

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

NEWPORT, R. I.

ARCHIVES

MILITARY AND TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE

File Number WNU

Accession No. 1930-32

Copy Number 2

Title
or
Subject

Naval Strategy of the World War.

Source
or
Author

Vice Admiral Wolfgang Wegener (ret) German Navy

Please Return Promptly
To Archives.

NOTE

This pamphlet is- - - - - and should be
returned to the Archives as soon as it has served its purpose.

If returned by mail it should be registered and addressed to the
Secretary, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.

THE NAVAL STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR

-----By-----

VICE-ADMIRAL WOLFGANG WEGENER,

German Navy - (Retired)

/OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

THE NAVAL STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR

-----By-----

Vice-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener, German Navy - (Retired)

INTRODUCTION

The further we recede from the events of the war and the more the details fade from view, the more astonishing it seems that in a war, with England as our principal enemy, one naval battle only was engaged and never once was an action fought to a finish. This cannot be adequately explained on the ground that the second part of the war lay under the sign of the submarine warfare, since its form and extent was first made possible by the fact that the fleets did not bring about a decision. The reason for this phenomenon can not lie in the details of the war but must rather be sought in the special circumstances and general concepts of naval warfare which were effective in bringing about this trend in the course of the war.

A naval war is not conducted by one, but by both opponents.

The investigation of these deeper and ultimate causes is of more than historical interest, since there can be only two possibilities. Either the Naval Staff in its official publication is right in attributing the failure to utilize the fleet to the accidental grouping of the officer personnel at the time -- in which case we need only to continue to train the naval personnel in accordance with the old tradition and trust that the future will provide more suitable leaders --

-3-

or else the State (and with it the Navy) was spell-bound during the war by certain preconceived ideas which formed the basis of these phenomena. In that event we must clear up these notions and for the sake of our future make a determined effort to revise our intellectual concepts and give our ideas a radically different trend.

The following analysis will serve to aid us in getting to the bottom of these notions and concepts.

All terrestrial life is in the process of eternal evolution and it is only natural that such development should be manifested in the case of a navy which was literally created by the State without any precedent.

If we consider our Navy historically from the standpoint of our purely continental past, there stands out against this background the tremendous achievement of the old Imperial Navy in developing and fostering the idea of sea-power not only within itself but throughout the whole nation.

The German nation has reason to be proud of its old fleet. But our interest in the old Navy should not be a reason for stagnation. We must develop beyond and above what lies behind us. When we perceive from the following analysis that many of the concepts we acquired in maneuvers did not meet the extraordinary requirements of the World War, we must not simply disregard this line of reasoning because it is foreign to our habits of thought. It should not be taken as a criticism but rather as a war experience which must be constantly studied and accepted in the broad-minded manner in which the old Navy welcomed every incentive to development.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE.

From the very beginning of the war, faith prevailed over reason: - namely, faith in the offensive spirit of the Briton. This faith was exalted to a dogma and on this foundation was reared-out-entire naval strategic structure, the Operations Plan of 1914 -- the blockade.

This faith proved illusory.

1. ENGLAND'S STRATEGIC POSITION.

1. When the enemy failed to appear off the German Bight immediately after the declaration of war, we wondered at the time why the materially-stronger English Fleet (which we then called the "brutally" overwhelming Fleet) did not seek to force action on us by a sharp offensive. Something of the mental attitude with which we passed from peace into war has since passed away. We must therefore always try to bear in

The entire naval war preparations, the mobilization and attitude of the Fleet in the early days of the war bear witness to this faith in the British fighting spirit, beginning with the fortifying of our North Sea Islands to the destruction of the Sangeroog church belfry to deprive the British of a navigational aid, including the demolition of vast rows of houses in Cuxhaven to open up a line of fire against an enemy seeking to penetrate the Elbe. The river mouths were deeply sown with mines; the Elbe at Cuxhaven and the Jade off Geniusbank. On the declaration of war the Fleet lay behind this mine barrier off Geniusbank with lights screened at night, awaiting the British attack with loaded guns, as though English flotillas could possibly break through the line of patrols off Heligoland and the outer Jade and, unheralded and unseen, steam up the darkened Jade without navigational aids.

mind those ideas regarding the "Grand Fleet" we held at that time and on which the Operations Plan of 1914 was based. The idea of the material superiority of the "Grand Fleet" was not the result of war experience but arose from peace-time considerations. We must therefore seek the true underlying reason why our clear vision was obscured and our fascinated gaze bound to the Northwest in momentary expectation of the English Fleet, due to its tremendous superiority, assuming the offensive and appearing off Heligoland.

This idea was taken from war on land. As a matter of fact, if two armies oppose each other on land, then -- and this is in accordance with the teachings of Clausewitz -- the stronger will immediately assume the defensive in order to hold the initiative. It is for the initiative that the Field Marshals struggle. It is of such great importance that even the weaker will not willingly surrender it to the enemy, but will at least make an effort to obtain the advantages of the initiative by means of an offensive.

To us Germans such military concepts are natural to a greater extent than we generally believe. Not in vain have we rendered service in the army and, with this training, absorbed military ideas which even to-day are effective through tradition.

Military concepts have become instinctive with us and therefore we failed to understand the English when they did not appear in August 1914. "If we had such an overwhelmingly superior fleet we should attack immediately", was the cry. With our continental military concepts, such might well have been possible, or even probable. But it was for this very reason that in our Operations Plan we failed to consider whether the English might not have very good reasons for not coming and whether such continental military concepts can be carried over to naval warfare at all.

The general principle, that the stronger must take the strategic offensive, is not applicable in naval warfare.

England found herself at the outbreak of the war in a brilliant strategic position. The arteries of her commerce lay in the Atlantic where they could not be attacked by the German Fleet from the Elbe. On the other hand the German commerce routes could be easily cut off in the Channel and off Scotland. The North Sea, thus swept of its commerce lanes, became a dead sea. The strategic position was so complete that England never once felt the need of improving her position throughout the whole course of the war. From the very start England was thus "saturated" and remained so after the danger of losing Cherbourg and Brest to us had been dispelled by the battle of the Marne. Her Fleet, relieved of the necessity of first conquering these positions, had as its primary mission to exercise command of the seas from this position, i.e. the protection of her own commerce lanes and the interruption of our commerce and further, the maintenance (which means defence) of these positions. However, the side which has as its mission the defence of a strategic position must necessarily have a strategic defensive operations plan and not an offensive such as German belief in the fighting spirit of the Briton and our own continental point of view assumed to be self-evident.

It demonstrates further that the English operations plan had nothing to do with the superiority of the British Fleet but was dependent solely on the existing strategic position at the outbreak of the war. The English Fleet might have been three times as strong or half as strong as it actually was, or the strength relations might have been exactly reversed; the English Operations Plan would have remained the same, always defensive, because under all circumstances

the primary mission of the English Fleet was the defence of her strategic position from which she controlled the important commerce arteries in the Atlantic.

For the British Admiralty there was not even the choice of whether they would take the strategic offensive or defensive. The defensive operations plan was necessarily bound up with their "saturated" strategic position -- as long as it remained perfect. If we regard the war dispassionately and not through the eyes of prejudice we must concede the correctness of the strictly passive attitude of the Grand Fleet.

8. From the English Operations Plan we may deduce what England must have thought about a battle. As part of her mission of defence England must perforce attack as soon as her strategic position is assailed. If instead of the tactical sorties from the German Bight, which did not menace the English position, we had initiated a strategic offensive and had unflinchingly held to such a strategic offensive operations plan, England would have been compelled to defend herself with her full force and to fight as soon as our attack began to threaten her strategic position. England was prepared to engage in battle as soon as it was required by her mission of defence, in its widest sense.

Since this attack was lacking, England saw no reason to fight. One does not need to fight for command of the seas -- and England possessed this in the Atlantic to the fullest extent -- until it is challenged. We did not make the slightest encroachments upon it. The British will to fight, an unavoidable presumption for a battle in the North Sea, did not exist and was simply a delusion of our High Command. Two parties are necessary to a battle.

Independent of the primary mission of strategic defence,

a second mission also fall to the lot of the Grand Fleet, as with every large Navy, namely, her coast defence. The defence of the coast has nothing to do with the defence of the strategic position. A fleet may have any strategic mission whatever -- the operations plan may be either strategic offensive or defensive -- the protection of the coasts always remains a problem from which no Navy can withdraw. It is in the nature of a debt of honour. England was therefore prepared to undertake this dutiful obligation of strict coast defence in which she had failed at Yarmouth and Harlepool. This intention was further evidenced by the fact that she appeared on the scene when the German Fleet advanced towards the English coast after the battle of Jutland in 1916. However, she refused to accept battle even in her own coastal waters.

In all other purely tactical operations which were not dependent on the primary mission of defence and which served only for reconnaissance or to inflict damage on us, she was actuated or restrained to caution by military or international political motives:-- matters which lay beyond our insight because her motives for action did not derive from the strategic needs of her problem of defence.

The Grand Fleet initiated such operations with great pains and caution and broke them off opportunely. Such undertakings were not to cost more than they were worth. The Dogger Bank battle in January 1915, is one such instance. The battle of Jutland, in which the Grand Fleet failed to continue the battle on the morning of June 1st, is another example of the breaking off of an action. The strategic motive, necessary to a decision, was lacking. The 23th of August,

Handwritten notes:
The Grand Fleet
was not to cost more than they were worth
The strategic motive, necessary to a decision, was lacking.

1914, is an example of sea-raid, in which the British tiger snatched the kid (our patrol forces, which we had bound to the Heligoland rock as a bait without standing by with a loaded gun), and disappeared.

Not until May, 1916, with the addition of the newest types of vessels to the Fleet, did England consider herself sufficiently superior to risk a large scale damaging fight far from her own coasts when the opportunity accidentally presented itself at Jutland.

They hoped at the time to add another memorable day to the prestige of Trafalgar. When the expected success failed to materialize at Jutland, the tactical activities of the Grand Fleet until the end of the war were thereafter confined to the limits imposed by the defensive operations plan:- i.e. those which corresponded with their mission of defence.

B: GERMANY'S STRATEGIC POSITION.

1. The knowledge that England must have a defensive operations plan because her position with respect to us was strategically perfect, should have readily led the High Command to the conclusion that our position with respect to England must be the reverse. The fact alone that operations plan and strategic position are closely associated should have led to the conclusion that since our strategic position was faulty, the necessity for altering this position lay with the German side. The idea of a strategic offensive for the purpose of improving the strategic position must then have come to the fore.

Another train of thought leads to the same conclusion.

If an army adheres to its offensive operations plan, it is always considered favourable if the enemy does not place obstacles in the path by offering a strong resistance. The operations plan may then be carried out with greater

case. If we compare this with the sorties of our Fleet, then the fact that the English did not oppose these raids should have thus brought our operations plan closer to fulfillment.

However, no such beneficial effect was ever apparent and could not become evident, since such an operations plan, by which something was to be achieved, never existed. At sea we had assumed the strategic defensive and this was clearly evident.

There resulted for us therefore the same situation as for the English, namely, adherence to a strategic position -- and we persistently maintained this strategic position in the German Bight -- with which a defensive operations plan is necessarily associated.

No tactical offensive is capable of changing a defensive operations plan into an offensive, since an offensive operations plan has for its purpose, not the maintenance of a strategic position, but its change.

Therefore: A strategic offensive purports to change the strategic position:-- a strategic defensive, the adherence to and the maintenance of the strategic position. Hence our Fleet could make as many sorties from the German Bight as it wished: in spite of that it remained on the strategic defensive. An advance from the trenches may be carried forward to any imaginable extent, it still remains a tactical action as long as a return is made to the original position. This must be clearly perceived if we are not to run the danger of confusing a tactical offensive with a strategic offensive. It depends on the strategic foundation on which the tactical operations are based.

The Fleet therefore adhered to its strategic position in

the German Bight and consequently had as its mission the defense of the German Bight. Since, however, the English did not attack our position, the Fleet in its operations was constantly defending something which was not threatened.

A strategic position invites attack by the enemy primarily by its relation to the commerce lanes. No commerce lanes - not even those of minor importance - lay in the vicinity of the German Bight and the trade route from Scotland to Norway lay so far distant that advances to that locality remained tactical operations only, without the possibility of ever aspiring to control these lanes since continuous pressure could never be exerted. Consequently the route from Scotland to Norway does not belong in the sphere of influence of the German Bight. In the field of influence of Heligoland were no commerce lanes. Our defensive operations plan lacked an object of defense. Therefore in the North Sea there was no battle to gain command of the seas. The German Bight was, is and remains a dead angle in a dead sea.

*was
Ylva
more
under*

Once, however, we did exercise command of the sea from the German Bight, namely, with the submarines, which are capable of exerting continuous pressure on enemy commerce lanes at great distances from their base. The English attack on the German Bight against this threat found expression in the mine-fields which were laid to encircle our base.

Surveying the North Sea as a whole, we find then that both opponents were adhering to their strategic positions. Both lay some hundred nautical miles apart with defensive operations plans, without contact, without opposition and without battle objectives with respect to each other. Both were prepared to defend their position and their occupancy with their full strength. Each side thrust the initiative upon the other.

There is, however, a vast difference between the two.

The position far north in Scotland dominates all the commerce lanes of the world including our own. The position of the German Bight commands nothing.

To conquer that position in the North was advantageous since in it lay the wealth of the world: our position was not worth attacking since it contained nothing. To defend that position in the North was important, since its possession meant victory. The defence of our position was meaningless - as it contained nothing. Often as our Fleet made a sortie, often as it cruised in the dead North Sea, all such cruises were of no strategic importance as they could result in no strategic gain.

The English defensive operations plan was correct: the German defensive operations plan was wrong.

A strategic defensive, that is, adherence to a worthless strategic position was purposeless.

If the German Operations Plan instead of being based on a naive belief in the British spirit of offensive had been based on unprejudiced reason, the knowledge derived from such considerations might have led the Fleet to a strategic offensive operations plan:- i.e. a strategic attack which had as its objective the improvement of the strategic position.

2. In the Baltic the situation was different. Here at least we had a sufficiently "saturated" strategic position and consequently the mission of exercising command of the sea from this position as well as the problem of covering and protecting the commerce lanes from Sweden to Germany which had assumed such vital importance to us after the halting of our advance on the Western front. The improvement of the position, as was effectively brought about by the occupation of the Åland Islands and later by the conquering of Libau and the Balticum, was not urgently necessary to the

purely naval warfare in the Baltic, as long as the Russians remained passive. Here therefore our operations plan --- since its mission was strictly one of protection ----- was necessarily defensive.

Since the accomplishment of this mission was not dependent on the relatively weak naval forces in the Baltic (which would have hardly been adequate against the Russians had they been active) but rested on the power of the High Seas Fleet concentrated in the North Sea, it exerted its influence on the tactical operations of the Fleet in the North Sea. The security of the Baltic was not threatened by Russia but by England.

Grand Admiral von Tirpitz discusses this point in his Memoirs, pages 300/301:

"Since our Fleet was not defeated, she made it possible for the Scandinavian countries, including Holland, to maintain their neutrality in the face of England's threats. In the first decade of this century, when our Fleet was still weak, England had planned a landing on Jutland or a sort of coercion of Denmark, after the manner in which Greece was handled later on. In the face of the German Fleet, this became impracticable.

Imagine, however, that our Fleet had been totally defeated, what consequences this would have entailed for our economic and military situation. With an indented or even strongly threatened northern front we should not have been in a position to hold our East and West fronts."

It is evident that the importance of the security of the Baltic on the whole war, as described by the Admiral, must necessarily have led to caution on the part of the fleet in view of its inferiority. Thus all fleet operations in the North Sea were saddled with a hypothesis -- the safety of the Baltic.

The strategy in the Baltic and the North Sea was a unit and not separable, since the fulfilment of the mission in both theatres of war rested upon one and the same fleet.

The problem of the Naval Command consisted therefore in going over from a defensive to a strategic offensive and in giving out strategic offensive operations plan a trend which would materially improve our strategic position, in which tactics would become a means for the accomplishment of the strategic aim, and which at the same time guaranteed the security of the Baltic.

The most suitable means of attaining this aim lay in the continuation of our offensive in France and in our advance to the Atlantic as far as Brest, with the simultaneous closing off of the Baltic.

As a result of our defeat at the Marne this path was definitely closed to us. We should then have sought another way. If we now describe this other means -- and it necessarily occupies the centre of the stage in this analysis -- the particular question as to which of these two ways would have been the best, must remain untouched. It is only chosen as the primary problem dealt with in this book because throughout the greater part of the war -- for four years -- it lay open before us without our perceiving it and because it might have been chosen without presupposing the war as laid to have taken a different trend.

3.

THE ADVANCE TO THE ATLANTIC.

The object of every strategic position -- good or bad -- to which one adheres and which becomes strategic defensive, consists in exercising command of the sea from this position, i.e. controlling the commerce lanes.

One such commerce lane lay within our reach. This was the northern trade route which, converging from Denmark,

Sweden and Norway, flowed through the Kattegat and Skagerrak and passed from there into the Atlantic by way of the Shetlands. It is conceivable that the poor strategic position which we occupied, must have impelled us to stretch out our hands towards this last attainable trade route. One might have thought that this urge to exercise command of the sea, the special purpose of a defensive operations plan, would have been adequate to provide our High Command with an incentive for an offensive strategy.

The attitude of the High Command in General Headquarters was different. We permitted the Danes to close the exits from the Belt and the Sound with mine-fields and -- I believe-- we were thankful to them for the protection they offered to our command of the Baltic, as though the safety of the Baltic did not rest solely on our Fleet and as though the strength and will of the Danes would not have collapsed the moment the German Fleet no longer stood behind them.

The effect of the Belt barriers on the trade route through the Kattegat was even more trenchant. The commerce thereupon passed behind the barriers, removed from our control. Under the mask of Danish neutrality, England therefore received a trade route free gratis without the need of employing a single fishing steamer.

That means in other words:-

In spite of the fact that England felt her strategic position at the outbreak of the war to be satisfactory and remained defensive, she was still enabled to acquire the strategic position of 'Denmark' as a result of the barriers in the Belt and was thus enabled to extend her blockade lines to the very gates of Kiel.

We failed to see this connection or, at least, its strategic importance because we retained that purely tactical attitude towards the "battle in itself" and entirely disregarded

the strategic background.

2. The content of the German strategic offensive operations plan which should free our Fleet from the fatal confinement to the German Bight, should therefore have been the reopening of the Belt, an understanding with Denmark regarding the use of her territorial waters and the control of the northern trade route. This plan was doubly obvious after England had already gained this strategic position by political means.

This plan was actually strategic offensive. The moment we passed the barriers in the Belt, we broke the British blockade lines and commenced to exercise the command of the seas. Whether or not England fought us for this position remained immaterial. The less the English opposition with which we had to contend the quicker and easier the position would fall to our lot. Strategy and tactics would work together in a fertile relationship since behind all tactical operations would be a strategic plan, namely, the conquest of this position.

If the purpose of every strategic offensive operations plan is the improvement of the strategic position, it remains to be demonstrated to what extent this would have occurred. Only the most important advantages need be cited:-

As the result of such a political agreement with Denmark we should have obtained the key to the Baltic. We could have covered the Sound and the Belt from the northward and thus safeguarded the Baltic from attack by England. The Fleet -- released from considerations of the Baltic -- would become free as far as England was concerned. Even had our offensive on the west front succeeded, we should have had to safeguard the Baltic in this manner in order to be free to operate in the Atlantic. In any event we needed this key to the Baltic. Further, the northern trade route would have

fallen to our lot together with a means of exerting pressure on the Scandinavian countries and with it an increase in political power and prestige. Further, our position in the Kattegat, after the fleet had been installed there, would have constituted a threat against the English position and would have opened up further objectives nearer the Atlantic as a result.

THE DOORS OF THE ATLANTIC.

1. With the Kattegat position once securely in our possession and tactically consolidated and the fleet thus made ready for further operations, the question then arises as to whether we should adhere to this newly acquired position by remaining on the strategic defensive, and seek to exercise command of the sea from this position.

Assuming that the decision is made in this sense, then for the exercise of the command of the sea, the only trade route which comes into consideration is that between Norway and the Shetlands.

It is difficult to say what England's course might have been in the face of our interference with this trade route:-- whether she would have fought us for it or simply removed it further to the Northward beyond our reach. Whatever course she may have elected to take is immaterial. Of sole importance in estimating the resulting German strategic situation is the fact that the possibility existed either of abandoning this trade route or else withdrawing it from our sphere of influence without battle.

This possibility shows that the value of a strategic position is not determined by the mere existence of a trade route, but that all depends upon the importance of these trade routes to our own or our enemies' vital needs. Since this trade route was not vital to England -- her large arteries of commerce all lay secure in the Atlantic -- the threat we should have been able to exercise from the Kattegat position could have been borne by England in emergency.

England could challenge us for the position or leave it. Then, however, our advances from this base would have

been simply in the nature of tactical operations from a defensive base and a possible battle would have been a "battle for itself" without direct strategic consequences.

In spite of this however our position at sea would have been improved over that in the German Bight as we should then have had at our disposal an operations base extending from Bogen to the Ems with all of the natural tactical advantages deriving from such a base. In spite of the lack of strategic effect, a battle from such a position which threatened England to a greater or less extent would partake of the nature of a struggle for the position.

Strategically, however, the German position would still have been open to improvement. As before, the incentive towards the strategic offensive would still have remained with us.

2. Owing to the fact that our position in the Kattegat would still have been open to improvement it follows that the strategic offensive is subject to a definite law, namely, that the offensive operations plan continually drives the High Command from one position to another until equality at least or, if possible, a superiority is attained through the strategic position. The struggle for position then ceases and the fight for command of the seas and control of the commerce arteries begins.

Strategic position is geographical position and the offensive strategy can have no other meaning than the attainment of a geographical position from which the battle over the arteries of commerce may be initiated. We must first be able to approach the trade lanes before we start to fight for their control.

Once we are enabled to seize control of a trade route

the enemy is compelled to fight in its defense.

It will be obvious therefore that a maritime operations plan is dependent solely on strategic position and not on strength relations of the fleets. Both strategic position and operations plan are geographic by nature, determined by geography and therefore removed from the influence of the human will. They point persistently to the ultimate goal of the strategic offensive, without regard to the mutual strength relationships of the fleets, to the equality of geographical position. What is generally termed "strategy" in the technical naval literature means simply tactical operations which resolve into battle tactics on contact with the enemy.

Therefore: Naval strategy is the science of geographical position: its changes and maintenance with respect to trade routes. Offensive strategy is the acquisition of such a geographical position: the defensive strategy its maintenance.

The difference lies solely in the fact that with armies on land, strategy is specially confined to a smaller area, and that variety of terrain offers a greater choice of possibilities. Strategy on land is changeable and dynamic. At sea, the strategy is bound by the configuration of the coast and is determined by the proximity of the sea lanes to the geographic position without wide possibilities of choice. Naval strategy therefore extends over wide areas and cannot -- without annulling itself -- be held back by territorial frontiers which have been accidentally drawn upon the charts in the course of history.

The strategic offensive operations plan is determined by geography. There is no choice.

Independent of the strength relations as the general trend of the operations plan may be, its tactical execution

and the question of how far it may be carried out, is definitely dependent on such relationships. It depends on our own estimates and fleet strength as to what individual stages are most suitably chosen in our progress towards the ultimate goal and how one is to build further from stage to stage.

But even when one is compelled by superior forces to maintain the strategic defensive, the will towards the strategic offensive still lives and receives a tremendous impetus.

Two things only can kill it:-

- (a) The lack of a geographical objective;
- (b) Our own will which voluntarily renounces the strategic offensive and thereupon persists in a poor strategic position and goes over to a defensive operations plan.

This was our fate in the world war.

5. The next stage in our progressive offensive would have been the southern part of Norway, which we first would have had to free from British coercion.

It need not be objected that such a war policy initiated by our fleet through Belt in the Kattegat would have been impossible. Whether our political leaders would have been in agreement is a question for itself. Had the High Command of the Army and the Naval Staff been united in the knowledge that only in this way could the war be conducted (after the west had been obstructed): had they thrown all into the balance and repeatedly insisted upon their position, the political leaders might have been convinced. One cannot believe that States which, owing to the accident of geographical position, had become enmeshed in the machinery of war between two large powers, did not feel their own urge towards negotiations and the wish to maintain friendly relations with such a powerful neighbor as Germany was at that time. It would be underrating the intelligence of the statesmen of such nations not to ascribe to them an insight into the fact that

Germany would only make demands for the limited duration of the war under the bitter compulsion of war necessity, which might be open to discussion, since they bore no animus. Certainly these states would not feel the need of making such offers in their own interests, but their intelligent readiness to negotiation is not open to question.

4. Carrying the theory of the strategic offensive to its conclusion, the Norwegian position would then be used as a base for the jump across the North Sea to the ultimate goal, a geographical position, the conquest of the Shetland Islands for instance. The Shetlands are, however, the gate of the Atlantic and this would be forced provided the leap were successful. The goal was there -- whether it would be reached or not remained for the battle to decide. England would then have been compelled to give battle under any circumstances -- not a battle for prestige or other matters, but in defence of a strategic position and for the decision as to who should possess the gateway of the Atlantic -- England or us -- who should win the naval war -- England or us.

Here we should certainly have found the battle which was so often demanded from the German Right -- not only one battle; but possibly more than we desired.

All battles however would have been fought under tactically favorable conditions, i.e. in the vicinity of our own bases in and relatively restricted waters which our weak reconnaissance could easily bridge. (Distances:-

Norway to Shetlands ----	160 miles
Scapa-Flow to Shetlands	120 "
Firth of Forth to Shetlands	240 "
Wilhelmshaven -Jutland battlefield----	80 miles)

We might then have employed airplanes and airships for reconnaissance which could have taken off sooner in these shorter cruises even in the face of adverse winds, owing to

the greater possibilities of landing on our coast from Norway to the Ems.

The Fleet Commander would not have been blind but would have been given insight with adequate service of information. He could choose his time to fight or not. Many opportunities would have offered. We would have exercised the threat; we would have been conducting the strategic attack and the greatest asset of the leader, the initiative, would have been in our hands.

Thus every battle, every minor engagement, would aid the decision. Here we should have had battles of the greatest strategic importance -- no "battle for itself" whose effect fades away as soon as it becomes evident that it possesses no strategic foundation. What a far-reaching influence the battle of Jutland would have had had we, fresh from the effects of this battle, cleared up the Belt question, thus putting this battle on a strategic basis and thereupon becoming aware of our strategic objective.

There, near the gateway of the Atlantic, attacking England's strategic position, the battle must have been fought to a finish. What the decision would have been no man can say and speculation on the matter is useless.

CHAPTER II

THE STRATEGIC DEFENSIVE.

A thorough study of the strategic position in which one finds oneself at the outbreak of war, reveals two things.

First it shows what course is best to pursue, and for the rest, it serves to clarify the situation in which one remains, in the event that this course is not followed. The contrast resulting from such a comparative estimate of the situation, should have made the urge towards the strategic offensive even more obvious -- or at least, since we failed to take the strategic offensive -- should have served to clarify the position to which we adhered and in which we remained on the defensive. Our next problem therefore will be a more detailed investigation of the strategic properties of the German Right.

1. If we consider a moment the naval war between the English and Dutch in the seventeenth century, we find both opponents in strategic positions given by their coasts. On the one side the Thames and on the other the coasts of the Netherlands, while between the two flowed the streams of world commerce to the Dutch and English harbours. Neither strategic position was capable of improvement, since each side was lacking in a geographic objective. Both sides were therefore compelled to maintain their positions and to assume the strategic offensive. Both positions were approximately equal in value and therefore each side had the possibility of exercising command of the seas from its own position, that is, to fight for the possession of the vital trade routes.

This shows that naval warfare is dependent on two factors: first on the presence of a fleet and secondly on the strategic position. If one of these factors is lacking then the naval

warfare ceases. If a fleet is lacking the naval warfare is finished before it is begun, since maritime warfare cannot be conducted without a fleet. If the equal value of strategic position is altered then the trade routes shift more and more into the possession of the stronger position until great disparity in the positions is reached, when the vital arteries can no longer be reached from the weaker position. The naval war comes to an end in spite of the presence of a fleet.

This extreme inequality of the strategic positions was the case with us. From the German Bight it was impossible to reach the vital arteries of world commerce which lay in the Atlantic, much less bring them under our control.

The renunciation of the strategic offensive, that is, the failure to undertake the advance towards the Atlantic, meant nothing less than a complete renunciation of the naval war: that is, we had built a fleet and then failed to use it. Had this point been made clear to General Headquarters, this knowledge would have been an unexcelled means of forcing the adoption of the strategic offensive. A naval war cannot be won if it is not conducted, and the reward cannot be reaped unless one is prepared to accept the conditions. That was what we desired, however, and what we demanded of the fleet.

The naval war could not be won from the German Bight because the war at sea could not be conducted from that position. The attitude of our fleet remained without influence on the winning of the war as long as, in our extremely poor strategic position, the strategic defensive operations plan was in force.

It could be lost, however, if we allowed ourselves to be defeated and thereby opened up the Baltic.

THE STRATEGIC VACUUM.

Every naval warfare revolves about the freedom of the seas for one's own shipping.

This freedom was lost to us by the geographical position, on England's declaration of war alone. Only he who controls the trade routes through his geographical position obtains this freedom. The Grand Fleet, which deprived us of the freedom of the seas was able, solely by maintaining its strategic position and by making use of its geographical position, to force us to capitulate.

We could therefore fight all the battles in the North Sea we wished -- provided they were offered -- geography, on which everything depended, would not be altered in the slightest and the freedom of the seas would remain outside of the situation.

From this it follows:-

No fleet action in the North Sea is capable of bringing a decision.

2. One cannot alter the geography. Since we held the opinion, however, that a battle would bring us victory in this war, we have, exactly stated, demanded of the fleet that it alter the conformation of the earth's surface -- therefore we demanded the impossible.

There follows therefore the axiom:-

What is lost by battle may be regained by battle, but what is lost through geography can only be won through geography.

3. With strategic positions of equal value, the battle alone is decisive. As in war on land, the fleets then become the sole war objectives. In positions such as in the North Sea, geography alone is decisive. The fleets cease to be war objectives.

Between these two limiting conditions lie all manner of possibilities. What in continental warfare is clear and concise in naval warfare becomes elastic and depends upon the geography.

From this it follows:-

Fleets are war objectives in accordance with the geographical situation in which they fight.

4. Geography therefore is the factor which determines the importance of the battle. Battles vary fundamentally since in every battle the associated geographical position lies hidden and unnoticed. This geographical factor is also expressed in the "tactical will to battle". One may be ever so offensively disposed, but in a position where nothing is dependent on the battle, there is no place for a "tactical will to battle". It is lacking even when one thinks to possess it. There remains only the will to inflict damage.

One needs only to test the events in the North Sea in an unbiased manner to find something deeper hidden beneath the surface of the tactical form and to realize that in all actions -- i.e., of both opponents -- the geographical essence of the situation is manifested. The will for decision is radiated from none of the enemies' decisions -- solely the will to inflict damage.

From this it follows that:-

The "tactical will to battle" is a correlate of geography.

For the conduct of the war in the World War this meant the urge towards the strategic offensive: for the fleet, that they found themselves in the North Sea in a strategic vacuum.

5.

The "battle for itself".

In a situation in which one element necessary to naval warfare is lacking, the strategic position, there appears the remarkable phenomenon of a fleet in existence, but non-existent as far as the war is concerned, because it is excluded by the geographical position. The strategic objective, which is the object of the struggle, is lacking. At the de-

sixive moment we shunted the fleet out of the current of the war. Its activities were to no purpose.

The presumption that a battle fought under such conditions must possess peculiar characteristics is obvious. Therefore we shall examine this battle in more detail.

1. A battle, as a purely tactical action, means nothing at all with regard to the war. It gains meaning for the war only when an obstacle which impedes progress towards the strategic objective has been removed. According to Clausewitz, the battle is simply a means for the purpose of the strategy. A naval battle, then, receives its decisive purport primarily through the fact that a strategic position is conquered or else the road to command of the seas is either made free or obstructed.

It demonstrates also -- and this is clearly evident -- that the naval battle is dominated by the same factors as the war at sea from which it derives. This also is composed of a strategic and tactical part. The tactical part is the action; the strategic part its effect. If, as in the North Sea, the strategic part is lacking, the effect is also lacking and only the tactical part remains. If the strategic objective is lacking, then the battle ceases to be a means. It becomes purposeless and therefore an end in itself.

The "battle for itself" is therefore a tactical phenomenon without war-decisive purport.

2. In her position England possessed everything, but we renounced the strategic attack. When both opponents refrain when neither wishes to wrest something from the other. One does not engage for nothing. A battle is no longer called for it is no longer necessary. A battle which is not necessary becomes dependent on chance, in which the term "chance" means

all the uncertainties and miscalculations which are necessarily associated with the uncertainties of war. Schoultz, in his book: "With the Grand Fleet in the World War", states that the reason which led the Grand Fleet to put to sea on the occasion of the battle of Jutland was that the Fleet wished to stage a demonstration off the Kattegat to relieve the pressure on the Russian forces in the Baltic while we, on the other hand, erroneously assumed that the battle of Jutland was the result of a change in the strategy of our Fleet Commander, Admiral Beheer. A change in the strategy did not come to the conscious attention of the English: a natural result, since a change in our strategy never actually took place. The strategy of all of our Fleet Commanders was the invariable strategic defensive. The battle of Jutland was therefore an accidental battle to inflict damage.

The battle for itself is a battle of chance without strategic motive.

3. A battle which is unnecessary is never fought, with the exception of those brought on by chance. The four-year progress of the war without battle is only natural. There are certain imponderables in this world, and one of these is the feeling of responsibility on the part of the leader. Admirals -- who exercise command at sea under the responsibility of their country and who must send men to their death -- wish, above all things, to feel in their own conscience the urge of absolute necessity. Only when one possesses something the other must have in order to live, and which the other cannot yield without dying, do battles arise. Not sooner! This "something", the trade route, was lacking in the North Sea. The well-known sentence:-- "Had we had a battle, then we should etc. etc." is erroneously conceived. Even this "if" is illusory. The battle in the North Sea is solely a

battle of thoughts and desires.

The "Battle for itself" is the battle which does not exist.

- d. If we go to the root of the battle, its effect on the war decision, nothing remains but the husk of a battle, a purely external image of material damage. In no contact with the enemy -- whether it be called a battle or an action -- will anything result but a more or less great infliction of material damage.

To enter voluntarily into such an engagement, without strategic urge, was a course open to each side at any time. One needed only to approach the enemy coast and wait for such a time as suited the enemy. Then the battle would be engaged with reasonable certainty.

Strategically such a battle appears as follows:-

For the attacked it lay within the field of coast defence. For them there exists no strategic motive other than the fulfilment of a duty of honour. For the attacking force, it lies outside the realm of the defence problem. It has no further strategic motive. For it, the action becomes a purely strategic operation without motive. For it, there remains solely the motive of inflicting damage. For this purpose, however, an action in enemy waters is the most unfavourable locality conceivable. Therefore neither of the opponents took such a course. A battle in the open North Sea, free from the coastal waters in the widest sense, lay outside the defence problem of both opponents. Such an action would mean the same for each side, namely, solely a tactical operation with the aim of damaging the enemy.

Therefore both opponents were admittedly and tacitly prepared for such a battle only on favourable opportunity and in a favourable locality. Favourable opportunity to inflict

damage means, however, own local superiority. Under all circumstances one must avoid the risk of such an engagement to inflict damage being turned into one's own defeat. Therefore both sides hesitate to expose themselves to positions in which they cannot control the situation. As soon as the word "risk" is heard, however faintly, the will to damage ceases. Hence the will to fight to a finish in such actions to inflict damage, is lacking.

The fleets cease to be war objectives and sink to the level of objects to be damaged.

The war at sea degenerates from strategy into a struggle for favourable opportunities.

The battle "for itself" is an action to inflict damage and a search for favourable opportunities.

The battle "for itself" is therefore a battle without motive, without battle objective and without purpose. It is a battle of chance, separated from all strategy. It is -- when it occurs -- simply a damaging action without influence on the war. The operations plan placed great faith in this battle and endowed it with qualities it did not possess, namely, existence and meaning for the war decision. To bring this phantom of battle, this unreal decisive action into the light of history and in the world of facts, was the problem which was set for war fleet in the war.

It was incapable of solution.

CHAPTER XI

THE POSITION IN THE NORTH SEA.

The task which we have set ourselves up is now culminated in showing that a dualism prevails in war on the sea, and that naval warfare and naval battles involve two factors which must work together in close co-operation for success.

The fleet necessarily requires a strategic position and vice versa. A fleet is not simply lost somewhere in universal space but has material existence in some definite situation in which it operates and to which it, together with all its activities, remains bound. Even a battle is not an absolute factor, something which exists freely in space, but derives meaning solely from its relation to the strategic basis, on which the fleet is dependent. We cannot simply ignore this strategic basis, as was done in our naval operations plan and as is usually the case when the events of the war are under discussion in the technical literature. This leads to a fallacy. Only when we view the tactical operations of the war in their relation to the strategic basis, do they assume their true complexion. The geographic basis with its advantages and disadvantages, is strategy, and therefore comprises the mission which the fleet, as the tactical weapon, is called upon to fulfil.

As we have seen, our strategic defensive, our adherence to the strategic position in the German Bight, was wrong. We shall now investigate the effects of this erroneous operations plan.

1. THE WAR OF DEFENSE AND THE STRATEGIC MOTIVE

The motives which impelled the Grand Fleet to engage in battles do not derive, on any occasion, from its strategic-defensive operations plan. We never at any time threatened its strategic position, let alone attacked it. Its motives for attack arose primarily from the subordinate mission of coast defence, in-

cluding the protection of troop transports (which were already geographically well protected) and secondarily from the military object to observe our fleet movements and to inflict damage whenever favourable opportunity offered.

It was from these military motives alone, and never for strategic reasons, that these sweeps of the English Fleet and its component parts were undertaken. The Grand Fleet was never compelled to seek battle with us in the vicinity of the German Bight under the existing unfavourable conditions, prepared though it was to defend its coasts and to anticipate chances to inflict damage when these corresponded to its idea of "favourable opportunity".

Our mission, under our strategic-defensive operations plan, was the same. We also were under obligation to defend our strategic position and coasts -- which, owing to the limited extent of our coast-line, were identical. We also were never attacked. Therefore for us no motive for attack flowed from our operations plan. For our fleet there remained solely the military incentive to damage the enemy and consequently there existed for us also the idea of "favourable opportunity".

Similar as the missions of the two fleets appear, there was in reality a profound difference between them. That is evidenced by the concept we held of "favourable opportunity". We did not wish to engage in battle at any time and any place, but hoped to create a situation by our activities which would draw the enemy fleet towards us.

The fleet was therefore deliberately to bring about a battle through its own activities. The compulsion rested upon us. The strategically erroneous operations plan stands clearly revealed in the light of this urge.

The strategic defensive, this adherence in the German Bight, was clearly proven to be wrong. The fleet could only be freed from this position by an offensive. Since, however, we neither

realized that the fault lay with the strategy nor could we form a clear concept of a strategic offensive, the strategic impulse sought release in tactics. We thought we were taking the strategic offensive with our fleet operations and confused strategic with tactical offensive. We sought to cure strategic errors with tactics. That such a course is impossible will be made clear by the following considerations:-

We wished to force the English to make a closer approach to our position. In our sweeps in the North Sea, however, lay no strategic compulsion for him, since these did not injure the British. Even the bombardment of the coasts (Yaroslith, etc.) were attacks on local objectives. The compulsion in such cases was not strategic but entirely local and died out beyond the coast defence limits, therefore, the German Fleet Commander possessed neither the power nor means to force an engagement when and where he desired. If therefore -- aside from pure chance -- we wished to bring on a battle with some degree of probability, it was necessary to penetrate those parts of the North Sea in which the Grand Fleet was accustomed to cruise, a penetration to which we inevitably arrive with any tactical presentation of the war.^z That means -- pure chance always excepted -- that we should have been compelled to accept battle where and when it suited the English and under conditions which, quite rightly, conflicted with our concept of a favourable opportunity. We cannot, after the event, simply ignore the actual existing inferiority of our fleet and deny to our fleet as well as the British, its right to its concept of a favourable opportunity. We did not draw the English to us; but the English drew us towards themselves.^{xx}

^z See v. Schulte. The Grand Fleet made a practice of not extending their operations further south than the 60th degree of latitude (Lat. of Firth of Forth).

^{xx} It is highly interesting to follow the manner in which the supplementary orders to the operations plan progressed step by step in this attraction. When the British failed to appear, the freedom of action of the Fleet Commander was gradually extended. The idea of the blockade remained but its radius increased. In place of the effort to equalize the strength relations by night torpedo-boat attacks, etc., increasingly important advances of the fleet were substituted -- corresponding to the increased radius -- as far as the enemy coasts, after abandoning the idea of equalizing the strength ratio.

On us lay the strategic compulsion of our poor position: the English lay under no such compulsion. Therefore we sought battle, without asking its purpose -- that might wait. The English controlled the situation, not through the superiority of their fleet, but as a result of their brilliant strategic position. The Grand Fleet was mistress of the situation and proscribed for us the law of tactical action; the greatest asset of command lay in her hands. Such was the effect of the strategic error on our tactics. Since it was strategic, it could only be remedied by strategy.

In our hypothetical strategic offensive, matters would have been different. As soon as we broke the barriers of the Belt, England would have perceived the intentions of our High Command and would have been forced to decide whether to allow us to occupy this strategic position or to fight us for it. We should have stopped in their path and the English fleet had to come to us if they wished to hinder our advance towards the Atlantic. They would then have been compelled to accept battle under conditions which were favourable to us -- not to them. We could have accepted battle or refused it, as seemed to us most advantageous. England would have been forced to come to us again and again seeking battle, while we had the choice of favourable opportunity. The situation as it existed in the North Sea would have been completely reversed. We should have exercised the compulsion. We would have been masters of the situation and we should have dictated the tactical action.

Every strategic offensive contains the urge towards the trade routes and thus displays the will to exercise command of the seas. Therefore the enemy is compelled somehow to stem the tide of this offensive and thus the entire naval war may be decided in battle about this offensive, without

the struggle for the trade routes ever materializing. A war conducted from the German point, however, reveals to the enemy the opposite -- a rannastion of everything.

In the same manner as the offensive through the Belt, the offensive in the West would have developed along identical lines had we won the battle of the Marne and had the Army been able to consolidate the position of Brest for us. Then, in place of Denmark and political negotiations, we should have had to deal with Holland. The question of the Schelde, as an essential intermediate base, would have become acute. Then also, our strategic goal, the Atlantic, would have been fully revealed. The Grand Fleet would have been compelled to shift its base from Scapa Flow to the Southward in order to prevent our transfer to Brest. She would have been compelled to fight every sortie of our fleet. At one blow the dead North Sea would have been brought to life. Then a sea-lane would have traversed the North Sea west and lay in the arteries of the Atlantic. Our possession of this sea-lane would have been challenged. Exactly as above in the struggle for the gateway to the Atlantic, the battles would have taken place in the vicinity of our coasts under conditions favourable to us. The decision would have fallen in the battle for this objective, possibly in the North Sea. But Brest was essential to this, as well as the will to the Atlantic.

2. THE WAR OF DEFENCE AND THE MILITARY ASPECT OF THE BATTLE

1. Let us assume that the fortunes of war had granted us a battle in the North Sea -- an anticipated battle of Jutland -- then, as far as its influence on the war was concerned, it would have been of as little value as the actual Jutland battle, since there was, as explained, no strategic factor

in the battle.

In the dead North Sea was nothing positive to decide. In spite of tactical successes the strategic position remained unchanged. A tactical success can only be evaluated as a victory in connection with the strategic position.

These considerations were so foreign to our reasoning that we conducted the war for two and a half years after the battle of Jutland without coming to a realization of these facts and even to-day we tend to ascribe the negative influence of this battle on the victory, to its lack of magnitude.

For us the idea that a battle can be without influence on the victory is so difficult that we must always seek images which will bring the geographic position vividly before our eyes. Hence, the following example:- Let us imagine two fleets in the Caspian Sea. Then it is obvious at once that it is immaterial whether a battle takes place or not, what the extent of the damage, or which side is the victor. Not a single ship on the seven seas of the world will be forced out of her course as a result of the battle. Granted, the North Sea was open at its north end and only closed by the British blockading forces. The German operations plan never touched this blockade line, even in thought. It had the same effect as though a solid strip of land bridged the sea from Scotland to Norway. If we imagine this condition then the likeness to the Caspian Sea is complete.

- E. Counting up the number of sweeps the English Fleet made in the early part of the war leads to the erroneous conclusion of so many sweeps, so many battles, which we might have had. We had only one opportunity; that which we accidentally took. There is no reason to assume that Eng-

land could have drawn other conclusions from this battle than those which we ourselves arrived at after the action off Heligoland on August 28, 1914. The sweeps of individual squadrons are the English counterpart of our own line of patrols off Heligoland and equally perverted from a tactical standpoint, since they were exposed to attack by overwhelming forces. These sweeps should have ceased with the first reverse, as did our own line of patrols after the 28th of August. We have always fixed our thoughts on "the" great battle only and failed to see the chances which were offered to us. The fact that we did not prepare a "28th of August" for the English must be included amongst the opportunities missed in the early part of the war.

Further, it is not clear why the Grand Fleet should have suffered greater material damage in such a battle than she did at Jutland. England had then become more cautious and in order to bring on a second engagement we should have had to approach even closer, possibly as far as the English coast, as we actually did in August 1916. That was not voluntary but was due to the urge of the strategic position which drove us on. The consequence of the battle of Jutland was that the English Fleet attracted us more strongly than ever. The tactical operations were not facilitated but rendered more difficult, in this search for a second battle.

Whether we found battle off the English coast or not, did not depend on the German Fleet, but on the English. The damaged party becomes cautious, the more so the greater the damage suffered in the reverse.

A tactical opportunity missed is always regrettable. However, the fate of the war did not depend upon this. The

typical course of the war remained the same, with or without the battle, so long as we confined our fleet to the North Sea. The decisive trend of the war did not depend on the battle but on the operations plan.

For this reason everything would have been altered by the strategic offensive. Under these conditions a cautious attitude would have aided the English not at all. If they failed to return then our advance towards the Atlantic would have progressed with so much greater facility. On the contrary, however, they would have been compelled to return. The urge which we exerted would have augmented with every success.

3. THE WAR OF DEFENSE AND THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF THE BATTLE

The question as to what political impression the battle would have made is a matter of personal conviction, since England, since she has begun a war, is tenacious. The following, however, is indisputable. Political weight attaches to a battle because it is the outward and visible sign that one is attempting to impose his will on the enemy. In the North Sea there was no battle of influence on the war and consequently no political success. For this reason only, no political capital could be derived from the battle of Jutland. First impressions faded quickly. A sword of Damocles which is unable to fall, holds no terrors.

It can hardly be assumed that England, with her strategic habits of thought, did not understand this clearly. Only we were inclined to overestimate the political influence of this battle, because with our purely tactical mode of thinking, we held every battle to be "eo ipso" of decisive influence on the war and failed to perceive the dualism inherent in naval warfare.

THE WAR OF DEFENSE AND THE INITIATIVE

In the summer of 1915 the idea of a battle off Scotland was discussed. It was proposed that we proceed to the Firth of Forth, to wait there and offer battle to the English. The plan was not put into execution and is of interest here for the following reason only:-

The moment our Fleet appeared off Scotland the initiative would have passed from our hands to the British, because it would then have depended entirely upon the Grand Fleet whether or not action would be engaged, as well as the time and circumstances. This slipping of the initiative from our hands into those of the British brings the false operations plan with its lack of objective into a clear light. During the period of waiting there would have been nothing to occupy the Fleet since there was neither trade route in the North Sea nor a strategic position as objective. All the tactical operations of the Fleet show this discouraging aimlessness. The main question as to the purpose of the advance always remains unanswered. This we more or less intuitively sensed, without arriving at a conscious knowledge of the reason.

If one has a strategic offensive in view, without knowing what demands it will make, then one seeks to provide for himself all tactical advantages possible. He who is confronted with the certainty of battle for a strategic offensive, however, does not need to plan a battle merely to inflict damage in an unfavourable locality, in which all the tactical traps are voluntarily surrendered from the start.

The mere fact that we sought an engagement should have apprised us of the fact that something was wrong. The battle is not the goal, but the goal is determined by the strategy from which the battle follows as an unavoidable necessity, if the strategic plan is right. It does not need to be sought.

Where the goal is lacking the obstacles to the goal, which must be cleared away by battle, are also lacking. The battle is always the means, never the purpose.

5. THE FLEET IN BEING

The strategic operations plan is the basis of conduct of all wars. Therefore, in the final analysis geography proved itself stronger than all desires and compelled the fleet to carry out what the geographic operations plan demanded.

Our powerful fleet, however, could do more than simply defend the German Bight, which was so worthless that no one wanted it. Above all, this purely defensive operations plan contradicted the necessity of the war, since England had raised the question of sea-power and had therefore become our principal enemy.

This persistent adherence of our fleet to the west triangle, against which we instinctively revolted, made it into a "fleet in being", which is characterized by the fact that its mission is fulfilled solely by its existence. The characteristic activities of a fleet in being in the North Sea, follow from the fact that no tactical success is capable of altering the situation, but that a reverse will displace the position to the negative side and may jeopardize the remaining possessions:— the Baltic and therefore the possibility of holding out on land, as well as the submarine warfare and the whole outcome of the war. Nothing can be won; but everything may be lost.

If we compare this mission with the actual attitude of our fleet in the war, then it will be seen that our Fleet Command acted correctly in accordance with the geographical position. Geography, in our case the geography of the strategic vacuum, reigned supreme.

The mission of our fleet as a "fleet in being" imposed by the geographical position, was one which our fleet could adequately

fulfil. The preservation of our last possession -- the Baltic -- was accomplished. The British Fleet was bound, though only partially so, and only to such an extent as to prevent the Grand Fleet from participating in the attempt to force the Dardanelles -- which might have succeeded had this binding been lacking. It did not suffice, however, to prevent the Grand Fleet from organizing the anti-submarine campaign.

Damage, which was never inflicted, is easily overlooked.

Assume that our Fleet had been seriously damaged, then for England all danger of this fleet undertaking an offensive would have vanished. Even had we remained only so strong after this defeat that England might hesitate to risk the penetration of the Baltic and we continued to receive ore from Sweden, the binding effect of our stronger and undefeated fleet would have ceased. What would then have been the probable result of the British Dardanelles campaign? What would have been the attitude of Bulgaria and Roumania had the Dardanelles fallen? Should we have continued to receive wheat from Roumania and the oil which was so essential to the conduct of the war? Would not the Allied armies which were bound in Gallipoli and later in Salonika, have appeared on the Western front or in Russia via the Crimea? Would not the transportation of material to Russia through the Mediterranean have been much more effective than the meagre store of supplies which trickled in by way of the White Sea?

All of these eventualities were prevented by the fleet in being. Without this quiet effectiveness of the fleet our ability to hold out for four years would have been as little possible as the submarine warfare -- which almost saved us.

In this quiet effect lay the positive, in fact the only positive factor in the situation, which was finally achieved in spite of everything. And it is because it was the opposite of the complete negative to which our tactics continued to cling in

the strategically empty North Sea, that it stands out in such bold relief.

It is quite comprehensible that this very circumscribed task was felt to be disproportionate to the strength of our fleet. We failed to appreciate the true underlying reasons for this and did not understand clearly that it was the "Defensive War in the North Sea" which conjured up all the evil.

Not until the English had girdled the German Bight with mine-fields against the submarines and the fleet was forced to engage in mine-sweeping operations, did our fleet succeed in entering on a strategic course, namely, the defence of the German Bight against this attack. But even this correct employment of the fleet did not bridge the disparity which existed between the fighting strength of the fleet and the service it was called upon to perform.

6. STRATEGY AS THE BASIS OF OPERATIONS.

It has occasionally been asserted that had we been completely victorious in battle, for example, on the occasion of our raid on Hartlepool on December 16, 1914, (when a fleet action might have resulted, as both fleets were at sea at the same time) then we should have automatically gone over to the offensive. The battle is assumed to be primary and the improvement of the strategic position a necessary consequence of the victory.

The fact that, had the fortunes of war smiled upon us, we might have chanced upon the strategic offensive through the roundabout way of tactics, is indisputable, although it is highly improbable. Our attitude after Jutland and our tactical habits of thought argue against it. We only contend that it is wrong to build a war plan on this initial premise.

It must be repeatedly asserted that our analysis does not hinge on the fact of whether a greater victory -- say than that of Jutland -- might have lighted us along the path to strategic knowledge and thus have rescued us from the North Sea,

or whether, persisting in our attitude, we should have remained in the North Sea. The answer to this question is a matter of personal conviction, and in matters of faith no argument is convincing.

We are dealing here with the objective and purely military question of whether our concept of naval warfare and consequently our activities, were right or wrong and whether it was right or wrong to say:- "First the battle and then perhaps -- depending on the outcome -- the strategic offensive".

Sometimes a trivial analogy from our daily lives, even though imperfect, will clarify the matter better than long explanations. Hence the following example:-

When a person has a note to cash, he usually saves and voluntarily takes such measures as are possible, to insure the cash being ready on the date it is due. He will not content himself with buying a lottery ticket. If he does gamble and win, he will be called lucky, but no one will presume to argue that the proper way to cash a note is to buy a lottery ticket.

The operations plan is the foundation and it is the function of tactics to carry into execution this previously-determined operations plan. From the fact alone that after such a battle we should have had to concern ourselves about the strategic position, shows clearly that that was our true objective to which our will naturally turned. The offensive operations plan is the expression of this will, the payment of the note in order to make ourselves independent.

One does not seek battle haphazard, without plan or objective, merely for the sake of battle, leaving to chance and to the fortunes of war the question as to whether the victory will be adequate and whether or not one will ultimately arrive at the correct strategy.

As a matter of fact the fortunes of war did not favour us

and we did not arrive at the proper operations plan.

Strategy is the foundation on which the tactical structure is reared. Tactics are the means for the purpose of the strategy. Thus it has always been and always will be and it is impossible to understand why in this war the opposite should be true.

7. OUR POSITION AS A CONSEQUENT POSITION.

It has been occasionally represented, with regard to our position, that the High Command fully appreciated the value of the Danish position, but that it would have been a hopeless task to convince the Foreign Office. The Fleet, in spite of superior knowledge, was therefore forced to accept this unfavourable position and to make the best of it.

Looking back on the matter from to-day, it is not a question for discussion as to the probable success such a struggle with politics might have achieved; the fact alone is important that the Naval Command never made the demand for the Belt to be opened. In the Kattegat they saw only a ship channel and a very welcome prolongation of the German Bight, but failed to realise its strategic value because they believed in the decisive importance of the battle "for itself", i. e. they did not realise that the operations plan was wrong. Had the true value of this position been realised, then from the moment of the deadlock on the western front until the last day of the war, this question would have been threshed out. The Fleet in the North Sea could then have calmly accepted the consequences of its position and the arguments about the battle would never have arisen.

For the future there follows the lesson that even in time of peace we must arrive at a clear understanding of the strategic position with which we go into the war. Had this been done in our country, then the nation would have entered the war

with that essential and unified operations plan which includes politics, army and navy.

3. THE WAR OF DEFENSE AND THE SUBMARINE WAR.

The second part of the war stands under the sign of the submarine warfare which, in spite of all political obstacles, almost brought us peace. In the mine-warfare it opened up for the fleet a strategically correct, although unpretentious field of effective operations. Little as may be argued strategically -- *robur sic stantibus* -- against the employment of the fleet in this phase of the war, this does not mean that our operations plan was correct.

Only owing to the fact that the operations plan started the fleet out of the war and in a manner of speaking "put it on ice", did the submarine come forward, in spite of all hindrances, and become the sole weapon against England. A particular role had been assigned the submarine in battle, particularly against the "Island Power", but it was only the adherence of the fleet to the war triangle which made this weapon into our sole hope for peace. The submarine warfare in this form and the enlistment of the fleet in mine-sweeping operations were the direct results of the defensive operations plan.

The employment of the submarine against enemy forces, often as it was attempted, always failed of success in the situation created in the North Sea by this defensive operations plan. With a strategic offensive the chances were better. Here, with the strategic urge drawing the Grand Fleet towards us again and again, possibilities of effective military employment would have arisen which the North Sea could not offer. As with the idea of a favourable opportunity, the desire for an equalization of strength in the face of the strength ratios of the forces was

comprehensible. Here the possibility at least would have been given by the submarine, although in another form.

To what extent we might have succeeded with our strategic offensive must remain an open question. In any event, the mine war, which we experienced in the North Sea, would have been impossible off the Norwegian Coast and in the deep channels of the Skaggeiak. Many submarine losses would have been spared us, and the mine-searching apparatus which was developed as a result of the mine warfare in the German Bight, would have been rendered superfluous. Under these conditions a serious mine warfare in the German Bight would have scarcely been initiated. The German Bight would have protected itself. With the initiation of the offensive it would have sunk to the relative unimportance of its strategic value. No one would have been interested in it. It would have been reduced in importance to a repair base far behind the lines.

In the German Bight we were compelled to enlist the Fleet in the service of the submarine. The false operations plan deprived us for a second time of our weapon against England -- the Fleet. It forced us to lay aside one weapon in order to make use of the other. In the offensive, both would have worked together in close co-operation. The binding which our Fleet in Norwegian waters would have exerted on the British Fleet would have prevented them to a great extent from engaging in anti-submarine operations. The extent of the resultant restrictions on the anti-submarine campaign is a matter of opinion, but they would nevertheless have been exercised. Above all, however, the two weapons would have mutually supplemented each other. Valuable as the submarine may be, it can exercise only partial command of the sea. It is able to destroy trade routes, but cannot protect its own. It is able to dive under the blockade but cannot break it.

that can only be accomplished by a fleet operating from a strategic position. What brilliant success might have crowned the submarine warfare had the battle for the gateway of the Atlantic been conducted at the same time!

To employ an analogy -- we starved in jail and almost succeeded in making our jailer starve with us, without once reaching for the bread that lay all the while on the table. That was once more the fault of our operations plan which ignored geographical considerations.

9. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION.

We are constantly being drawn into psychological considerations because otherwise the riddle remains unsolved, why our fleet with all its training and eagerness for battle was still unable to find it. Neglecting all tactical considerations, the battle has been deliberated off Scotland, in the Hebrides and in the English Channel, and still it was never fought. Whether our strategic concepts are right or wrong, the fact remains that we believed in the battle as the victory in this war and in spite of that, did not obtain it.

The current explanation of this is known, but this is rather unsatisfactory. It leaves unanswered the great psychological question, why an officer corps, capable of producing an "Edden" commander, which is victorious at Coronel and dies gloriously at the Falklands, and which, in the submarine warfare, produces a number of submarine commanders equal to the great leaders, suddenly acts so differently in the German Night in spite of manifold changes in the fleet command.

In order to probe the matter to the bottom, let us consider the personality of Admiral Scheer, whose initiative and energy are beyond question, and ask ourselves why, in the two years after Jutland he had no further battle, why on the morning of June 1st, 1916, he did not continue the battle and why, in August, 1916, the battle off the English Coast was not fought.

For this the Fleet Commander had real and convincing grounds and tactical reasons, but in the final analysis, these were not the ultimate and decisive motives. In the depths of his soul, unknown even to himself, was a feeling and a presentiment which may be clothed in words somewhat as follows:- "A 'fleet in being' can only damage the enemy and in the face of existing conditions the disparity between the risk and the useful effect is too great". Jellicoe reasoned in exactly the same way.

This instinctive decision is particularly illuminating when we imagine such a battle fought through to the bitter end, as our operations plan demanded. Such a battle to a finish upsets all conceptions. It brings to renewed decision by battle that which one already more securely and incontrovertibly possesses without the battle. No one does this voluntarily. No matter how eagerly one anticipates and seeks a battle, regardless of locality and circumstances, one is always confronted, even in the last moment, by the overwhelming elementary fact that in the North Sea there is nothing to be won and nothing to be decided.

There is not the slightest doubt that if, on June 1st, 1916, the fleet had been engaged in battle for the gateway of the Atlantic and if fleets of transports had been afloat, Admiral Scheer would have continued the action without a second's hesitation in spite of these identical tactical obstacles. Not only would Admiral Scheer have attacked -- Jellicoe would also have attacked. That is based on the psychology of the strategic situation. The purpose of the battle would then have been obvious.

We see therefore that the same motives may give rise to quite different conclusions, depending on the strategic situation in which they arise. None of these tactical reasons, which lie only on the surface, are absolute. They have already passed through the depths of the psychological prism of the

strategic situation and arrive, after having been "refracted" in the consciousness of the leader, whose decisions are then ripened by them.

Every strategic form, the battle for command of the seas, the strategic offensive, the war of coast defence or the fleet in being, has its own psychology which works unconsciously and acts mutually on both opponents.

Boldness, which lights the path of the fleet, belongs to the strategic offensive which dares to venture on account of its aims. Tactical caution is the role of the fleet in being, since it fulfils its mission by its mere existence, without battle. A fleet, which is forcibly made into a fleet in being, instinctively acts in this manner, and rightly. The psychology of the strategic form, which works unconsciously from the depths, is stronger than the obvious desires which lie on the surface. This psychology apparently overshadowed the undeniably offensive spirit of our Navy, which stands out in such bold relief the moment it frees itself from the psychology of the "fleet in being" -- whether in the cruiser warfare in the Atlantic or in the submarine warfare.

Admitted -- a great victory in the North Sea might possibly have led us to the strategic offensive. In war nothing is impossible.

In the end, however, one does not seek battle in order to arrive in this manner at strategic ideas. This must be done independently in advance.

Such a great victory would then have been the free gift of a kindly fate. More probable, however, than the unusual is the normal course of events. This is rather in line with the psychology of the fleet in being, which seeks to inflict damage on the enemy without undue risk, but which knows no decisive battle at any price. Both opponents felt the same

in this connection and therefore Jellicoe did not seek battle in the German Bight and kept his fleet to the northward of the latitude of the Firth of Forth. This psychology of the situation which determined the thoughts and actions of both opponents, is the underlying reason why, in spite of all our will and desire, "the" battle was never fought, and why by mutual agreement, the Battle of Jutland was not fought to a finish, and why we had no other battle, before or after.

"The battle" in the North Sea was lacking in strategic purpose. Therefore -- regarded from the psychological standpoint, the sentence "We lost the war because we had no battle" is contestible. Paradoxical as it may sound, the true situation is better expressed by the sentence, "We lost the war because we clamoured for battle", since this sentence discloses the false operations plan.

The psychology of the situation is the consequence and not the cause of the operations plan. This brings us back to the beginning. The reason for the loss of the war lay solely in our "ignorance" -- our lack of knowledge of the nature of naval warfare, which brought about the false operations plan and its consequences with the accompanying psychology. Had we known strategy, we should have arrived at another operations plan and have thus altered the whole psychological situation for us and for the English. Then, instead of the battle, our entire conduct of war would have revolved about the strategic position as a centre -- and we should have had the battle immediately.

Clausewitz says: Tactics is the means for the purpose of the strategy.

1. THE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE

Let us compare again the strategic offensive with our adherence at the time to the wet triangle.

After the deadlock on the western front we should then have energetically undertaken our offensive in the Belt instead of waiting to seek an accidental success. We should then have been able to start our advance sometime in November 1914. In this offensive, as opposed to the attack and defence, contact between the fleets would have been assured. They would have attracted each other like magnets. We should have wrested from fate all that was possible by human will. We should have been masters of the strategic position, exercised the strategic urge and dictated the course of action. All actions would have taken place in the winter months of 1914/15 when the long nights favored our torpedo-boat attacks. Our fleet was then at its highest relative strength through the addition of four new battleships. All of the conditions would have been exactly those which we considered the most favorable from a tactical standpoint. In the higher latitudes we should have had ample opportunity to make good the opportunities lost during the early weeks of the war. These would no longer have been remembered.

The offensive would have completely changed the whole situation and reversed it. Its influence would have extended further into the Atlantic and might have relieved the pressure on Graf Spee, who at the time was just about to round Cape Horn. Possibly England might then have dispatched older armored cruisers against him instead of the battle cruisers. The battle of the Falkland Islands might have been a victory.

CHAPTER 4THE STRATEGIC PROBLEM1. The Battle of the Marne.

We have been led by strategy beyond tactics to the maritime strategy of the North Sea and reach the heights where all details fade from view and we can distinguish only the broad trend of the war as a whole.

We see England then as our enemy, in a preponderant geographical position, dominating all the nations of the earth through her command of the seas. On the other side lies Germany about to engage in battle. Germany then begins the struggle with her army for the strategic position on the Atlantic. France, as a continental power, is not the objective; the prize is the strategic position. From these sovereign heights we see that Army and Navy have no separate and separate operations plans. One common plan serves for the whole. The moment the German Army crosses the frontier the adherence to the German Right at sea ceases, and the alteration of the strategic position begins. The German nation as a whole then has a naval strategic operations plan. The defensive operations plan of the Fleet is superseded before the Fleet Commander even receives it. The High Command does not perceive that the Army has taken the Operations plan out of the hands of the Navy and has corrected it.

The Battle for the French positions on the Atlantic becomes a battle for the fleets, but not fought by the fleets. To the fleets are assigned the role of spectators. From then the strategic law of the dead North Sea still holds. The decision lies on land.

Then comes the battle of the Marne and the stiffening of the western front. Now we see the war become retrogressive, slumping back into the continental trend and coming away into the streams and brooks of continental warfare. Now the German nation

turns away from the war against England. The naval war with England flickers out. We assume the strategic offensive, not only in the Fleet but as a whole, and England thereby gains her overwhelming political prestige, with which she is able to subjugate all nations. With the turning away from the war at sea, begins the war of exhaustion. We attempted to do the same as Napoleon, who wished to conquer England on land because, though he held the strategic positions, he had no fleet. We, on the other hand, have a fleet. But the High Command does not perceive that the Army dictates the operations plan to the fleet for the second time and thereby assigns it the role it is to play in the war. Even the Army does not realize that with this defensive operations plan they have cut the foundations from beneath the fleet. But from the heights on which we survey the operations plan as a whole, we realize that the confinement of the war to war on land means the relinquishment of the fight against England. The naval front is deadlocked like the western front. All that the fleet does, or does not do, becomes meaningless, because the offensive against England has been abandoned. All fleet operations, including the Battle of Jutland, are purely local tactical phenomena, like the trench warfare and the trench raids on the frozen western front. The submarine, which springs into the breach as a new weapon, deceives us with its tactical effect at a distance and glosses over the reality of the strategic defensive against England. The Fleet merely holds the shield of defence on the seafront for the protection of the Baltic.

All this is implied in the defensive naval strategic operations plan.

The Navy as its cruises had often seen Germany from beyond her borders and saw further than any other administrative posts in the nation. She understood that England was her principal enemy and that therefore the naval battle was the essential thing. But far as she was able to visualize, her vision was too limited by

tactical considerations for her to realize that the High Command belonged on the sea, that the whole war should be conducted as a naval war, and that although the Army of a million was specially more extensive, it had no more important mission than placing the weapons of naval warfare on a firm basis from which they could operate effectively.

If the road to Brest were closed they should immediately have undertaken the advance to the Northward.

The great intellectual problem of the High Command was to draw the Army away from the continental warfare and restore it to the path of naval warfare. Nothing of this is evident; on the contrary, the High Command agrees to the closing of the Belt by Denmark. Tactics and the firm belief in the war-decisive influence of the battle in the North Sea dominate the situation.

Only from the heights of these considerations do we perceive how the question of the strategic offensive of the fleet and on the other side its adherence to the German High are intimately bound up with the whole trend of the war. Only when seen from the heights of the strategy as a whole, does the position of Denmark-Norway come into the focus of the war, after the offensive in the West is seen to be hopeless.

In view of its extreme importance all difficulties in the way of negotiations with Denmark fade away together with the question was to where the Army is to obtain the necessary troops.

The solution of both questions is given as soon as the knowledge is there.

From this deadlock on the Western front there arose the signal arm of an automatic turntable -- though recognisable only to the strategic eye. We needed only to pull it down and the war train would have been shunted off to another track to the northward, towards England, with the same destination as the naval war.

B. CONCLUSIONS.

We have seen that it was this very continentalizing of the war as a whole, which relegated to the Fleet its defensive mission in the war. This national operations plan was responsible for locking our Fleet to the North Sea as though it a cage and making England into the guardian of the door. This, our own continental operations plan, strangled the Fleet and geographically laid it aside for safe-keeping. The maritime aims of the Navy floundered in the currents of the war as a whale.

That this defensive became a permanent condition and was not contended against must be attributed to the fact that General Headquarters failed to comprehend the dualism of naval warfare and the mission of the Fleet in war and assigned a purely tactical importance to the Fleet which did not obtain in the North Sea. The Fleet, which throughout the entire war laboured under the dominion of the dead North Sea never for one brief instant carried the fate of the nation on board, although this whole war was a naval war.

All of the contradictions, revealed by this war, are rooted in the conflict between hard reality and the strategic defensive of the national operations plan, which denied this reality. The clear path lay in the strategic offensive, i.e., the continuation of the naval warfare. Everything which in those days of peace we looked to our Fleet to accomplish, lay -- after the battle of the Marne -- in the offensive through the Belt.

It lies beyond the scope of this work to investigate the probable influence which would have been exerted on the tactical operations of the Fleet by the secrecy maintained with respect to its movements. In Norway, however, and with the Danish waters in our possession, the movements of the Fleet could not have been so readily observed and reported as in the German Bight. That influence would have been exerted on the theatre of war in the

Baltic, and the war on land against Russia, ^{had} and we been able, operating from Norway, to block the stream of supplies which passed over the Scandinavian Peninsula and through the Arctic Ocean! Consider also the influence overseas! After seeing us in battle with England from the Norwegian position, would the neutrals have surrendered so unconditionally to England's orders and placed at her disposal all their available shipping; would they have so meekly accepted all of England's breaches of neutrality; would they have raised such protest later against the submarine warfare? What would have been America's attitude in the face of this energetic naval warfare? What prestige and political influence we might have reaped had the fortunes of war smiled ever so slightly upon us; not to mention the influence on our own domestic policies. Our ships at least would have been withdrawn from political propaganda.

To-day, these questions have only problematistical value. They must be mentioned, however, if only to show the possibilities inherent in the strategic Fleet offensive.

In the German Bight, these prizes lay beyond our reach, unattainable, because the Fleet lay blocked inside.

Granted, one cannot win a war with a strategic position alone -- certainly not -- neither can it be won with a fleet alone. Both belong together. The Fleet was there and the first and most urgent problem of the entire war was the acquisition of the strategic position. In the North Sea our fleet was a rider without a horse. We had to win our mount; we already knew how to ride.

3. THE STRATEGIC PROBLEM.

Just as the battle is not an end unto itself but serves the purposes of strategy, so strategy does not exist for itself alone. It also is subordinated to a higher purpose, namely, the aim of the war which it must fulfill.

The strategic problem has been discussed in part in our fore-

going analysis and partially indicated, so that it now remains for us to summarize and formulate it clearly. It may be stated thus:-England had the strategic problem of cutting us off from the oceans of the world and blockading us. Our problem was to break this blockade, wherever it lay, and clear our path to the Atlantic. *Why?*

Considering then the problem of our fleet from this strategic standpoint and looking into the North Sea from the blockade line in the far North, it became obvious at once that it was absolutely immaterial what our fleet did or did not do within this dead angle -- this wet triangle -- and why the Battle of Jutland, which was fought in this dead basin from the strategic position of Heligoland, remained without effect. Where no strategic problem exists, none can be solved by a battle.

It will be equally obvious why the offensive could not be content with the Danish position, because from there also the blockade could not be effectively broken. The Norwegian position offered far better opportunities. England could then no longer maintain the blockade line:-Shetlands to Norway; but would have been compelled to withdraw the line to about Shetlands--Faroe Island. This line, however, was rather exposed. The fresh ocean breezes swept from the distance through the close air of the harbor blockade. For the rest, this line would have been extremely difficult for the English to defend. First it lay relatively near our bases and, secondly, the English strategic position would have been considerably outflanked geographically to the Northward.

However, the blockade could only have been completely raised provided the jump across the North Sea succeeded and if the battle for the gate of the Atlantic had been decided in our favor. The lanes would then have been free for our imports and we should have covered our own commerce routes. That alone

was the reason for the Fleet's existence. This shows that the battle over the blockade is nothing more than the struggle for the freedom of the seas for ourselves, the battle for those lanes so vital to our existence. We finally reach a clear comprehension of that age-old axiom that the strategic problem of the war at sea is the fight for command of the seas, at the place it is to be exercised, namely, where the vital commerce arteries lie, in the Atlantic and its outlets and from those geographical positions in which the battle is tactically possible.

There is this -- or nothing.

With this antithesis the Navy becomes dependent on the combined operations plan and at the same time is projected into it as a determining factor. The decision in this antithesis (since there is no middle ground -- it is "either - or") no longer remains a special departmental matter for the Navy but is a matter affecting the conduct of the war as a whole. The trend of the entire war is bound up with it and provides the aim and purpose of all departments; - Politics, Army and Navy. After the battle of the Marne the question to be decided was not: "Shall we first conquer Russia and then France?", thus leaving England entirely out of account, but rather: - "Shall the naval warfare against England be conducted from below or above? Shall we re-establish our overseas communications through the Channel and the Atlantic harbours of France or shall the breaking of the blockade be attempted off Scotland?"

In what light would the Russian campaign then have appeared? Would we have founded the state of Poland in order to conclude a quick peace with the Empire of the Czar? What a different complexion would have been given to Austria, the Balkans and all that lay in the route of the Berlin-Bagdad railway had we looked at the war from the standpoint of the combined operations plan with the main theatre of war on the sea and the conquering of England with the breaking of the blockade as the principal war

aim, towards which all our efforts were bent?"

Only in the light of this combined operations plan directed against England is it possible to estimate properly the political and strategic decisions in every phase of the war. The rest is tactics.

Here we are concerned with "the" great trend, "the" decisive question of the whole war, namely, "Naval or continental warfare". Or, what comes to the same thing:- "Shall the war be decided by force of arms or exhaustion, with the slogan: "Hold out to the end"?"

To-day we are confronted by the fact that the State, in its conduct of the war failed to understand that the whole war was a naval war, that the decision lay on the seas; neither did it understand the meaning of naval warfare nor the mission which should have been assigned to the Navy.

We did not really understand the sea. Not one of us! ✓

The question of the employment of the Fleet to force a decision may therefore be answered as follows:

It is not a question of the execution of the operations plan which was delivered to the Fleet Commander on the outbreak of the war but a question of the combined operations plan of the entire nation.

It is not a question of tactics, but a basic strategy. Its solution is not to be sought on the flagbridge in the Fleet but in General Headquarters.

CHAPTER V.
THE PEACE TRAINING OF THE
NAVY.

For the historian it suffices to determine what occurred. But we, who are seeking the reasons, cannot be satisfied with the bare facts. We wish to know more. We have seen that God strikes with blindness those whom He would destroy. We wish to know what made us blind and why we remained so.

We cannot pass over the striking phenomenon that in war we failed utterly to apply to our own situation those very principles of naval warfare which we have used here to clarify the strategic situation.

We all know that naval warfare is a struggle for the trade routes and nothing else. During the war this knowledge vanished completely in the face of a concept of war which knew nothing of a struggle for commerce lanes. We all know that in a naval war one cannot impose his will on the enemy unless one can cut his overseas communications. We also employed the submarine quite correctly in attacks on these lines of communication. But as soon as it became a question of the fleet, which we had built up with indefatigable energy in time of peace to compel the Briton to acknowledge us at sea, we did not consider the struggle for the commerce lanes but made the battle in the North Sea the centre of all our ideas and the search for this battle our sole war aim. *Some of our fleet would have been lost - which would have been a disaster.*

It is certainly remarkable that we not only adopted a strategic defensive, tactical offensive operations plan in our geographical position, but that we persistently held to this plan to the end of the war, ignoring the cold fact which confronted us daily that the Fleet made no progress from the German Bight. Another important factor to be investigated is the

reason why we believed so strongly in "the battle" without ever asking ourselves the purpose of the battle, and thinking only of when, where and with what prospects of success the Fleet might engage.

We must seek the answer in the peace training of the Navy.

THE WAR OF DEFENCE IN THE NORTH SEA.

For the strategic defensive the explanation is simple. It derived from a feeling of inferiority, which was comprehensible as long as our Fleet was small. The remarkable fact, however, is that this did not disappear with the growth of the Fleet.

Several factors were responsible for this:

1. First and foremost is the "risk" idea, which took the form and trend given it by Grand Admiral V. Tirpitz in his memoirs. According to this we wished to construct a Fleet which would not be large enough to threaten England with attack, but would still be sufficiently powerful to offer a certain risk to the English in attacking us, in spite of their superiority. Its supreme war effort in a war of defence would therefore be the battle in the North Sea. Herein lay the political defensive and the tactical will to battle in a war of defence.

What one shouts politically from the housetops, however, and what one does afterwards are two different things. In war, however, we made this political cant into reality.

Proof:-

a. In comparing the estimates of an offensive war with a war of defence in the North Sea on the basis of the strength ratios, political cant overshadowed strategy, since the strength relations are wholly without influence on the strategy and it is wholly immaterial whether it is concerned politically with a war of defence or offence. The operations plan is dependant solely on the strategic position, i.e., the position the German Fleet was only feasible in connection with a strategic offensive

under any circumstances.

b. The association of the war of defence in the North Sea with the tactical will to battle is simply a popular form of the academic expression:- "Strategic defensive - tactical offensive": the defensive operations plan with the battle "for itself" of our war operations plan.

In founding the Fleet -- and this is the most important point -- the fundamental principle of naval warfare, that the problem of war on the sea is the battle for command of the sea (the commerce lanes) was neglected. In its place was substituted a myth, the war of defence with a phantom battle. Therefore the Naval Command lacked the concept of strategic position. Never did we seek anything in the Atlantic. And yet this was the very purpose for which the Fleet was founded, namely, the protection of our overseas communications in the Atlantic for industry and trade during a war--the sole reason for the fleet's existence.

3. This "risk" can't lend support to the tactical investigations which the Fleet carried out with true German thoroughness. All tactical investigations culminated in the problem of how a materially-inferior fleet can defeat a stronger fleet, if the imponderables are not to be taken into account to such an extent that the result begins to be insupportable. The negative result of these investigations found expression in this sense of inferiority and was permanently manifested in the idea of a blockade of the German Bight. The defensive then appeared to be the given solution, i.e., the war of defence in the North Sea, in view of this inferiority.

3. The smaller calibre of our guns was effective in the same sense. Even though we knew that our smaller calibre guns were as effective as the heavier English guns, our armament was still unable to do more than bring about an equalization in the individual fighting

value of ship for ship, and in no event a superiority, which as August 1914 showed, might have sufficed to overcome this feeling of inferiority.

The need of a powerful armament is based on sound military principles, since it is in agreement with the law of concentration of forces.

In war on land, the skill of the Field Marshal is directed towards a concentration of forces at a tactically important point. At sea, the concept of tactical position in the military sense and the possibility of concentrating the ships at a given point does not exist. That which we term "tactical position" at sea is a transient phenomenon. The concentration of force therefore lies primarily in the ship itself. This is the same tactical idea which led to the construction of the battleship and will lead to even further augmentation as long as naval battles are fought. He who neglects this principle is acting the same as the Field Marshal who voluntarily refrains from affecting a concentration of his forces in an important position.

In the consciousness of the excellence of our armament, heavier calibre guns might have resulted in a visible and tangible preponderance of force, which might then, by way of tactical considerations, have led to a feeling of superiority and we might finally have come to consider the strategic purpose of the tactical battle.

However, powerful as the Fleet might have become in fighting value with heavier guns and the utilization of our technical superiority, the decisive drawback did not lie in material but in the realm of psychology, because it was this comparison of calibres which gave rise to the tactical investigations and the estimates of the mutual fighting values of the Fleets.

It follows from this that the psychological factor should be taken into consideration in new construction. Afterwards, it is immaterial where the psychological attitude originated and

whether or not it was justified. The attitude, right or wrong, is a very effective factor in war.

4. The manoeuvres and the war games of the Navy present the same position. Blue always loses as soon as it is opposed by superior forces in battle:- an experience of the game board bodily incorporated in our operations plan which ordered the battle to be engaged only after the strength ratios had been equalised. The result of this experience in manoeuvres was to strengthen the feeling of inferiority, which then became exaggerated. The defensive was based on this feeling. Complete accord was thus established between the military part of the "risk idea" -- the war of defence in the North Sea in view of the strength relations -- and the task of the Navy at sea.

5. THE ASSUMED TACTICAL WILL TO BATTLE.

Although it is possible for us to trace the motives in the peace training of the Navy which led to chaining the Fleet to the German Bight as a result of this sense of inferiority and which prevented the Naval Command from resuming strategically, we still lack any indication of the origin of the purely military idea of the naval battle as the goal of all efforts.

In all naval manoeuvres and war games the battle becomes the goal of all operations without the strategic basis entering into the problem.

This battle thus appears to be the very aim and goal of all strategy. One fails to realise that all operations, which lead to battle, are simply tactical preparations for battle and that strategy lies beyond the battle. Tactics are the means for the purpose of the strategy but the High Command -- undeterred by this -- made the strategy subservient to the purpose of the battle.

If the Fleet bombards the enemy coast (Yarmouth and Hartlepool)

It is not because something is to be wrested from the coast -- there is nothing there to be obtained -- but simply because it seeks in this manner to bring on a battle. If we consider the cutting off of the troop transports across the English Channel at the beginning of the war, then the question, to what extent this would have been technically practicable with surface craft operating from the German Bight and the question whether such raids on the Channel were in accord with war aims (which corresponded in magnitude and extent to the effectiveness of about half a dozen submarines) plays a subordinate role. In any event, all that is sought is to exercise a pressure on these transports, even though at a distance, and thus bring about the battle. In the final analysis, the High Command never sought the purpose but only the means.

The High Command never took the attitude towards the battle as a struggle for command of the seas, but identified the battle with the war aims because they thought to derive from this battle all the military, political and moral benefits which are only to be reaped in maritime warfare through command of the seas.

"The goal of our entire military and administrative procedure in the past twenty years has been the battle". (Tirpitz: Memoirs).

In this sentence we find the explanation for the fact that the battle was always conceived "ad ipsum" as a battle for the decision.

How deeply this concept of the battle with the resultant unavoidable belief in the British will to fight and eagerness to take the offensive became ingrained in our being and how intuitively we worked in this sense, may be readily appreciated from the following comparisons.

On regarding the matter from the English standpoint we

fully appreciate the motives which restrain Admiral Jellicoe from seeking to force an action under the guns of Heligoland. We feel the Grand Fleet to be the protector of the blockade and intuitively concur with the British in subordinating their tactics to strategy -- therefore in not seeking battle until it is required by strategic considerations.

On returning to our own side, however, we immediately begin to rivet our gaze on the North-Sea and in spite of all the above considerations we lose our intuitive concept of strategic position. All that we have just conceded the English is overshadowed by our own feelings which thrust the battle into the foreground of our consciousness. The conscious knowledge that we also have a strategic defensive operations plan, fades out completely. On the contrary, such strategic considerations are disturbing to our feelings and not without reluctance are we finally convinced that the normal and proper way to leave a room is through the door and not by butting one's head against the wall.

It is the tactical will to battle demanded by the "risk idea" which dominates. But whence this conception? We must probe deeper.

3. THE KEY.

Let us pose the question:- "Does there arise in the war at sea a special case in which the battle is the end and aim of all the effort and where nothing stands behind the battle?"

As a matter of fact, such a special case does exist, this is in pure coast defence.

The strategic idea permeates the quiet and narrow confines of the coast defence navy. Strategic position and the struggle for command of the sea are matters beyond its knowledge and capabilities. Here, since strategic position is eliminated, the operations plan is dependent on our own weakness and is always strategic defensive. A fleet which is not capable of keeping the sea can do nothing, even with the

most brilliant strategic position. Solely the tactical value or drawbacks of our own positions are of importance. Here the initiative rests entirely with the enemy and hence a firm belief in the spirit of offensive on the part of the enemy is the unavoidable presumption for war at all. Under such conditions the attack of the enemy on the coast is right. Here it is the means. Here the battle will decide whether the enemy must abandon the attack on the coast or not. The battle is then the end of all reasoning and strategy. Nothing comes into question beyond the battle, since there is no question of command of the sea. Everything is placed upon a strictly tactical and military basis. Contradictory as it seems, everything then taken on life and colour. The employment of the fleet to gain the decision acquires a vital meaning as does the distinction between war of defence and of offence.

Hence this coupling together of operations plan and strength ratios of the Fleet; hence the strategic-defensive tactical-offensive operations plan; hence the shift of the Fleet concentration to the North Sea and the consolidation of Wilhelmshaven.

For this reason we erected such strong fortifications on the coast of the North Sea and raised the strategically worthless island of Heligoland to a fortress of the first order. Hence the external idea of the blockade.

With this it becomes clear whence we derived the idea of the "brutal" superiority of the Grand Fleet. In the very words:—"War of Defence" lies the implication of inferiority and this feeling was emphasized by constant defensive manoeuvres until it became thoroughly rooted in our psychology. This was then the beginning of the vicious cycle for us. The Fleet practiced blockade tactics because the English were superior and because we practiced the blockade tactics we made the English superior. Since we always persistently in the war of defence, the English Fleet, to our mind goes with our own. How powerful the Grand Fleet must have been if it was capable of forcing an unconditional

defensive on our own Fleet, whose increasing strength we realized better from day to day.

The coast defence ^{had} permeated our choice of types, the composition of our Fleet, our conduct of the naval war and our conception of warfare. Even our tactics and the organization of our Fleet were influenced thereby. Our ignorance of the purpose of the fast division of the English Fleet as support for the reconnaissance and the resultant influence on the course of the Battle of Jutland are partially explained by this line of reasoning.

In this lay the origin of our purely military-tactical habit of thought and our lack of interest in the overseas commerce lanes.

It now becomes obvious why we placed such faith in the effect of the battle and put battle and naval warfare on an equal basis. Because of the fact that in the coast defence - war, the battle decides the naval war, we believed in it. Therefore, we considered the battle as the end of all strategy. Wherever we were, in war, ^{or} in manoeuvres, we carried -- without realising it -- the strategic relations of the narrow German Bight in our own spirit.

Strategic-defensive tactical-offensive is the chemical formula for the "Coast Defence War!" It is no longer valid in the realm of strategy which deals with strategic position and the struggle for the overseas communications.

The transition from a small navy to a large navy is not accomplished by thrusting the defence at arm's length from the coast, which was symbolized in our case by the slogan:--"Away from the coasts" and the name:-- "High Seas Fleet". The transformation must be intellectual. It is a transition from a tactical to a strategical concept of war on the sea.

The contrast is the more marked as there is no bridge across the gulf. It is the contrast of the "either-or".

Ideas rule the world. We are confronted with the historical evidence of a powerful fleet turned into a coast-defense navy by the power of an idea. This leads us to hope that today, where conditions are reversed and our fleet is materially weak, our ideas may have the power to protect us from the spiritual desolation of a coastal navy and in the future to endow us with the assets of a traditional navy.

The ideas that sponsor the birth of a navy exert a tremendous influence.

We have seen what confusion of thought results when the unrealized hard facts of reality come into contact with guiding principles. Irreconcilable contradictions result when a seeworthy fleet is nailed fast to a pedestal which has room for a coastal navy only. The incongruity between strength and possibility of employment is manifested when it is assigned the strategic-defensive-tactical-offensive operations plan of a coast navy.

4. RESULTS.

As we have seen, the cast of the "risk idea" with its psychology carried over to the sea formed the basis for the development of our Navy in time of peace and gave our training its trend and goal.

Without being aware of it, this idea of the war of defense lived and exerted its influence on ships and types, on training and on our conduct of war. The idea of a war of defense made and kept us all blind.

It is therefore quite comprehensible that a navy which holds as its highest attainable strategic aim the war of defense, will hold to this form of defensive warfare when war is declared. War of defense in the North Sea is a form of coast defense war. This, however, is tactical.

Even the coast defense war has a strategic basis: namely, the defensive. Although in war on the sea, strategic offensive or

defensive may be freely chosen and alternate, depending on geographic requirements, the defensive of the coast defence war is the rigid unalterable basis. It is predetermined from the start and stands immutable. Hence it is sensed as the unalterable and no longer manifests itself. Tactics alone dominate. Hence we are bound to tactics.

Therefore a deep symbolism underlies the locality of Scapa Flow, where our Fleet disappeared from the face of the sea. It is as though in dying, it wished to point in admonition to the gate of the Atlantic, wherein we failed. It is as though in death it wished to teach the lesson that as long as naval history exists, no sea-power, no fleet in any age ever stands on the basis of a defensive war with a tactical will to battle, but that battle for command of the seas is the sole rule of conduct.

He, however, who comprehends the mighty power of thought, which gives form and content to everything that lives, will read in the light of this lesson the future promise to all life, inscribed over the grave of our brave Fleet at the gate of the Atlantic:

"Die and live again."

Our mental attitude shows how little maritime manoeuvres and war-games are capable of clarifying the fundamental concepts of naval warfare, since yallow will always be unconsciously conducted according to German concepts. Such war games only prove that when both opponents are inspired by the same tactical will to battle, no battle will result while the question whether the tactical will to battle is founded on the geographical situation remains wholly untouched. This is easily demonstrated by the experience of everyone.

C H A P T E R VITHE STRATEGIC WILL.

It would be attributing too much astuteness to the English to assume that they themselves were fully cognizant of the strategic situation in all its details, as we have analyzed it in this investigation. Such was certainly not the case: otherwise they would not have made so many mistakes in detail. But despite the many errors with which history may be able to charge them after the event, the fact remains that the general trend of their strategy was instinctively correct. With their century-long experience on the seas, the old traditions had become ingrained in the English and were instinctive, just as we had imbibed the traditions of war on land.

All terrestrial life matures through experience. Even a fleet attains maturity only through war experience. We created a fleet and trained it brilliantly for battle in drill, the turn about of the ships in a bent column under heavy fire, which was made famous at Jutland, finds its counterpart only in the Potsdam drill grounds of the great Hohenzollerns. But in spite of its proficiency, the Navy remained intellectually a coast navy. That is proven by the last war, on whose experience the new Fleet is built and from which it will derive its inner tradition. The old Navy was incapable of looking over the fence enclosing the Heligoland drill grounds, which was erected by the idea of a war of defence in the North Sea. Had this been possible only once, we should have seen that while our ships were growing from coast defence monitors to battleships, our Fleet increasing, and in a state of flux, the curve of blockade idea remained as the fixed pivot of our thoughts. Then we should no longer have put our faith in the strategic-defensive tactical-offensive operations plan as a divinely bestowed fact, but

have been impelled to investigate the true meaning of this operations plan.

If now, in place of the battle as the intellectual basis of every war at sea, we recognize the "strategic will", this new formula should not be implicitly accepted as a dogma, but our concepts of "strategic will" in its deepest sense must be clarified.

Our problem thus becomes the study of the inner content of this strategic will.

1. THE STRATEGIC WILL AND SEA-POWER.

If we consider the old Russian Black Sea Fleet, it is obvious that it was a sea-power within the Black Sea but that its influence could not be extended to the Mediterranean. A strategic position from which it could be effective was lacking.

Two things therefore engender sea-power: the Fleet and the geographic position. Only in conjunction with each other and not separate and detached, can they produce sea-power. Here also we have a dualism. These are the identical factors on which maritime warfare is dependent, since war on the sea is simply the energetic expression of sea power-- its smashing fist.

Of the two elements of sea-power, one - the Fleet - is the tactical factor, while the other - the strategic position - is geographic. With the complete independence of these two factors and connective link, which is common to both elements, is essential. This is the strategic will. This is the factor which, operating through the strategic operations plan, leads the tactical Fleet to its strategic position.

It is the strategic will which first breathes the breath of life into the fleet. This cannot be accomplished by the offensive spirit, since the latter is a tactical element only, even as battle is simply a tactical phenomenon attendant on war on the sea and is not naval warfare proper. War on the

sea, like sea-power from which it flows, is composed of these two elements.

Had we won the battle of the Marne and had then been able to transfer our Fleet to Brest, we should have entered into the war on the sea and been awakened to life without even becoming consciously aware of the fact. The battle was decided otherwise, however, and it therefore became our task to develop this strategic will consciously, from our own resources.

There was no lack of incentive, either in peace or war. A few examples will illustrate the point.

Our hopeless position in the German Bight was the most powerful incentive since, strictly speaking, the binding or holding in check of the English Fleet was not accomplished by our tactical sweeps into the dead North Sea. These operations were simply an outward and visible sign that we were there. The menace lay solely in the possibility that our Fleet might come to life at any moment and undertake the strategic offensive leading to the North through the Belt.

Had the thoughts of our Naval Staff in peace not been so exclusively centred on the wet triangle by this idea of a war of defence, then with the increasing tension between our country and England, we should have grasped the true meaning of the entire English Operations Plan directed against us, which was evidenced by the shift of ^{their} Fleet concentration to Scotland and the consolidation of Rosyth.

We also knew that in England our annual cruises to Norway had awakened grave suspicion of our motives. The Briton, judging us by his own strategic attitude of mind, firmly believed that under the guise of a recreational cruise we were studying the Norwegian navigational waters in search of the necessary bases for our battle for the gate of the Atlantic, in the event of war.

Hence the mysterious night engagements between English ships off the Norwegian coast in the early part of the war. Thus the

rumor of this shooting reached us, we were mildly amused. "Such a thing could not have occurred with our superior training. What should be we doing in these waters anyway?"

The strategic question, however, why the English should have assumed our presence off the Norwegian coast, was never even considered.

Through their nervousness over our Norwegian cruises, the English already betrayed to us in time of peace, what conduct of war they expected from us.

We were much struck, however, by the deep impression created in England by the victory of Count Spee at Coronel and the nervousness occasioned by the cruiser warfare of the "Tulden", "Koeve", etc., which impelled the English to concentrate a relatively powerful force to accomplish the destruction of these weak units: this in contrast to the impression created by the battle of Jutland. Our Naval Command was unable to draw the proper conclusions from these facts.

There on the broad expanses of the ocean, sea-power was being exercised - tactical ships based on a strategic position. Even though this strategic position in the trade lanes consisted solely of a few feeble soldiers, it still was sea-power and therefore England fought it with all the preponderance of force she was able to command. Although the battle of Jutland was a painful loss of prestige for England, it was not a battle with sea-power. Hence the impression faded quickly when it became apparent that the day at Jutland did not reveal the will to acquire that second element essential to sea-power - a strategic position.

In England the relationship was fully understood. Otherwise we cannot solve the contradiction why England in war failed to fight the same Fleet whose construction she fought with all the means in her power in peace. It was because our Fleet was shown to be harmless the moment it was discovered that the stra-

logic will was lacking in our Naval Staff. For the British, our Fleet then degenerated into a tactical objective to be attacked on favorable opportunity, and its disarmament became their peace aim.

"The British Fleet did not exist for the purpose of fighting the German Fleet; it existed for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining command of the seas" (The sea-power of Germany and the Teachings of Mahan - by Brevet Lieut. Col. Seaden).

We saw all this clearly but were unable to appreciate its real meaning. In the war of defence in the North Sea, we kept our gaze rivetted on the Northwest.

Not once did the hard realities of war serve to deprive us of this purely tactical concept of war on the sea and to awaken the strategic will which should breathe life into our Fleet and make it into sea-power.

Our Fleet literally died before it was awakened to life.

2. WORLD POLITICS AND SEA POWER.

A nation which, owing to its industrial and economic structure is compelled to use the seas for imports and exports, is forced to engage in world politics whether it wishes it or not. Politics is the expression of national power which, in a decisive crisis has exactly as much weight as the nation possesses military strength - in its widest sense. Today, nations fight as a whole. The entire state, organized for war, becomes military power. Continental power rests on military power on land, but world politics is founded on sea-power, since on the seas the political will cannot be imposed by war with the army. World politics is therefore directly dependent on sea-power and is consequently associated with those factors which are peculiar to sea-power. Sea-power, however, being dependent on the strategic position from which it must operate, is not always of equal effect. Although the political centre of gravity of an

Army is always constant, the Fleet, though able to exert its full strength against one nation, may be able to exercise very little of its power against another with respect to which the strategic position is poor. Sea-power, therefore, which depends on one and the same fleet, may run through the entire scale from zero to full effectiveness, depending on the given strategic position. Thus, with it and equally variable, the centre of gravity of world politics passes through various stages of influence.

With respect to England, our sea-power and foreign policies were equal to exactly nothing, owing to our poor strategic position. Hence our very slight political influence on the neutrals during the war.

In our Fleet, however, England glimpsed part of a coming sea-power which developed in the future into real sea-power, might ultimately lay claim to the freedom of the seas for German shipping.

These relations were not clearly realized by us because we, with our tactical attitude of mind, held the Fleet to be the whole instead of merely one element of sea-power. Therefore we failed to comprehend the deep meaning of the word "luxury fleet" which Churchill scornfully flung in our face. Translated, it means: "Your Fleet by itself is not sea-power and therefore your pretension to world politics rests on a precarious footing. In England, with her experience of many centuries on the seas and her long naval history, the people understood and sensed the true meaning of sea-power. We, however, invented the term "direful fleet" and fought the very foundations on which our overseas politics had rested since the turn of the century.

WORLD POLITICS AND THE AIMS OF SEA-POWER.

In the history of naval warfare, extraordinarily little mention is made of strategy. There is good reason for this. In

most cases the strategic position has been determined by the coast line on each side of about equal value and the war at sea was fought with a defensive operations plan. Offensive strategy did not enter into the problem. In those wars, however, in which a strategic operations plan is visible, none stand out more clearly than in the World War (which is an outstanding example). Usually it is concealed in the form of alliances (the English alliance with Naples in the naval operations of Nelson in the Mediterranean) or it appears, as in the conquest of the Korea (for instance), in the Russo-Japanese War, not as a naval strategic operations plan, but as a means for the purpose of the war on land.

Naval strategy is therefore pursued the more ardently in the peace negotiations. The results of these negotiations are not evaluated in the military presentations of the war because the war ends when peace is concluded. The entire history of the English naval warfare with its peace treaties, is nothing but a large scale offensive strategy. For centuries, English world politics have been an offensive naval strategy:- the incarnation of the strategic will to sea-power.

We find in this a principle of naval warfare, that, at sea, strategy and tactics are two entirely independent factors. On land, strategy and tactics come into play in one and the same medium, changing gradually from one to the other without sharp lines of demarcation. At sea, however, tactics lies on the water and strategy on land.

With the Army, therefore, strategy begins only with the outbreak of war, but with the Navy, it begins in time of peace, since it may be entirely separated from tactics. This means that naval strategy is not a strictly military problem, but because the joint problem of the military and the statesmen in peace and in war. The "Pacific Convention" of the Washington Conference is a naval strategic war waged in time of peace for the strategic positions in the Pacific in the future war of the

Anglo-Saxons with Japan.

In peace, therefore, naval strategy has a two-fold aim. First it aspires to shift the political centre of gravity in peace by the increased might of sea-power and secondly it seeks to relieve the Fleet as far as possible from the necessity of conquering these strategic positions in the event of war. Every such conquest is, to say the least, an undesirable expenditure of energy at the wrong time, since the strategic position is not the ultimate aim of the war but simply constitutes the foundation from which the war is conducted. Its conquest is only a stage.

The constant need of adapting the foreign policies to the political constellation by means of naval strategy and the desire, flowing from this need, to be armed as far as possible against any contingency, lends all foreign policies a political offensive character and gives to sea-power its urge towards expansion. As Admiral Monk expressed it:- "The nation which aspires to command the seas must always attack".

Nowhere more than on the seas is stagnation retrogression,

If the Army and the Navy belong together as brothers in arms, owing to their joint operations plan in war, then the Navy and the Foreign Office should be twin brothers owing to the strategy which they must pursue in time of peace to augment the sea-power, which is the common foundation of both. The tie which binds Foreign Office and Navy so securely to each other is the strategic will to sea-power.

Although during the war we employed our Fleet simply as a shield for the nation in the North and to cover the vital trade routes from Sweden to Germany and for various reasons closed the Belt against it to the Northward, our Fleet, reduced thereby to semi-effectiveness as sea-power, remained our sole hope for the future. It is therefore readily comprehensible that we should place our hope in the acquisition of a strategic position as a result of the war, provided its outcome were more or less

favorable to us.

Our eyes were fixed on Flanders in such an event simply in the sense of its historical value as a spear-head pointing towards England. When naval strategic problems arose, we considered the matter from the standpoint of our untenable position in the wet triangle in the event that England enlisted Belgium and Holland on her side and thereby extended her political power as far as the East. (Tirpitz-Memoirs, pp.254,255).

Such an estimate of the Flanders Coast in its influence on the strategically worthless German Bight, shows that the military evaluation of Flanders remained tactical. Just as the war, which found us in possession of Flanders showed that Flanders possessed tactical but no strategic value, since the arteries of commerce were equally unaccessible both from Flanders and from the German Bight. Happily chosen though Flanders might prove as a tactical position opposite the Thames, it was not an objective of sea-power. Strategically it is nothing more than the innermost support of the bridge to the Atlantic.

4. SEA - POWER AS A NATIONAL AIM.

With the tremendous growth of the trans-Atlantic industrial nations, the commerce lanes from East to West gradually shifted from the North Sea to the Atlantic. One hundred years ago the American States shipped raw products to England and Holland, as the only two industrial countries of Europe, where they were manufactured into finished articles and distributed to the Continent. The lanes of world trade then ran from England to Europe, i.e. the North Sea contained a considerable part of the world commerce lanes. The North Sea was then the open sea, the more so since the primitive weapons of those days made the distances much more difficult to bridge than in these days of high-speed vessels and high-powered guns. In those days Flanders was a strategic position on the commerce lanes of the world, a pistol pointed at the heart of England.

These conditions which were true of the North Sea one

hundred years ago, now obtain in the Atlantic. The German nation treated by nature like a step-child, was unable to follow this expansion into the Atlantic although it had meanwhile grown into an important industrial state, dependent on export and import. After the North Sea became converted into an inland sea, we were geographically excluded from the open sea, i.e. the Atlantic, and were thrust back into the role of a continental state. In order to live, however, we require access to the sea, i.e. the Atlantic, and consequently to protect our commerce we need strategic positions on the Atlantic.

When and how such strategic positions might have been acquired, or placed at our disposal, is a question in itself and cannot be treated here.

Of importance to our analysis is the fact that, though our fleet-building programme needed to be supported by corresponding maritime alliances for strategic positions in order that we might become a sea-power, never once did this idea enter into our minds. Had we ever been conscious of this need, it would have been obvious that the question would become acute the moment we engaged in war with England.

So far were we from any conception of the nature of sea-power that even during the war we remained without a geographic goal, regarding our defensive policies as praiseworthy and a justifiable positive policy as wrong! Our point of view, lacking geographical considerations, held no place for strategic objectives and therefore we confused positive policies with aggressive policies.

The reason for this is always the same: our failure to grasp the two elements of sea-power, and hence the lack of a strategic will.

World power and sea-power, world politics and maritime strategy are identities, because their will and influence flows from the same source, the "strategic will". This is

nothing but the will to power turned towards the sea. A nation which lacks the strategic will, lacks the aspiration to sea-power. In other words, we wished to become a sea-power, but in the same breath we renounced all pretensions to sea-power with our ideas of a "political defensive" and the "war of defence". Defensive politics and the war of defence in the North Sea (the strategic defensive) at the political and military aspects of the same thing.

Renunciation of power, in order to prove to your enemy your love of peace, is always a dangerous policy in whatever guise or clothed in whatever thoughts it may appear. It leads to the danger of a surrender of prestige in the community of nations in favor of other nations, proud and clear-sighted, in their national consciousness, which do not renounce their power.

5. THE RISK IDEA AND THE WILL TO POWER.

All power means a certain risk for the enemy. This does not need to be demonstrated. We do need, however, to clarify our ideas of how and by what means this power constituted a risk. Obviously the risk for the enemy lies in the fact that one threatens to spring at his throat and to strike him down when he tramples our interests underfoot. In the strength and in the will to threaten the enemy with attack, lies the menace and not in the defensive warfare of the trenches.

A threat of attack, however, definitely is excluded from our concept of "risk" (as expressed in the words "risk fleet"). We did not wish to build a fleet strong enough for that purpose. Our risk idea therefore lacked the strategic will to attack. This Fleet lacked the will to sea-power and consequently did not constitute a risk for the enemy. Proof: the war. Our Fleet was not dangerous to England as long as the will to sea-power, the strategic will, was lacking in our Government.

The best guarantees of peace are obtained, not through a renunciation of the strategic attack, but of the aggressive poli-

See nearly every page of the History of the Navy of the United States

cies of the other nations. Serbia was politically aggressive in the highest degree, in spite of her lack of the means to attack. *She could not attack, & as would happen, but not proceed.*

Likewise, our defensive operations plan neither depends on the strength ratios of the fleets, nor does the battle belong as an integral part to the war of defence in the North Sea. Finally, we should have recognized the tactical will to battle as a correlate of the geography which also bears a certain relation to the war of defence.

The renunciation of aggression is very nearly the counterpart of the war of defence.

He who does not take the strategic offensive must necessarily take the strategic defensive.

We saw in this "risk idea" a master piece of diplomatic dialectics which was able, for its political purposes (the risk) to couple together with apparent logic, things which had nothing to do with each other, and which, politically, very cleverly removed the aggressive character from our Fleet programme by depriving it at the same time of its aggressive strategic will.

Thus this risk idea belongs neither on the sea nor in politics but solely in the realm of political cant, since, considered from the naval strategic standpoint, every promise is wrong.

With our continental attitude of mind, a parallel from the war on land is particularly illuminating. Hence the following example: Suppose that our old Army had adapted this risk idea. Then we might have said:- In order to guarantee peace we shall reduce our military strength and maintain a force just strong enough to defend our position on the front with safety-- a sort of Siegfried position -- but not strong enough to constitute a strategic menace against France. It is obvious that had our Army adopted the political idea into its military life for 15 years, as the Navy did, and had based its training on

8. 9.
 this idea, then the war of movement would never have taken place, for intellectual reasons, since the Army, trained to this one-sided war of position and over-estimating the enemy strength, would have waited the enemy attack even though it were actually stronger than demanded by a war of defence.

This was exactly the situation created in our Navy Fleet. When the much-practised war of defence failed -- since there was nothing to defend in the North Sea -- we were mentally caught in the underbrush of defensive warfare and did not know what to do with our Fleet. All our discussions revolve about these tactical sweeps of the Fleet and never around the basic question: war of defence or war of movement. The High Command never appreciated the fact that our primary mission was the breaking of the blockade, because the blockade lines being placed at a distance were, tactically, safeguarded from direct attack from our "Siegfried position" in the German Bight. Even the Norwegian and Danish questions were considered solely from the standpoint of defence with respect to our own counter measures in the event that England occupied these positions, entirely overlooking the fact that England already held the strategic position of these countries as a result of our closing of the Belt. (Tirpitz: Memoirs, pp. 300-301.)

Never once did we entertain the idea of challenging the supremacy of England in her own territory, in the Atlantic. And yet, in a war for the sake of our commerce, it was either this-- or complete renunciation.

On the contrary, with this risk idea, we deliberately forego such aim and chose renunciation.

We wished only to "defend ourselves", never to menace England, politically or strategically. One cannot "defend oneself" against sea-power, however. This is a maritime impossibility. One can only fight sea-power for the control of the commerce lanes.

This was the psychology of our pre-war politics, our fleet

building programme, our fleet development and our conduct of the war.

The whole posse training of the Navy breathed the spirit of defence. All decisive questions, from calibre and displacement, through manoeuvres and drills down to the estimation of the supply of coal for battle, were solved, not in the sense of aggressive combat, but with the idea of a war of defence. Our torpedo-boats, in type, tactics and fighting value, were the direct and most striking expression of this idea of defensive warfare in the North Sea. Developed with the idea of the Atlantic ocean walls, this weapon takes on quite a different appearance.

This defensive attitude leads to the very serious question as to whether the Navy, believing itself to have been trained for the offensive was not a victim of self-deception, and whether this emphasis laid on the tactical-offensive training was not the instinctive defence mechanism of its innate feeling raised against the defensive training which environed it.

One should not confuse this "tactical-offensive" attitude with personal bravery and our spirit of initiative which are innate in the German character. The tactical-offensive attitude means an intuitive sense of the given tactical situation within limits of the whole, which the responsible leader or subordinate must feel. It is illuminating that when the whole situation is permeated with a feeling of inferiority and of defence, the estimate of the tactical situation follows from the viewpoint of inferiority. Is it possible, then, for a Navy to have a mental attitude of defence and of the tactical offence at the same time? This question is difficult to answer and no answer will be attempted here. It should serve, however, as an incentive to serious thought along these lines.

Strategy is master; tactics the servant. It is therefore quite conceivable that the strategic idea in which the Fleet

is developed, should also become the "leitmotif" in the tactical estimate of the situation. If the strategy is defensive due to the feeling of inferiority, this will probably be reflected in the tactics.

Had we led the Fleet out of this dead wet triangle and assumed the offensive as the only possible solution with our geographical position, then our tactics would have followed this idea. The road would then have been clear. There would have been no further talk of the tactical-offensive attitude. That lay then in the milieu.

From whatever angle and line of thought we regard our maritime development, we always arrive at the same conclusion. Much as one might have wished for certain improvements in material, the outstanding fact remains that nothing was lacking to us, except the strategic will -- the will to sea-power. Our intellectual and psychological attitude was so lacking in the idea of strategic offensive (which was of such decisive importance in our geographical position) that even the State itself, under pressure of war, could not arrive at it.

There can be only one conclusion for the future of our Navy:-- in spite of our present weakness, the officer corps must mentally transform this idea of defensive warfare into strategic will. This is our hope of the future.

Of what use is the best and the bravest fleet when the nation does not know its purpose nor understand how to use it? F

6. OUR CONCEPT OF SEA POWER.

The influence of the strategic will has been treated at length in order to show that, not alone the Navy, but the whole nation is deeply influenced by this concept of the strategic will the moment it turns towards the sea and to what extent -- far beyond the narrow confines of the military circles -- it is necessary that this concept of sea-power be properly developed and

comprehended. As far as we were concerned, however, the concept was practically entirely lacking. Not that the Navy itself did not form a clear idea of the influence of sea-power on world politics. In its position, the political side of sea-power was probably better understood than in any other department, but it did not perceive the concrete foundation of sea-power, on which, in decisive moments, the influences of foreign policies rest.

We considered the Fleet alone to constitute sea-power.

That is evidenced by our pre-war policies and our conduct of the naval war. In conclusion, therefore, it is interesting to investigate how we came to arrive at this one-sided and erroneous conception.

The explanation probably lies in the fact that we derived our ideas of sea-power from our concept of military power on the continent, and since, according to our ideas, such power depends solely on the size of the Army, we arrived at this peculiar idea of a sea-power, which knows nothing of the concept of strategic-geographic position.

If we examine then the resultant war of defence on the sea, from the standpoint of this continental military concept of sea-power, we find the following:-

Let us consider a war between France and Spain. Then it is clear that the weaker Spanish Army might succeed in holding a strong defensive position in the Pyrenees against the futile onslaughts of the much stronger French Army and thus keep Spain free from the invader.

When one defends "oneself" on land, this word "oneself" implies one's land, the fortifications, the trenches, or in short anything implying possession or occupancy. Likewise, at sea, one can only "defend" something concrete, such as a coast, a commerce lane, a prize, but not "oneself". In the no-war's

land of the sea there is lacking this implied possession which stands behind the word "self".

The coast defence war, narrow as its limits may be, stands upon the firm foundation of reality. A war of defence, however, which does not specify what is to be defended, becomes something unreal.

Obviously at sea there can be no such thing as a war of defence, and such an idea can only derive from a continental mental attitude.

Every war is fought over some possession held by the enemy. Even the smallest nation has a possession -- its land. This possession is desired by the enemy and therefore he attacks, while the weaker defends "itself".

The seas, however, belong to no one. The only possession one holds upon the seas are the ships which traverse the commerce lanes. Only that nation which controls the commerce lanes by virtue of its geographical position -- and this is independent of the strength of the fleet -- has possession.

There, England rightly fought a war of defence (strategically understood) and did not attack since she alone had a possession to be defended. We on the other hand, lost all our possessions (with the exception of the Baltic) as soon as war was declared. A war of defence in the North Sea was therefore meaningless for us, who were without possessions, and the employment of the fleet to bring about a decision was pure fiction. Our situation might be likened to a fortress from which a sortie is made. In this manner, some local military damage may be inflicted on the enemy, but the land which has fallen into enemy hands cannot be reconquered in this manner.

The risk idea and the war of defence associated with it -- which takes no account of the factor of possession -- and the idea that we, as the military weaker power, must conduct a war of defence against the aggression of a superior England, are all ideas which flow from this continental habit of thought.

The same is true of our concept of naval supremacy. We wished to acknowledge the maritime supremacy of England at sea and yet be strong enough so that we should be independent of the favour or disfavour of her power. We wished to build up that degree of power which would suffice to prevent England from successfully imposing her will upon us even in a war of defence in the North Sea. This was exactly the idea presented in our analogy of the war between Spain and France in the Pyrenees. In this example the Spanish, in spite of their weaker army, have "military supremacy" over an aggressive France.

At sea, however, in a war of defence in the North Sea, the opposite -- not naval supremacy but a deliberate renunciation of naval supremacy -- is revealed. Such a war of defence is purely coast defence and holds no idea of naval supremacy. It renounces battle for the trade lanes and the freedom of the seas. Every nation, whose navy is conceived as a means of protecting its commerce, must be prepared to follow the road of strategy which leads to strategic position or else, where the Fleet suffers from an unfavourable geographic position, it must be content to remain a coast defence navy. The battle for command of the seas, or at least for keeping open one's own trade routes, is the reason for the fleet's existence -- it has no other purpose. A nation has naval supremacy only to the extent that its navy is materially and intellectually capable of accomplishing this mission. The concept of naval supremacy held by our Naval staff, however, derived from war on land.

The extent to which our ideas were derived from war on land, to which all concepts of naval strategic position are foreign, is shown by the way in which we apply the word "strategy" in relation to the sea. Even to-day we call everything "strategic" which pertains to fleet operations outside the limits of contact (for example tactical reconnaissance instead of strategic reconnaissance); this regardless of whether the undertaking is strategic (geographic) or is simply a large-scale tactical

operation. We make no distinction in the terms although the difference is the greatest imaginable. One is strategy and pertains to the land; the other is tactics and lies on the water.

When we realize the manner in which our mental attitude was influenced by our concepts of war on land, it becomes clear why we trained the fleet with this risk idea and why, during the war, we learned many things but evaluated them differently. All strategic questions -- even where we recognized them as such -- were considered in the light of our land military point of view and accounted to be of little influence on the war decision.

All of us were soldiers on land by instinct and tradition. For that reason our ideas did not conflict with the risk idea, which also derived from this mode of thought.

The fact that this concept of sea-power and its mission, held by us for twenty years, should have necessarily exerted its influence on the form of the coast defense war, (which was meaningless in view of the actual strength of our Fleet), is not to be wondered at, any more than the failure which resulted therefrom.

Such as this continental attitude of mind explains the action of the government, it is no more than an explanation. It does not prevent us from calmly and fearlessly facing the fact that our concept of sea-power, naval supremacy and naval warfare, contradicted the nature of the sea.

How would our Fleet have looked had it been logically developed for the past twenty years with the will to sea-power and the will to fight for the command of the Atlantic, provided war should prove unavoidable?

Even though it were not numerically greater than it was, its material in type and composition and its intellectual concepts of naval warfare would have been quite different. Then we should have forced our way to the Atlantic over the strategic positions, and fought with England for command of the Atlantic, and the freedom of the seas. This Fleet, imbued

with a strategic will, would have become sea-power. With what clarity and purpose our country could then have conceived its well-reasoned mission. Then with England's declaration of war, the signal from the Fleet flagship would have been the eager cry of Kleist:-

"Crush all the foes of Brandenburg!"

CHAPTER VII.THE FLEET AND ITS SPOON

The simpler and clearer those lines of thought developed here appear, the more puzzling it becomes that we should have overlooked such basic truths.

All explanations which we have attempted up to now seem somehow unsatisfactory, because we feel that we have not yet probed the depths of knowledge. We shall therefore pass on to the question whether it might not be better to seek to understand the Navy and our Naval Command in the light of the age in which they had their being.

Let us consider first our sense of power. When the Army declared at the outbreak of the war that it wished to march through Belgium, our "sense of power" thrust aside all scruple and said:- "What the Army needs, it must have!" At sea we felt differently. Little as we may have been conscious of the decisive importance of the strategic position of Denmark, the tactical advantages alone, offered by our possession of the Kattegat, were clear to everyone. Confronted with the necessity of negotiating with Denmark for these advantages, there arose political difficulties and scruples of international law which our sense of supremacy at sea was incapable of overcoming, in spite of the fact that England was continually violating every international agreement.

Our sense of ascendancy on the sea was undeveloped.

One may easily demonstrate this from his own experience by imagining oneself back in the war and considering the result had the Army demanded the settlement of the Belt question for its own purposes. As soon as the Army instead of the Navy comes into question, our instinct of power functions properly.

If we conceive the Fleet then as the manifestation of this undeveloped instinct at sea, then it becomes obvious why we conducted the war in this manner and not otherwise. Erroneous as

were our naval strategic ideas -- taken absolutely, they corresponded with our undeveloped sense of power on the sea, since this instinct restricted our aims. We did not aspire to world and sea-power of the first order to which we should have been led by victorious battle for command of the seas. We did not aspire to more than retention of our limited interests in the North Sea. The discussion amongst our leaders lies in the same plans. All wished and desired the same thing -- the defence -- only the form was open to dispute.

We can therefore only conclude as a fact that our will to sea-power was immature. Why was this? We must glance at our history.

1. THE POST-RICHANDEAN STATE.

All peoples which are of importance in the world are the exponents of an idea, a philosophy which is peculiar to them. It is this idea which binds the peoples into nations, and the state lives for this idea alone. If the nation is defeated, the idea dies; if the idea flickers out the nation dies and sinks to the level of a tributary existence.

The idea strives for expansion and drives the nations on to aggressive policies, in order that it may assert itself. All nations which are representatives of the idea, must pursue an aggressive policy from inner necessity, as long as they live, and it is only because they must maintain this idea that they wage war. Its policies are imperialistic, its history the records of wars. Its fate lies in battle.

Extinct states do not make conquests, they do not wage war, because their ideal is dead. At most, they become war objectives for others. They are without history. Their policies are domestic. They enjoy eternal peace. But their peace is death. (Hauger).

No matter how recorded history may dress up this will to might in making it out to be right or wrong, the fact of this

will to power remains. The belief in their right to power, however, is created by each nation from the idea, which is the substance of its life.

All nations, when they lived, pursued the policy of might: Holland, Spain, Sweden, France and England. Prussia also grew in this manner until 1870. Then it ceased to aspire to power and in the world war no longer held to the aim of might. What had happened? Was our idea extinct? Not in the least!

After a period of respite our national idea started to grow anew with the turn of the century. Our instinct drove us across the frontier, with commerce, shipping and industry, to world policies overseas. Our fleet building programme, based on this instinct, followed at the same time. Although, as we have shown, our world politics and sea-power stood upon a precarious foundation, our naval armament revealed to the world our will to sea-power. To a certain extent the world then advanced us credit for sea-power in the expectation that in the event of war we would establish the flimsy structure of our coming sea-power on a firm geographic basis. Because the world had faith in our future as a sea-power, we became powerful and our affairs prospered.

This national urge to power is unconscious. The task of the political leaders is to grasp this idea intellectually and give it the proper political form. In the post-Bismarckian state this was not successfully accomplished. We aspired to sea-power and proved it by the building of our fleet, but we failed to realize that a continental state can never become a sea-power without geographical expansion to the sea. The task of our Government in the post-Bismarck epoch was to pursue a maritime policy for power and alliances for the sake of sea-power, which does not necessarily imply that this policy should end in war. On the contrary, there was every probability that such a policy would find a peaceful political solution provided only our aim were clearly conceived. This

historical ford is not decisive. It depends on circumstances and on the age in which the goal is finally attained. The essential thing for the statesman is a clear foresighted perception of the goal towards which the national policies are directed. The government, after Bismarck, deceived itself with respect to our aspirations for sea-power and found no concrete goal in its foreign policies. We felt ourselves geographically saturated.

The giant Bismarck still threw his shadow across our path.

The saturated state under Bismarck is identical with the League of Princes at the time of Frederick the Great. It is the expression of the consolidation epoch, the necessary peace and quiet following great exertions. It is the time for the political defensive -- the time for consolidating what has been acquired.

Bismarck's historical statesmanship, like that of Frederick the Great, does not lie in the epoch of the political defensive after the storm but in the epochs in which our national instinct drove us to the positive policy of expansion. As Frederick the Great expressed himself to Voltaire:- "I ask you, Voltaire: if one has the advantage, shall one make use of it or not? I am fully prepared. If I fail to make use of this advantage, then I hold an asset in my hands whose use I misconceive".

In the post-Bismarck state, however, this positive epoch was disregarded and the defensive politics of the saturated state were held to embody the highest type of Bismarckian statesmanship and were raised then to a dogma.

A contradiction was thus brought about between the unconscious national instinct and its conscious political guidance.

The economic will of the nation demanded a positive policy while the state held to its defensive policies. On the one hand the urge to world and sea-power and on the other the saturated continental state. The Foreign Office and the Navy came into unnatural conflict. In all countries of the world

our economic life was struggling with England for markets, with industry, shipping and commerce, while our diplomacy surrendered to England without a struggle all of the geographic bases of power so essential to our military protection of this economic life.

The same contradiction is implied in the risk idea. In the promise the will to sea-power. In the conclusion the political defensive and the protection of the saturated continental State. The risk idea was not deliberate cant and political subterfuge, but was honorably intended since in war, where this cant could serve no purpose, we still acted politically and militarily in accord with the idea. The risk idea was more than a mere formula for the founding of the fleet. It is the verbal expression of an epoch in which a people had grown out of contact with its own national life. It is the great disparity between desire and accomplishment.

Thus the post-Bismarck state could find for itself no goal in the war. The miserable question of the war-aims reflects this condition. If the national consciousness is not directed towards the question of right, which is to be decided, there comes the moment, after the first enthusiasms of war has flickered out, when the people ask why they are fighting and bleeding. In the necessity of the war it then requires a steadfast will to bring the national consciousness to the point of holding out. Otherwise it becomes paralyzed and in the interplay of the forces the opposition, which is inherent in every state, comes into power. That is the historical sense of the events which we experienced in our revolution. The nation which arose unanimously in 1914 in the unconscious urge of its feelings, was willing to be led when this lay in the direction of its unconscious urge. Had we once fought England in naval warfare, whether for Brest or near Scotland, we might well have lost the war, but we should never have had a revolution. Because leaders and

nation would have been one. Both would then have been following the urge of the national instinct.

Because the state failed to envisage this goal of sea-power, the peace of a continental state became the sole, although scarcely attainable goal. That, because this was not the sole question, but rather a peace of a state aspiring to world-power. For this peace -- disregarding the submarine warfare, we never fought, owing to our continental attitude of mind. The Fleet, the means for attaining this goal of power, remained unemployed.

Therefore the building of our Fleet -- as a risk fleet to preserve the continental state -- was historically unwise. Crowell created the British Fleet with the deliberate aim of sea-power. Our fleet was built for a defensive war in the North Sea. In the Fleet programme is reflected the epoch which gave it birth. Its creation was owing to a sound national instinct, its political-strategic conception was an error.

The Fleet and the epoch are identical in all respects.

Our policies knew no world-political geographic goal -- the Fleet was not employed in a strategic offensive.

Politics did not create the fleet to protect our commerce in war; in the combined operations plan was no thought of command of the seas and the Atlantic.

Politics wished to defend the saturated continental state with the fleet -- the fleet was compelled to protect the coast in a war of defence in the North Sea.

Politics saw no goal for the state; the operations plan of the fleet in being is the operations plan of lack of objective.

In the whole, neither the statesman nor the Naval Staff knew the will to sea-power. Reason: the misunderstood Bismarck.

If we see in the fleet the image of its age, then it is apparent why our will to sea-power remained undeveloped and why

our Naval Command was totally unable to conceive the naval strategic ideas.

Here, at last, we reach the depths of understanding. The question why our political intellect remained mired in the past while our national instinct was visibly seeking the new road, cannot be solved. We live in a subjective world. In this visible world men -- and only men -- make history, and their thoughts, actions and errors are for us the ultimate tangible grounds of historic knowledge.

Now from the past to the future.

To-day the European civilization encircles the globe. Across the oceans, Powers have arisen with their own instincts. Therefore, for living nations, European politics belong to the past. For us there can be only ~~one~~ politics -- world politics. But this is sea-power.

Therefore we shall again have to take the path to world and sea-power: but this time with a matured knowledge of the instinct to sea-power. This time the historical forms and the political path will be different. The more clearly and more deliberately the government follows this goal, the surer the national consciousness will be led and the quicker will the destructive opposition be crushed. Because their life depends upon it, nations have a sure instinct for the direction in which the national instinct is being led and whether it assumes the proper historical form, so that when the time comes, they may say with Frederick the Great:- "I ask you Voltaire".

The lessons of history are as simple as the laws of nature and as invariable in their monotony; the only changes are in the historical vestments in which they are clothed by time.

2. THE NATIONAL TASK OF THE OFFICER PERSONNEL OF THE NAVY.

A knowledge of the errors made is the first step towards correcting them. The Navy must therefore teach the Army and

the statement that it was our continental attitude which brought us defeat, because we needed sea-power and failed to attain it.

These ideas, however, can only be propagated by naval officers. To-day they are the only ones in a position to know and their's will be the fault if they do not fight for this knowledge.

For the future of the state we must learn to view the facts of this world not through continental eyes but in the light of world politics, i. e. to take the maritime viewpoint.

For the Navy, these war experiences may be stated in the following military form:-

The closer a navy approaches the army in thought and organization, the more surely it will develop into a coast defence navy. The proof of this lies in the war of defence in the North Sea which is permeated with the military ideas of war on land.

The coast war is a war between wind and water. The coast is still land and the defence of the national territory is a matter for the army. Therefore, in a coast defence war, the requirements for war on land are valid. A ship, which is drawn into the coast defence problem, loses its properties as a ship. It becomes a floating fort along the coast and is withdrawn from the original purpose of its existence, during the time it is thus employed. The defence of the coast and the coastal waters belonging to it is therefore simply an "obligation of honour" for the navy and in no sense its "mission". The mission of the navy in war is the protection of the economic life which lies at sea beyond the frontiers. *or the destruction of the enemy's economic life.* This external economic life -- as we found in the war -- lies, not in the North Sea or in the Baltic, but in the Atlantic beyond reach of the might of the army.

The Versailles Treaty robbed our navy of power as well as our army. Both weapons are deprived of the possibility of

of aggressive warfare. They must take the defensive. The mission itself -- independent of whether it can be fulfilled to-day or not -- remains always the same. The mission of the army to-day is still the defence of the national territory and that of the navy remains the defence of our overseas trade on the Atlantic for the sake of our industries.

No navy -- except a coast navy -- as shown by the war, chooses the theatre of its operations; this is chosen for it by trade. The latter, however, seeks its outlets undeterred by the geographical position of the state and the strength of its navy, solely in accordance with economic laws. Therefore the navy must follow wherever trade may lead. That the flag must follow the trade is literally true and is to be understood in the geographical sense. Now it is obvious why every maritime operations plan must be geographic and independent of the strength of the fleet. On the strength of the fleet depends, not the locality, but simply the mass which may be concentrated on the ocean and the extent to which one is entitled to participate in world politics. To-day world politics are conducted without our participation.

So long as our navy does not forget the Atlantic, it will live, be it ever so small. As long as it lives it will cherish its heritage from the past, the idea of naval supremacy. Without this idea, it will ultimately turn from the wide world to the idea of a coast navy which relinquishes the protection of its trade.

CONCLUSION

Nations are trained by their historical experience. For centuries we have been compelled to fight for our existence on land and only lately did we become a world power. Forced to turn to the sea by our commerce and industry, we undertook this step politically and militarily with reluctance and hesitance. When the world-war broke out, our objectives were limited. In this battle for our existence we turned to our

historical memories of continental power and conceived the war as a war on land. In this we failed because it proved to be a naval war. Our entire conduct of the war was dictated by the land instinct. To-day we are the heritors of the titanic struggle: we were defeated but must still find our way in the future.

If then we can clearly and consciously arouse in our people the spirit of the Atlantic, then those who now sleep eternally in the bosom of the all-mother sea, will not have fallen in vain.

The inscription written over their memorial in Flensburg then takes on a deeper symbolism:-

"Not to complain but wager again,
Seafaring is our need!"
