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Author Mahan, A.T., Rear Admiral, U.S.N., and Naval War College Staff.

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*General Board has a copy of this correspondence C. L. H.*

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February 22, 1911.

My dear Rodgers:-

I have read twice very carefully the Strategic Plan submitted to me by you.

It will be recognized that in the ten days the papers have been in my hands I cannot have acquired all the detailed knowledge, much less the familiarity with all conditions, which are essential to judicious final decisions. The comment which I present therefore is rather of the nature of suggestion for the consideration of those upon whom the responsibility of such decisions rest. Several of the suggestions, such as to length of time required to fortify, size of garrisons, proportion of attacking troops to defenders, are army questions, and should be referred to a military opinion.

Estimate p.2. I think the assumption that Orange could readily project an over-sea movement of 100,000 men is exaggerated. It should be carefully tested by known army standards, as to tonnage needed, which increases largely with the distance. I have seen that, for the short distance from Germany to England, it is held that, for 70,000 men, 200,000 tons of shipping would be required. From Japan to Luzon the same estimate might hold; but from Japan to Honolulu, eleven days at twelve knots, the troops would suffer if similarly crowded. Moreover, greater stowage of provisions and ammunition is required for distant operations. From Yokohama to San Francisco it would be fifteen days.

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p.5. Thirty-five thousand troops could be transported, assuming above rate of tonnage; and I presume the reckoning of 25,000 to occupy Hawaii rests upon data which I do not possess. But I cannot think that the detachments named, 5,000 for Guam, 3,000 for Samoa, and 2,000 for Kiska, could securely hold those points, unless already fortified, landward as well as seaward. Even with Blue Fleet in Atlantic, there would not be time so to fortify, by placing in position guns which a modern fleet need regard. Except Hawaii, the others could be picked up in detail by a Blue division of 15,000. For this reason, important as I consider Guam, I would not fortify it, because in the present temper of the Blue nation it would not be adequately garrisoned; while to have it fall to an enemy fortified would be an additional calamity.

p.9, last paragraph and p.10, first paragraph. Shows the necessity, which underlies every part of the plan, that Pearl Harbor should be so fortified, garrisoned, and provided with stores, as to be able to hold out at least six months, — or double the time needed for the Blue Fleet to move from the Atlantic to its relief. With Hawaii thus secured, I doubt if Orange would risk even the force necessary to hold Guam, if not fortified. They would not have time to fortify.

p.14. Would the dispositions recommended suffice to preserve Guam (harbor), if unfortified, from a crushing fire by the whole Orange fleet? What is to prevent Orange from sending 25,000 to Guam, as

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proposed for Hawaii? and what could the proposed force, 3,000, do against such? In short, is the shipping proposed adequate to resist naval attack, or the troops proposed land attack? If not, like the assumed Orange forces in Kiska and Samoa, they are only a bait to swallow.

Is not Corregidor to be fortified? If so, can it not at least support the shipping which, like the monitors and gunboats, cannot be removed? Will not Guam empty be least of a prize to Orange, and more easily regained by Blue? Will not Corregidor, plus monitors and 3,000 troops, be a more effectual concentration than Guam plus the same?

If time allow, I agree the cruisers had better retreat at once upon Pearl Harbor, and further westward; but betimes. Orange will not make formal proclamation before striking; though Blue by its Constitution must do so.

pp.15,16. The Blue Pacific detachment should advance on calculated time to meet Asiatic detachment. The destroyers and submarines should be distributed at San Francisco and Puget Sound.

p.16. "During period of strained relations." An unexpected blow from Orange may occur at any moment during this period.

p.19. I concur most emphatically in the underlined paragraph on this page; but these preparations should be made now, not left to strained relations with a Power that has no scruples as to time of striking.

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p.19, line 20. Minorca and Malta do not support the conclusion. Both succumbed to the Power controlling the sea, when it chose to take them. In 1760 the British preferred to regain Minorca by capturing Belle Isle; in 1782 they did not control the sea. Malta in 1800 fell, after two years tenure, because its communications were cut off by the control of the sea.

p.20, line 2. Ten thousand men are not sufficient, in my judgment; but that is an army question. Navally it is certain that the Blue fleet cannot reach there from the Atlantic in less than three months; whereas Orange can land 30,000 men in three weeks.

p.20, last paragraph. I entirely agree with this paragraph and that next following it on page 21.

p.21, last paragraph. If Hawaii be gained by Orange, it becomes thenceforth a possession which it must both defend and supply; as the French did Malta in 1798-1800. That is, it is an exposed point. The Blue fleet once arrived in the Pacific, Kiska and Guam, if unfortified when taken, can be regained; if indeed Kiska be occupied, which I doubt. To hold Hawaii securely, Orange must also hold Guam; and I incline to think that with Blue's superior navy it must be possible from Kiska to act decisively against Guam. In fact, unless Guam falls into Orange hands already fortified, it seems impossible to prevent the occupation of the harbor by Blue; after which the troops on the island are hopelessly cut off. The harbor then becomes a base, both for the battle fleet to operate against Orange

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possessions, and for the cruisers, armored and others, to attack and to defend the lines of supply. Hawaii cannot harbor the Orange fleet, if its communications are cut off; for in such case, being continually in doubt as to coal, it can threaten but little the Blue communications, which also, in the case of single vessels, may take any one of the many lines possible from the Pacific coast to Guam. *Infet.*

*Therefore, that a move of Blue fleet to Kiska will compel Orange fleet to fall back from Hawaii, and that it will not stop at Guam, but must retreat to home base.*

p.22, second paragraph. The conclusion that "a southern approach to the Philippines would be the only practicable one," on the supposition that Orange has so occupied Hawaii as to require a long continued direct attack to reduce it, appears to me the crux of the whole plan, and to be very disputable. Much depends upon the harborage available at Kiska, or at Unalaska, as to which my information is inadequate. I know that General Wood has been inclined to look favorably on Unalaska.

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The assumption (that Orange has settled himself firmly at Hawaii. As there are, (p.5), three anchorages in the islands, this assumption implies that he has at each at least 30,000 troops; for no less force could hope to resist that which Blue could land within six months after Blue fleet, by arrival, has established command of the sea. If the Blue fleet go to Hawaii, this command of the sea will be localized there. The attempt to regain the islands then would be direct; instead of indirect, by counter attack elsewhere, and by stopping communications. In case of direct attack, say by 50,000 Blue troops, with the superior Blue fleet commanding the wa-

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ter, unless the three anchorages mentioned (p.5) are all on one island, no one of the three 30,000 Orangendivisions can help the other; and it is stated (p.20 last line, and p.21 first two lines) that other islands than Oahu may fall and become a supporting point for Orange. Why not for Blue in turn? It will be the case of Kiska, Hawaii, and Samoa reproduced on a larger scale.

If, however, Orange recognizes this dilemma and concentrates his force at one position, say Pearl Harbor, the other anchorages remain open to Blue from which to institute the strictest blockade, and to throw Orange wholly on local resources for prolonged occupation. Like the French in Egypt, and in Malta, 1798-1800, neither reinforcement nor ammunition could reach them; perhaps scarcely even information, except by wireless. *The Orange battle fleet must retire; or else fight, which is what Blue should wish.*

If Blue finds direct attack inexpedient, or prefers an indirect attack, that is upon the Orange communications with Hawaii, and upon the Orange interests, the question arises of a new base, other than Hawaii. The Plan (p.24) dismisses the northern route, on account of "climatic or weather disadvantages during six months of the year." As hydrographic difficulties, of safe anchorage, are not advanced, I presume there are harbors.

I find it difficult to admit that for white men climatic inconveniences of an over-cold climate can equal in ultimate effect those of one constantly over-warm. Also, the southern route seems to depend upon coal renewal at Nukuhiva, Solomon Islands, Admiralty Islands, although these are neutral, and permission so to use them is

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doubtful. The northern route throughout will be either Blue or Orange in tenure; that is, open to use by a belligerent, conditional only on his power so to do.

Let us examine the strategic position of Kiska, and of Unalaska, with reference to the situation that will exist if Blue finds the Hawaiian group so strongly held as to render a direct attack there unadvisable. Unalaska, with Dutch Harbor, is six hundred miles nearer Bremerton than Kiska is, and the same distance further from Yokohama.

Although my personal opinion is that the Blue battle fleet should be stationed on its Pacific coast at least eighteen months before the expected completion of the Canal, I find it impossible to believe that, if it be ready for instant movement from the Atlantic, Orange can both seize and adequately fortify all anchorages in the Hawaiian islands and Guam before Blue fleet can reach Pacific.

2970 / Dutch Harbor is 2039 miles from Honolulu; San Francisco ~~is~~ about the same, 2098. Kiska is about 200 miles farther away from Honolulu, but it is only 1800 from Yokohama, 1500 from Hakodate, and 2700 from Guam; whereas from the Hawaiian Islands to Guam is 3312, making the total distance, San Francisco to Guam, 5410, or double that of Kiska, and quite beyond the steaming radius of the fleet.

For position merely, Kiska is better than San Francisco, or than Bremerton. It lacks strength and resources; and, if used, strength must be supplied to protect the resources.



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From Bremerton to Kiska is 2400 miles, from Kiska to Guam 2700. Total 5,100, as against the 5,400 of the present route: San Francisco, Honolulu, Guam. I learn from the Plan that 4,000 is the estimated coal endurance of the battle fleet; so that a Bremerton-Kiska-Guam passage would bring it to Guam ready for immediate action so far as coal is concerned, -- bunkers one-third full.

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It will be understood that I am not advocating the northern route against the central; but against the southern, on the supposition that central is closed, because no anchorage in the Hawaiian *and Orange ships then threaten communications by central route.* group can be secured, *For the entire trip, Bremerton-Kiska-Guam,* colliers would have to supply only 1,100 (5100 — 4000) miles more steaming than the fleet starts with from Bremerton. The colliers also being full on starting, the fleet may be assumed easily filled at Guam itself, should it be attacked. *if it can take Guam at all,* That is, ~~take the fleet and it~~ *to capture it* can do so before necessary to coal. If thought impossible, *Guam will* be neglected and another destination sought.

For such alternate destination it is to be remembered that Yokohama is but 1800 miles from Kiska; Hakodate 1,500. Therefore, the arrival of the Blue Fleet at Kiska, or even at Unalaska, menaces all the home waters of Orange. Amami O Sima itself is but 800 miles from Yokohama; that is, at most, 2,600 from Kiska. In other words Amami O Sima is a little nearer than Guam to Kiska, which menaces both. Kiska is also about 2,300 miles from Honolulu. It presents therefore, as to position, an equal menace to three Orange positions, -- supposing Guam occupied as well as Hawaii.

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Unalaska is somewhat inferior to Kiska as regards position; but there being the two, Orange must occupy both, as well as all Hawaii and Guam, or else the above strategic reasoning stands. Holding means, of course, guns that a fleet dare not meet, and a garrison which which 30,000 men cannot dispossess.

With the Blue Fleet at San Francisco, the inferior Orange may hold on at Hawaii, if still there; but with the Blue at Kiska, its home interests and its communications are too much endangered. Reverse the conditions, giving Orange the naval superiority Blue now has: Would the Blue Fleet remain in Hawaii if Orange advanced to and seized Kiska or Unalaska, threatening Blue's communications with the main land?

In summary, I apprehend that, if the Blue Fleet be in the Atlantic when war begins, Orange could land a large force on the Pacific coast; but I think she will not do so, realizing that the effect would be to solidify popular feeling in Blue, and so entail upon herself a prolonged effort on a scale so huge as to be exhausting. During 1909, the trade of Japan, with a population of 58,000,000 was \$400,000,000; that of Australia, with less than 5,000,000, amounted to \$580,000,000. The contrast indicates the staying power resting on finance; and it is well understood that the advances of Japan towards peace with Russia in 1905 were attributable to a financial exigency which is not yet dispelled.

At a much less expenditure of force Orange could seize the Philippines and Guam. This would undoubtedly arouse much public

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feeling in Blue; but it would be neither unanimous, nor so enduring as the presence of a hostile force on Blue's home territory. The War of 1812 illustrated this difference, when Great Britain in 1814 could spare troops for invasion. Hawaii also could probably be occupied without universal popular dissatisfaction; except on Blue's Pacific coast, which as yet has not the numerous voters which cast the scale in representative governments. These facts affect the important consideration of the energy of Blue warfare.

I apprehend, therefore, that in case of war, the Blue Fleet being in the Atlantic, Orange might calculate reasonably upon successes which would insure the permanent acquisition of the Philippines and Guam; but could have no equivalent expectations of results from Hawaii, and still less from invasion of Blue's Pacific coast; that she would not attempt the latter; but very probably might Hawaii for several reasons, among which the large Orange population already there.

It is of course incumbent to consider the possibility of invasion; and while I have no criticism to make of the Plan, in its provision for such contingency, I think the military word to the Blue Government is that its fleet should be in the Pacific not later than eighteen months before the Canal is completed. Meantime the docking development of the Pacific should proceed apace.

Like the United States after the War of Secession, there remains to Orange from her late war, and will remain till several years after the Canal opens, a large force of veteran troops availa-

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ble for the various enterprises named: Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, Pacific coast, Kiska, Unalaska, and Samoa, besides that which singly is the most important of all -- the Canal. But, even granting the means and the numbers to seize all, it is to me incredible that all can also be fortified, armed, and garrisoned, before the Blue Fleet establishes control of the sea in the Pacific. That is, a base must remain open for occupancy to Blue.

I prefer that that base be one of the three anchorages in the Hawaiian group; because nowhere else can such sure control over the communications of the supposed Orange garrison be established. To this occupancy there can be but one issue in Hawaii, unless Blue loses control of the sea.

This base should be fortified at once against a possible attack by any Orange division. If the Orange battle fleet be in Hawaii, the Blue battle fleet remains there, the armored cruisers proceeding against Guam; this, of course, without awaiting the fortification of the base.

If, as is more probable, the Orange fleet be in home waters, the battle fleet should proceed against Guam at once. Cruisers, armored and otherwise, would remain at the Hawaiian Base to cut off the supplies and reinforcements of the garrison. These cruisers should be kept in prime steaming condition, going to San Francisco <sup>or Wilmington</sup> by detachments, for cleaning. Until the Hawaiian base gives them security by its works, surprise by an enemy's superior division, though improbable, is possible; and both by speed and coal endurance

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they must be always ready for such contingency.

Should the anchorage at Guam have been so fortified as to make attack dangerous to Blue's naval superiority, a condition I think extremely doubtful, the Blue battle fleet should make its base at Kiska. This alternative illustrates the importance of Guam; for while Kiska is not much further — 500 miles — from southern Japan than Guam is, Guam is greatly nearer Manila and Formosa, to all Japanese communications to those islands, and to Japanese commercial lines, which must be mainly from southern Japan southward, or westward.

This is so evident that it appears to me, ~~that~~ if I were at this instant making plans for Orange, I should say the first move would be the seizure of Guam, and the provision now, in time of peace, of guns and mountings, etc. with plans for instant fortification and garrisoning. Hawaii would be to me secondary to Guam, *from an Orange viewpoint*

*2770* In this connection, it is to be remembered that Kiska is so much nearer Guam than Hawaii is, -- 2700 miles against 3312 -- that with a steaming radius of 4,000 miles a fleet from Hawaii will reach Guam dangerously near the limit of its endurance, if compelled to delay entrance to the harbor, or to fight an action; whereas from Kiska the margin of safety would be considerably larger.

I believe that these remarks present sufficiently, though too discursively, my views as to the northern route and its bases. They lead of course towards a blow at the Orange communications, ~~from~~ from the island Kiushiu southward. Kiska is merely a Blue advanced

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home base, a stepping stone to a base in or near the Orange territory, from which the superior Blue fleet can operate offensively as may be judged most expedient. This position attained, Kiska remains a stepping stone, held by the Blue army for the service of the fleet and protected against Orange enterprises <sup>on a large scale</sup> by the fleet's own position. (1)

As regards further operations from a fixed base, -- whether Guam or Kiska, -- it is to be remarked that, with so extensive a coast as that of Japan and its dependencies, it seems scarcely probable that no undefended anchorage could be found where the fleet could coal; securely as regards hydrographic conditions, though greatly exposed to attack.

If accompanied by sufficiently many destroyers, however, coaling by daylight only, with nets down by night, and scouts out both day and night, -- in short with due watchfulness against an enemy known to be enterprising, -- it seems probable the operation could be safely carried out. To act at all, the fleet must anchor somewhere; and, in fact, must advance to and occupy for the war a permanent position suitably chosen. The coaling just spoken of on Orange coast is a minor case of the same.

For this permanent advanced base: it is clear that the Orange fleet cannot be both south and north at the same time, except by an absurd division of force. It has a station at the Pescadores; an Orange army may be in the Philippines; the great naval stations are in southern Japan, Sasebo, Kure, and others not accurately remembered by me now. Kure on the Inland Sea presents such military ad-

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vantages as to be the most probable choice.

The Lu-Chu islands intervene between Japan and the Pescadores, and are within easy steaming range of all southern Japan, as well as of Orange communications with Guam; not to say of those with Hawaii, if occupied by Orange. An anchorage in the LuChus is the most effective position for the Blue Fleet. Such occupation would demand of the fleet a provision of defences immediately; by mines, booms, and other precautions, as to which the Japanese occupation of the Elliot Islands may offer suggestions. In advancing for such purpose, the fleet should go prepared; not only with material, but with detailed plans, and officers especially familiar with these to place them in the shortest time. This done, and with proper scouting, which will inure from the mere watching of southern Orange ports to oppress their commerce, the fleet while at anchor should be reasonably secure, as security is reckoned in war.

The fleet by its general position, indicated above, would seriously incommode, if not wholly cripple, Orange communications southward. It would probably cause the recall of cruisers based on Guam, and thus secure in great measure its own communications, unless Orange has had time to stock Guam heavily with coal. It would be usually at sea; because cruising is the basis of efficiency, and it must support a blockade of the Orange coast. The blockade will be planned with a view to dislocating traffic as well by land as by sea; for which purpose railway centres and their relations to ports of entry must be studied beforehand. This of course is cruiser

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work. The aim will be to force an outcry for peace; but it will not be possible to blockade effectively the whole coast-line. Dislocation is the aim;

As detachments must return to coal and to rest crews, the numbers of the Blue Fleet need to be increased to the utmost, disregardful of a certain relative inefficiency <sup>in</sup> ~~or~~ older ships; disregardful also of stripping the Blue coasts <sup>as towards</sup> ~~because of~~ other possible enemies. Blue cannot fight Orange and another great naval Power at the same time; so this contingency must be dismissed in favor of concentration against Orange. Blue will in fact have the sympathy of every naval nation except the ally of Orange, all of whose colonies would cry out against any attack on Blue.

The General Scheme here advanced seems to me decidedly stronger than the southern route with base at Malampaya Sound and a Suez line of communications. It must be remembered that nations now tire easily of war; that it is enormously expensive; and that therefore blows must be straight, rapid, and decisive one way or the other. The risk of the scheme here suggested is great; but it is a flank attack instead of a direct one, as from Malampaya; and, while it offers greater chance of a military reverse than the other, it offers also a greater chance of national success, which the other may forfeit even while escaping a particular disaster. Compare the flank march to Blenheim, in its effects, with Marlborough's other victories, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, weighty as they were. Consider Napoleon in Italy in 1796, rushing past the Austrian flank to



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Piacenza to seize the position in their rear. Consider his movement in 1800 to Marengo, again in the rear; and in 1805 cutting off Ulm. Perhaps more illustrative, read in Grant's Memoirs the discussion between him and Sherman concerning the great flank march past Vicksburg, and crossing the Mississippi below to come up in rear, instead of Sherman's suggestion to fall back to Memphis, and thence to advance in direct attack with communications constantly covered

by the army's line of advance. *It would be an interesting inquiry in military psychology, what effect the Vicksburg Campaign had in determining Sherman's March to the Sea, eighteen months later.*

To insure success, however, to "get the greatest number of chances in your favor," all details must be carefully thought out beforehand, all alternative schemes searched out, weighed, and as far as may be also developed, so that in case of failure at one step the next best thing may equally be known and at once attempted; if not it, the second best, and so on. Several schemes resemble several lines of communication; if one fails, you have the others.

But all this elaborate and necessary scheming demonstrates only more forcibly that at a not distant date the Blue fleet should be moved to the Pacific, and there remain until the opening of the Canal; that the Pacific ports be duly fortified, and Hawaii secured. There will then be no war; barring some intolerable action, which Blue as a nation will not commit.

Sincerely Yours  
A. J. Mahan

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March 4, 1911.

My dear Rodgers:-

After reading the paper you handed me on Thursday, I think it better, rather than to reply to it point by point, which might seem a contentiousness which I am far from feeling, to state the impression left upon my mind as to the general situation.

Many of the facts stated in the last paper are new to me, for my attention for several years has not kept abreast of the detailed advances of naval equipment. That an advanced base can be equipped within a week for holding against a serious attempt at recapture, — serious, of course, means against a considerably superior force, for the attack must always be superior, in a proportion depending upon the position of the defender, — is new to me. The efficacy of mortar batteries, also, I have esteemed less highly by far than the College does; but officers on the active list, specially devoted to such studies, should be better judges than myself.

The broad situation raised by the problem may be stated thus: Blue has a decisively preponderant naval force in line-of-battle ships, in cruisers, and in destroyers, — not in smaller torpedo vessels. Blue, however, has a far less protected coast, and several island stations outlying from that coast; none of which are properly defended. Orange, though inferior in naval force, has much the superior army, composed largely of veterans who have known war; a better defended home coast; and means for transporting that army rapidly

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either to the attack of Blue positions, or to the defence of its own outlying islands, of which there are many.

Under these conditions, the Blue Navy, the presence of which would control operations and transport within the radius of its steaming powers, is actually not less distant than three months steaming from the scene of operations on its own coasts, and nearer outlying islands; while, to reach Orange possessions, two months more at least, for renewal, for preparation, and for transfer of force, would be needed.

In short, despite the superior Blue Navy, Orange controls the Pacific Ocean for four months; during which the Blue fleet is non-existent for counteractive purposes.

When the Blue fleet at last, at the expiration of this period, arrives on the scene, it controls the water within the limit of its sustained steaming power.

*One (of several)* (The assumption of the College is that it will by that time—  
circumstances being as they now are — find all its islands occupied, and possibly a strong Orange force on its mainland; either in Alaska or in the Pacific states, or in both. Also, that in the islands <sup>Orange</sup> ~~it~~ will have fortified all positions to such an extent as to be <sup>impossible</sup> ~~inexpedible~~, to the utmost efforts of the Blue Navy, and of such Army as Blue may in the four months assemble. The result is, that north of Panama Blue will have no base of operations from which to begin. Of course, the islands off Santa Barbara are as open to seizure and occupation as other positions.

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*20th  
Under one assumption*

Before proceeding, I wish here to note my entire assent to the College position that such lodgments are possible, although I am less convinced of their ~~inexpugnableness~~; and that it follows with absolute directness that Oahu, and Guam if possible, should be at once so provided as to make rapid seizure impossible. The whole process of the war will depend upon this. If the Blue people will endure the strain, they doubtless have the power to retrieve all the loss; but at an immense additional expenditure over that which would be necessary if Guam and Oahu be preserved.

I differ from the College in that I do not believe it practicable for Orange to occupy all possible bases in such manner as to be inexpugnable. It may be that Orange, although knowing that Blue will eventually appear in decisively superior naval force, will scatter her land force, large though it may be, in numerous detachments; which will be isolated from the moment the Blue Navy appears. The existing military land force of Blue is in numbers contemptible; but Blue is extremely rich, as compared with Orange, and history has shown that within a year it can produce forces which would capture one by one every Orange detachment thus exposed. True, the process will take time; but time means money, and Blue, if it has endurance, can bear the strain better than Orange. It is to be remembered that Orange, having once occupied these positions, is tied to supporting them. It might even be urged as a sound policy on the part of Blue, to induce Orange to such distant effort, which would place it in the same position that Blue finds so difficult in trans-Pacific operations.

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I cannot believe that Orange can put in position, in six months, in all the positions taken from Blue, as well as in all its own many harbors, guns of a calibre that a fleet could not encounter; and while I know that rifled mortars have a very great increase of accuracy over the old time ones, I conceive that no number likely to be placed in all the captured Blue positions, and <sup>in</sup> Orange <sup>positions</sup> as yet unfortified, would prevent even a half-dozen armored cruisers from clearing a beachhead enabling a landing to be made. Ships under rapid movement, which can be made designedly irregular, are difficult objects even from a flat trajectory; much more for a vertical fall. In short, I believe Blue can recover a base, and gradually recover all captured positions in such order as may seem expedient. Some may be even neglected, as immaterial, in favor of offensive action against the enemy's positions.

For the same reason that Blue, even if more provident militarily than it is, would not attempt to make all its outlying stations impregnable, so I conceive Orange must ~~not~~, if for mere economy, leave some anchorages open, which may, or may not, serve the purposes of Blue. One thing is certain; somewhere Blue must secure a base for any offensive operations for recovery of its own, or for aggression against the enemy's interests. I believe such base can be secured somewhere, no matter what the scene of war.

To what extent modern defences can be rapidly installed, to what extent ships can <sup>encounter</sup> ~~meet~~ such rapid installations — a very different matter from twelve and fourteen inch guns deliberately plac-

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ed, -- all the circumstances of covering a landing, of effecting a landing, of the subsequent land operations, are questions for men in the prime of life; and with full knowledge abreast of modern conditions. It must be remembered always, however, that an operation is not impracticable because two or three ships may be sunk, or ten thousand men injured. To five-inch guns, and to mortars, cruisers may be exposed and may prove adequate; reserving battleships for battleship work.

Granting that Orange has possessed himself of all the Blue outlying positions, that the central route is thus eliminated, there may be adopted the northern route as I suggested; but if that prove impracticable, or unadvisable, there remains the southern, or that of Suez. The latter not being mentioned in the Plan submitted to me, I did not consider it, nor even realize for the moment that it was shorter than Magellan, as I now understand.

The southern routes, either Samoa or Suez, reject the plan I advocated, of seizing a central position of the Orange group, in favor of a base at the extreme end (south) of the line of Orange possessions (supposed to include the Philippines by occupation). In case of a southern approach, by either route, this is inevitable. The subsequent process of gradually working northward is more secure than my suggestion, and also slower. It protracts the issue; and leaves Orange unmolested in Oahu, and for a time in Guam. Though safer, it is less decisive. My own opinion is that unless Orange is put in tremor concerning his communications, — threatened at home, —

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he can hold out till the Blue people weary of the war. If the Blue nation do not weary, Orange will be reduced by exhaustion.

I do not attach major importance to the Blue fleet by position covering the Pacific Coast. Offence against the enemy, war carried to his own possessions, is the best defence. The British people have always been placid under risks to Gibraltar, or even to the West Indies, but terrorized by the allied fleets in the Channel, and by Napoleon's project of invasion. Witness also the present apprehensions of the Pacific coast. Blue cannot attempt a landing in Orange home territory; but even the poor Vladivostok division shut up the native shipping in Yokohama, by appearing near-by.

As regards operations against the trade of Orange, this is cruiserwork; supported by battleships, whose only share is that of support. They therefore are not divided, but the cruisers are; and the disposition is against commercial centres and coasting trade, to produce, as I said, dislocation, and engorgement of railroads. I do not believe blockade of the whole coast possible. I do believe it probable that dislocation with all its evils can be produced.

If the Blue fleet maintain superiority such as it now has, it can be maintained near the Orange coast. The question of coal supply is a huge administrative question, costly and intricate; but it is not insoluble to money and brains. There is to be but one dominating principle, viz: "To have coal enough, you must have too much." On any plan, northern route or southern, a depot can be secured and fortified against probable molestations by raid. Any-

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thing more, as, for instance, such landing as I have considered possible for the reduction of Orange positions scattered in former Blue possessions, demands a force which will not be risked afloat by Orange while Blue is in near-by command of the water.

Everything, however, goes to show, and all argument returns to the point, that Oahu and Guam should be made secure now. Why not now keep in Guam the 3,000, if they be deemed adequate, on the plea of comparative health which should obtain in a small wind-swept island? Granting such garrison, why not now place mortars? And certainly, even now, every feature of the island should be studied and mastered with a view, not only to fortification but, to defence against landings. My objection to the proposed transfer of force from Corregidor was, partly, that I thought it inadequate; partly that I thought, if relations were strained, Orange would prevent it. Both considerations are worthy of weighing. How far does the topography of the harbor of San Luis favor gun positions, and conceal vessels within?

As a last suggestion, with Oahu and Guam in Blue's possession, I presume a fleet leaving the former might, besides colliers, carry a deck load for several days, without tactical risk through meeting an enemy.

In conclusion, the two papers of the College appear to me to present a very admirable digest of the situation of both sides, with a full presentation of the difficulties which Blue must encounter as soon as his campaign is initiated by entering the Pacific. Such

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full appreciation of all difficulties is absolutely essential to any safe plan. What I miss in the papers is a clear recognition of the difficulties of Orange, of moral effects, of the fact that difficulty does not spell impossibility, and of the truth that the very existence of difficulty has repeatedly proved opportunity, for the reason that the defence is deceived by its apparent security.

Farragut's summary of the difference between Drayton's point of view and his own, and his adoption as his motto of Danton's "de l'audace, de l'audace, et encore de l'audace," will be found in every great military achievement. A very striking illustration of this very quality will be seen in the council he held before passing the New Orleans forts, contrasted with Porter's advice, <sup>This</sup> which will be found in my Life of Farragut. (I should mention that Soley in his life of Porter contests the justice of this report, but only as affecting Porter personally, not the question of the two lines of action). Grant and Sherman before Vicksburg presented the same contrast.

In this connection, I question the soundness of Corbett's dictum of not attacking the enemy where he is strongest; and the apparent inference, in the second paper, that "Blue's security lies in an approach on Orange's weakest flank." Corbett relies mainly on Clausewitz, whose authority is of the very first; but I conceive it is not the enemy's local strength, but the chance of success, and the effect produced by success, which should influence. In our Revolutionary War the allied fleets preferred the blockade of Gi-

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braltar, and operations in the West Indies, to the occupancy of the British Channel, or to the support of the American armies on the continent, where the British strength was such that Washington said, "We are at the end of our tether." Actually sixty-odd allies hesitated to attack thirty-five British in an anchorage on the British coast, though there were no torpedoes then; and Yorktown was a fluke, as regarded allied cooperation. Brueys thought that the difficulties of navigation would delay Nelson's approach and give him a night to repair neglects. Yet there seems to me no doubt, that naval support on the American coast, or such an action as offered in the Channel, were the true course, though the heart of the enemy's strength lay there. In short, aphorisms are open to the condition that circumstances alter cases.

*Sincerely Yours*

*A. J. Mahan*

NOTES ON COMMENTS OF REAR ADMIRAL MAHAN.

Page 1. (Estimate p.2.)

The assumption that Orange could readily project an oversea movement of 100,000 men, should such a movement be desired, does not seem an exaggeration when the following facts are before you.

1. That the latest reliable information shows Orange to possess 308 steamers of gross tonnage 953,751 tons in the aggregate. Of these 41 vessels exceed 5,000 gross tons each and an aggregate of 281,469 tons; 17 of between 4000 and 5000 gross tons; 52 of between 3000 and 4000 gross tons; 108 of between 2000 and 3000 gross tons; and 90 of between 1400 to 2000 gross tons.

2. The contracts with the Imperial Government provided that "the merchant fleet shall be used in time of war as transports, etc." and everything is arranged in advance for their speedy conversion for military purposes; stores and material being in store at designated arsenals and depots.

3. While the allowance of space was, for the Russo-Japanese war, 1 gross tone per man, which seemed to satisfy for the short distances across the Japan sea, 3 gross tons per man would cover the requirement for long distance transportation. This would require in gross tonnage for 100,000 men less than 30 % of the gross tonnage available from 3000 tons up.

Page 2. (p. 5.)

On the supposition that Orange would not send a force to gain a foothold and maintain itself on the Pacific coast, it was assumed that Orange would take full advantage of its practically ~~unrestricted~~ <sup>unrestricted</sup> control of the Pacific, prior to the arrival of the Blue main fleet in the Pacific, to place as many obstacles as possible in the <sup>way of the</sup> subsequent passage of the Blue fleet across the Pacific.

With these positions unfortified as at present; or, in the

case of Oahu, fortified, but weakly garrisoned; and the possibility of hostilities being begun by Orange before a formal declaration of war, it does not seem unreasonable to ~~report~~<sup>expect</sup> that the points mentioned would be likely to pass into Orange possession.

A force of 25,000 men operating from a ~~totally undefended~~ neighboring island to Oahu, should have no great difficulty in securing control of that island with its garrison of less than 5,000 men. The 55,000 adult Orange males in the Hawaiian islands, a due proportion of which are in Oahu, if they have not arms already, could be supplied and the conquest of the Hawaiian Islands would be complete. Orange effective land force there then becomes for the war one of 80,000 men. This looks very much like permanent tenure.

In the case of Kiska and Samoa, if Orange, by so small a force as that suggested, forces upon Blue a major operation to regain possession, it becomes as economical and as effective a use of force as that so often employed in the great campaigns on shore where a small number of men well placed tactically in a defile defeats the strategic aim of an enemy.

Manifestly, if Orange cannot gain the Hawaiian Islands the possession of Samoa or Kiska by Orange would for the time being perhaps be of little or no consequence to Blue; but the effort to take Samoa or Kiska, and the number of men and amount of material necessary to hold them would be so small that it seems more than likely that they would be taken and held against anything short of a major operation.

Modern fleets are not likely to go up against shore fortifications. We have in our service an equipment for advance bases upon which we pin faith to hold out against anything but an attack in great force, and this equipment we feel we should be able to emplace within a week if not within 3 days after arrival.

Page 2. (p.9).

Orange moved the 11-inch mortar battery and had ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> emplaced and began firing with ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> upon the defenses of Port Arthur three weeks after they had been landed in Dalny. It must be borne in mind that indirect mortar fire is far more dangerous to attacking vessels than direct fire from guns in necessarily exposed emplacements, because they cannot be searched out successfully by vessels at sea and afford no target for the ships' guns.

In any event, whether Oahu is gained by Orange or not, Guam is a place of prime importance to her to control in a war with Blue; and, with the Blue fleet in the Atlantic at the outbreak of hostilities, and Guam undefended, so that Orange could take unopposed possession, Orange would have at least 6 months to place that island in a state of defense before serious harassment would be threatened by Blue. Mortar batteries are capable of being installed much more quickly than direct fire batteries and are much more effective because they can be completely hidden.

Page 2. (p.14)

The dispositions suggested with regard to Guam are not supposed to deny Guam to the force of the whole Orange fleet. It would deny Guam to a small force that might be sent to take possession, expecting but slight resistance. The value of all the equipment recommended to be taken there from the Philippines is probably less than the value of a single battleship, yet it would be effective in probably causing the loss to Orange of much more than a single battleship in trying to take it. There are but two small indentations on the coast of Guam outside of the harbor of San Luis d'Apra where troops might land, and it is probable that 1000 men defending each of these points would do much towards resisting landings there. It might be said, too, that to leave these 3000 men in the

Philippines, is only leaving 3000 more mouths to feed in Corregidor, where food will be bound to prove a weak element of the defense, and there will likely be in any retreat on Corregidor more men than necessary to man its batteries.

Page 3. (p.16 and 19 and second par. above).

This fact it is important to keep in mind when we are thinking of the time that will be available for Orange to act before the Blue fleet will threaten.

Page 4. (p.19, line 20).

It is held that Malta and ~~Berness~~<sup>Minorca</sup> sustain the argument used in the paper.

Page 4. (p.21, last par.)

Hawaii or Oahu would not be held by Orange as a base for their main fleet. Granting its capture by Orange and the control of available anchorages (one in Hawaii and one in Maui) by Orange mortar batteries, those islands need no sea defense. They are fruitful in every necessity of life and with the Blue fleet based as it must be over 2000 miles away, opportunities will be plentiful for replenishing with war stores without danger of serious loss or too frequent capture of supplies going in from Orange. Where will Blue base itself to operate for the recapture of Guam, assuming Orange to hold Hawaii?

If from Kiska, Blue must before leaving that base be absolutely assured of the success of his venture, or else he sacrifices the full Blue naval strength in a vain attempt.

From Kiska to Guam is 2970 miles, about 2/3 of the steaming radius of Blue. Arriving there, Blue cannot fall back upon his base in case of failure for he has not coal enough to get there. Would <sup>not</sup> such a movement by Blue upon Guam be an unwarranted risk? Would he dare hazard all that Blue has on such a doubtful expedition?

Orange would have at least 6 months to prepare Guam for defense.

Page 5. (p. 22, second par.)

Kiska has been several times reported upon by competent officers of our service from 1893 to date. It has been selected as the best place to establish a coaling station in the Aleutian Islands. As an anchorage for a limited number of vessels it is fairly good, but even then by no means in all weathers, but it would never suffice as a base for a fleet.

If the Blue fleet go to Hawaii from the Pacific coast or from Unalaska or Kiska, it expends in reaching that destination (over 2000 miles from any point of departure) full one half of its coal. Will it control the sea locally in that area if it cannot maintain itself there?

It has been stated in the paper in question that "other islands than Oahu may fall and become a supporting point for Orange". "Why not for Blue in turn?" Because in the first instance, those islands are undefended and their anchorages open to Orange. In the second instance the islands of Maui and Hawaii, in each of which there is an anchorage, are defended by Orange, and these anchorages denied to Blue by the defense Orange has probable already prepared to locate there.

The Orange fleet would not have to remain there to meet the Blue fleet. It would probably retire and trust to the obstacle that Blue is trying to surmount, to reduce the Blue superiority of fighting units in the fleet if it persisted in its efforts. And this will have been accomplished with 25,000 men. Orange will have gained more time for its defense behind this line and would probably have supplied its Hawaiian defenses with war stores to hold out for a year at least.

The Northern route is dismissed because any movement thence by Blue in the direction of the Far East is, under the conditions, flanked on both sides by the enemy, and Blue would deliberately thrust the war into the area where the enemy is in maximum strength; also on the grounds of climatic and

weather disadvantages that make such harbors as these are absolutely untenable for a large fleet. Anchorages there are, but depths are excessive. All experience in those waters points to the necessity of mooring on account of contracted space for even small vessels and of lying with two anchors down to hold securely against the storms that are so frequent. Fogs, too, in this area are extremely frequent, due to the warm current of the Japan stream meeting the colder air of these regions.

The charts of these regions are notoriously inaccurate, the currents very poorly defined and all hydrographic information unreliable.

It was not because of any physical effect upon men that this route was dismissed, but rather the physical dangers to security of vessels operating in or from these areas.

Nukuhiva is French. It is not definitely determined that there is anchorage outside the Marine league at this place, but it is believed that such anchorage exists.

At Admiralty Islands there is available anchorage outside the Marine league -- also in Ysabel Island of the Solomon Island group.

Page 7. From Kiska to Guam the distance is stated in Admiral Mahan's paper as 2700 miles. This is, I believe, an error. The approx. correct distance is 2970 miles.

Page 8. From Bremerton to Kiska is 2400 miles; from Kiska to Guam 2970 -- total 5370 miles (not 5100) as against 5400 from S.F. to Honolulu to Guam.

In either case whether from Kiska or Honolulu, the Blue fleet would arrive at Guam ready for immediate action so far as coal is concerned, but what would Blue do then if he failed to reduce Guam, as before stated.

What other destination would be sought, if Blue decided he could not take Guam?



It is assumed that he has his entire fighting fleet with him so as to be in superior strength to Orange. If so, and he seeks some other destination, where will he get his coal unless he has colliers with him. His fleet will require 136,000 tons of coal to fill up. That will give him a train to protect and unless he can go somewhere and coal in security he would be badly placed. Orange might be prepared to see that he did not coal in security, after giving up an attempt on Guam.

Kiska cannot be considered a serious menace to either Guam, the Orange coast, or Amami O Sima.

With a knowledge that Blue is likely to approach from the northward the following dispositions could readily be made by Orange. With the assurance that no fleet will be likely to assail its heavily defended home ports or bases Orange need give them no concern. On the NE coast of Honshu between Tushima Peninsula and Tsugan~~u~~ straits there are about 8 bays and these are at present undefended. With the system of railways running 60 miles back from this coast up to Same Bay the northernmost of these bays, in 24 hours every Bay on this coast could be defended by infantry and artillery with siege guns to an extent to deny the use of any of those anchorages to Blue.

In two days, 10,000 troops with siege material could go from ~~Kagoshima~~ to Amami O Sima, also torpedo craft and submarines to defend that island with its splendid anchorages and deny it to Blue. The same could be done in three days to Okinawa Sima -- the big Luchu.

Now to any one of these places from Kiska, Blue will have expended half his coal, and if he hopes to return at all to his base he must do so at once or he will be without sufficient coal. Where in this region could he coal with a hostile fleet, though inferior, on his heels.

Page 9. From the above it would seem that if the Orange main fleet was in Oahu, it might remain there in confidence that an advance by Blue to cut his line of communication would only result in disaster to Blue and in any event be rendered innocuous, because Blue has no nearer base than Kiska. The probability would be, however, as pointed out before that Orange would have retired nearer his home bases, because there is nothing necessarily gained by keeping his fleet in Oahu. That place will take care of itself for a considerable time.

If conditions were reversed as to strength and Blue inferior fleet held Oahu, with a superior Orange fleet at Kiska threatening Blue's communications, Blue would of course be obliged eventually to retire, but he would be in a bad way because Orange could fill up with coal in Blue waters about 400 miles north of the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, and Blue coasts not being strongly defended and its extent forbidding it, Orange might even base itself on the coast and operate to effectually contain the Blue fleet.

Page 12 (next to last par.) The distance from Kiska to Guam as compared to that from Honolulu to Guam is 2970 to 3337. The difference is 367 miles; but ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> is not well to consider that the approach from Hawaii with a secure and well established base is far better than from Kiska, with its limited possibilities. The advantages of 367 miles shorter from Kiska to Guam would likely be more than used up in the weather that would be experienced on this route as contrasted with the route from Hawaii.

Page 13. It must not be forgotten that Blue, should he be so fortunate as to find a base close to Orange home territory for his superior fleet, must be assured of his supplies. With an active and enterprising enemy, Blue would have to keep

on the move and would consume coal. His fleet in full strength will need 190,000 tons of coal a month to keep alive. Could he get it if Orange refused a general engagement and devoted all its energy to cut off Blue supplies.

It should be pointed out that Blue's security lies in an approach on Orange's weakest flank to gain his first permanent foothold. That gained, and his communications guaranteed, he then can be said to be in a position to take bold but not unwise moves in furtherance of his plans.

Page 14. A division of Blue forces to blockade the Orange coast would likely result in a speedy reduction of Blue's superiority of force.

The above has been very hastily drawn up. Therefore overlook typographical inaccuracies and bad style.

M.H.O.  
(Captain J. H. Oliver)

(COPY)

Naval War College,

Newport, R.I.,

March 14, 1911.

Dear Admiral Mahan:-

As the College plan which you examined is now going to the General Board, I am led to ask your wishes in regard to the views expressed by you concerning the Northern Pacific Route and your corresponding plan of operations; whether your letters should be laid before the General Board or held, as at present, in the College archives as a comment upon the College plan.

As the question concerning your comment and plan may arise I should be glad to know your wishes in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) R.P.RODGERS

Rear Admiral A.T.Mahan, U.S.N.,  
Quogue, L.I.,  
New York.

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LONG ISLAND

March 17, 1911.

My dear Rodgers:-

Your letter of March 14 reached me last evening. Replying to your query, with regard to the comments I sent you upon the College "Plan," as submitted to me, I am entirely willing that any disposition of the papers be made that may seem expedient.

It will be remembered, of course, that I wrote under limitations of time which did not permit a full examination of details which might modify the general line of thought. But the concurrence of opinion, on certain important necessities, between the officers of the College and myself may have value.

Sincerely yours,

*A. J. Mahan*

Rear-Admiral R.P. Rodgers

Naval War College

Newport R.I.