had scored again." Soviet leaders "treated Reagan's statement as a real threat."[1339] The memoirs and recollections of policy makers in Moscow confirm that they took Reagan seriously. An expensive competition in ballistic missile defenses appeared particularly unattractive to Soviet leaders, who were aware of

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[1335] Barrass, *The Great Cold War*, p. 278.
[1336] Ibid., p. 304.
[1337] SNIE 11-10-84/JX, "Implications of Recent Soviet Military-Political Activities," 18 May 1984, available at http://www.foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed 24 May 2012)
[1338] Fritz W. Ermarth, Observations on the 'War Scare' of 1983 from an Intelligence Perch," Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, available at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=108634&lng=en (accessed 6 June 2012).
[1339] Quoted in Jeremi Suri, "Explaining the End of the Cold War: A New Historical Consensus?," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 4, Fall 2002, p. 65.

the country's economic difficulties. SDI also highlighted the Soviet Union's lag in computers and microelectronics.[1340]

Recent scholarship indicates that the announcement of SDI triggered a debate within the Soviet leadership over the wisdom of competing with the United States in space weaponry, as well as the form that competition should take. David Hoffman, for example, suggests that the announcement of SDI ultimately set up a situation in which Soviet leaders who favored a high-technology competition with the United States in space arms initially carried the day, only to be discredited by their inability to field advanced weapons. That is, SDI put in motion a chain of events that ultimately made the Soviet leadership aware that it could not compete with the United States in high-technology weaponry.[1341]

The resource implications of responding to SDI became particularly apparent after Mikhail Gorbachev assumed control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 and launched an effort to revive the lagging economy. As one 1987 CIA assessment put it, "the Soviets would find it difficult to mount a large response to SDI … without curtailing other military programs. Significantly expanding procurement of weapon systems based on existing technologies would strain the Soviets' already taut component supply base. Reliance on more complex technologies would cause still greater strain because many Soviet weapons programs projected to reach initial operational capability in the late 1990s will compete for the same resources." The assessment went on to note that the demand for advanced technology would hit the Soviet economy just as Gorbachev was trying to modernize Soviet industry through accelerated investment in advanced technology for manufacturing. Moreover, Gorbachev's "modernization plans call for many of the same scarce, high-technology resources – including

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[1340] Ibid., p. 66.
[1341] David E. Hoffman, *The Dead Hand* (New York, 2009).

microelectronics and flexible manufacturing systems – that would be required for advanced BMD systems and countermeasures."[1342]

The United States also undertook several efforts to shape Soviet perceptions of the technological competition. One involved feeding deceptive information to the Soviets regarding the state of U.S. military technology. In 1981, French intelligence recruited Colonel Vladimir I. Vetrov, a KGB officer who had been assigned to collect intelligence on Western science and technology. Vetrov, dubbed "Farewell", gave the French more than 4,000 documents that demonstrated that Moscow relied on the theft of foreign science and technology to shore up the Soviet economy. The documents constituted a shopping list of the technologies the Soviets were seeking, information the French passed on to the Americans.[1343] In early 1984, the CIA and Pentagon used their knowledge of Soviet collection requirements to begin feeding Moscow incomplete and misleading information. The disinformation campaign covered half a dozen sensitive military technologies that the Soviets were interested in, including stealth, ballistic missile defenses, and advanced tactical aircraft. The United States planted false information regarding development schedules, prototype performance, test results, production schedules, and operational performance.[1344]

Economic Competition

Military competition was not the sole, or perhaps even the most important, dimension of the U.S. strategy toward the Soviet Union. The Reagan administration also adopted a strategic

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[1342] SOV 87-10063X, "Soviet SDI Response Options: The Resource Dilemma," November 1987. 19871101, vi, available at http://www.foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed 28 May 2012).
[1343] Gus W. Weiss, "The Farewell Dossier," *Studies in Intelligence* (1996) at http://www.cia.gov/csi/studies/96unclass/farewell.htm (accessed 14 October 2004).
[1344] Schweizer, *Victory,* p. 189.

approach to economic policy, based upon its understanding of the dependence of the Soviet economy on Western technology and hard-currency exports of oil and gas. NSDD 75 called for efforts to ensure that technology transfer did not benefit the Soviet military and to avoid subsidizing the Soviet economy in a way that would dilute pressure to change. It also sought to minimize Soviet leverage on the West based upon trade, energy, and finance.[1345] In the years that followed, the U.S. government undertook a campaign to reduce dramatically Soviet hard currency earnings by working with the government of Saudi Arabia to drive down the price of oil, as well as to limit Soviet exports of natural gas to the West.

In order to implement the administration's economic policy, Clark and the NSC staff created the Senior Interdepartmental Group -- International Economic Policy (ISG-IEP), a Cabinet-level body chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury. The purpose of the group, which reported to the president through the national security advisor, was to ensure that national security considerations would trump commercial interests in U.S. international economic policy.[1346]

The administration launched a global effort to reduce Soviet access to the Western high technology upon which the Soviet economy depended. In 1975, 32.7 percent of American goods sold to the Soviet Union involved high technology, amounting to $219 million in sales. By 1983, the volume had been reduced to 5.4 percent, amounting to only $39 million in sales.[1347] Moreover, according to Peter Schweizer, the United States used U.S. companies to provide the Soviet Union faulty information designed to disrupt the Soviet economy.[1348]

[1345] NSDD 75, pp. 2-3.
[1346] Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge*, p. 188
[1347] Schweizer, *Victory*, p. 139.
[1348] Ibid., pp. 46, 187-188.

A particular focus of U.S. efforts was the Soviet oil and gas sector, which was Moscow's main source of hard currency. The spike in oil prices following the 1973 Arab oil embargo had been a boon to the Soviet Union, allowing it to boost revenues by 272 percent while only increasing oil and gas production by 22 percent. Indeed, for every dollar increase in a barrel of oil, the Soviet Union would earn $1 billion per year in hard currency. Conversely, every $10 drop in the price of a barrel of oil would cost Soviet Union $10 billion per year.[1349]

The United States sought to block technology transfer for the Soviet oil and gas industry, and particularly that bound for the trans-Siberian gas pipeline, which was to provide Moscow as much as $30 billion per year in hard currency. The embargo proved controversial with U.S. allies, a number of whom had agreed to finance the purchase of equipment for the pipeline below market rates. Western European nations, suffering through the highest unemployment since the mid-1950s, looked to the project as a source of jobs. Although only partially successful, U.S. sanctions cost the Soviets by their own reckoning two years and $2 billion.[1350]

The administration also worked with Saudi Arabia to increase Riyadh's production of oil to drive down market prices and deny the Soviet Union hard currency. The effort, spearheaded by Bill Casey, culminated in the announcement by Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the Saudi Oil Minister, on 13 September 1985 that Saudi Arabia had altered its oil policy by no longer protecting oil prices. During the next six months, Saudi Arabia regained its share in the world oil markets as its oil production increased fourfold while global oil prices dropped significantly.

As a result, of low oil prices, the Soviet Union lost approximately $20 billion in revenue per year. In May 1986, the CIA assessed that low energy prices, declining oil production, and the depreciation of the dollar would substantially cut into Moscow's ability to import Western

[1349] Ibid., p. 105.
[1350] Ibid., pp. 42, 216.

equipment, agricultural goods, and industrial materials at the very time that Gorbachev was counting on increasing imports to revitalize the Soviet economy.[1351] Four months later, a National Intelligence Estimate assessed that Soviet hard currency export earnings for the second half of the 1980s would be 30 percent below those of recent years, and that the Soviet Union would experience an even greater decline in its purchasing power because of the depreciation of the dollar, in which about two-thirds of Soviet exports were denominated.[1352]

In the view of Russian economist Yegor Gaidar, the drop in oil prices confronted the Soviet leadership with three options: cutting loose the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, drastically reducing imports of food to the Soviet Union, or dramatically cutting military expenditures. In the event, it chose none of these options, and the problems plaguing the Soviet economy grew progressively worse.[1353]

Political Action

More than any administration since that of Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Reagan administration used political action as an instrument of foreign policy. As the NSDD 11-82 study put it, "U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union must have an ideological thrust which clearly demonstrates the superiority of U.S. and Western values of individual dignity and freedom, a free press, free trade unions, free enterprise, and political democracy over the repressive character of Soviet communism."[1354] Reagan's rhetoric was one aspect of the public face of this

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[1351] SOV 86-10027X, "USSR: Facing the Dilemma of Hard Currency Shortages," May 1986, p. iii, available at http://www.foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed 28 May 2012).
[1352] NIE 11-23-86, "Implications of the Decline in Soviet Hard Currency Earnings," September 1986, 3, available at http://www.foia.cia.gov/Reagan.asp (accessed 28 May 2012).
[1353] Yegor Gaidar, "The Soviet Collapse: Grain and Oil," American Enterprise Institute, April 2007, pp. 4-5, available at http://www.aei.org/docLib/20070419_Gaidar.pdf (accessed 24 April 2012).
[1354] Response to NSSD 11-82, p. 30

strategy, but it also had a covert aspect, including financial and logistical support to the Solidarity trade union in Poland.

The Reagan administration also implemented covert action to contest Soviet gains in the Third World. Indeed, Reagan inherited, but then considerably expanded, financial and military support to the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and supplied the mujahidin to take the war to Soviet territory.[1355] Similarly, the administration provided assistance to anti-Soviet resistance movements in Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, and Nicaragua. As James Scott has put it, NSDD 75 "represented the codification of the strategy…that two years later would receive the title 'Reagan Doctrine'".[1356]

The strategic framework constructed in the first years of the Reagan administration remained operative throughout Reagan's eight years in office. During the first four years of the Reagan administration, the United States emphasized the first two objectives outlined in NSDD 75: containing and reversing Soviet expansionism by competing with the Soviets and promoting change within the Soviet Union. The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union provided the occasion for Reagan to pursue the third objective: engaging the Soviets in negotiations to reach agreements to protect and enhance U.S. interests. Both because of the pressure the United States had exerted on the Soviet Union and because of Gorbachev's recognition of the need to lessen tensions with the United States to implement needed domestic reforms, the Soviet leader agreed to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

In June 1986, the NSC staff initiated a review of NSDD-32 in accordance with the recommendations of the Packard Commission. That review essentially endorsed the continued utility of the strategy. As the Deputy Secretary of Defense, William H. Taft IV, wrote, "DoD

[1355] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York, 2004).
[1356] James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NC, 1996), p. 21.

basically agrees that NSDD 32 and its supporting study remain fundamentally sound."[1357] The revisions that were recommended were minor and included a more explicit statement on the administration's policy of denying the Soviet Union military technology as well as an explicit statement of supporting, overtly and covertly, those combating communism. In the end, the NSC opted to retain NSDD 32 intact rather than adopting even these minor changes. NSDD 75 remained in force until the George H.W. Bush administration superseded it with NSD 23 on 14 May 1991.[1358]

Conclusion

Scholars will debate the influence of U.S. strategy on the outcome of the Cold War for decades to come. There should, however, be no debate over whether U.S. actions influenced the outcome. Although one should always be wary of the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, it would indeed be strange if U.S. actions had no effect whatsoever on the Soviet leadership.

A persuasive case can be made that the Cold War ended because U.S. strategy forced the Soviet government to implement sweeping change in a bid to save the communist regime. The Soviet Union was confronted by a resurgent America at the very time the Soviet leadership had begun to comprehend the extent of Russia's economic and social malaise. In the economic realm, U.S. efforts to depress oil prices and technology forced the Soviet leadership to make hard choices between military and domestic spending. In the political arena, the Kremlin had to confront increasingly restive clients abroad as well as the population at home. In the military

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[1357] William H. Taft, IV, Memorandum for the National Security Advisor to the President, "Review of NSDD 32", June 2, 1986, Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), Box 1, OA 91311, NSDD-32, RRPL, NARA.

[1358] National Security Directive 59, "Disposition of Reagan Administration Policy Papers", 14 May 1991, at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/nsd/nsd59.pdf.

sphere, it appears as though Soviet military concerns about the widening gap between U.S. and Soviet military technology helped to forge a confluence of interest between the Soviet political elite and elements of the defense industrial sector on the general need to re-orient Soviet foreign policy.[1359] Indeed, in February 1988 Gorbachev announced the need for defense cuts in order to restructure the domestic economy.[1360]

This chapter demonstrates the challenges that a modern democracy faces in undertaking a shift in strategy. Formulating a new strategy required achieving a bureaucratic consensus through the exercise of presidential command. Implementing it required the U.S. government to deal with a different set of challenges from Congress and U.S. allies, as well as interaction with the Soviet Union.

The strategic shift would not have occurred without the strategic leadership of Ronald Reagan. Primary source documents make it difficult to agree with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau's judgment that "Reagan could be pleasant company for social conversation but was not a man for thoughtful policy discussion."[1361] As more and more of the archival record has become available, it is increasingly apparent that Reagan's detractors underestimate him. John Lewis Gaddis appears closer to the mark when he wrote "Reagan was as skillful a politician as the nation had seen for many years, and one of its sharpest grand strategists ever."[1362]

[1359] Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War", *International Security* 25, no. 3, Winter 2000/01.
[1360] Schweizer, *Victory*, p. 343.
[1361] Quoted in William E. Pemberton, *Exit with Honor: The Life and Presidency of Ronald Reagan* (Armonk< NY, 1997), p. 150.
[1362] Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 217.

Afterword

The thirteen essays in this volume originated in one explicit question and one implied belief. The question is how a national government – or an alliance – formulates and executes an effective military strategy. The belief is that doing so materially improves the likelihood of prosecuting war to a successful conclusion, or better still, of averting it altogether. Both question and belief reflect widespread agreement among observers of U.S. national security policy that, since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has been bereft of a coherent defense strategy, thereby incurring penalties ranging from the misallocation of defense resources to counterproductive military commitments. As the project's sponsor noted, "There is little attention paid to assessing the state of the competition, or evaluating strengths and weaknesses in ourselves or our potential opponents, and still less effort to develop genuine strategies that exploit the enduring strengths we bring to the competition."[1363] In his Introduction, Williamson Murray points out that official declarations of strategic intention abound. But the conviction persists that, however useful they may be as wish lists, they've been much less useful in disciplining resource and commitment decisions. The cases examined here seek to illuminate how others – including we ourselves – previously have done better.

The term "strategy" is fraught with definitional difficulty, however. As Chapter 5 notes, it didn't even enter the English lexicon until borrowed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from the French, who themselves derived it from the Greek *strategos*, the leader of an army. Strategy thus merely denoted the art of the general. It was in that narrow sense - as "the use of

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[1363] A.W. Marshall, "Memorandum for Participants: Strategy and History," Office of the Secretary of Defense, Director of Net Assessment, 9 June 2010.

the engagement for the purpose of the war" - that Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz subsequently deployed it.[1364] But while general and ruler were synonymous for a good part of military history, with the gradual bifurcation of military and political power and the state's growing reliance for military success on resources outside the military's purview, the making of strategy became more complicated and applications of the term multiplied. Today, we find ourselves trying to reconcile grand strategy, defense strategy, economic strategy, information strategy, cyber strategy, and a welter of other such formulations.

One result of this terminological proliferation is definitional confusion, efforts to unravel which invariably risk sterile debate. As Humpty Dumpty told Alice, "When I use a word…it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."[1365] However, if we're to generalize from history about strategy, there is some obligation to apply the term consistently. What follows, therefore, takes strategy to mean a scheme of behavior deliberately pursued to achieve a more-or-less explicit aim, reflecting a causal theory believed to connect them. It thus connotes a considered choice from among alternative courses of action. That formulation by no means excludes the possibility that nonconforming behavior might have impact recognizable after the fact as strategic. As Colin Gray tells us, for example, Great Britain's ultimately crucial decision in the interwar period to build fighters rather than bombers was driven more by economic than by strategic concerns. As that suggests, however, impact alone is insufficient evidence of strategic intention.

That is the more true inasmuch as behavior having profound impact on the security of the state can differ vastly in duration; and the longer the duration, the greater the risk of misinterpreting that impact as proof of intention. In fact, noted one distinguished historian

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[1364] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey, 1976), p. 177.
[1365] Lewis Carroll, *Through The Looking Glass*, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12/12-h/12-h.htm.

elsewhere, "Once strategy moves beyond the near term, it struggles to define what exactly it intends to do."[1366] Our own cases range in duration from Edward I's two-year conquest of Wales to half a millennium of Roman domination of the Mediterranean world. The first ended with Wales' submission to the British crown, the second, as all know, with the collapse of the Roman Empire. Conceding, as their authors claim, that both enterprises reflected definable strategies, should we thus consider the first to have been successful and the second a failure? Patently, that would be absurd. Acknowledging that absurdity, however, obliges us to decide when, in the fullness of time, a strategy arguably successful in achieving the aim to which it was directed should be absolved of responsibility for subsequent events that its very success may have set in motion.

Moreover, not all successes result from strategy, and strategy isn't invariably responsible for every failure. The longer the period examined, the more true that is likely to be. As Murray notes, "Beyond several decades, it is almost impossible to plan, and those who believe that statesmen or military leaders can articulate strategies that will reach out far into the future are naive, arrogant, or unaware of the complexities that human interactions inevitably involve. The proof of this lies in the simple fact that strategies which are successful for a decade or more are so rare in historical terms." Consider Victor Davis Hanson's judgment that "while Themistoclean foresight helped defeat the Persians and found the Athenian Empire, it also led to a radicalization of the Athenian state that contributed to its eventual defeat and impoverishment by Sparta." Should Themistocles really be held to account for that belated consequence? Or what of Marcus Jones' acknowledgment that, while "For Bismarck, the essence of strategic policy, particularly when it involved the potential for violent conflict, consisted not in military success alone but in a stable and enduring settlement," in the end his policies "collapsed against the basic causes of

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[1366] Hew Strachan, "Strategy and contingency," *International Affairs*, Vol 86:6 (2011), p. 1281.

European insecurity." How much, then, should Bismarck be blamed for the subsequent cataclysm of 1914-1918?

All those qualifications urge caution in claiming a linkage between behavior recognizable after the fact as having strategic impact and the presumed intentions and decisions that produced it; and even more care in generalizing from that assessment an answer to the question of how a state can with confidence formulate and execute a successful strategy. That's the more true because, as our cases reveal, direct evidence that behavior was informed by deliberate strategic choice isn't always easy to acquire. The terms of reference informing production of our cases cautioned that "What is most important is that there be real, concrete evidence of the thinking and analysis that led to a successful strategy…instead of simply imputing a strategy to historical figures based on what we believe they might have been thinking…."[1367] Especially in historically remote cases, such guidance imposes an evidentiary burden that may be nearly impossible to satisfy. For that matter, even more recent cases rarely furnish evidence of strategic intention as unambiguous as Bismarck's candid declaration in July, 1862 to future British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli:

> I shall soon be compelled to undertake the conduct of the Prussian government. My first care will
> be to reorganize the army, with or without the help of the *Landtag* [the legislature] . . . As soon as
> the army shall have been brought into such a condition to inspire respect, I shall seize the first best
> pretext to declare war against Austria, dissolve the German Diet, subdue the minor states, and give
> national unity to Germany under Prussian leadership. I have come here to say this to the Queen's
> ministers.[1368]

But while some of our cases perforce rely more heavily on inference than on direct evidence, that needn't devalue their contribution to understanding the strategic enterprise. As

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[1367] A.W. Marshall, "Memorandum for Participants."
[1368] Quoted in Jonathan Steinberg, *Bismarck: A Life* (Oxford, 2011), p.174

Umberto Eco once noted, "A child speaks his mother tongue properly, though he could never write out its grammar. But the grammarian is not the only one who knows the rules of the language; they are well known, albeit unconsciously, also to the child."[1369] So too with strategy, which may be pursued implicitly even though not explicitly documented. Whence James Lacey's contention that "enough information can be gleaned from various histories and the archeological record to demonstrate that Rome surely possessed and adhered to a grand strategy, even if it may never have been articulated as such."[1370]

Accepting that view, it's nevertheless striking to realize how few of our cases reveal explicit discussion of strategic alternatives. That may help explain why, on their evidence, the surest way to strategic success seems to be to acquire a great strategist, or at least, a strong decision-maker perceptive enough to identify one and self-confident enough listen to him. The great majority of our cases attribute success largely to the impact of such leaders – Themistocles, Edward, Lincoln, Bismarck, Roosevelt, Truman, Reagan. Some of them had crucial help – Lincoln his Grant, Truman his Marshall and Kennan – but even then, strategic direction seems to have been the product of a relatively few like minds. Even Edward I's conquest of Wales fits that description, although in that case, the like mind in question was that of a long-dead cleric, and the principal evidence of its influence was the remarkable consistency of Edward's decisions with its injunctions.

The very prominence of individual genius in so many of our cases suggests that, at least in the short run, strategy more reliably – or at least, more recognizably – governs behavior when

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[1369] Umberto Eco, "Reflections on *The Name of the Rose*," *Encounter*, April 1985, pp. 7-19.

[1370] As Lacey acknowledges, this view remains controversial. At very least, however, most scholars would agree that "Rome had objectives which transcended the whims of individual emperors, and broad principles toward which she consistently directed her impressive force." Emerson T. Brooking, "*Roma Surrecta*: Portrait of a Counterinsurgent Power, 216 BC - AD 72," *College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal*, University of Pennsylvania, 2011, pp. 25-26.

authority over its formulation and execution resides in a single dominant decision-maker. For one thing, such authority renders strategic choices less vulnerable to ancillary pressures. Commenting on the events precipitating Prussia's military reforms, Dennis Showalter notes that "The efflorescently collegial nature of the Prussian cabinet system was widely described as a major factor in the disaster of 1806…Frederick William III had not only failed consistently to impose his will on his advisors; he regularly ascribed his own indecision to the conflicting pressures of grayer, presumably wiser, heads." In contrast, while acknowledging that "Bismarck was extraordinarily sensitive to the inherent tension between domestic and foreign affairs," Jones rejects the suggestion that economic imperatives drove Bismarckian strategy, arguing that Bismarck "pointedly, perhaps self-servingly rejected the idea that a responsible statesman made decisions about the latter in light of the former." Similarly, Peter Mansoor convincingly demolishes suggestions that Franklin D. Roosevelt was merely the endorser of strategic choices reached by internal bargaining among his senior military and naval commanders.

Of course, even autocratic leaders aren't wholly free to pursue strategies without reference to those needed to support their execution, and democratic leaders are even less so. As then Brig. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower commented early in World War II, "In a war such as this, when high command invariably involves a president, a prime minister, six chiefs of staff, and a horde of lesser planners, there has got to be patience – no one person can be a Napoleon or a Caesar."[1371] Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Wayne Hsieh's discussion of Abraham Lincoln's war strategy is how closely his dealings with the state governors on whom he depended for troops and resources resembled a coalition management rather than a unilateral strategic problem. In that respect, there are striking parallels between the strategic challenge confronting Lincoln and that confronting FDR eighty years later. In such cases, strategy may be

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[1371] Quoted in Walter R. Borneman, *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey, Leahy, and King* (New York, 2012), p. 238.

as much about creating and maintaining conditions allowing the strategic effort to be pursued as about achieving its ultimate aim.

Which raises the question whether the strategy of an autocratic, or at least idiosyncratic, leader is as likely to survive the departure of its champion as one institutionalized in the decision-making culture of the state that it purports to guide. Where strategic success is proximate, of course, the answer may be immaterial. FDR's death left Truman to conclude the war against Germany and Japan, but there's no evidence that any significant change in military strategy resulted. Suggestions that FDR might have been less willing than his successor to use the atom bomb against Japan are purely speculative.[1372] Similarly, Lincoln's assassination had virtually no impact on a war by then effectively won, although there is widespread agreement that it hugely influenced for the worse the peace that followed.

Where the strategic challenge is prolonged, on the other hand, a failure to institutionalize strategy may be more damaging. As Bradford Lee's essay makes clear, for example, Containment in its original form didn't survive the Truman administration.[1373] "American success in the early stage of the Cold War was not to be sustained over the middle stage of the Cold War in the 1960s and 1970s," he tells us. "Rather than the incremental improvement in the American strategic position during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, there was to be decremental declension from one administration to another over the following two decades." Similarly, Lacey argues that, while Roman rulers hewed to the vital imperative to protect Rome's tax-producing provinces, the empire flourished. But as the combination of internal strife and

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[1372] Herman S. Wolk and Richard P. Hallion, "FDR and Truman: Continuity And Context In The A-Bomb Decision," *Air Power Journal*, Fall 1995.

[1373] Indeed, it didn't even survive its author's retirement. In an interview with journalist James Strode years later, Paul Nitze, who succeeded George Kennan in late 1949 as State's director of policy planning, cheerfully acknowledged having "hikacked" Containment. See Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove* (New York, 2009), p. 316.

external over-reach eroded Rome's ability to secure its productive core, the empire began to fall apart.

For the purpose of drawing lessons for the future, of course, the problem is that great strategists don't grow on trees and aren't easy to identify when they do come along. Few at the outset of the Civil War would have anticipated the strategic acumen of Lincoln and Grant, the one widely disparaged as a bumpkin lawyer, the other seen as a military and business failure. Ditto for Harry Truman, a small-town machine politician in whom even the president who chose him reposed little confidence. Truman of course had the assistance of two remarkable minds in the Georges, Marshall and Kennan. Even so, as Lee shows, the policies that guided the U.S. through the early years of the Cold War clearly bore the imprint of Truman's own instincts. Similarly, decades later, the policies that replaced a Containment strategy that Thomas Mahnken argues had outlived its usefulness reflected Ronald Reagan's instincts, although he gave little more early evidence of strategic acumen.

In his Introduction, Murray regrets how few senior military and political leaders reach their strategically influential positions with a sound grounding in strategic history. Indeed, that was among the justifications for this volume and the project from which it emerged. And doubtless much could be done to improve senior leader education in strategy. But how significantly that would increase the statistical likelihood of producing or even of identifying great strategists is open to question. In Orson Scott Card's classic science-fiction novel *Ender's Game*, a future earth government confronting an existential alien threat selects and tests children to discover those with a native talent for strategy, then immerses them in progressively more difficult war games with a view to grooming those with a true genius for military leadership.[1374] It's a fascinating conceit, but more fiction than science. As Lee notes with respect to the

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[1374] Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* (New York, 1985).

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"declension" in U.S. Cold War strategy in the 1960s and 1970s, it "played out under both Democratic and Republican presidents who were served by what were thought to be the 'best and brightest' thinkers and practitioners of their time."

Instead, absent dominating leadership, strategy is more likely to emerge, to the extent that it emerges definably at all, from a more or less contentious political process. Writing of British operations in the War of the Spanish Succession, Jamel Ostwald notes that "All Englishmen could agree that the first line of defense was the fleet and its seamen. Beyond that, views differed over how best to attack France. Continental strategists, influenced by William, argued for a strong military presence across the Channel. Blue water strategists, usually Tories, argued that English land commitments should be minimal and that the vast majority of attention be paid to the sea service. A navy, unlike a field army, could both fight the enemy and protect important English commercial interests, and for Tories it had the additional political advantage of not being a tool for potential tyrants."

Moreover, if strategy thus reflected politics, the reverse also applied. Adds Ostwald, "In an odd way, English success was also predicated on its political gyrations…The war effort required political support, yet the military strategies one chose were themselves politicized. The success or failure of any given strategy was itself a political event – once a war of battle had clearly been replaced with a war of siege, the political constellation of Britain changed as well." Much the same thing happened in Great Britain's war against Napoleonic France. As government succeeded government, not only military choices but even British war aims vacillated. The only persistent aims were preservation of Great Britain's safety from invasion and of the maritime trade on which depended both her economic vitality and her ability to sustain those willing to continue resisting Bonaparte. Hence, while Ostwald concludes his essay with the

assertion that "Britain's real success in the War of the Spanish Succession was to create a grand strategic formula that would allow it to win future wars," it might be more accurate to say that Britain's real success was to create political and financial institutions sufficiently robust to weather repeated military disappointments until a successful strategic formula finally emerged.

Whether autocratically or politically driven, our cases suggest that no strategy is likely to survive for very long in defiance of a nation's cultural predilections. As Mansoor confirms, for example, confronted with public rage over Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt's presumed "Europe First" strategy barely survived its nominal adoption. In a different context, rebutting suggestions that America's war against Japan was driven largely by racial prejudices, Showalter argues that it instead reflected an Army-Navy institutional equality deeply rooted in America's culture, "The Pacific campaign," he contends, "was in good part a strategic response to an institutional issue, not a racial one."[1375]

Strategy is especially hostage to culture when the institutions through which it is effected must be transformed simply to marshal the resources needed to execute it. Thus, for Hanson, perhaps the most difficult challenge confronting Themistocles was overcoming Athens' attachment to hoplite warfare, reflecting both the memory of victory at Marathon and the resistance of the city's élites to a strategy that required empowering landless citizens. As he describes the prevailing attitude, "No walls or ships – or poor people – were needed to save Athens from Persian hordes." Similarly, Showalter tells us, Prussian military reform required "nurturing a sense of [popular] commitment that would actualize the latent loyalty Prussians felt for state and crown."

[1375] Dennis Showalter, "War to the Knife: The U.S. in the Pacific, 1941-1945," in *The Pacific War as Total War: Proceedings of the 2011 International Forum on War History* (Tokyo, 2012), pp. 91-2.

Adapting strategy to cultural imperatives is the more essential because, as several of our cases demonstrate, successful strategy is as much about acquiring the means of defense as it is about employing them. Comments Hanson, "Most generals tried to best use the resources their societies put at their disposal; Themistocles, in contrast, ensured that his society would have the wisdom and capability to put the right resources at his disposal." The same might be said, *inter alia*, of Lincoln, Dowding, and Reagan. In contrast, Lacey tells us, "Rome's inability, or unwillingness, to access the accumulated wealth of its elites was a crucial handicap when the funds necessary to secure the Empire ran short." Rodgers scores a similar problem, arguing that "It would be fair to say that until 1276, the strategy of the English kings who had aimed at the conquest of Wales reflected too much concern with how best to use what they had, rather than how to get what they needed."

Great Britain's experience in the War of the Spanish Succession and the Napoleonic War demonstrates the problem with special force. In both cases, British military alternatives were circumscribed by a deep-seated cultural and political reluctance to enlarge the size of the regular British army, and thus an inescapable dependence on continental allies for military manpower. As Ostwald notes, "In every theater in which English troops were engaged, their numbers were subsumed within a much larger sea of Allied manpower…To understand English success in the Spanish Succession, we must appreciate the role that the broader coalition played in these allied victories." The same was true of continental operations against Napoleon. As Chapter 5 notes with respect to Britain's ultimately successful operations in Iberia, "With a volunteer army small to begin with compared with Continental armies, more than half of it perforce dispersed abroad to protect Britain's expanding colonial possessions, British leaders could visualize no way of confronting the more than 200,000 French troops in Spain on their own with any hope of

success." In both cases, Britain's success was hostage to the steadfastness of her continental allies, aided in Spain by Napoleon's over-ambition. At the same time, it was in part British leaders' very acceptance of that constraint that helped them sustain public support for both wars despite their prolonged durations. The resonance with America's recent military experience needs no elaboration.

Military means having been acquired, whether from the state's own resources or through coalition, and barring outright battlefield defeat, strategic success hinges almost entirely on the conformity of strategic aims to available military means and the validity of the theory according to which the latter are committed. Concerning the first, while the term "strategy-force mismatch" is of relatively recent vintage, the problem that it tags is anything but new. Describing the military challenge confronting Rome, for example, Lacey reminds us that "the defense of the Empire rested on 150,000 legionnaires along with a similar number of auxiliaries. In other words less than 0.5 percent of the Empire's total population was responsible for the security of the remaining 99.5 percent." As long as Roman emperors kept their ambitions in check, those capabilities sufficed. Not so as imperial ambitions escalated.[1376] Similarly, Jones writes, "After 1871 [Bismarck] struggled with increasing futility to control the forces he had helped to release, 'like a sorcerer's apprentice,' and to save the new German Empire from the strategic circumstances of its birth." Squeezed between a mercurial and ambitious young emperor and over-aggressive military leaders, Bismarck proved unable to save Germany from a strategic over-extension that finally proved fatal.

[1376] As one scholar argues, "By the turn of the second century AD, Rome's situation was much analogous to that of the British Empire at the turn of the nineteenth, in which Britain buckled under the weight of maintaining her 'formal' empire after being forced to absorb her 'informal' one." Emerson T. Brooking, "*Roma Surrecta*: Portrait of a Counterinsurgent Power, 216 BC - AD 72," p.23.

Most would agree that a similar problem currently confronts American leaders seeking to steer a sensible course between over-extension and strategic passivity at a time of proliferating security challenges and diminishing resources. That no one yet has managed to articulate a course of action with which all or even most influential American politicians can agree is a measure of the current difficulty of reconciling strategic aims with available resources, the latter not excluding diminished public support for international engagement after a decade of frustratingly unrequited military effort. Elsewhere, the author has drawn a parallel with Britain's similar experience during the last years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, in which a global empire acquired during a century of British economic and naval supremacy found itself increasingly challenged in both arenas.[1377] Britain's success in meeting those challenges reflected statesmanship of a very high order indeed, but also required navigating repeated public and political controversies.

Not all strategic failures reflect over-extension, however. They are equally likely – perhaps more likely – to reflect mistaken theories of success.[1378] Often that misjudgment is a product of stubborn or unexamined adherence to outmoded military practices. Here history uncritically applied easily can imprison rather than enlighten. We've already noted Themistocles' need to overcome Athenian overconfidence in hoplite warfare resulting from the Greeks' one-off victory at Marathon. Similar memories of Frederick the Great's victories impeded Prussian army reform until Jena-Auerstädt forcibly revealed the need for change, while in the American Civil War, stubborn refusal to recognize how radically military technology had

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[1377] Richard Hart Sinnreich, "About Turn: British Strategic Transformation from Salisbury to Grey," in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds.),*The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 113. The same theme has been picked up by others. See, e.g., Andrew F. Krepinevich *et al*, *Strategy in Austerity* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012), pp. 35-60.
[1378] As that inimitable strategist Yogi Berra is reputed to have said, "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is."

altered the battlefield since the Napoleonic era persisted on both sides nearly to the end of the conflict, as it later did even more expensively in World War I. The U.S. Navy's innovations between the wars and the Royal Air Force's parallel development of air defense doctrine were remarkable in part because, from a historical perspective, such self-initiated reforms are so unusual absent a prompting defeat. Even then, as Murray and Gray reveal in their respective cases, both services had to overcome enormous resistance, not least from traditionalists within their own ranks.

More often, mistaken theories linking means to ends result from misreading the enemy, the context of the struggle, or both. Few of our strategists had the benefit of an analysis as perceptive and complete as that produced by Gerald of Wales. As Rodgers reveals, perhaps the most impressive feature of Gerald's proposal for subduing Wales was its thoughtful diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of both the land and people to be subdued and those seeking to do it – what we today would call a net assessment. In devising his plan, Rodgers tells us, Gerald "expressly takes into account the lessons of history. He considers English strengths and English weaknesses, Welsh advantages and disadvantages, and situational factors. He takes into account military, political, cultural, topographical, and economic considerations. Rather than taking force structure as a given, he reflects on what sorts of troops would be best suited to accomplish the mission, and implicitly recommends changes to force structure, tactics, and equipment to reflect the task at hand." Finally, and remarkably, Gerald goes so far as to conduct his own version of a "Red Team" analysis, imagining how the Welsh might go about frustrating such an enterprise.

Historically, such carefully anchored strategic design, or at least, clear evidence of it, has been astonishingly rare. Indeed, for a modern appraisal as detailed as Gerald's, although perhaps

less influential, once must travel forward all the way to 1907 and Sir Eyre Crowe's famous British Foreign Office "Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany," which, like Gerald's, called on history, geopolitics, and an appraisal of British and German strengths, weaknesses, and ambitions to urge the need for allied firmness in dealing with Kaiser Wilhelm II. Compare that with the conflicting and deceptive assessments about Vietnam revealed in the *Pentagon Papers*, which at one point led President Kennedy to ask two of his recently returned advisers whether they even had visited the same country.[1379] Or, to cite a more recent example, recall Army Gen. Scott Wallace's comment during the 2003 invasion of Iraq that "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war gamed against,"[1380] a frank appraisal that got the good general in trouble with his superiors, but that soon proved woefully understated. As a June 2012 Joint Staff analysis of military lessons learned during the previous decade admitted, "In operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, a failure to recognize, acknowledge, and accurately define the operational environment led to a mismatch between forces, capabilities, missions, and goals."[1381]

To be fair, in an era of accelerating change, even the soundest net assessment has its limits as a guide to strategic decision-making. Any such appraisal at best is a snapshot, after all, and the more transient the information on which it relies, the more quickly invalidated. Today, among the preeminent challenges for strategists is distinguishing features of the environment likely to endure from a welter of other compellingly immediate but also less reliably durable calls on a nation's attention and energies. For that reason if for no other, strategy is more likely

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[1379] Vietnam Taskforce, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, Part IV. B. 5., "Counterinsurgency: The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May-Nov. 1963," (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1969), p. 26. Nor have matters apparently improved that much since, witness recent revelations of war-related decision-making in both the G.W. Bush and Obama administrations.

[1380] Quoted in Jim Dwyer, "A Nation at War: In The Field -- V Corps Commander," *TNYT*, March 28, 2003.

[1381] Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis Division, "Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations," *Decade of War*, Volume I (Joint Staff J7, 15 June 2012), p. 3.

to be successful the more modestly its objectives are defined and the more limited in scope and scale. Contrariwise, the more ambitious the stated goals and the greater the duration over which they must be pursued, the smaller the likelihood that any strategy based on a single net assessment however comprehensive will succeed.

Above all, strategic success is hostage to the willingness of political and military leaders to read and heed the evidence of the battlefield even at at the price of jettisoning cherished assumptions. In the Civil War, as Hsieh point out, strategic success remained elusive until Lincoln and Grant, each independently, recognized that they were engaged in a war of societies, not merely of armies. "Like many other Northerners," Hsieh notes, "Lincoln began the war under the impression that a powerful current of widespread Unionism existed in the Confederacy, which could be exploited with a few military victories and moderate political measures. When the strength of Confederate nationalism became apparent, Lincoln then moved to increasingly stringent and severe war measures aimed at the complete defeat of Confederate military power." More than any moral impulse, it was that evolution in his understanding of the strategic problem he confronted that drove him to issue the Emancipation Proclamation (which, it will be recalled, affected only slaves in the rebellious states). Grant likewise began the war expecting it to be decided on the battlefield, not at the Southern peoples' homes and hearths. As he later wrote, "Up to the battle of Shiloh [I] believed that the rebellion against the Government would collapse suddenly and soon, if a decisive victory could be gained over any of its armies…but [after Shiloh] I gave up all idea of saving the Union except by complete conquest."[1382]

What was true in the mid-nineteenth century is even more true today, as American frustrations in Iraq and Afghanistan reveal only too clearly. In both conflicts, U.S. and alliance leaders were slow to acknowledge that crucial contextual assumptions underwriting both military

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[1382] Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, 1999), p. 198.

commitments were wrong, as the following passage from a U.S. Army retrospective on Operation Iraqi Freedom confirms:

> OIF began as a traditional, though very bold, conventional military offensive directed toward defeating Iraq's military forces and removing the Saddam regime from power. Following the accomplishment of this goal, most commanders and units expected to transition to a new phase of the conflict in which stability and support operations would briefly dominate and would resemble recent experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo. This phase of the conflict would require only a limited commitment by the US military and would be relatively peaceful and short as Iraqis quickly assumed responsibility…Few commanders foresaw that…it would require US and Coalition military forces to take the lead in providing security, reconstruction, and governance for Iraq for years."[1383]

In consequence, allied nations were compelled to adapt not only their means and methods, but also their strategic aims. In doing so, they at least were in good company. As Jones has written elsewhere about Bismarck, perhaps the preeminent strategist of his age, "what stands out in Bismarck's formulation is a conscious flexibility in achieving his ends, and quite possibly flexibility in framing the ends themselves."[1384] For a more recent example of similar flexibility, consider U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's comment on evolving U.S. strategy in June, 2012: "In the past, the United States often assumed the primary role of defending others. We built permanent bases. We deployed large forces across the globe to fixed positions. We often assumed that others were not willing or capable of defending themselves. Our new strategy recognizes that this is not the world we live in anymore."[1385]

[1383] Dr. Donald P. Wright, Colonel Timothy R. Reese *et al*, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, May 2003–January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2008), pp. 3-4.

[1384] Marcus Jones, "Strategy as character: Bismarck and the Prusso-German Question, 1862-1878," in Murray and Sinnreich, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, p. 86.

[1385] Pentagon Press Conference, June 28, 2012.

In short, as the volatility of the operating environment increases, the need intensifies to balance long-term with opportunistic behavior. Each imposes different requirements and embodies different dangers. To be successful, a long-term strategy requires both an accurate prompting diagnosis and the discipline to conform action to intention over time. Its greatest risk is target fixation – the failure to honor the evidence of the evolving environment when it begins to refute the assumptions on which the strategy was based. An opportunistic strategy is more forgiving. But executing it effectively requires both the freedom of action to engage and disengage at will and the political robustness to tolerate failure without fatally diminishing commitment to the aim. Its greatest risk is that so much energy will be dissipated on peripheral objectives that resources prove insufficient to seize the moment for decisive commitment when it finally arrives.

Finally, while strategy carefully devised and implemented can help an army or a nation make the most effective use of its resources, in the end, method alone is at best a temporary substitute for adequate means. As the Athenians rightly reminded the Melians, "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."[1386] Weak states, like weak armies, may prevail for a time over stronger but less clever adversaries. But unless cleverness can be translated into effective military power, a stronger contestant sooner or later will prevail absent a failure of political will. That doesn't argue for ignoring strategy; it does argue against expecting any strategy to compensate over the long haul for persistent failure adequately to resource military enterprises. As the familiar adage holds, at some point, quantity assumes a quality all its own.

[1386] Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," in Robert B Strassler (Ed.), *The Landmark Thucydides* (New York: 1996), p. 352.

Where organic military means are insufficient, states must seek additional resources through alliance or informal coalition. In several of our cases, coalitions provided the decisive ingredient of success. As those cases reveal, however, from a strategic perspective, coalitions are a two-edged sword. At best, reliance on allies to make up the difference between the means organic to the state and those required to achieve success typically will require adapting methods and sometimes the aims themselves to competing interests, predilections, and perceptions of risk. In both the War of the Spanish Succession and the Napoleonic War, for example, Britain's strategic flexibility was constrained by the need to accommodate continental allies whose exposure to the costs and risks of military operations were significantly greater. Similarly, Mansoor demonstrates, during World War II, sensitivity to the need to keep America's allies on board compelled Roosevelt repeatedly to overrule his own military commanders. Less obviously, to satisfy the political demands of the Northern governors on whom continued support for the defeat of the Confederacy depended, Lincoln and Grant were compelled to endure commanders such as Banks, Butler, and Sigel whose incompetence often proved strategically as well as tactically costly. For evidence that the problem persists today, one need look no further than recent NATO engagements from the Balkans to Afghanistan, in which the need to reconcile differing allied operational viewpoints and cost-tolerances have been a persistent strategic challenge, confirming Winston Churchill's notorious comment that "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them!"[1387]

To square the resulting circle of strategic aim with coalition constraint, leaders in more than one of our cases have resorted to deliberate ambiguity of intention and occasionally to outright deception. Themistocles, Hanson tells us, not only blackmailed his Peloponnesian allies by threatening to abandon Attica altogether, but also negotiated with the common enemy

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[1387] Kay Halle (Compiler), *The Irrepressible Churchill: Winston's World, Wars & Wit* (New York, 2011).

unbeknownst to them. Similarly, Ostwald writes, "Marlborough, Godolphin, Eugene, and the Austrian minister Wratislaw managed…contradictions in interests and personalities, as much by acting independently, remaining vague, and hiding unpalatable agreements from each other." American leaders until recently have proved less willing to indulge in such manipulations, or perhaps merely less adept in managing them, although not above resorting to euphemism and ambiguity to paper over politically inconvenient differences in allied perspective.[1388] In any case, whatever its short-term advantages, playing fast and loose with one's allies isn't calculated to sustain the relationship. As Hanson comments, "When a coalition leader must mislead his own allies, suspicion follows even in victory."

As the preceding remarks suggest, both the ingredients of past strategic successes and the capacity and willingness of political and military leaders to devise and apply them offer no straightforward checklist for their current and future successors. Notes Jones of Bismarck, "Among [his] most striking characteristics as a strategist was an almost complete lack of faith in the permanence of any international accommodation. To the extent that such an anachronistic concept can be applied to him, grand strategy was an ongoing process of adaptation to shifting circumstances instead of a formula or handful of trite maxims." Especially in an era of extreme strategic volatility and increasing information transparency, those charged with the security of their nations must more than ever be guided by the medical maxim, "First, do no harm." As Colin Gray has argued elsewhere, "[T]he key to quality in political and strategic leadership is not the avoidance of error, which is impossible. Instead, it is the ability to make small rather than large mistakes and to err generally in ways for which one can readily find adequate

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[1388] As the checkered history of NATO nuclear doctrine reveals. For one look at the problem, see David N. Schwartz, *Nato's Nuclear Dilemmas* (Washington, DC, 1983).

compensation."[1389] To assert that is not to deprecate the need to devise and apply strategic priorities, but rather to insure that commitments do not so wed the nation to a single course of action that they become impossible to reconfigure when conditions change and/or evidence accumulates that the beliefs undergirding the chosen strategy were misconceived.

Finally, it is worth reiterating Murray's reminder from Chapter 8 that "The success of strategy at any level depends on the personalities of those who conduct it." Whether the creation of a single strategic genius or the messier product of political sausage-making, strategy is the product of a human process, not a computer program. In the end, because it must, it will reflect the culture, convictions, and prejudices of those whose energies and loyalties it seeks to marshal and apply. The strategist or leader who flies in the face of that reality invites resistance at best, repudiation at worst. Sun Tzu was right to admonish his readers that "The consummate leader cultivates the moral law…[causing] the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger."[1390] In the end, sustaining the nation's will to defend itself is the crucial hallmark of any successful military strategy.

[1389] Colin Gray, "Harry S. Truman and the Forming of American grand strategy in the Cold War, 1945-1953," in Murray and Sinnreich, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, p. 211.
[1390] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Trans. Lionel Giles (http://classics.mit.edu//Tzu/artwar.html).