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THESIS

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THE RELATIONSHIP IN WAR
OF
NAVAL STRATEGY, TACTICS, AND, COMMAND.

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Newport, R. I.

7 May, 1934

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Introduction

The subject assigned seems clear and definite yet in the directive the student is told to cover the following points:

1. Develop a new group of conceptions primarily concerned with the coercion of enemies.
2. A National Naval Strategy, with objectives consonant with national aims, is to be evolved as a primary premise.
3. The task is to delineate clearly the extent of the influence and interdependence of strategy and tactics.
4. The student will evaluate the relationship to naval strategy and tactics of the bases of command.
5. The student will make an exposition of a concrete problem that confronts every officer in high command in war.
6. The studies in Economics will be used in developing the Naval Strategy of the United States.
7. The aim is to develop practical concepts required by high ranking naval officers in war, the general plans

of the conceptions being that of the Commander in Chief or Chief of Naval Operations.

8. Cover in a practical way American Naval Strategy.
9. One of the conceptions to be investigated is that of winning a victory with an inferior force.
10. The Thesis is to be intensely practical and to include conceptions of naval strategy and the use of a Fleet for winning a decisive victory.
11. One aim is to produce original thoughts on the utilization of financial power as a weapon in the conduct of war.
12. It is also hoped to develop original thoughts on the use of the Merchant Marine in the conduct of a Naval War.

The result is that the student is confused by the multiplicity of tasks, and by the realization that an industrious and gifted writer might, somewhat inadequately, cover the subject in a life time. What follows can, therefore, be nothing but a few random ideas on American Naval Strategy, Tactics, and Command.

Strategy

The activities of the Navy in time of war are, primarily, concerned with protecting our own coasts and with securing the freedom of the seas for our own shipping and denying the use of the sea to the shipping of the enemy.

If the enemy has a fleet and a superior geographical position for attacking our vital trade routes or for

protecting his own, our first aim will be to improve our geographical position, and then contest for the control of trade routes. In this process a naval battle is almost certain to occur, but the battle is not an end in itself but serves the purpose of strategy which is to secure the aims of policy.

It is the function of strategy to prepare for the battle, decide what are the chances of victory, and whether the value of a victory is worth the risk of defeat, or whether the general situation demands a battle even with slight hope of victory.

In peace the role of Naval Strategy is to so prepare the Navy for the support of the national policy, that other nations, whose policy may conflict with ours, will be loath to resort to war; yet, if war should unhappily eventuate, our Navy will be so prepared and so disposed, with properly equipped and adequately defended bases so located, as to enable it to attack successfully the vital trade routes of the enemy, while defending our own.

It is the function of naval strategy, after knowing the national policies of the state, to indicate

In Peace

1. The geographical position of bases to be acquired in peace or attained in war.
2. The character and extent of defenses and facilities to be provided for such bases.
3. The types including such characteristics as steaming radius and armament, and numbers of ships.
4. The personnel requirements.
5. The character of operations the Fleet should be trained to undertake.

In Preparation For War

1. The character and extent of war plans to be formulated for the conduct of any war that might be necessary to secure the objectives of national policy.
2. The type and number of Fleet auxiliary ships that should be provided.
3. The amount and character of joint operations to be provided for.
4. The geographical distribution of the Fleet.

In War

1. The area of operations.
2. The objectives of the Navy.
3. The operations to be initiated.
4. The time and the purpose of the battle.
5. The reserves in personnel and material to be assembled.
6. The naval building program to be initiated.

Thus, while with the Army, strategy begins only with the outbreak of the war, naval strategy is not a strictly military problem and begins in time of peace. It is so intimately connected with, and flows so directly from national policy that it is a joint problem of the Naval leaders and the statesmen. A large part of the work of strategy should be completed before war begins.

In order to discuss what American Naval Strategy should be it is necessary to know what American foreign policy is now, and is likely to be in the future; but the form of our Government is such that no one can state what the American

foreign policies are. At best our foreign policy is nebulous and improvised so that no Naval authority can develop a concept of naval strategy with any assurance as to its correctness.

However it is believed that American foreign policy, its developments and changes should be the subject of constant study by the Navy, in the hope that a fair estimate may be made as to what our foreign policy includes; in order that, in the absence of more authoritative information, such an estimate may serve as a basis for the development of American naval strategy.

American foreign policy is frequently assumed to include

1. Isolation, no entangling alliances.
2. Monroe Doctrine and Caribbean Policy.
3. Freedom of the seas or neutral right of trade.
4. Open door and territorial integrity of China.

It is probable that only the first two are genuine foreign policies of the United States.

From the first week in August 1914 up to our entry in the War, there was a series of acts by Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, every one of which was challenged by our Government as a violation of our neutral rights, yet up to the time we entered the war not one of our contentions had been recognized as a right by them, and on 19 May 1917 in an exchange of notes with Great Britain we deliberately gave up any attempt to ascertain the validity of our claims of violation of neutral rights by Great Britain.

Either neutrals have the right of trade at sea or search right does not exist. Conflict in the future might be avoided if policy settled this point during peace. With

the question unsettled and with our continued insistence upon the existence of such rights it is almost certain that we will be unable to maintain a position of neutrality in any future war in which a strong naval power is engaged.

We have repeatedly refrained from using force to support our alleged policy of the Open Door and territorial integrity of China. The Open Door policy is essentially a kind of intervention policy and since the American people are unalterably opposed to entanglement in European affairs it is difficult to believe that they would support a policy of entanglement in Asiatic affairs. This is especially evident since in the Washington Conference the American Government made agreements which rendered a policy of intervention in Asia impossible for fifteen years, and very difficult thereafter and, in the Philippine Independence Bill, is rendering it still more difficult.

In attempting to determine what our foreign policies are, it seems safe to assume that a national policy is a course of action repeatedly followed by a nation for the accomplishment of aims of such vital interest that it will resort to war rather than renounce them.

On this basis, in view of the past history of the United States, it appears that the American people are primarily concerned with domestic affairs, have no desire to participate in World Politics or World affairs beyond expressing moral sentiments and altruistic aims which they like to talk about and wish for, but are unwilling to support by force.

An American Naval Strategy that would be in keeping with the present public opinion in America would be a purely defensive strategy concerned primarily with the defense of

our trade routes along the west coast of the Americas and on the east coast down to and including the Caribbean. The Hawaiian Islands should be looked upon and prepared as an outpost defending our West Coast rather than as a stepping off place for our westward movement across the Pacific.

For a defensive role of this character the American Navy in its present strength is adequate without the addition of all the vessels provided for in the building program.

It is possible that under the influence of propaganda or resentment arising from overt acts of Japan, the American people might demand that the Navy take some aggressive action in the Western Pacific therefore, in time of peace, thorough and comprehensive studies should be made of a grand movement in force to the Western Pacific in order to demonstrate to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States and his advisers in foreign affairs, the impracticability of carrying out, in war, such a movement without a larger Navy, long preparation, a defended and equipped base in the Far East or allies capable of offering us facilities or assistance in that area.

Since the American people might demand war with Japan, and the administration refuse to prepare for or authorize a western movement in force across the Pacific, exhaustive studies should be made of other means of bringing pressure to bear upon the economic life of Japan in order to determine the practicability and probable effectiveness of such measures. With longer range oil burning, turbine driven cruisers it might prove entirely feasible to maintain cruiser operations against trade routes far removed from bases. These studies should be looked upon frankly as studies and not as War Plans.

It is difficult to conceive of the United States being engaged in a war with a European state without our being assisted by allies, but in any war in the Atlantic the initial aim of our Naval Strategy would be the control of the Western Atlantic from Newfoundland to south of the Caribbean. The later modifications of our Naval Strategy would be so influenced by the character of our enemies, and our allies, and by the developments of the war that it would be futile to speculate as to what our Naval Strategy might be. However it would probably be safe to assume that our Navy will never again be employed in escorting large troop movements across the Atlantic.

Naval Tactics

Naval tactics is the art of preparing for and conducting battle; it is the art of using armed forces in battle to gain victory. Strategy precedes tactics in preparing for and deciding upon the battle, and is the basis upon which tactics rests in employing, in battle, the means provided by strategy to secure victory.

Victory in battle, the aim of tactics, is usually sought by material superiority at point of contact, perfect co-ordination and concentration.

No effort will be made to present new ideas on tactics nor to expound the present development of American Naval Tactics. The Navy has developed what appears to be sound tactics for the battle line, but opinion as to the tactical employment of heavy cruisers has not yet sufficiently crystallized so as to constitute doctrine, and no unified

opinion has been developed as to how submarine and air operations should be co-ordinated with the other arms in naval battle.

It is probable that in the naval battle of the future the engagement of the battle lines will be preceded by a contest between the light forces for the control of the areas favorable for launching torpedo attacks at the enemy battle line, and by a contest between air forces for the control of the air. In practically all exercises in the fleet and on the game board the objective of the initial air attack is the enemy carrier. This appears to be perfectly sound provided the attack on the carrier can be made before she has launched her planes; but with carriers separated and disposed fifty miles or more from the battle line the time spent in searching for and attacking the carrier might be utilized to far greater advantage in attacking the light forces or the battle line.

Before the battle forces come in contact effort must be made to secure information about the enemy. In this service heavy cruisers will certainly be employed yet we have devoted little time and effort to develop the proper method of utilizing these vessels in scouting, and in training the personnel to promptly and correctly transmit what information they might secure.

Naval Command

Naval Command is the right, the power and the responsibility of employing, controlling, and directing naval forces. When informed as to policy, Command, appreciating

strategy, utilizes tactics in employing naval forces to secure victory in battle.

Command does not formulate policy, but since it has the duty of supporting policy it should have some voice in seeing that the means provided are in harmony with the policy to be supported.

Command translates policy into terms of strategy and merges strategy into tactics.

The functions of Command are

Organization

Indoctrination and Training

Administration and Supply

Planning

Execution

Organization

The organization of the Navy Department is essentially a peace time organization primarily concerned with administration and supply. In fact it has two organizations, one the Bureau system whose sole function is administration and supply, and imposed thereon another, Naval Operations, which is charged, by law, with operations, that is, Indoctrination, Training, Planning, and Execution. However the organization of Naval Operations has become so involved with Administration and Supply that we have two organizations endeavoring to execute the non-combatant function of Command with too little attention devoted to the other and more essentially military functions of command.

During the World War our Army actually participated in the war to a sufficient extent to be forced to realize the necessity of organizing the War Department on a war making basis. The Navy was not called on to exercise to any extent any of the command functions other than Administration and Supply so that a reorganization of the Navy Department was not induced by the experience of the war. Had we been called on to carry out real and independent war operations an effective organization might have resulted.

It is doubtful whether a proper reorganization of the Navy Department can be effected by the Navy. The Navy is most conservative and resists change, the Bureaus are strongly entrenched, the civilian organization of the Bureaus fears change and fears a reduction in the number of the higher paid positions, the staff Bureaus have acquired much power and would resist any change that tended to reduce their importance or power, the Line of the Navy might oppose a reduction in the number of billets that carry the pay and allowances of a senior Rear Admiral and finally Congress favors the Bureau system because by making appropriations based on Bureau estimates minute control of detail expenditures is secured.

It is probable that the only way in which a re-organization of the Navy Department can be effected is to have a reorganization imposed on the Navy, when the Navy Staff would become so concerned that it would then make every effort to so modify the proposed reorganization as to make it acceptable.

Time and perhaps talent are not available to present a proposed organization for the Navy Department, but it should be such as to increase the importance of ^{and} the prestige of indoctrination and Training, Planning, Execution and War oper-

ations while reducing the importance and power of the branches charged with supply. The Chief of Naval Operations should be relieved of some of the duty of administering the Navy in time of peace in order that he may give more thought to its operations in war.

The organization of the Fleet on paper appears to be essentially sound. It is of course organized by types and by tasks and in peace it appears over-organized, but it is necessary, in peace, to give flag officers experience at sea even if there appears to be an excess of flag officers in a command.

One fault runs through the Navy and that is the over stressing of material at the expense of operations; the undue attention to administration and supply with the consequent neglect of the other functions of command; the devotion of too much time and thought to the administration of the peace time Navy and too little planning for its use in war.

No task force commander, like Commander Scouting Force and Commander Battle Force or Commander in Chief should have technical specialists on the staff. These should be on the staff of type commanders who would handle material matters leaving the task commanders free for planning and execution. When a technical specialist is put on the staff of a task force commander he feels that he must justify his existence by performing work in line with his specialty and as soon as he becomes involved in material matters his Flag Officer interests himself in such questions to the detriment of his primary duties.

Indoctrination and Training

My own experience leads me to believe that, in our Navy, indoctrination and training do not proceed beyond the very elementary stages, in fact they seldom advance above the individual ship.

For example, I was head of an academic department at the Naval Academy, but no Superintendent ever gave me any information, instructions, or guidance orally or in writing as to his plans or views in carrying out the mission of the Naval Academy.

In command of the South China Patrol, I never saw the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and never received from him or from my predecessor any information as to the duties, responsibilities, or authority of the Commander South China Patrol.

In command of Destroyers Naval Forces Europe, I never received from the Navy Department or from Commander Naval Forces Europe any communication as to the mission, task, or purpose of the destroyers in Europe. I received an itinerary but no information as to why I was to visit a port, what I was to do on arrival, or in fact why the destroyers were in Europe.

When I became Director of Officer Personnel the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation was so busy performing the detailed duties assumed by him that he could find no time to tell me how he wanted my duty performed and my predecessor had no doctrine or policy to pass on to me.

During almost two and a half years in command of the Augusta I never attended any conference to discuss or receive information or instructions as to the operations of

the Cruiser Scouting Force and with the exception of one paper I can remember no effort having been made to indoctrinate me.

The only time during the past twenty years when I have been conscious of any effort to indoctrinate me has been at the Naval War College.

I believe that indoctrination is an aid to the success of any organization in peace and is essential to its success in war, and that the higher command in the Navy does not realize that the failure to indoctrinate subordinates during peace may have grave consequences in war.

Training is seriously handicapped by Competition. In the early days of modern target practice competition was a necessary and valuable means of training but now Competition has become an end in itself to the detriment of training. I have seen long range practice wasted, as an opportunity to train the ship as a whole especially the ship control, for fear of the prejudicial effect on the score which was the goal of the gunnery department.

The Competition results in long and tedious preparation for Short Range Battle Practice with consequent consumption of time and fuel that could be more advantageously spent on higher forms of training.

Administration and Supply

The Navy is primarily maintained for war purposes and during war the essential combatant functions of command demonstrate their basic importance, but during long periods of peace when war operations are not required the material side of the Navy assumes undue prominence and Administration, the less combatant function of Command, acquires a dominant

position. The Navy becomes material minded and officers become administrators rather than leaders. It is probable that the routine administrator and the war time leader require quite different characteristics and placing too high a value on administration may give us leaders who will fail under the trial of war.

In the Navy as a whole and particularly in the Navy Department Administration and Supply are bountifully provided for and in fact over accentuated with the result that nearly all hands are so busy keeping their desks clear of administrative papers that they have no time to think about how the whole service might be improved. An example of the wasteful growth of administrative matters is the system of cash accounting in vogue in the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts. As far as I have been able to learn this cost accounting serves no useful purpose, is understood by only a few experts, yet demands the employment of more than half the civilian force of the Bureau and for that reason probably cannot be abolished.

Planning

The Navy as a whole is exceedingly weak in planning. Nearly everyone is so concerned with doing the job in hand that he devotes little thought to plans for the future. The larger the organization the more necessary that a fair portion of its time and intelligence be freed from considerations of the here and now, in order that the requisite time and intelligence may be devoted to plans for the future.

We neglect not only war plans but plans for peace time operation, altho the growth of the fleet and the limitation on funds available have forced the development of

reasonably satisfactory peace time planning.

Unless there has been a recent change in war planning, Naval Operations formulates mobilization plans leaving the plans for war operations to be developed by command afloat.

Execution

All of the functions of command except execution may, to some extent, be exercised by the high command (Chief of Naval Operations) ashore but execution is the supreme function of high command afloat.

The Commander in Chief exercises the other functions of command but such exercise and all command ashore is of value only to the extent it contributes to successful execution.

It is reasonable to allow the current frequent changes in officer personnel so as to enable every officer to receive some degree of training in the various branches of his profession but it is entirely wrong to look upon high command afloat as a reward for past excellent service. Rather than being considered a reward for past service it should impose an obligation of continued effort of the highest order.

With our frequent changes in the high command at sea the new Commander-in-Chief assumes command with the year's work completely planned and scheduled, so that all he can do is to carry out exercises already formulated and incorporate his own ideas in peace time plans to be executed by his successor.

In our service we frequently have a Commander-in-Chief in command for only one year. In war the Commander-in-Chief has a grave responsibility. It is admitted that

indoctrination, training and planning are essential to success in execution and all of these require time. We probably would need only one capable Commander-in-Chief during war, but we would certainly need one capable one, and his place could not be satisfactorily filled by several almost capable ones.

Therefore it would appear reasonable to select one promising Rear Admiral, make him Commander-in-Chief and permit him to remain in that position long enough to enable him to have some effect in the exercise of the functions of Indoctrination, Training, and Planning.