

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

# NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

Vol. VIII No. 8

April, 1956

## CONTENTS

<b>THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE STRATEGY IN PEACE AND WAR . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Professor Arnold O. Wolfers</i>	
<b>SEAPOWER AND MILITARY STRATEGY TODAY . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Professor James A. Field, Jr.</i>	
<b>THE STRATEGIC PLAN . . . . .</b>	<b>41</b>
<i>Professor William A. Reitzel</i>	
<b>RECOMMENDED READING . . . . .</b>	<b>67</b>



## **SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE READER**

**The material contained herein is furnished to the individual addressee for his private information and education only. The frank remarks and personal opinions of many Naval War College guest lecturers are presented with the understanding that they will not be quoted; you are enjoined to respect their privacy. Under no circumstances will this material be republished or quoted publicly, as a whole or in part, without specific clearance in each instance with both the author and the Naval War College.**

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW** was established in 1948 by the Chief of Naval Personnel in order that officers of the service might receive some of the educational benefits of the resident students at the Naval War College. Distribution is in accordance with BUPERS Instruction 1552.5 of 23 June 1954. It must be kept in the possession of the subscriber, or other officers eligible for subscription, and should be destroyed by burning when no longer required.

**The thoughts and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author, and are not necessarily those of the Navy Department or of the Naval War College.**

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
REVIEW**

**Issued Monthly  
U. S. Naval War College  
Newport, R. I.**

## **THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE STRATEGY IN PEACE AND WAR**

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 7 December 1955 by  
*Professor Arnold O. Wolfers*

Admiral McCormick, Members of the Naval War College,

Last year, I spoke on alliances in general. This time, I want to discuss with you the present particular alliance problems of this country. As usual, I am going to speak as an optimist — an “optimist” being a man who thinks the future is still uncertain.

The future of our alliance system, at least its success, I would consider still uncertain. While there has been progress, the emphasis must be on the difficulties facing our statesmen in dealing with what in a way is perhaps their most irksome problem. While the Soviet and Communist danger overshadows all other issues in its seriousness, the necessity of conducting an alliance policy rather than a policy of go-it-alone makes it so hard to deal with the danger adequately and consistently. In fact our alliance system is the cause of so much trouble that one has to be fully convinced of its necessity if one is to accept these troubles. The non-alliance policy of isolation of this country continued, as you know, until World War II. Then for the first time since the 18th Century did the United States enter into alliances, with definite commitments of mutual assistance. In the First World War, this did not happen. The United States insisted on being treated as an associated power so that there would be no mistake about the fact that it was not going to tie itself to a group of allies.

I believe this change to an alliance policy was inevitable, and this conviction is shared by most people today. The reason why we had to enter into an alliance system during and after

World War II is obvious enough. The task exceeded our own strength. This is particularly evident today when the least we must do for our own security is to make sure that the Soviet Bloc will be contained within the limits it reached shortly after the end of the war. This task is made so difficult because we are the most distant country to try to balance a great power in the center of Eurasia and because the rimlands of Eurasia, as the geopoliticians call them, the countries along the Soviet border from Scandinavia all the way to Japan and Korea, emerged from the war practically as a power vacuum. One does not usually ally oneself with a power vacuum!

After all, an alliance is supposed to serve as a means of obtaining assistance from others as well as of lending them assistance. It is based on the idea of mutual assistance. The big problem for us has been this question of "mutuality." We could go out and guarantee other countries against attack, but an agreement to do so is not usually called an alliance. It goes under the name of a guarantee pact which big powers have at times found to their interest to offer smaller countries as a way of protecting them. We were in search of allies that could help make containment workable.

The question, then, is: What was there along the fringes of the Soviet Union, on its side of the oceans, that could be considered real alliance potential? We had seen to it that two of the potentially most promising military allies in that area were thoroughly disarmed. We had eliminated Germany and Japan, for a long time to come, as military allies of significant value. There were a number of other countries that had been spared during the war, neutral countries like Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Turkey, but of these only one, namely Turkey, became available as an ally. The others did not wish to be drawn into military alliances because they had fared so well as neutrals in World War II. The rest in Europe were countries that had suffered seriously, if not disastrously, during World War II, countries like Italy,

France, Britain, and several small countries. In Asia, the situation was even less promising though in part for reasons other than war damage.

I do not think that one would find in history many similar situations facing a nation in search of allies. When the British built up its many coalitions against would-be rulers of Europe, when Bismarck's Germany established her alliance system, or when, after World War I, the French collected allies in Europe for what became known as the French Alliance System against Germany, these countries were able to link up with relatively powerful countries. Even the French allies, though small, compared favorably with the power vacuum which was then Germany, or Hungary.

We had to make the best, then, of a most unfavorable situation. Let us see what we were able to accomplish, and how this measures up to the idea of a mutual assistance system. Of course the biggest and most important military bloc that we have been able to establish is our European defense system, known as NATO. In NATO, by taking all of its forces together, we have succeeded in building up a very respectable military force that constitutes the cornerstone of our entire alliance system. If we eliminated NATO from our considerations, the rest would not be impressive in terms of actual if even of potential military power.

I would add, however, that much of the rest while not constituting a promise of much armed assistance may still offer us valuable real estate on which to base our forces — particularly our air forces. In this sense it may represent additional power, even where the indigenous forces are relatively weak.

As we go around the circumference of the Soviet Bloc, once we get beyond Turkey, as you know better than I do, we get into territory that at least until quite recently had to be considered a vacuum as far as military power is concerned. We can now point to the "Northern tier" from Turkey to Pakistan, which includes

Iran and Iraq. That looks very nice on a map, but METO, or the Bagdad Pact, is largely a paper organization. The forces are not there simply because these countries have allied themselves with Britain and each other.

Going further eastward, fortunately the Himalayan Ranges are a pretty considerable ally! One can hardly speak of a gap there, except possibly for the Kyber Pass.

Beyond that we come to the area of SEATO, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, but again, as an alliance system not in the remotest sense comparable to NATO. What has happened here is that Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, France and the United States have agreed to act together to meet any attack, direct or indirect, on a Treaty area which includes Cambodia and Laos and South Vietnam, non-members of the organization. What this amounts to is very hard to evaluate: it is a promise, a commitment of the member countries to meet any attack on the Treaty area by the forces they individually deem necessary. What this would really amount to in case of an emergency is hard to say.

There follows the Far Eastern region, which borders on Red China and thus on the Soviet Bloc. Here, we come into an area in which all we could do was to make bilateral agreements with a number of countries. Each of them represents some strength, South Korea, the Republic of China, the Philippines, through the ANZUS Treaty, New Zealand and Australia, and finally Japan, which at present, however, again is not much more than valuable real estate.

In former times these "defense treaties" would hardly have been called "alliances"; at least the French would not have accepted them as such because they do not define the kind of forces the partners will throw into the battle if one of them were attacked. It merely says that they will take action, leaving it up to each of them to decide how much action, action when, and

action with what kind of forces. The members will also consult and will consider an attack on one of them an attack on all of them. This at least eliminates the idea that they are entitled to remain neutral or could declare themselves disinterested.

If one adds all this together it obviously amounts to something. Even in Asia there are a number of armies involved: the army on Formosa, the Philippine troops, the Pakistani troops, the army of South Korea, etc. We are training, equipping and in part at least beginning to coordinate these forces for common action. So one can say that in one important respect time has been on our side. Out of a vacuum we have created something of a grouping of military forces which, in case of an attack, could add strength to our resistance.

But, as I tried to show last year when I was talking about alliances, one has always to keep in mind that there are negative features to all alliances. Alliances are not a net benefit. In the first place, for being spread over such a vast area of the world these alliances imply a certain diversion of our forces; we have to give all of our allies a sense of protection if we are to count on them. But much more serious is the fact that most of these countries have opponents within the Free World. Therefore, every time we ally ourselves with one country, we antagonize its opponents.

In Europe, there is little left now of that problem. There is still some Franco-German conflict which caused great difficulty when it came to joining Germany through an alliance with the West without dangerously antagonizing the French. We certainly antagonize the Czechs and the Poles by rearming West Germany. But in the case of Germany, as in the case of Spain and Yugoslavia, where the conflict with Italy was quite serious, we have gradually achieved a considerable degree of consensus. Our allies agree that it is necessary to line up with these countries for purposes of common resistance against the East.

In the Middle and Near East, the situation is much graver. If we give arms to any country there it antagonizes some others to the point of serious hostility toward us. If we tie any Arab country to our alliance system, while others refuse to join, we are accused of trying to split the Arab world. The Egyptian Bloc now is very hostile to Iraq for this reason, so we are in danger of losing more than we gain by driving some countries into the opposite camp. The Arab-Israel conflict makes this problem particularly acute. Hardly less serious is the case of Pakistan, where Indians and Afghanistans ask whether what we are doing for Pakistan is really directed against the Soviet Bloc and not against them. After all, the Pakistanis are talking about a Holy War for Kashmir and might turn the weapons obtained from us against India.

Further to the east, we are having trouble because some countries, including Korea, are still afraid of Japan. There are others who are hostile to Chiang Kai-Shek. Therefore, here again, we cannot consider our alliances to be pure assets.

Moreover, tying any nations to us by means of military alliances is creating opposition within the allied countries themselves. Military alliances, like armaments, can always be misunderstood as a form of saber-rattling. Military blocs have always aroused hostility for being interpreted as warlike gestures. This country used to be strongly opposed to the idea of military blocs for just this reason. We are now the leaders of a military bloc policy, and there is no way around it. The price we pay for it must be kept in mind, however, a price Communist propaganda succeeds in raising.

There has developed within countries allied with us a kind of anti-alliance sentiment. It is strong in West Germany, where it is felt that by allying herself with us Germany may be perpetuating the division of the country. It is quite strong in France,

where non-Communist neutralism adds to the strength of Communist opposition. So we have to watch out lest a craving for neutrality lead to a weakening of our alliances, and to growing hostility from nations intent on preserving their present neutrality. Because of our alliances in Asia, Nehru accuses us of bringing the danger of war to India's borders.

I wonder whether it might not have been wiser, particularly in Asia, to forego the formality of alliances. We might have helped some countries militarily that wanted to side with us by giving them military aid, by consultation with their military leaders, but doing it in a more informal fashion. We can see how the Soviets are approaching the problem in the case of Egypt. They are not offering Egypt an alliance. Practically, the two methods come to the same, yet the Soviets will not be accused of splitting the region into hostile blocs. If we were ever forced into an agonizing reappraisal, we might find that one of the things to reappraise is this treaty network, which, after all, despite its formal nature, leaves to its members a great deal of freedom to escape from their commitments. In fact, the members do not commit themselves to do much more than what they would want to do anyway. I wonder, then, whether to have insisted on these METO and SEATO pacts has been worth the price of antagonizing so many people inside and outside of the member countries, having become the victims of the same kind of pactomania that was typical of the French during the pre-war period.

Now let me look into the problems of alliance strategy. We have got alliances; they may prove advantageous to us in many ways; to a large extent they are indispensable, particularly in Europe. We are faced with the task, therefore, of making this alliance system work, which means turning it into something we can rely upon for our security both in point of strength and of reliability. It does not help us to have strong allies unless we can be confident that their promise to fight with us in case of need

will be kept when the time comes. Even as an instrument of deterrence, an alliance is only worth what it contains in the way of reliable promises to act together in case of a crisis.

So in time of peace we are engaged in a twofold struggle: We are concerned with the problem of building up the strength of our allies and our own strength, and of coordinating this strength into an instrument that, if used, will be effective; and, secondly, of assuring ourselves that it will actually be used, or that the others will be on our side if and when needed.

The first can be called the problem of peacetime preparedness policy, a policy directed toward preparing a coalition for common action in war. You know more about our preparedness policy than I do; it is largely a military matter. I only want to point to some of its difficulties and implications. As I said at the start, the reason why we needed alliances so badly was because of our geographical handicap, because we were far away from the borders of the bloc we want to contain. It used to be a tremendous advantage to this country to be separated from the other great powers by the oceans. If one is sure of one's security or that others are going to take care of any potential danger, one can sit comfortably on one shore of a wide ocean. But if one has to be ready for action across the ocean on the opposite shore, obviously the distance becomes a grave handicap. The problem was to create a base from which to operate on the opposite shore. This required a number of types of agreements.

The agreements on bases seem to have been worked out very well. We have been able to obtain the right to place our bases on territory of countries extremely touchy about their independence. This is quite surprising, and I think proves good statesmanship. Obviously, the presence of such bases does carry with it at least the possibility of outside interference. A country like Libya could not refuse; but for a country like Spain, not to speak

of Britain, to accept to serve as an "aircraft carrier" for American bombers and bombers that can take off with nuclear weapons, thus becoming a vulnerable target for attacks on American forces, is quite an accomplishment, probably unique in history.

I do not say that we are at the end of our difficulties with the countries which we are using as our bases. We do not know what the future of Morocco will be or, specifically, how a new Moroccan government will feel about a Western country being militarily established within the borders of its country. It makes us interested in the peace and order of that territory; we have logistical problems concerning the way of getting to our bases. A country like Spain loses some of her independence of action once we are in there because she will not want to become involved in a conflict with us over matters of interference if she can help it.

The next problem is how to help allied countries raise and equip adequate military forces, and how to coordinate them. We know from experience that a coalition war with a great divergence of forces, different in training, outlook, weapons, and strategic concepts poses a host of extremely thorny problems. The biggest step taken in this respect since the war was to establish a peacetime coalition with a supreme allied commander and to start in peacetime with the actual integration of forces. Since the word "integration" has been so much abused, it may be better to use the looser term of "coordination," or to speak of mutual adjustment.

NATO can serve as a model for developments elsewhere. This is the best peacetime coalition that we know of or can hope to attain for the time being. Here we have the common infrastructure, common strategic planning, and, more astonishing, actual agreement on strategy. With the Germans coming in, some new problems may arise in regard to the strategy which NATO has adopted. As it dawns on more and more people what even tactical nuclear warfare means to countries that become the battlefield, new strategic questions are almost certain to be raised. But

all of this is being worked out in a most friendly and cooperative spirit, and this may be the biggest asset we have been able to gain for ourselves through our peacetime alliance policy.

In other parts of the world, this particular problem of coordination has not been so difficult because the superiority the United States vis-a-vis a South Korea, a Formosa, or a Philippines makes subordination to American wishes almost inescapable. Here, coordination has been a function of what we are willing to give in the way of technical assistance and military aid. But even here, as we know from our experience with Syngman Rhee, things do not always go quite smoothly in terms of coordination or of subordination. Preparedness policy, then, has been in operation all along the line. Even common maneuvers are now a common feature of this policy. We have gone beyond any pre-war experience, then, because of the conviction that in a new war there will no longer be time to build up a coordinated system once the battle has started. What was done in the past meant waiting, often for years, before a common commander was appointed, with grave friction during all of the war over every aspect of coordination.

Again, to emphasize the difficulties, I think we also have gained experience over the last few years concerning the limits of peacetime integration of national forces. We all know what has happened to the plans of European military integration. This country had no intention of going to anything like the length of integration contemplated for Western Europe under EDC. The idea was to create a European army that would take the place of independent national armies. We thought that this would prove possible. The leaders of the European movement led us to believe that the time was ripe for such a revolutionary innovation. It would have meant, for those countries, giving up the most fundamental of sovereign rights: namely, the right to control the nation's armed forces, and doing so while remaining sovereign states. Once EDC failed, it became clear that plans as ambitious as this would have to be discarded.

For NATO as a whole the problem was one of standardization, of coordination at the command level, of division of labor between nations in point of arms production. "Why is it not possible," people have been asking, "to have each country specialize and produce one or a few types of arms rather than for all to be dispersing their strength by trying to do everything themselves?" A little progress has been made in this respect, but very little. Is this simply the result of nations obstinately clinging to obsolete ideas and old habits? Is it something which progressive forces in each country will eventually be able to overcome? I think we had better save ourselves from illusions in this respect. There is a very deep reason why after a certain point is reached the obstacles become insuperable: Sovereign countries do not want to lose the possibility of acting independently, if necessary. There is not one country that is sufficiently confident in its allies to wish to be utterly at the mercy of allied cooperation where its vital interests are at stake. Also, if a country were not allowed to produce planes, e. g., or nuclear weapons, it may feel that its inferiority becomes fixed for all times. Limitations imposed on West Germany, in this respect, may cause trouble some day.

This may seem irrational because, after all, our allies cannot hope to defend themselves individually. But they also know that their bargaining power within the alliance depends on their ability to say "no" at a certain point. If their armed forces are of no use except within the coalition because they are kept strictly partial, having rifles e. g., but no ammunition, infantry but no planes which the country could produce — they are going to become dependencies of the nation that has retained the all-round capacity. As far as I can see, even the small countries are unwilling to face up to such dependency on their stronger allies. One should not forget that prior to the last war most countries that had any opportunity to do so set out to build up their own armaments industry, if necessary under high tariff protection and at a tremendous burden on the consumer and the taxpayer, merely in order to enjoy some sense of independence or influence. We are

dealing with allies, it should not be forgotten, who are extremely eager to remain or to become sovereign nations and not satellites. This desire goes so far in some of the new countries of Asia that they prefer to forgo even economic aid to having to accept strings attached to it. This strong nationalist sentiment all over the Free World is making it unrealistic to think in terms of a really integrated alliance system. All we can do is to try to persuade our allies to accept some degree of standardization, some distribution of production where it will not seriously affect their independence. This amounts to allowing all of the countries, to which we grant military aid, to build up at least a nucleus of independent military power. After that, we can hope to get their cooperation more easily.

Also, we may succeed, by the sheer example of our own progress in the field of military skills, to convince others that they had better adapt themselves to our way of doing things. While I was a little shocked the other day to read that in the NATO maneuvers in south Germany the Germans had gained a very bad impression of what seemed to them the backwardness of the French army, they seem at least to have been very well impressed by the novelty of American tactics, the great mobility of the American forces and their equipment of vehicles, helicopters, and all sorts of devices suitable for nuclear warfare. This, if correctly reported, may induce the German government to accept American standards and thereby to facilitate coordination.

It should be added, perhaps, that some countries are going to do better for not having accepted the American model too quickly, because the American model itself is being changed. Those who come late with their reorganization may catch onto a more recent pattern. It seems to be Germany's particular luck in this century that having to start from scratch when others are already at least halfway ready, they can start off with the more modern system. The new German army can now be modeled on the American armed forces of 1956 rather than on those of 1950,

which had been the original idea. Due to the new adaptation to nuclear warfare, this may mean e. g. accepting the idea of smaller units, of greater mobility, and of greater fire power per unit. So much then for the preparedness policy which is a continuous operation. It has to be a very patient operation and free from illusions; it has to be aimed at the maximum military coordination that is practical.

The second point is to make sure that the forces we have helped establish and coordinate will in fact be ordered to fight together. Much more difficult than to give strength to one's allies, technically, and in other respects, is to turn them into reliable allies. It took a long time until we convinced our allies that the United States was reliable. Only quite recently has there ceased to be talk about America returning to isolationism. Before that there was fear in many quarters that American protection might not be but a temporary thing, a mere passing phase in American foreign policy. There is bound to remain fear on our side that some of our allies may not prove reliable. Many of them are weak, internally split, in places with only a slim majority firmly convinced of the value of the alliance system and with large groups neutralist, communist, or convinced that war has become suicidal.

Reliability is not a matter of sheer external persuasion. It develops from a continued conviction of common interest in regard to the ultimate aim, but also of common interest in the particular course which the leader of the coalition decides to pursue. After all, this is an alliance system built around the United States; it stands and falls for representing the orbit of our defense interest. With all their independence, our allies know that there is nothing to this alliance system except as the United States forms its center, leads it and provides it with an arsenal of military power. The problem is not so much, then, one of compromising the various interests of our allies as it is that of making sure that each of them sees eye-to-eye with us.

One difficulty in this respect arises from the fact that if we try to satisfy one group or country, another group tends to become dissatisfied. This results from the fact that within our alliance system, and the circle of friendly but uncommitted nations which we would like to carry with us, too, there exist profound differences of opinion about the way in which the Free World should behave in regard to the Communist World. This is one of the facts of life. We can be annoyed by it, we can become impatient, but the fact remains that there are at least two very distinct views about how to deal with the danger that is commonly accepted as existing. I do not think there are many people in the Free World who doubt that the Soviet Bloc may continue to be expansionist, and may continue to be aggressive in the future as it has been in the past. There are very few non-Communists in the world who do not agree that communism itself is still a very potent revolutionary force. The chief issue is the method of dealing with these dangers.

I spent some time recently with Pastor Niemöller, the German neutralist leader. He seems quite convinced that these dangers exist and yet he thinks we are making a grave mistake in the way we are dealing with them. The same is probably true of Nehru, who certainly knows the Communist danger from his experience in India. I am sure he is also aware of the fact that Red China might become a threat to Indian interests, having seen her operate in Tibet and Nepal recently. Yet, he disagrees with our way of approaching the problem. We have the further divergency between the colonial powers and the very impatient and impassioned Asian-African Bloc, which we also consider a part of the Free World. In the case of all such divergencies we are expected to satisfy everybody, yet if we choose to side with one group or the other we are bound to split the Free World even more deeply.

Take the case of Goa. One may think that Portugal is not very important, but Portugal represents one of the colonial powers.

However, if we fail to back Portugal, will the French not feel less secure in Algeria? If we stand by Portugal, we not only antagonize India but a large conglomeration of peoples in Asia and Africa, which is fiercely anti-colonial and has the support of Soviet propaganda.

What can one do about a situation like this? One is tempted to answer: "We have got to have wise statesmanship." But this does not help our statesmen very much. Obviously, they are trying to be as wise as they can. What it does amount to, I think, is this: we cannot afford to pursue any extreme policy. "Moderation," I realize, is an unsympathetic word to many. Oscar Wilde once said that "moderation is fateful; nothing succeeds like excess." It probably does in certain circumstances. But there is much virtue in having the leader of a great coalition bent on exercising a moderating influence, trying to get others to cool off and to be patient so as to give us time to help solve some of their problems. After all, we are dealing in many places with unusually impassioned, intemperate and irrational forces. Take Cyprus as an example, or Algiers; or take Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-Shek, both impatient for excellent reasons because the status quo is almost fatal to them.

There is another aspect to this problem of divergency within the Free World. Some countries are so scared of war and so unprepared for it that they shrink back from us as soon as we seek to awaken people to the present dangers by means of a "crisis diplomacy" and try to get them to make greater defense efforts. We have scared them in the past to such a degree that President Eisenhower, at the Geneva Summit Conference, had to convince them that it was not our intention to provoke a third World War. On the other side, if we try instead to get people to calm down so they will have confidence in our desire for peace and conduct a diplomacy of sweetness and light or relaxation, the next we know is that they start falling to sleep and failing to maintain even their present inadequate armaments. And, before

we know it, this country does the same. This is another warning against extremes, or of allowing the pendulum to swing from extreme to extreme.

So all I can say is that an alliance policy directed at keeping a coalition together over a long and tough haul—and for this I can see no alternative—must seek to convince the Free World that no effort is being spared to meet the vital needs of all, to the limit set by the common task and danger. In the case of France and Germany we succeeded in convincing both, I believe, that what we were interested in was their reconciliation on terms fair to both of them. We did the same in the case of Trieste, where Yugoslavia and Italy were involved. I think we are trying hard to take the same line in the case of Israel and the Arab nations. If we should succeed there, it would certainly be a feather in our cap.

Now, a few words about alliance policy in wartime, which may seem to be a remote problem. We could not dare discuss it with our friends or allies today; we would seem hysterical to them, and scare them out of their wits if we said: "Let's have a conference on the war aims of a future war." Even so, I hope that some people are thinking about war aims from time to time. We are not sure, after all, that Geneva has buried the chance of war; if we were, I do not think we would be discussing alliances at a War College. The formulation of war aims bears directly on any rational and farsighted coalition policy. As we know, nothing is more dangerous to the maintenance of a coalition than the conflict that tends to arise over war aims.

During the First World War, we got into trouble because the Allies had tried to settle their war aims by secret treaties which we condemned as imperialist deals. We thought one could solve the war aims problem by the proclamation of principles of justice and by the establishment of an international organization which would be able to put order into things later. That method failed.

During the Second World War, we preferred again not to talk about war aims before victory was assured for fear such talk would divide the Allies. We would wait, except for setting up the United Nations and proclaiming some general principles. At Teheran and Yalta, at last, we tried to work out some kind of agreement on war aims. One cannot say that they came out very well, either.

So the question is: Can one look ahead to the end of a war and contemplate a peace settlement that would shape the order of the future to one's liking? It seems to me that we have never really tried to envisage the world, concretely, as we would want to see it emerge after another war. How would we like power to be distributed? We have got to assume that even after World War III this world would still interest us as a nation, or at least some of us. If so, we might seek to know what kind of a world we would want it to be.

How, e. g., would we want the age-old German-Polish problem solved? This might be one of the key issues if there is to be durable peace in Europe. What should be done about Russia herself if she were defeated? Most people may feel that this is the last thing we need to be worried about now. But let us assume that we had not thought about it and that war should come. We might then find ourselves conducting a strategy, decided upon prior to the war, by which the Germans would be the ones to liberate Poland. Who is going to liberate Poland from the Germans? I think that this is a matter to be considered as part of peacetime planning of our strategy. We know from the last war that where the troops of a nation penetrate in war they have a tendency to stay when peace comes; at least, some of them do. When this happens, the conduct of military operations has decided the question of the postwar "order." The fact that the Russian armies were able to march through the satellite countries spelled doom for the freedom of those countries. The fact that we did not march into Berlin or Prague helped set the stage for everything that followed.

With this experience in mind, it would be worthwhile to think of the kind of order of the world we would want to see later. Maybe if we could gradually get people to feel that what we had in mind was an order to their liking — where there would not be an unbalance again, or a power vacuum, or all sorts of new sources of passionate dissatisfaction and conflict — this would strengthen the confidence of our allies that leadership in another war was going to be in good hands. I am not suggesting that one could sit down and write a detailed blueprint of the world after World War III because we cannot foresee on what assets one could still count or what the circumstances would be, even in their broad outline. But I do not believe that nations are going to fight with much confidence or much wisdom if they have no idea of where it is they are heading.

To say that the only thing that counts in war is victory blinds one to the real problem, blinds one to the fact that victory may be the beginning of the worst defeat; it may mean that one has already lost the peace. Our experience with Germany has shown that to want to smash a big power totally to the point of unconditional surrender creates unsolvable problems afterwards because of the immense vacuum that is created. A lot of people agree to that when one talks about Germany today. But when one says: "We have an equal interest that, in case of another war, the Soviet Union shall not become a power vacuum," then one does not get the same sympathetic response. Today, it seems as if nothing could be more obviously desirable than to smash the Soviets beyond recognition. But if eliminating all Russian power, provided that were possible short of total self-destruction, meant establishing some other hegemony — German, perhaps, or Japanese — then before long we would be back at the task of restoring the power of a vanquished foe. This may suggest that contemplating war aims may lead one to become more favorable to the idea of limited objectives which nuclear warfare is likely to impose anyway.

I hope I have discussed the main reasons which make an alliance policy a very exacting task. Some of the problems are inherent in every alliance policy, some are peculiar to the world situation of today; some finally result from the fact that this country is undergoing the painful process of adjusting to a necessary but drastic reversal of its traditional foreign policy, to the change from isolationism to an alliance policy. This is a field of new experience, then, where methods and concepts have to be worked out in the course of the process and often under trying circumstances. For this reason it would seem that the study of alliance policy deserves the attention given to it by this College and by an increasing number of students of international relations throughout the United States.

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

### Professor Arnold O. Wolfers

Doctor Wolfers has been Department Head and Sterling Professor of International Relations at Yale University since 1949. He was born on 14 June 1892 at St. Gallen, Switzerland. He studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Munich and Berlin, and received his JUD degree at the University of Zurich in 1917.

From 1917 to 1919, he practiced law in Switzerland and at the same time served as a First Lieutenant in the Swiss Army. During the next four years, he studied economics and political science at the Universities of Zurich, Berlin, and Giessen, receiving his Ph. D. at the latter in 1924. Professor Wolfers was affiliated with the Hochschule fur Politik, Berlin, from 1924 to 1933, first as a lecturer in Political Science and then as Director.

He came to the United States in 1933, and was naturalized six years later. After serving as a visiting professor at Yale University, he was appointed Master of Pierson College, a position he held from 1935 to 1949. From 1942 to 1944, he was special advisor and lecturer at the School of Military Government, University of Virginia, and expert consultant for the Office of the Provost Marshal General. The following year, he served as consultant for the Office of Strategic Services. He was a member of the resident faculty at the National War College in 1946.

Professor Wolfers has been awarded the following honorary degrees: M. A., Yale, 1935; Litt. D., Mt. Holyoke, 1934; and LL. D., University of Rochester, 1945. He has written numerous books and articles on law, economics, and international relations in German and English, one of which was *Britain and France Between Two Wars*, published in 1940. He was also co-author of *The Absolute Weapon* (1946).

## SEAPOWER AND MILITARY STRATEGY TODAY

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 20 December 1955 by  
*Professor James A. Field, Jr.*

Admiral McCormick, Gentlemen of the Naval War College:

At this Christmas season those of us who can get out from under the pressures of shopping, or of term papers, turn our eyes to the East. The spectacle there, if not a very cheerful one, at least demonstrates the continuity of history. Once again the Israelites are bickering with the neighboring tribes. Once again there has been a flight into Egypt, conducted this time, however, by Czechoslovakian jets. Much changes but much remains the same, and this too we may say of seapower, something which has been important to survival ever since a distinguished naval architect called Noah built himself an ark of gopher wood. But all this is far in the past, and our concern at the moment is with the problem of seapower today.

The trouble with talking about seapower is that it is so difficult to say just what it is. The gentleman who first used the term as an abstraction to describe a complex of forces of great historical influence never defined it. This was perhaps wisdom on his part. If you have a good phrase, with a manifest but undefined relation to reality, it is probably best to leave it a little vague and so acquire the support of many who might take exception to a too precise formulation. In the management of men there is something to be said for Napoleon's statement that if an obscurity did not exist it might be well to invent one. But for the formulation of serious policy in serious times it is desirable that content be reasonably clear, certainly to the experts and if possible also to lecturers.

Yet we must note that Mahan's purpose in choosing the phrase, that of striking the imagination of his readers, was amply fulfilled. He used it, he said, deliberately, "in order to compel attention," and *The Influence of Seapower on History* became one of the few really important do-it-yourself books of modern times. Here, in the possession of a battle line, was the key to national greatness. Armed with the lessons of history the navalists and ironmasters of the world united in seeing to it that their countries were not deprived of this essential instrument for gaining a place in the sun. The Germans built battleships, as did the Americans. The Japanese bought them, as on a smaller scale did the Greeks and the Argentines.

However much one may deplore armament races, it can be argued that this one was helpful in at least one sense: it clarified the real distribution of force in the industrialized international community. So far as the United States was concerned, for example, it put an end to such awkward situations as the Chilean crisis of 1892 in which the imbalance of naval forces led to West Coast terror of the Chilean fleet, and in which our grave naval inferiority was for a time redressed only by our fortuitous possession of an impressive secret weapon in the gifted profanity of Fighting Bob Evans. If the influence of Mahan on history shows that the pen is mightier than the sword, that of Evans at Valparaiso demonstrates the occasional virtue of words the pen dares not commit to paper.

The educational impact of the writings of Mahan were indubitably immense. Once the scales had fallen from their eyes the various states of the world attempted to wrest the trident from Great Britain, or at least to run away with a piece of it, by following what was understood to be the British example. Similarly flattering imitation was accorded Mahan himself, for as military technology advanced others attempted to avail themselves of the emotive value of his terminology. Where once seapower

was all, new growths proliferated. In the process of this justification by terminology, we found ourselves afflicted with landpower, and airpower, and firepower.

To the student of the history of science, this attribution of dynamic virtue to inert elements raises a horrid possibility. Long ago Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, postulated that all is water. We may consider him the Mahan of physics. But by the time of Aristotle, this agreeably simple concept had been outmoded and the elements had become four: earth, air, fire, and water. Today, things are still worse, and on the walls of offices of harassed government servants hang periodic tables of elements far outnumbering four. One shudders to think of the possibility of a similar fragmentation of the concepts of the elements of military force. Still, things could be worse: at least this is not yet the Water War College.

The trouble is, I think, that these terms are essentially meaningless. The reason they are so slippery is that in their construction the concept of power is compounded not with its source, or even with its purpose, but with the element in which it is exercised. Firepower we can manage fairly easily: this term is a little different from the others, and can be defined in familiar and friendly units such as rounds, or footpounds, or megatons. But who has ever seen land exert power? Seapower we might have had at Passamaguoddy if only the Congress had gone along. Airpower turns windmills, and is useful in oratory, but that is not what General Mitchell had in mind.

Now all this semantic skirmishing is not to be taken to indicate that one cannot talk meaningfully about these things. I realize that I am here to praise Caesar, not to bury him. There is no reason why the term "seapower" should not mean anything we choose. Like Humpty Dumpty we are, or ought to be, the masters, and can freight these counters with our own ideas in the same way that we can freight an algebraic symbol. But it is desirable to know the value of X, and if we cannot find it from

Mahan we had best look elsewhere. And, for choice, we should begin with something fairly simple and manageable.

Such a definition we can take from the writings of Admiral Richmond, one of the gifted British commentators on these matters. Seapower, he says, is that form of national strength which permits one to send his armies and commerce across such stretches of ocean as may seem desirable, and to prevent his enemy from doing the same. In its material sense it is composed of three things: of fighting strength, of suitable positions where this strength can be nourished and whence it can be projected, and of vehicles of transport. Simplified, this means navies, bases, and shipping. There are certain objections to this definition, and certain modifications which seem in order, some of which we will come to, but for the moment perhaps this will do. We may note, however, that it is a much narrower definition than that implicit in Mahan's use of the term.

Now these three elements — navies, bases, and shipping — which make up the form of national strength called seapower, are passive only. They may amount to seapower, but they, and it, will not pay off by themselves. Without direction the ships will not sail, nor the bases operate; without intelligent direction the ships may sail the wrong way, and the bases perform their duties badly. Like war, in which they have traditionally been useful, these things are but the instruments of policy. We need also an intelligent system of direction, which we can call strategy.

But here, as you well know, we get involved in a circular process. For strategy must direct not only the sailing of the ships, but also their timely construction. Policy must form as well as control the instrument, and if this is not wisely done the weapons mix may prove inappropriate, or the bases inefficient, or the merchant marine inadequate. "I do not," wrote Lord North in September 1772, "recollect to have seen a more pacific appearance of affairs than there is at this moment. This is a time for a reasonable

economy. Great peace establishments will, if we do not take care, prove our ruin." The ruin came, but not as the result of great peace establishments. The Royal Navy proved inadequate to the demands made upon it, and the Battle off Ushant and the affair off the Capes of the Chesapeake cost an empire.

Thus far we have accumulated three things: the passive instruments of seapower, the intelligent control of these instruments, and their wise preplanning and provision. By this process of snowballing we are, I think, approaching what it was Mahan had in mind, but to get to it we will have to add in a few more factors: such things as commercial, and economic, and colonial policies. All these are part of an inclusive maritime strategy. All these, added to the mix, conduce to greatness in a world of competing mercantalist empires. In other words, since Britain came to the top of the heap through seapower, seapower is the sum of those things which brought Britain to the top of the heap.

This, at any rate, is what some competent critics have thought Mahan thought. But we should perhaps be a little delicate about putting words into his mouth, for the bane of great men is often the conduct of their followers. That other great educator of the 19th century, Karl Marx, showed this when late in life he somewhat sourly remarked, "Moi, je ne suis pas marxiste." Rather than attempting to tie the Admiral down, we may proceed to see if useful elements remain today in his interpretation of what now seems ancient history.

It would, of course, be surprising if there were not some changes, for change is the one great constant of history and the rate of change certainly seems to have been increasing in recent times. One of the greatest changes, and one indeed of basic importance, has been in the direction of policy of the maritime powers, in the shift from offensive to defensive. In the classic period of European overseas activity and of the wars for empire, the important use of the seas was expansionist, designed to gather in the outer world and to subject it first to European control, and then

to that of whichever European power could succeed in dominating the others. The problem was one in two parts: first, to seize the treasures of the Incas or the Moguls or whatever, and, second, by controlling the exits from Europe and some of the other narrow places of the world, to prevent citizens of the competing western rimlands from beating you at the same game.

In the two great wars of this century, however, the problem has been a very different one. Far from being concerned with the projection of European power in order to exploit the outer world, these were struggles to defend the rimlands against aggression from within the Eurasian continent. The western approaches were again a critical area, but now as the avenue for external support. The problem was one of compression rather than expansion. No longer were seapower and maritime strategy employed to remake the map of the world. Their function was essentially conservative.

Somewhat the same observation can be made for the Pacific areas, although the timing was different owing to cultural lag. Beginning in the 1890's with the Sino-Japanese war, Japan practiced what could be called an old-fashioned offensive use of seapower, an expansionist maritime strategy. This, with intermissions, she continued to do down to that December fourteen years ago when she made an unfortunate mistake. The consequence of this mistake was that the Japanese found themselves subjected to a phenomenon unique in naval history, to compression from across an ocean. The American war against Japan was certainly, from the time of Guadalcanal on, an offensive naval campaign, but in the larger old-fashioned sense it was not an offensive maritime strategy or a positive use of seapower. It put the Jap back in his box but it did not reorder the world. The Asiatic world was indeed reordered, but by others, with the result that our felt but somewhat unclearly articulated desires were not fulfilled, victory was not enough, and the Asiatic situation is still not one to give entire satisfaction to the maritime powers.

It is, however, similar in its essential elements to the strategic situation in Europe: in both, the problem is the defense of the rimlands and offshore islands against expansionist pressures from inside Eurasia. Peninsular war is thus the continuing strategic problem of our time, whether in the large as in Europe or in miniature as in Korea. The landing in the rear has become the standard counter of the maritime powers. As Gallipoli, North Africa, Inchon, and the current importance of the Middle East all testify, we have taken the advice of the Psalmist (78:66) to smite our enemies in the hinder parts and put them to perpetual reproach.

Here, then, is one major change in the nature of seapower: it has become conservative rather than revolutionary, defensive rather than offensive, concerned not with expansion but with compression.

In addition to this change in the nature of its employment, there have also, quite obviously, been great changes in capabilities and methods since Nelson was the embodiment of British seapower. What the exercise of seapower really boils down to, I suppose, is a special case of movement control, movement control confined to wet areas. This is sufficiently important, however, for it is hard to think of any human activity that does not involve the movement either of tangible or intangible goods.

In the days of the classical exercise of seapower, the state of military technology was such as to emphasize this capability of movement control at sea. The process was, as has been frequently been observed, a monopolistic one. Once control of the sea had been won by destruction or containment of the enemy, you had it and he didn't. It was an economical business, granting the success of the original investment. Unlike the state of affairs on land, further argument was unlikely to be very important. The situation was comparatively easy to maintain. But it is easy to maintain no longer: you can destroy the enemy's battle fleet, if he has one, but you may still be pretty certain of harassment

from above and below. The battles are no longer on the surface, but in the air, on the beaches, and along the convoy lanes. Naval operations have replaced naval actions.

Control of the sea was formerly monopolistic in another sense, in that control of movement along the surface of the oceans meant control of most of the traffic that really mattered. But autarchy has diminished dependence on imports; the airplane can move important categories of goods above the seas; the development of roads, canals, railroads, and trucking have made land transport approximate that in a fluid medium. The result of this equalization is that the maritime world is threatened by tyrants from progressively increasing distances — first Napoleon, then Hitler, then Stalin.

Control of the seas formerly meant control of the movement not only of goods but of persons and of information. The colonies had their troubles communicating with France during the Revolution and Benjamin Franklin was almost pulled in by a British cruiser while enroute to the court of Versailles. The Confederacy had similar problems, as shown by the capture of the envoys Mason and Slidell by a Union frigate. But when in the First World War the British, as part of their organization of the blockade, fished up the cables from the ocean floor, they found that radiotelegraphy had progressed to such a point as considerably to diminish the utility of the enterprise. Today, the airwaves around the world are made hideous around the clock by competing propagandas which no naval officer can intercept except in the communicator's technical sense of the word.

In various ways, then, the exercise of seapower is of more limited effect than once it was. The monopoly situation is over and free competition is the order of the day. It cannot be said, if indeed it ever could, that the exercise of seapower is the monopoly of the navy. When you send the big bombers, or the missiles, against the shipyards, or the submarine pens, or against ships at sea, you are involved in the exercise of seapower. When you

send them against land transport targets, you are attempting to impose a kind of movement control which was formerly peculiar to sea warfare. In the other direction the situation is altered by the ability of naval air to reach inland with gifts from the sea. Nobody is monopolistic. The efforts to spell out service missions are less exercises in logic than in diplomacy. The inevitable and necessary result of all this intermingling is the establishment of joint commands for the control not of surface areas but of three-dimensional boxes, partly wet, partly dry, and generally airy.

The exercise of seapower has thus changed, since the period analyzed by Mahan, both in its aims and in its methods. These change in themselves are enough to pose grave problems and to complicate immensely the process of reaching simple and intellectually elegant solutions of the old-fashioned sort. Of course it has always been easier to write history than to make it, and one should be sympathetic to those who have had to face the distressing problems of innovation — with the shipwrights, for example, forced to accustom themselves to work first in Noah's gopher wood, then in pine and live oak, then with rivets, then with welding. But how much more difficult this kind of thing becomes in the face of the phenomenal technological advances of the past decade, which bring with them uncertainties of the greatest magnitude. Who now can feel confident in his ability to predict the course of conflict? Wise men in the past, with far more manipulable data, made notable errors. Who is wise enough today to hazard a guess, let alone an opinion, firm enough to serve as a base for policy?

For ten years now, ever since the end of the war, the military services have been in a rather unenviable position with regard to the fundamental problems of just what their functions are, and of how to plan for the implementation of national policy. They have had to face up to these questions, which are in no sense easy ones, in a period of high-speed political and technological change,

and while operating under the pressures of semi-mobilization and with only semi-permanent personnel. National policy, furthermore, has not always been as clearly articulated as would be the case in the best of all possible worlds. It is therefore no wonder that the results have at times been somewhat less than reassuring, as harassed planners vibrated between the lessons of history (there has always been a horse calvary so we will always need one), and the predictable simplicities of weapon performance (this gadget will flatten an area the size of Texas, so three dozen of these will solve our troubles). But what do you do with the horses if you fight in an oatless area? Or with the gadgets if war breaks out in Lichtenstein?

The postwar ructions in the Defense Department reflected these puzzles in the rethinking of roles and procedures. In some ways, I think, the process was hardest for the Navy. The Army had gone through its period of rethinking in the late thirties, when it fought its way out of the concept of hemisphere defense. Then, with its dominantly ETO experience, it could fall in naturally with the new policy of coalition, containment, and the defense of Europe. The Air Force, enjoying its original monopoly of the new weapon, was enabled to renew and strengthen its promises of quick strategic war. But the Navy, with its dominantly Pacific experience and with Pacific veterans in the top positions, found itself less well-equipped to meet the new situation and, for a time, on the defensive in inter-service matters.

For the Pacific War, while it was a pretty good war as they go, is not, I think, a very fruitful source of doctrine for the present. It was, in effect, a unique type of pure maritime conflict, a war of time and distance and weapons effects only, war so to speak of the maneuvering board. There were no problems with allies, unless you include in this category the CinC SWPacific. There were no administrative and ideological problems arising from captured territories and subject or liberated populations. There were no unscalable mountains and no impassable

deserts. All that had to be done was to get the stuff out there and then use it to slap the Jap. In all these respects the Pacific war was about as unlike our subsequent troubles as could possibly be imagined, and furthermore the weapons systems which had proved most useful in the Pacific were not at first suited to attack on the heartland enemy.

The strategic uncertainties of recent years have necessarily been of great concern to those involved in naval planning and naval operations, as well as those forced to consider the meaning, if any, of seapower. But the problems involved in linking up armed force and policy are in no sense peculiar to the Navy. Strategic thinking and planning today are joint, not separate, whether in Washington or in Naval Warfare II. Indeed, some of the factors which have historically been peculiar to seapower are now of concern to those in the other services. I have mentioned that the development, for example, of land transport and of air warfare has made it both desirable and possible to attempt to impose in land theaters somewhat the same kind of movement control previously imposed by fleets at sea. Of even more importance, perhaps, is some way to recover the gradualism which was such a notable characteristic of seapower in the monopolistic days. It is useful to have an instrument of policy with which pressure can be built up and reduced in controlled fashion, but where do we find it today?

One of the reasons why these problems do not yield easily is perhaps a certain lack of flexibility on our part, a difficulty in anticipating or in promptly replying to other people's initiatives. Some of this, no doubt, flows naturally from the shift in direction of policy of the seapowers from one of remodeling the world to one of conserving it in something like its present state. Conservatives, it has been said, are often right but rarely imaginative. The defensive is a dull business. Under pressure and given time we can work out a policy and run along with it pretty well, but new demands are painful.

Another trouble, this time related to the speed of change both in political affairs and in technology, is a prevalence of pattern thinking. Where so much is uncertain all certainty seems precious, and if there isn't enough of it around it is human to invent some. But the invented constants may not always be useful. For example:

There is the tendency to think in terms of war and peace, or hot and cold war, as if these were really distinguishable states. The distinction is, of course, absolute in law, but in fact it is comparative, and this is particularly plain, historically, in maritime matters. Maneuvering and engaging are parts of one whole, or ought to be. The risk in differentiating is that the idea becomes current that policy governs only until "hot war" begins, at which time it is locked up in the safe, or thrown out the porthole, as an unnecessary distraction from the more important business of laying the ship alongside and fighting for a "victory" undefined in meaningful terms. This is particularly hazardous in a period when there are strategic implications in single weapons and when one can envisage a situation in which policy, strategy, and post-war planning are all determined by the single act of target selection.

There is the comforting, or at least stabilizing, belief that there exists a long-term Communist plan for world conquest. Fascination with this improbable irrelevancy is dangerous for two reasons. First, it tends to lead to a surrender of the initiative at the very start. Second, it leads to the neglect of ascertainable capabilities in favor of presumably known intentions, and the sad history of intentions planning is written large through recent history.

There is the tendency to feel that the enemy's strategy can be discovered by a quick glance in the mirror. Thus: we have worked hard to set up NATO; this means Europe is important; therefore, the Soviets are planning to march westward to the

Atlantic. Now the Russians are not very smart, but even the thickest quarterback will try a pass if he is stopped at the line of scrimmage all afternoon. What was most disconcerting about the recent forward pass into Egypt was not that it was thrown but the bemused horror of the secondary defenses.

How much truth there is in this argument, how important these factors are, of this you must be the judges. But if strategic thinking is at times confused, if ends are confounded with means, if we find ourselves forced always to reply to the initiatives of someone else, if the word "seapower" seems sometimes more ritualistic than meaningful, we should try to find a way out. Often, in such an impasse, when things seem most hopeless, the way out is gained if one tries to reformulate the problem and to approach it from a different angle. It may even be that if we try this we will find that Mahan has something to teach us still.

The first thing to note is the essential flexibility of seapower, the wide possibilities of choice that are open to the dominant maritime groups if only they are willing to perceive and to act upon them. This is one point I do not think we need argue in detail. Whatever the precise nature of the factors which have brought this about—the physics of a fluid medium, factors of location economics, phenomena of meteorology and history, the course of the development of international law—the fact itself will hardly be seriously disputed. If you control the seas you control economic processes of great importance and, at the same time, you have at your disposal the one "legal" and effective way of going from here to there, and of deploying in the vicinity of "there" without aggressing. Perhaps in all honesty this should be qualified by saying that this was the only effective way of thus showing the flag prior to the new custom adopted by certain heads of state of junketing around and making ill-mannered speeches; but if Messrs. Kruschev and Bulganin are now providing competition, they are at least emphasizing the virtue of this capability. This is seapower on the cheap.

This flexibility of seapower, it should be noted, has existed both in the present and through time, not only on the immediate tactical level but in historically very different circumstances, not only in war but in peace. Control of the sea has given its possessors the option of landing at X or at Y, as seemed preferable. It has also permitted them to live and prosper in very different environments. The monopolistic virtues of seapower were very handy things during the European scramble for overseas empire. Its adaptability to coalition policies has been of great benefit to us in recent times.

The British story is in large measure that of the shift from splendid isolation, an English term meaning go-it-alone, to coalition policy. The British got their empire and except for the loss of the thirteen colonies they kept it by the same instrument, control of the sea, but the instrument was employed in different ways. They got it as the result of some excellent sea fights but keeping it was another thing, and it can certainly be argued that the most peaceful century of British seapower, the nineteenth, was also the most successful.

It was, furthermore, a Briton — Eyre Crowe — who first pointed out that once the empty places had been preempted and the world filled up with sovereign states the nature of seapower was such as to induce the dominant nation to tailor its policy in the general interest so as not to find itself faced with an overwhelming hostile coalition. "General interest" in this context means on behalf of the independence and self-determination of states, and against the would-be conqueror. For Americans this is a welcome thing in view of our deeply ingrained faith in a cooperative world order and in the universal validity of the principles for which we fought our own War of Independence. It is also a good thing for the general interest, which might otherwise be in the position of finding itself without any very important friends.

Now I said earlier that seapower is difficult to define, and that its practice in anything like the sense given it by Mahan

is impossible, both because of the reorientation of policy of the maritime states and because of technological change. Yet here we are talking about its sovereign virtues again in the old Indian remedy terms. This is not wholly an accident. It illustrates one great truth about seapower for those who have the sea around them; namely, that they are stuck with it. It also may help us to reach, if not a definition, at least an understanding of the phenomenon.

Because seapower is more than geography and character of the population and sound institutions and natural resources and so on. What Mahan was really writing about was the product not only of a national state but of a state of mind, not just the capabilities but a deep and almost instinctive appreciation of the possibilities inherent in them, and an ability to employ them without self-imposed rigidities and limitations. You cannot ordain seapower. In the First Book of Kings (9:26-28) we read that Solomon built a navy, but that when it came to manning it he had to borrow crews from Hiram, King of Tyre, "shipmen that had knowledge of the sea." To do these things well you have to be doing what comes naturally.

We may ask at this point whether in this sense the United States is a seapower? The answer, I guess, is yes, to a certain extent.

One of the traditional virtues in control and exploitation of the seas is that you can accomplish a lot in fairly economical terms, so far as blood and treasure are concerned. This we have done and are doing. In the more or less peaceful war in which we have been engaged for the past ten years the nation and the Navy have already accomplished their first great task. The armies which previously had to be pushed through the submarine zone and over the beaches of Europe have once again been pushed through. The Western Front is stabilized; the time is now, if you please, 1918 or 1944. That this movement was not resisted by force is, I take it, a triumph of policy. We have learned one thing

at least about the use of the seas, and that is that it is easier if you get started in good time.

Logistically, too, we are through the first phase of the campaign. The war so far has been largely one of logistics maneuver, of projection by sea from the continental base of airstrips, port facilities, supplies of POL and the like, and their positioning and support. I said earlier that I didn't think the Pacific War a very good source of contemporary lessons, but there is perhaps an exception to this in its demonstration that a campaign confined to the realm of logistics is more predictable and controllable than one which involves fleet action. Battles rarely go according to plan; base development sometimes does. Thus, Proverbs 21:31: "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord." Here again, I think we can say that our use of the seas is sound, the more so perhaps since while it is a serious business to risk a fleet it is even more so to risk the cities of western civilization.

But if the Western Front is stabilized, where do we go from here? Can we decide, or must others decide for us? This is a problem of exploiting the flexibility which seapower gives: economy of force, the possibility of indirect approaches which afford leverage and control but obviate the brutal business of conquest, the opportunity to buy them rather than to beat them. And here the record is not perhaps so good: we find ourselves fixed, our lines frozen, our initiative lacking, in part from our own inability to appreciate opportunity.

I said earlier that one of the great changes in the exercise of seapower was the change to the defensive. But if a history of conservatism stifles the initiative we should watch out. The 19th century may have been the most successful century of British seapower, but it ended with an awful bang in 1914. Behind the peaceful facade the world had walked right out from under the British international structure. Surely the lesson here is that

since change is inevitable we should try to guide it rather than await a a new Sarajevo.

The Russians, we observe, have begun to use a bargain basement kind of seapower. Khrushchev goes on the road; promises fly; arms are shipped to Egypt. With the world formally at peace visit and search is not the answer. The alternative to steering an intercepting course is to put on more turns. This means resuming the offensive, and why not? Why not try to change the world, the more so since the changes we wish to see call not for conquest and dominion, but for leveling up, for teaching and sharing, for a stabilized and cooperative international society.

In this context, we should note one final major historic change which affects the nature and possibilities of seapower. Mahan's seapower was the product of a world of scarcity, where wealth derived primarily from commercial exchange. It was thus necessary to grab for control and to fight to maintain it. And since trade dominance meant dominant wealth, Britain, as the successful practitioner, could develop a major policy weapon out of her ability to subsidize continental allies.

But now, for the first time in history, we are approaching a world of abundance. Production on a massive scale has been added to exchange as the basis of economic power. The gold and silver, the ivory, apes, and peacocks which Solomon's navy brought from afar are now synthesized in Detroit and Pittsburg, and in the valleys of the Columbia and Tennessee. Where the British anciently bought rulers with gold, we have a larger capability: we can buy peoples with goods. And only we, for the moment at any rate, can do this.

So once again the question: with the Western Front stabilized, what next? And here I would like to comment very briefly on two troubled areas which everybody knows are troubled but which, if you cut to the heart of the matter, should not present

very difficult problems to those who, possessing the greatest productive machine in history, rule the sea and propose to use it.

The first is of course the Middle East. This is the new Gallipoli, or North Africa, the flanking area of our expanded theater of operations. Seen from the sea it has certain advantages: it is easy to sail to the southern shores; it is hard to walk into from the north. The population is sparse, which gives room for maneuver both economic and military. Unlike Gallipoli Peninsula or Morocco, however, it is an area of transcendent importance on its own account, because of its oil. In a sense the control of this area is very nearly equivalent to the control of industrial Western Europe. Why then have we been so backward here? So harried by Mossadegh, so alarmed by the Czechoslovakian jets, so ungraceful about the Aswam Dam? To any western statesman thinking in maritime terms, a policy of initiative in this area would seem to be a must. Here is one place to go.

The second area is the Far East. Here again it would seem we have become the prisoners of our own rigidities, and have helped to keep others imprisoned in theirs. Where everything should have been done to pry the Chinese loose from the Russians, we have done all we could to bind them together. This is not to say the problem is in practice an easy one, but since we are talking the theory of seapower and have thus the theorists' privilege of keeping things simple, I think we should remind ourselves that here, if anywhere, the sea retains its ancient virtues. The quick way to see the direction policy should take, from the point of view of both parties, is to compare the carrying capacity of the Pacific Ocean with that of the Trans-Siberian railroad.

It would seem that anyone thinking along the lines of the maritime strategic tradition would argue this way, and yet even naval officers have talked in terms of fighting rather than buying the Chinese. The Chinese, needless to say, have talked back. This is the kind of problem one gets when one translates the striking

force mentality into the realms of policy. We need striking forces, but we need policy, too, and the tension between these different demands is just one of the tensions which the current state of the world imposes on the military man.

This, indeed, is what strikes the outsider who sits down to think about strategy most forcibly, the formidable demands which the present situation makes of naval officers and of the military in general. They must be highly competent in their specialized duties. They have to have at least an administrator's acquaintance with most of the fields of human knowledge. They can call on, and must wisely use, specialists in all areas of human life. Hoping always for peace and yet ready to fight on a moment's notice, they must conduct a war of maneuver in order to prevent a war of bombardment. In what other field of endeavor, with the possible exception of matrimony, is man faced with such problems?

Still, the greater the challenge the greater the reward that comes with its mastery. The need for the understanding and wise use of seapower is a great challenge, particularly for naval officers but in an important sense for us all. Weapons and techniques may change. The responsibilities may be collectivized, and shared with aviators and diplomats and economists. The events of day to day may seem an endless series of harassments and distractions. Nevertheless, if you lift your sights it becomes plain that those concerned with exploitation of the wet areas will be in business for a long time. Seapower is a long-term thing. It begins long before the bombers take off. It is what permits the bombers to fly. It is inevitably deeply involved in picking up the pieces. If it is properly handled it may prevent the bombers ever being called on.

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Professor James A. Field, Jr.

Professor Field attended Harvard University, where he received his B. S., A. M., and Ph. D. degrees, and also attended Cambridge University, England, in 1937-1938.

In 1939-1941, and again in 1947, he was a Teaching Fellow and Tutor in the Department of History and Literature at Harvard University. During World War II, he served with the United States Navy from 1942 to 1946. His wartime assignments included duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, on an escort carrier in the Pacific area, as gunnery officer of Carrier Division 23, and on the Staff of Commander Air Force, United States Atlantic Fleet.

Doctor Field is Professor of American History at Swarthmore College. He occupied the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History at the Naval War College during the 1954-1955 academic year.

As a member of the Navy Analysis Division, USSBS, he collaborated in the preparation of *Interrogations of Japanese Officials* and *Campaigns of the Pacific War*. He is the author of the *Japanese at Leyte Gulf*, and the translator of R. de Belot's *Struggle for the Mediterranean*.

## THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 13 March 1956 by  
*Professor William A. Reitzel*

One of my hopes is that, someday, I will be invited by the President of the Naval War College to give a soothing and cultural talk on a topic such as *Sea Stories of All Time*. That day, however, is obviously not today.

As a matter of fact, I'm even worse off than I was five months ago when I had to talk about *Decision-Making*. Then, at least, I was ahead of you. Now, you are ahead of and above me. You have been the National Security Council and have drafted "the basic objectives of national security policy." You have also been the JCS and have developed a Strategic Concept to implement national security policy.

You are now, I am told, involved in developing a *Strategic Plan* to execute the strategic concept. This is far above me. As I talk this morning, I will be climbing up to your level of experience.

Let's review the stages in a progression you have been working your way along since December:

- (1) Formulating *Basic National Objectives* and developing relevant *National Security Policies*.
- (2) Translating *National Security Policies* into *Basic Military Objectives* and into a *Strategic Concept* of how to achieve them.
- (3) Developing the *Strategic Concept* into *Strategic Plans*.

Let's also look ahead and take note of the stages you still have to work your way through:

- (4) Convert the *Strategic Plan* into a selected *Area War Plan*, supported by selected *Mission/Task Plans*.
- (5) Play a *War Game* strategically.

Now, if this were an ideal world — in the sense that all human beings were sensible, good-tempered, infallible, needed no sleep, communicated entirely in mathematical symbols, had no imagination or enthusiasm, beat no drums, and rolled no logs, in short if the world was really a fine, upstanding electronic calculating device — you would, by the time you had completed the fifth stage in the series, have achieved the *Basic National Objectives* you had formulated in the first stage. After all, that was the purpose of the whole business.

I do not need to underline the fact that the world is not ideal and that your efforts will not come to this neat, complete, circular conclusion. Even if you were to come within reasonable spitting distance of your goal, you would have to put down your success to one of two things:

- (1) Either you would have been giving an unreal imitation of a calculating machine; or
- (2) You would have invented a very second-rate and compliant enemy for yourselves.

Since no lecture on a military subject is complete without one reference to Clausewitz, I will explain this divergence by quoting him here and now. Clausewitz pins this matter down by saying, in effect, "After you have listed and considered all the contingencies that can possibly develop you will find that, in action, there will be one that you did not think of — and this is the one that will occur."

Nevertheless, the idea of a perfect circle of operation from *objective through action to the accomplishment of purpose* is not to be sniffed at, even if it is an abstraction. By defining perfection, it sets up the criteria for judging why and to what extent particular performance falls short and, thus, we can look for ways to organize an imperfect reality so that it will at least approximate the ideal. These are not just words. They give us the means to talk about the place and the function of Strategic Planning in the series of operations leading from objectives to the accomplishment of objectives.

I would like you to look at three slides in quick succession before I talk about them one by one. (See Visual Aids A, B, and C). These slides represent three different concepts of the way in which this series of operations can take place: the *circular*, the *linear*, and the *stepped-down*.

(SEE VISUAL AID A)

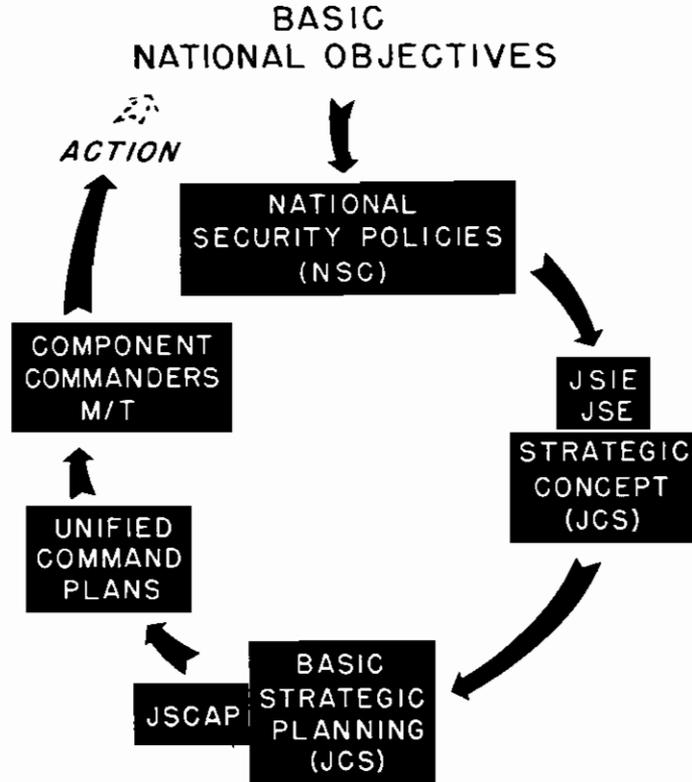
### THE CIRCULAR CONCEPT

This picture had better be regarded as a purely theoretical one. It states the ideal — every function in place, every function picking up where the preceding one has left off, the broad guide lines steadily reduced to more and more specific forms, until a final translation into nuts and bolts and groups of men with defined jobs to do is made. Then, action is undertaken and the originally conceived end is reached.

Theoretically, therefore, a progression is laid down:

- (1) Objectives generate Policies.
- (2) Policies generate Strategic Concepts.
- (3) Concepts generate Strategic Plans.
- (4) Strategic Plans generate Detailed Plans.
- (5) Detailed Plans generate Action.
- (6) Actions, taken as a whole, lead to the achievement of Objectives — and the cycle is complete.

# THE CIRCULAR CONCEPT



VISUAL "A"

UNCLASSIFIED

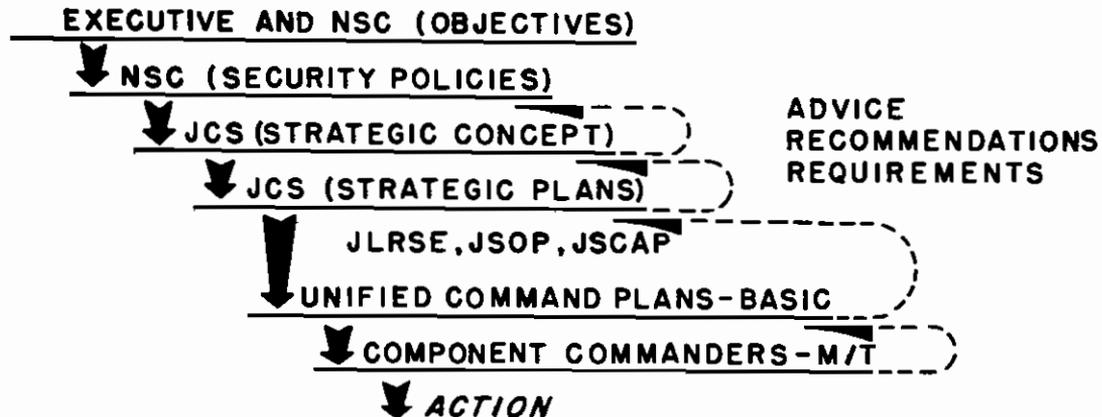
VISUAL "B"

## THE LINEAR CONCEPT



UNCLASSIFIED

## THE STEPPED-DOWN CONCEPT



There are some significant things to be noted about this progression. It is based on a principle of moving from a very high level of generalization (Objectives) by a process of gradually converting generalizations into specific actions until a point is reached where you have a set of related actions laid out and you have defined the concrete means of carrying them out.

The place of *Strategic Planning* in this progression is clearly the stage at which a set of generalizations gets its primary conversion into broadly sketched courses of action. The theoretical function of strategic planning, consequently, is to turn statements of purpose (Objectives) and general statements of method (Strategic Concepts) into guide lines for specific action.

The strategic planners, however, must satisfy three needs if this theoretical progression is to work smoothly. They must, *first*, break down the strategic concept into basic patterns of action. They must, *second*, determine the relationships between these patterns: relationships *in kind*—that is, what services or agencies are responsible for what actions; relationships *in time and space*—that is, where and in what sequence the actions are to take place; and relationships *to resources*—that is, who gets what to perform the actions; and, *finally*, the strategic planners must present their judgments to the next planning group in the progression in such a form as will enable it to proceed to further and more detailed breakdowns.

If any one thing stands out as essential to this theoretical progression, it is that the function of each component must be clearly understood in relation to the whole. In other words, the various stages of generalization and specification must be kept distinct. They cannot be mixed without confusing the process itself.

(SEE VISUAL AID B)

### THE LINEAR CONCEPT

This picture can be regarded as coming closer to the organizational design of government operations, generally, and of

the military services in particular. In a way, it indicates an effort to express what is theoretically desirable in terms of an organized chain of command. In effect, it is a kind of Mercator's projection — taking the circumference of a circle and laying it out as a straight line — and it results in many of the distortions of this form of representation. But the intent remains the same: to get from generalized *Objectives* to a pattern of specific *Actions* that will result in the accomplishment of the Objectives.

The method of operation is, however, no longer the same. The peculiar thing about the circular progression is that from any point on the circumference you can, if you choose, see any other point; in other words, relationships between functions can be surveyed and reviewed and kept geared by reference from any stage in the progression. But when the progression is thought of as linear, this power of cross-referencing is weakened. Each stage gets further away from the starting point. The starting point — a set of highly generalized purposes (Objectives) — gets obscured by an ever-thickening fog of detail and becomes open to varying interpretations. Checking back for clarification becomes more and more difficult.

Consider: in the linear progression an individual, or a planning group, simply occupies a point on a line, hemmed in on the one hand by a Directive from the preceding point and on the other hand by the need to produce a Direction for the following point. If the linear chain of command concept was actually and strictly followed in practice, no complete and relevant conversion of generalized objectives into concrete actions would ever take place. But we all know from experience that the work is done in a different way.

In principle, the place and the function of Strategic Planning is the same in the linear as in the circular progression. The function, however, is more difficult to exercise in a strictly linear organization. There is a tendency for the Strategic Planners

merely to take over preceding generalizations unchanged and then to become so detailed in their planning that they usurp the functions of the subsequent planning stages.

(SEE VISUAL AID C)

### THE STEPPED-DOWN CONCEPT

Here is a picture that I believe comes closest of all to reality. It reflects the fact of command relations; that is, of separate levels of responsibility. It also reflects the real working relationships between these levels.

On the one hand Directives move down the ladder, becoming less general and more specific at each step. On the other hand Advice, Recommendations, Requirements move up the ladder, becoming less *quantitative* (less matters of so many nuts and so many bolts) and more *qualitative* (more matters of what kinds of nuts and bolts, in what places, at what times, and for what purposes) at each step.

Now, obviously, this concept of the progression does not automatically ensure that *Action* will lead to the accomplishment of the *Objective*. But, then, nothing will absolutely ensure this anyhow. What we are after is not the theoretical perfection of the circle. We must be content with a progression in which a reasonable amount of cross-checking and back-referencing is taking place all the time.

*Note:* in this stepped-down concept, each individual, or planning group, occupies a distinct and identifiable level and these levels correspond to the reality of command levels of authority and responsibility.

*Note, also:* each level is operationally linked on a working exchange basis with the level above and the level below, and there is place for plenty of give and take between them. This is an important difference from the linear concept where, strictly speaking, each stage is hemmed in by Directives.

Now, I need not tell you that this is a more accurate picture of the ordinary routine than either the Linear or the Circular. But, I must point out that while this Stepped-Down type of operation avoids the rigidities of the Linear type, it has its own built-in problems. The playback of Advice, Recommendations, and Requirements — essential as it is — very soon has the effect of pushing detail further and further up the ladder until it begins to interfere with the capacity to generalize; that is, with the capacity to define broad objectives and to develop general courses of action. Important as the pennies are, it must also be recalled that if you take care of the dollars the pennies will take care of themselves.

Let's take a refresher run through each of these three concepts,

(SEE VISUAL AIDS A, B, AND C)

the Circular, the Linear, and the Stepped-Down. Then, let me pull out the key point of this morning's talk — the role of the *Strategic Plan*.

You will notice — or you should have noticed — that in each of the diagrams the *Strategic Planning* stage came at a point where generalizations had to be converted into broad, but linked, courses of action. In other words, it was the stage at which instructions that had been received in one form of statement (generalized and unspecific) had to be put into another form of statement (segmented and concrete).

(SEE VISUAL AID D)

I have now removed NSC, JCS, etc., and left only the essential functions of each stage in front of us. These functions, I remind you, remain the same whether the concept of how they should be related is circular, linear, or stepped-down. The function of the *Strategic Plan* stands out pretty sharply in this scheme. It is:

## THE BASIC PROGRESSION

### 1. OBJECTIVES

### 2. SECURITY POLICIES

### 3. STRATEGIC CONCEPT

- a. CONVERTS POLITICAL INTO MILITARY OBJECTIVES
- b. CONVERTS SECURITY POLICIES INTO BROAD FRAMEWORK OF MILITARY ACTION

### 4. STRATEGIC PLANS

- a. CONVERTS BROAD FRAMEWORK INTO SPECIFIC COURSES RELATED IN TIME AND SPACE
- b. PROVIDES BASIC GUIDANCE FOR SUBSEQUENT PLANNING

### 5. SUBSEQUENT PLANNING (ALL TYPES)

- (1) To bring the security policies down to earth in a military sense by means of —
  - (a) A *Strategic Intelligence Estimate* which specifies the actual conditions under which the policies will have to be carried out.
  - (b) A *Strategic Estimate* which serves the purpose of all standard estimates, but at a high level of generalization.
  - (c) A *Strategic Capabilities Plan* which specifies the means available, or to be made available, for carrying the policies out.
- (2) To develop on this basis broad statements of the overall military and supporting actions that must be planned in detail.

It should be noticed that an important thing takes place at this stage. The Intelligence Estimate, the Estimate, and the Capabilities Plan either confirm the validity of the Objectives and Policies, or their infeasibility is demonstrated. If the latter, then one of two things follows: either the policies are reviewed and adjusted on the basis of recommendations and requirements flowing up — that is, the national sights are lowered; or, the policies are reaffirmed, but political or economic action is initiated to change the unfavorable conditions indicated by the work of the Strategic Planners.

I have said “one of two things follows.” This, of course, is not a realistic statement, as those of you who have lived and suffered at this level of the national planning process know perfectly well. In principle, one of these two things should follow. But, this is the most difficult of all areas in the operation of a government. Here is the place at which Objectives and Policies — *what is desired* — must be brought into some sort of conformity with *what can be done*. The inevitable gap between the two can

**CRITERIA  
FOR STRATEGIC CONCEPT / PLAN**

- 1. RATIONAL -- IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL,  
AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED**
- 2. RESULTING SITUATION -- IF ACHIEVED, SHOULD BE  
CLOSE TO THAT SPECIFIED AS DESIRABLE BY  
NATIONAL OBJECTIVES**
- 3. INITIATIVE -- SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN  
ALMOST REGARDLESS OF THE ACTIONS OF OPPONENT**

never be wholly closed except by reducing *what is desired*, or by *increasing capabilities*. To do either of these requires hard political decisions, and such decisions can never be made except at a price. Something has always to be given up—choices made. This is the old “Guns or Butter” issue.

However, no matter how difficult it may be to resolve such issues, the validity of a Strategic Plan is directly related to the degree to which such issues have been identified, clearly faced, fought out, and decided. In any event, these are the matters that must be resolved at this point in the progression if they are to be resolved at all. If they are not cleared up here, they confuse the strategic planning process and frustrate all subsequent planning stages.

The reason for this can be generally stated. The strategic planning process is, at best, a kind of contingency planning—contingencies being introduced by uncertainty about the intentions of the opponent. If, in addition to this normal uncertainty, unresolved domestic issues are present as well, then extra contingencies are introduced—this time in consequence of uncertainties about one’s own intentions.

I think the point is worth chasing for a few minutes more since it directly concerns the function of Strategic Planning.

Let me repeat that, from the military point of view, the normal progression from Objectives and Security Policies involves the conversion of National Political and Security Purposes into Strategic Military Objectives. This conversion begins in the Strategic Concept. It is completed in the Strategic Plan.

Now, there are three basic conditions that have to be satisfied by this conversion. The resulting strategic military objectives —

(SEE VISUAL AID E)

INDICATORS  
DESIRED IN THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT/PLAN

1. FUNDAMENTAL NATURE AND INTENT
2. AREAS IN WHICH OPERATIONAL
3. DEGREE OF PERMISSIBLE FLEXIBILITY

- (1) Should be *rational* in terms of the economic, social, and political factors involved;
- (2) Should lead to a situation that, if achieved, resembles the end sought as the *national political objective*;
- (3) Should indicate the maintenance of the *initiative* — that is, it should be possible to pursue them almost regardless of the actions of the opponent.

Furthermore, the Strategic Concept and Plan, between them, should set up certain *indicators* as the necessary framework for subsequent detailed planning. These essential indicators can be listed as follows:

(SEE VISUAL AID F)

- (1) The *fundamental nature* of the concept and plan — is it offensive, defensive, or a staged shifting from defense to offense, etc.?
- (2) The *areas* in which the concept and plan are to become operational, and in what order.
- (3) The *degree of flexibility* that is being given to subsequent planners — that is, what alternatives have been left open and what alternatives have been foreclosed?

Obviously, the division of labor between the Concept and the Plan cannot be absolutely fixed. In practice, there is a good deal of interplay and interchange between the two processes and a lot of mutual adjustment takes place before the papers are finalized. There is, however, a fundamental difference between them: the difference between the general and the specific. The mutual adjustment that takes place is one by which the generalization is made more valid as it confronts specific detail and planning

becomes more relevant as the general goals it aims at are more carefully formulated.

But, let us assume that the division of labor has been worked out. The Strategic Planners still have their own private brands of trouble and sorrow.

First of all, what has actually been handed to them as the basis for going to work? Three things:

- (1) A statement of the National Objectives, formulated at a very high level of generalization.
- (2) A set of National Security Policies, also formulated at a high level of generalization but now in the form of setting broad areas for action and indicating the desired ends.
- (3) A Strategic Concept, formulated at a lower level of generalization as far as the national purpose is concerned, but at a high level of generalization as far as the military establishment is concerned.

Secondly, what are the Strategic Planners expected to do with this material:— Two things:

- (1) Convert the Strategic Concept into specific courses of action related in time and space.
- (2) Provide basic guidance for all subsequent planning in all categories — Logistic, Joint Mission/Area, Basic Service, and Service Area/Mission/Task.

Third, what is the essential problem that confronts the Strategic Planners? *It is to be perfectly clear and to remain perfectly clear about the level of generalization at which they are working.* This is a *problem of selection* — what to include and

what to reject — and it is peculiarly hard to select at this particular stage in the progression.

Consider, for example, that the Strategic Plan, if viewed from above, is the point at which generalizations are first clearly reduced to concrete forms. Consider also, however, that the Strategic Plan, if viewed from below by subsequent planners, still represents a fairly high level of broadly generalized statement and still needs a good deal of even more specific spelling out.

In fact, the Strategic Planner is more than a little like Kipling's Royal Marines — "nothing but giddy hermaphrodites, soldiers and sailors too." He is a sort of Mr. Facing-Both-Ways. Policymakers and concept drafters always look down. Other kinds of planners always look up. But the Strategic Planner has to look both ways at once. It is no wonder that there is a high concentration of ulcers, gray hair, baldness, and middle-age spread at the strategic planning level.

So the problem of the *Strategic Plan* is to find, and to stick to, the correct level of generalization. I added that this was a difficult thing to determine. There is a particular reason why this should be so.

A moment ago, I referred to the two functions of the Strategic Planner:

- (1) To reduce strategic concepts to specific courses of action.
- (2) To provide guidance for subsequent planning.

In practice, these functions call for different levels of generalization, neither of which can be precisely defined.

Certainly, when a strategic concept is reduced to specific courses of action you move from a higher to a lower level of generalization. But, how far down the scale towards detailed specifics do you go? Remember that what is done here becomes the

basic guidance for subsequent planning. Therefore, if the Strategic Plan gets too far into specifics it begins to predetermine what follows in too many respects. On the other hand, if the Strategic Plan does not get far enough into detail it merely passes untranslated generalizations on to another stage in the progression where they are worse than useless — they are confusing.

The difficulty of finding just the right pitch is added to by the fact that the relationships and procedures laid down in the "Joint Program for Planning" — though they furnish a valid, tried and tested, and practical approach — do not give any real clues to the level of generalization/specification that would be proper for the strategic planning function.

For example, the format of the Strategic Intelligence Estimate does not differ from that used at much lower planning levels. The requirement that it should be world-wide in coverage frequently means no more than that small patches have been stitched together to make a bigger quilt.

Again, the format of the Joint Strategic Estimate is, in its essentials, a reproduction of the standard estimate form as used at lower levels. It remains at the discretion, experience, and good sense of the Strategic Planner to decide how much detail is to go into the filling out of this form.

Not until you come to the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCAP) do you get to a format that has been developed primarily for strategic planning purposes. But, since the JSCAP derives from the Strategic Estimate and supporting documents, this may not mean a great deal in fact.

Consequently, I have to take off here into the realm of theoretical analysis if I am to deal with this question. The question is: How to define the proper mixture of generalization and specification that is suited to the function of strategic planning?

This theoretical analysis calls for a little historical background, so I come at the question with a crablike, sideways movement. The question actually has become urgent only within the 20th century and, within this century, has been recognized as a serious problem only within our generation. We are still very busy arguing about the nature of the problem and about alternative methods of dealing with it. Our whole national security setup is one of these experimental methods.

The problem has, in fact, been generated by the increasing complexity of the operation of a modern industrial society and by the increasing difficulty of coordinating a multiplicity of activities in order to shift such a society from a peace to a wartime basis. This problem affects the work of the Strategic Planner in a direct way: in the requirements for information and in the flow of information; in the range of supporting plans and actions that have to be kept under consideration.

What do you need to know to convert a Strategic Concept into a Strategic Plan? For what kinds of subsequent planning do you have to provide guidance?

Take the last point first. In addition to traditional guidance for Area, Mission, and Task planning, you have to provide guidance for:

- (1) Research and development.
- (2) Military budgeting.
- (3) Industrial and manpower mobilization.
- (4) Maintenance and use of forces and resources.

These latter and newfangled items are the recent gift of industrial society to the Strategic Planner.

With respect to these two categories of guidance, the level of generalization needed to provide strategic guidance for the subsequent planning of missions and tasks has been pretty well

established by experience and tradition. Professional judgment is adequate to decide how to draft a plan that is specific enough to set directions and general enough to give the detailed planners freedom to adjust; that is, professional judgment was adequate in the past when it was the sole judge. But now it is not left in sole possession of the field.

The kind of guidance needed to plan supporting actions in research, budgeting, mobilization, etc., has to be developed from statistical materials. Statistical materials imply a background of masses of detail. The stage is thus set for a competition between generalizations and specifications. However, this conflict is manageable if you know what you are doing. If you do not know, quantitative detail always wins. But quantitative detail can be mastered by statistical techniques.

One of the interesting and important things about statistical techniques is that they are methods of generalizing. While you cannot develop a strategic concept by statistical techniques, you can apply them to converting a strategic concept into a strategic plan that has been related to capabilities. The proper use of these techniques will permit you to move from concept to proposed action at comparable levels of generalization.

For example, you can talk about percentage increases in steel production, or about production per man hour as related to the distribution of manpower between industry and military service, and remain at a high level of generalization. And you can safely leave it to subsequent planners to talk about numbers of steel mills, quantities of military items coming off assembly lines, tables of organization and force components — for these are the proper subjects of detailed planning.

There is one trap, however, in connection with statistical information. What is wanted at the strategic planning level is knowledge of trends and of the techniques of projection. This is *qualitative knowledge*. What is wanted at subsequent planning

levels is essentially *quantitative knowledge* — How much is needed? How many have you got? When can you get more, etc.?

Thus, what comes *up* to the strategic level as requirements and recommendations is *quantitative information*, but what goes *down* from the strategic planning level as guidance is *qualitative information*. What comes up, therefore, has to be converted from one kind of statistical information to another if the strategic planning process is to maintain its proper level of generalization. What is sent down has to be converted in reverse — from qualitative to quantitative — if the subsequent planning processes are to be carried out in significant detail.

But this only takes care of part of the problem of striking the right generalizing note. There still remain those aspects of strategic planning that will not go into statistical forms. The choice of strategic objectives, the selection of courses of action to lead to the objectives, the maintenance of right direction in the selected courses, the consideration of an opponent's intentions — these are not determined by statistical techniques. These remain to be settled by professional judgment. Professional judgment, however, is no longer able to operate simply on the basis of training, experience, and expert intuition. It now has to include the factors produced by statistical techniques.

I may be able to make this point clearer if I pick up something that I mentioned when I was speaking about Decision-Making here at the start of the year. I made a distinction between *puzzles* and *difficulties*. Puzzles, I said, were solvable by organized method; difficulties were overcome by making choices. I also said that in the whole planning progression from Objectives to Action difficulties were more characteristic of the early stages, when Objectives and Strategic Concepts were being developed; while puzzles were more characteristic of the later stages, when detailed and concrete planning for particular Missions and Tasks was taking place.

Now, it is obvious that the Strategic Planning stage — sandwiched, as it is, between generalized concepts and concrete action plans — is the place at which difficulties and puzzles are in continual intimate relations. Like so many intimate relations between discordant temperments, this often leads to a shotgun wedding.

If you want to think of Strategic Planning as a kind of forced marriage between advanced professional judgment and advanced statistical techniques, you will not be far off. And if you want to regard a Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan as the offspring of such a restless mating, you will not be far wrong either.

But this is not a marriage that has been made in heaven. It is a rough-and-tumble, practical arrangement, and if it is to succeed both partners have to be conscious of the delicate and ambiguous nature of their relationship. If professional judgment abandons the field, statistical detail takes over. When this happens, Strategic Planning tends to become overspecific and has the wrong kind of binding effect on subsequent planning. The sign that this is happening is when the generalizations of the policy and concept stages are merely repeated verbatim in the strategic planning stage.

Thus, if an NSC paper says that the security policy is “to develop, expand, and improve a system of sovereign states for collective and coordinated action compatible with the principles of the United States,” this is properly generalized for this level. But if this statement is simply repeated as it stands in a Strategic Concept, then no progress has been made. And if it is repeated again in the Strategic Plan, you can be pretty sure that professional judgment has hauled down the flag and that the planners are happily playing with statistical mud pies. For, obviously, this repetition is *not* what is wanted. What is wanted is for professional judgment to translate this generalization in terms of military responsibilities to fit ever more narrowly defined and specific situations.

If, on the other hand, statistical detail is pushed to the wall and ignored, then under complex modern conditions professional judgment can easily take the bit in its teeth and develop a series of propositions whose unfeasibility is not revealed until the much later and more detailed stages of the planning progression. By that time, adjustments are extremely hard to make.

Those who do a great deal of strategic planning become accustomed to this restless and uncertain atmosphere. They acquire a sixth sense of the traps and learn to find their way around them. For those of you, however, who have not yet experienced life among the elephant traps, it might be useful if I wind up by noting the key points at which such pitfalls are likely to occur.

The worst and most prevalent pitfall comes from mixing levels of generalization. You get nowhere if you jump in the same paragraph from "develop a system of sovereign states for coordinated action" to "hold an air base in Saudi Arabia at all costs." Several intermediate generalizations are needed — "system of sovereign states" becomes "system of bases" and "system of bases" becomes "areas in which bases are desired." Not until the level of generalization has been thus reduced is it reasonable to mention a base in Saudi Arabia, and by this time you have got out of the strategic planning stage and are in some subsequent stage.

An opposite, but closely related, pitfall is to fail to blend the general and the particular adequately enough to guide subsequent planners. It is not enough to say "air and naval bases will be established at relevant points," and to leave the question of how many and where, and in what order of importance completely open.

Another pitfall comes from not specifying the full range of supporting plans that will be needed to fulfill the Strategic Plan.

Still another pitfall comes from not leaving the way sufficiently open for review and modification in the light of the recommendations and requirements that subsequent detailed planning generates.

But, above all, if it is safe to single out one thing and put it above all others, as the Strategic Plan approaches its final form — that is, as it communicates basic guidance for the remaining stages of the planning progression — it is important to check for two things:

- (1) Has it been over-specific? In other words, has it imposed unnecessary restraints, or inadequately delegated responsibility?
- (2) Has it remained too generalized? In other words, has it merely handed the problems of interpretation, definition, and choice further down the planning ladder?

Serious shortcomings in either of these respects will tend to overload and frustrate the vital closing stages of the planning process. In the first instance, the specialized skills and knowledge of the subordinate planners will be foreclosed. In the second case, the subordinate planners will be forced to do — hesitatingly and poorly — what the Strategic Planner is supposed to have done well and firmly.

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

### Professor William A. Reitzel

Professor Reitzel received his B. S. degree from Haverford College in 1922, his B. A. and M. A. degrees from Oxford University in 1925 and 1931.

In 1925, he joined the faculty of Haverford College where he continued until 1940, having been appointed Professor of English during that time. In 1940, he resigned and became Director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and editor of "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History".

In 1942, he was commissioned in the Naval Reserve and served in the European Theater until 1946. His assignments included Naval Observer, London; Assistant to Principal Salvage Officer, Mediterranean Intelligence Officer, Com Nav Europe; Flag Secretary, Com Nav For North African Waters; and Flag Secretary, Com Nav For Germany.

On returning to inactive duty, Professor Reitzel joined the Center for International Studies at Yale University as Deputy Director. He entered Government service in 1948, resigning in 1950 to become a member of the Senior Staff of the Brookings Institution and Deputy Director of the International Studies Group. In 1953, he rejoined the faculty of Haverford College as Professor of Social Science and now divides his time between Haverford and the Brookings Institution. He occupied the Chester Nimitz Chair of Social and Political Philosophy at the Naval War College during the 1954-55 academic year.

Professor Reitzel is the author of *The Life of William Cobbett*; *The Mediterranean — Its Role in U. S. Foreign Policy*; and editor and co-author of the annual Brookings' publication, *The Major Problems of U. S. Foreign Policy*.

## RECOMMENDED READING

The evaluation of books listed below include those recommended to resident students of the Naval War College. Officers in the fleet and elsewhere may find these of interest.

The listings herein should not be construed as an endorsement by the Naval War College; they are indicated only on the basis of interesting reading matter.

Many of these publications may be found in ship and station libraries. Books on the list which are not available from these sources may be obtained from one of the Navy's Auxiliary Library Services Collections. These collections of books available for loan to individual officers are maintained in the Bureau of Naval Personnel; Headquarters ELEVENTH, FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH Naval Districts; and Commander Naval Forces, Marianas, Guam. Requests for the loan of these books should be made by the individual to the nearest Auxiliary Library Service Collection (see Article C9604, Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual, 1948).

Title: *Facts to a Candid World.* 164 p.

Author: Stephens, Oren. Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1955.

Evaluation: A discussion of America's Overseas Information Program. Throughout the book, the author concentrates on the philosophy as well as the substance of our propaganda, telling his story in a most interesting and informative manner. He examines propaganda for what it is, why it is important, and how to make it internationally effective. The background of propaganda is given in Part I, beginning with the Search for a Formula; next, he describes the power and nature of public opinion and then touches on world opinion. The program is explained in Part II, and its weaknesses and strengths are analyzed.

Title: *So Full a Glory.* 288 p.  
Author: Salisbury-Jones, Sir Guy. New York, Praeger, 1955.

Evaluation: The biography of Marshall de Lattre de Tassigny gives a clear, concise account of his campaigns, his methods and his contributions to military science. Written in a most interesting and readable style, it is recommended reading for those who desire to further their knowledge of the will of the French people to fight; the part the French army played in the liberation of France and the defeat of Germany in World War II; and the qualities and development of outstanding leadership.

Title: *Betrayal of an Ideal.* 298 p.  
Press, 1955.

Author: Tokaev, G. A. Bloomington, Indiana, University

Evaluation: The first part of an autobiography by one of the highest ranking and most distinguished defectors from the Soviet Union. Colonel Tokaev, a North Caucasian, was aeronautical scientific advisor to Marshall Zhukov when he came over to the West in 1948. He presents a spirited and understandable version of the difference between Stalinism, the current philosophy practiced by the Communists, and Marxism-Leninism—the philosophy of the Revolution. Colonel Tokaev is no ordinary turncoat, and no follower of any part of Stalinism. He is still a Communist, however, and makes no apologies for his convictions. He has no sympathy whatsoever with the current Soviet regime. His description of student life in post-revolutionary Russia, his information on the tensions, dissents, accusations, and purges which took place in the educational institutions of Moscow and Leningrad in the thirties, and the hints of the nature of the existing underground opposition in Russia, make this first part of his life story both interesting and of value to the student who seeks to understand the Soviet mind. The final part of his story, yet to be published, should add to the considerable quantity of information which he has imparted in this book.

## PERIODICALS

- Title: *Has Atomic War Really Become Impossible?*  
Author: Morgenthau, Hans J.  
Publication: BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS,  
January, 1956, p. 7-9.  
Annotation: Discusses the question and concludes that a strong belief  
in the affirmative only increases the possibility for war.
- Title: *Asia's Needs and Western Policy.*  
Author: Ward, Barbara.  
Publication: THE ATLANTIC, February, 1956, p. 44-48.  
Annotation: Asserts that Western aid programs are inadequate and  
urges the Western powers to re-examine the real needs  
of Asia and to establish a more effective policy to com-  
bat Russian activities in the field of foreign aid.
- Title: *"New Look" Hits Europe's Defenses.*  
Publication: U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, January  
27, 1956, p. 42, 45.  
Annotation: A report from Paris on NATO trends says military  
leaders are shifting their plans from large armies and  
conventional weapons to smaller units equipped with the  
latest nuclear devices, as they expect a nuclear attack  
from the air if World War III comes.
- Title: *Fuels For War Short.*  
Publication: THE OIL AND GAS JOURNAL, January 30,  
1956, p. 132.  
Annotation: Points out that a shortage of heavy oils, such as jet  
fuels, could become serious in the next war and outlines  
various problems concerning this type of fuel.
- Title: *Guided Missiles.*  
Publication: TIME, January 30, 1956, p. 52-56.  
Annotation: Deals with the current status of the U. S. missile pro-  
gram, its problems, its progress, and its possibilities.  
(Illustrations, p. 52-53).

Title: *The Middle East: Reds Exploit Power Vacuum.*  
Publication: BUSINESS WEEK, January 21, 1956, p. 112-117.

Annotation: Outlines the history of the Middle East, showing why Moscow has moved into this area and indicates the importance of the Eisenhower-Eden conference.

Title: *Massive Retaliation and Graduated Deterrence.*  
Author: Buzzard, Anthony W., Rear Admiral, Royal Navy (Ret.)

Publication: WORLD POLITICS, January, 1956, p. 228-237.

Annotation: This article proffers substituting "graduated deterrence" for "massive retaliation" as the logical result of the Soviet's increasing atomic and hydrogen bomb capability. The proposed deterrence is to be based upon tactical versus strategic use of nuclear weapons and defines each in terms of weapon types and targets against which weapons are to be analyzed. The author presents his thesis based on moral, political, military and economic considerations. He also objectively considers the obvious objections to his proposal and concludes that a deterrence of this sort is the only type that in the foreseeable future has a real chance of maintaining the peace, in view of rapid closing of the atomic capability between the Soviets and the West (primarily the United States).

Title: *Challenge of the Underdeveloped Lands.*

Author: Black, Eugene R.

Publication: THE VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW, Winter, 1955-1956, p. 1-16.

Annotation: The President of the International Bank discusses some of the problems of the economically backward regions and their importance to the West.

Title: *SAGE Provides New Defense Concept.*

Author: Klass, Philip J.

Publication: AVIATION WEEK, January 30, 1956, p. 46-49, 52-55.

Annotation: An illustrated report on the air defense system developed at M. I. T.'s Lincoln Laboratory.

- Title:** *The Politics of Peace.*
- Author:** Bowles, Chester.
- Publication:** LOOK, February 7, 1956, p. 70-76.
- Annotation:** Contends that a new era in world affairs calls for re-examination of the uses and limits of military power, economic aid and diplomacy.
- 
- Title:** *Promotion of Officers in the Navy.*
- Publication:** NAVAL TRAINING BULLETIN, January, 1956.
- Annotation:** A special issue, devoted to the officer promotion program of regular and reserve officers of the United States Navy.
- 
- Title:** *Alaska: The Economy and the Labor Force.*
- Author:** Rogers, George W.
- Publication:** MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW, December, 1955, p. 1375-1382.
- Annotation:** Points out that Alaska is an economically underdeveloped area, which is important as a source of raw and semi-processed materials and as a strategic military post.
- 
- Title:** *The Age of Continents.*
- Author:** Matthews, William R.
- Publication:** UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS, January, 1956, p. 55-61.
- Annotation:** An excellent article discusses the polarization of power in the United States and the Soviet Union and the rising power of other nations with vast land masses and large populations, such as China and India. The author points out that in order to be a world power a nation must be backed up not only by seapower, but by economic resources, land mass and manpower.

- Title: *Who is Winning in the Middle East.*
- Author: Jamali, Dr. Mohammed Fadhel.
- Publication: VITAL SPEECHES OF THE DAY, January 1, 1956, p. 173-177.
- Annotation: Examines recent Western policies in the Middle East and Soviet policies in the same areas in order to evaluate their success in the struggle to win this area.
- Title: *The New Phase of the Struggle with International Communism.*
- Author: Secretary of State Dulles.
- Publication: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BULLETIN, December 19, 1955, p. 1003-1007.
- Annotation: An address by the Secretary of State, dealing with the policies of the free nations for collective security.