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"THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC"

Presentation

by

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"THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC"

In taking up this morning the War in the Pacific, we are considering a matter with which all of you are fairly familiar. For that reason I am not presenting to you a condensed history of the war; rather than that, I have selected seven happenings or incidents of the war, situations which can be the subject of reasonable discussion with respect to one element or another of the strategy involved.

These seven subjects are not all related to one another. I have chosen them in keeping with the aims of the present studies of World War II because each can profitably be studied for application to some future situation.

In presenting them to you with a good deal of opinion and comment I should like to make it clear that I am fully aware of the advantage gained by hindsight, and that the basis of this lecture is a recognition of that advantage and an attempt to profit by it.

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To get on with our subject then, I should like to begin with the opening of the war. And in discussing this, the start of the war, there are three aspects of interest that I shall take up in succession. One is the decision whether to start the war; the second is the question which

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faced the Japanese of how to start the war; and the third is the selection of a strategy by which the Japanese planned to fight the war.

This matter of determining whether or not to open a war is a matter which I think we have not studied carefully enough, nor have we learned from the War in the Pacific as we should. Let me review for a moment. By the autumn of 1941 we find a situation that we can summarize something like this: Japan was deeply committed in China. Her troop expenditures had been very high. The bulk of her national fortune was tied up in the China effort. The United States was applying a considerable economic pressure. To make matters a little better, however, her northern flank was secure, Russia was busy with Germany, and a satisfactory arrangement had been made in Indo-China. But Japan very definitely had her hands full.

The next thing that appears is an apparent abandonment of all remaining sanity in the Japanese in their deliberate attack on one of the most powerful nations in the world away over on the far side of the Pacific Ocean. With this picture of the situation it might be reasonable to condemn the Japanese for some very bad thinking; to say that right at this point they made their fatal mistake. And viewing the situation on these grounds alone I think such a condemnation might be justified. Certainly most of the post-war writings on the

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subject have criticised them on some variation of this theme.

But there is more to the story than that.

Let me go back a little. You will remember the urgent, continued diplomatic negotiations of the summer and autumn of 1941 with both governments well aware of increasing tension. On the 26th of November the Secretary of State handed to the Japanese ambassador a note which summarized and re-stated the United States position. It listed ten points in which action was proposed. Nine of these proposals commenced with the words "both governments". The remaining one, which is point 5 in the listing, I have here on a slide.

This was not the first time that autumn that the United States had brought up this China requirement, it had been in the discussions for some time. When it was included in this statement the Japanese interpreted it as a form of ultimatum. The fact that Indo-China is included in the same paragraph is not really important. The crux is the withdrawal of military forces from China.

The United States, in effect, demanded that Japan get out of China. When the Japanese received this they had as they saw it, and since they felt unable to induce the United States to modify its demand, only two alternatives. The first was to get out of China. The second was to protect themselves by going to war. If they had chosen to get out

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of China I do not see how they could have avoided an internal revolution. No power clique such as the one that ruled Japan will ever abdicate (and that would have been the result of the getting out of China). And even if they had done so their successors would have come into power in opposition to any such course. As a matter of cold reality there was no possibility whatever of Japanese acceptance of this United States demand. Under the conditions existing at that time it was a completely absurd requirement. Its only possible effect was to force the Japanese to adopt the second alternative, to force the Japanese into war against the United States.

Charles A. Beard, the historian, was convinced that Mr. Roosevelt deliberately forced the Japanese into the war in the Pacific. I do not concur with him in believing it was deliberate. But I should like to ask this question: Did the United States really understand that by putting this China issue squarely up to the Japanese at this late date that the United States had, in effect, narrowed down Japan's possible fields of action to a single choice of war?

I do not believe the United States was aware of this, and I do believe that this is precisely what we did.

And the point I should like to make is this one:

The decision to start a war is the most serious one that a nation ever has to face. But it is a decision which

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can be made indirectly as well as directly. The direct decision I am sure this country will never make. But the indirect decision, the decision forced on another by the United States under conditions very similar to those that existed in 1941, is one that we must be uniquely sensitive to appreciate and to recognize as it approaches. We may at some time feel that we have to make that decision. But we should never again make it without knowing that we do so. We ought never fail again to appreciate a situation as it may appear to a government other than our own. We should never again force such a decision so righteously and so completely unaware of what we have done.

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The next matter of strategic decision is the problem of how to start the war.

We were surprised at Pearl Harbor, thoroughly, and quite apart from the military effect, we were infuriated by what we regarded as the peculiar cunning of the oriental mind. There has been ample discussion by many men concerning the actual effect of Pearl Harbor and the ultimate advantages that came to us. I shall pass over that aspect and comment only on the opening of the war with a sudden blow. The Pearl Harbor investigation, and a host of individual writers, have attempted to identify a particular

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action or lack of action on the part of our military or civilian commanders which was the cause of our being so pathetically unready. I think we were culpable, but culpable of a general rather than a specific neglect. Our failure was a failure to be aware of the normal, routine, historical precedents in just such a situation as this one.

With respect to this matter of being surprised, I should like to quote you a passage from Sir Julian Corbett's superb history of "England in the Seven Year's War." He wrote in 1907 describing a situation in 1755:

".....The principle of securing or improving your strategical position by a sudden and secret blow before declaration of war is, and was then, well known. Almost every maritime war which we had waged had begun in this way. If precedent can sanctify an international usage, this one was beyond question admissable. Our Ministers had committed themselves to the time-honoured principle, and whatever their irresolution and incapacity, they at least must not be saddled with this unspeakable piece of folly, that having determined to open the war,they informed the enemy of their intention."

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This is as relevant to the Japanese in 1941 as it was to the English in 1755 and I shall make no further comment.

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Now to go on from this to the third aspect of the opening of the war, the decision of how to fight it...the basic strategy of the war.

Sometime after 1927 or 1928, when the famous Tanaka Memorial was alleged to have been compiled, the Japanese became convinced that a conquest of China alone would not satisfy their needs. Some time in the middle and late thirties there came the general agreement that the Empire must control Southeast Asia. Once that realization became generally accepted in the minds of the governing Japanese, then it became fairly clear to them that their plans should have as their aim the acquisition of Southeast Asia and its island groups. From this the Japanese quite naturally followed the pattern their predecessors had set for them in the Russo-Japanese War. The war plans which they evolved were plans for a limited war, a war limited in its scope to the seizure, control, and exploitation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. .

They reached the periphery of their planned conquests by the late spring of 1942, and, as they saw it, the task then confronting them was to hold this area. From all that

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I have been able to find they were quite anxious to limit the war to this region, to the new boundaries of the Co-Prosperity Sphere. But one thing they did not count upon was the power and intention of the United States. The United States had no intention of limiting the war to the Co-Prosperity Sphere; and this contrariness of ours, this refusal to abide by the rules assumed by the Japanese, led eventually to the downfall of the Empire.

The gist of the matter is that Japan wanted to fight a war of limited geographic objectives; but Japan did not have a control sufficient to limit it. The United States by the method in which she applied her sea-power, turned it into something approaching an unlimited war. This business of control, I believe, is probably the most important ingredient of any strategy, and I should like to interject here the supposition that if a theory of strategy were to be formalized (and we now have no theory), it would have to include a postulate that the strategist must retain control of the essential elements of action. Let me illustrate that by further discussion of the limited war.

There have been many limited wars in the long years of history...limited in terms of their geographic extent, their aims, their scope, and their ferocity. Most of them have been land wars. Some of them were colonial wars. A few of them have been wars in which a sea power fought a

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limited war against a land power. I recall none other than possibly the Anglo-Dutch wars, in which two major sea powers managed to conduct a limited war through to a finish. In this case that we consider today, one major sea power, Japan, tried to fight a limited war against another major sea power, the United States. But the United States was not controlled by the unilateral Japanese decision as to how the war was to be fought. The United States fought an unlimited war with its target not the re-capture of the disputed areas in Southeast Asia, but its target the downfall, the unconditional surrender, of Japanese power in the east.

I think the matter was very well expressed by Corbett, again in his story of "England in the Seven Year's War," when he discussed:

"....the tendency of limited wars to become unlimited
....the process, between two powerful and determined states, is almost inevitable. In a limited war, correctly conducted, a phase must be reached sooner or later in which one party begins to predominate in the limited area...the area of special object. The other party...will (then) seek to redress his balance by striking him at the center of his power."

Now, much of this might appear to be a condemnation of the Japanese for considering a limited war. Such is not the case. History abounds with examples in which we can see the

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desirability of quite carefully, and by mutual agreement, limiting wars. And if history did not lead us to that conclusion then sound reasoning would. The mere capacity to fight an essentially unlimited war is in itself no assurance that this is the most desirable course to follow. This, however, was not the Japanese error; that lay in just the opposite situation. Japan desired to limit the war but lacked the strength, the control, to do it.

The point to be made is that a limited war is a most treacherous experiment to embark upon. The first requisite, and an absolutely essential one, is that the participants have, in reserve, the relative strength to fight an unlimited war. No lesser strength will have the power to keep a war within pre-selected bounds. No lesser strength can retain control of this essential element of action. A lack of strength adequate to fight an unlimited war will probably let the limited war get wholly or partially out of hand and lead to ultimate defeat.

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From that I think we can go to an illustration of the effect of the conception of the war on the strategic decisions which take place during the war. In this case that I am going to bring up now, remember that, whether they had it precisely labelled or not, the Japanese basic concept was of

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a war definitely limited in its geographic interest. It was not global. They had no idea of destroying the United States; they had their eyes only on the modern equivalent of limited colonial conquest. No more than that.

In April of 1942, to protect their Malayan flank, the Japanese Fleet sortied into the eastern Indian Ocean, did some damage to the British Fleet, sank about 100,000 tons of merchant shipping, and then withdrew. The British Navy and Mr. Churchill were, properly, quite perturbed about the matter, but it seems to have been generally glossed over in most of the post-war appreciations of the situation.

I think that the Japanese failure to take control of the entire Indian Ocean, even for a few months, was one of the gravest strategic blunders of the entire war.

Consider for a moment what the result would have been. In the spring of 1942 Rommel was in the desert. In the spring of 1942 there were impending the great battles focused about Stalingrad. All supplies for the British in the desert and nearly all supplies, the lend-lease supplies, for the Russians in southern Russia, were coming through the Indian Ocean either to the Red Sea or to the Persian Gulf.

A relatively small effort on the part of the Japanese, employing their submarines, their ships, and their aircraft carriers, would have seriously hindered, if indeed it would not have temporarily suspended, the transportation of

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supplies to these two critical theatres of the war.

It is my belief that if the Japanese had attempted (and I think they might well have been successful) to seize control of the Indian Ocean even for a few months, it might well have been disaster for the Allies. At the very least the British in the desert would have been beaten. The Russians in Southern Russia would probably have been beaten. The United States would have been forced to put all, instead of only nearly all, its effort in the war in the Atlantic and Europe; and the resultant reduction of pressure in the Pacific would have permitted the Japanese much more effectively to consolidate their perimeter.

Why they did not make any such attempt in the Indian Ocean I believe is due entirely to their limited concept of the war. I have not been able to discover any other major reason. I offer it to you as a strategic decision of the first magnitude; as an illustration of the indirect effect of what sea power might have done, had it been properly conceived of in its relation to the total world struggle and had it been properly applied.

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We have discussed, so far, four instances of strategic decision which were peculiar to the Japanese situation in the beginning stages of the war. Next I am going to present for your comparison the Japanese and American solutions to a strategic problem the elements of which were generally the same for both sides. I refer to the employment of submarines.

During the 1930's, a very large proportion of our U.S. Fleet training was directed toward the annual fleet problem, and in most cases this annual problem was designed to exercise all elements of combatant naval strength. One result of this training program was a generally prevailing conception of the submarine as an integral element of the fleet. Growing from this conception, a great deal of our pre-war submarine training was a training in support of, or against combatant naval vessels. May I remind you of the "fleet" type submarine whose very name is indicative of its planned employment; remind you that it was deliberately designed for about 21 knots to match the "fleet speed" of the battle line. And I have here a slide showing an extract from USF-25, the 1939 edition of "Current Doctrine, Submarines". Only once in all this publication is there any mention made of merchant shipping, and that one to dismiss it as a target.

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From what I have been able to find and to deduce, I am just as satisfied that the Japanese conception, design, and training of their submarines in the nineteen thirties was much the same as our own. I should not be too surprised to learn that it was copied from our own books.

So what happened after that unpleasant December Sunday in Hawaii? For four years the Japanese continued to conceive of and to operate their submarines primarily as tools of fleet action, and never did these submarines become a critically important factor in the outcome of the war. Inconvenient and dangerous, yes, but never really critical.

But in our own service something happened. The "fleet" concept of the submarine all but vanished and in its place there was an understanding that the primary usefulness of the submarine was as a tonnage destroyer, as a means of economic strangulation. There are several factors that, alone or in combination, may have caused this complete up-setting of a stereotyped thought:

a) this may have been the tacit idea all during the thirties, although there is no written evidence that I can find to support this.

b) it may have developed with the German submarine war in the Atlantic during 1939 and 1940.

c) it may have been due to the fact that there was, after Pearl Harbor, no fleet for the submarines to work with.

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d) it may have been due to the awareness that the tactical functions of the "fleet" submarine had gradually been assumed by the airplane and the radar.

e) and it may in part have been due to the cold fury generated at Pearl Harbor and exemplified a famous dispatch issued on the day the war started: "Carry out unrestricted submarine warfare."

At any rate, the point I wish to make is this: During the nineteen thirties both the Americans and the Japanese trained their submarines in one particular way and established a thought pattern concerning those submarines. The Japanese held to that pattern and were not successful in the employment of their submarines. We abandoned it, for one fortuitous reason or another, and were successful.

Perhaps there is a moral to be drawn -- a warning that we should not let the factors of peacetime training convenience unduly influence our conceptions of wartime employment of any particular tool of war. And because the submarine instance is typical of the wide variation between our pre-war training and our wartime practice, it might be prudent if we re-examined some of our present training with that point in view.

What will be our amphibious employments? And where? And do our amphibious training and developments prepare us, for instance, for operations in the very shoal Scandinavian

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Straits or the Baltic? The requirements for these areas might be quite different from the open-ocean needs of the Pacific, the open-ocean techniques that we now practice, for reasons of habit and convenience, off the Virginia Capes and in the Caribbean.

What, for another instance, will be our actual employment of submarines during the next war? Does our training actually train for that? Or are we setting up a mental stereotype that may hinder us in the most profitable employment of this tool of war.

We must take our warning from this submarine illustration in the War in the Pacific and must guard against letting the convenience, the arbitrary conditions, or the normal administrative inertia of peace lead us into unsound conceptions and unsound preparations for war.

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May we now take under consideration for a moment that employment of forces generally referred to as the two-pronged spear across the Pacific. As you know, the Central Pacific forces under the Commander-in-Chief Pacific and Southwest Pacific forces under General MacArthur each pushed generally west and northwest toward the Philippines, Formosa, and the China Coast, and thus pushed generally toward the Japanese Empire home islands. There has been quite a bit written about the strength of this two-pronged spear, this

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dual effort. There has been much written that it kept the Japanese off balance, that it forced the Japanese to disperse their resistance, that it kept the Japanese continually guessing, that it made Japan expend her soldiers and her navy and her planes at a greater rate than any other method would have done.

It would pay to re-examine this. Why---really why--- did we have two separate overseas campaigns against Japan across the Pacific Ocean? I think that all the reasons that I have seen so far in the several histories of the war are baseless rationalizations. I think none of them has any major content of validity.

I believe the military usefulness served by the Southwest Pacific forces ended when they halted the Japanese advance in Eastern New Guinea and thus removed the real or imagined threat to Australia. The political usefulness after 1942 required nothing more than maintenance of that New Guinea barrier.

From that time on, in spite of the outstanding individual engagements, in spite of the magnificent heroism of the soldiers and marines and the airmen and the sailors involved, in spite of the peculiar sympathy of a participant for the part he plays in any war, in spite of the tremendous wealth

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of our own and enemy material expended, the Southwest Pacific campaigns (and I include with them the upper Solomons of the South Pacific area) served no critically useful military or political purpose from the end of 1942 until those forces joined with the Central Pacific in the assault on the Philippines.

What actually was accomplished? I do not know.

These campaigns did not critically expend Japanese soldiers. Japan at the end of the war had available far more troops than she was able to use.

They did not critically expend Japanese air strength. The majority of her pilots and the bulk of her planes were not lost in the Southwest after 1942.

They did not gain any critically important real estate (and by critically important I mean positions which had a definite strategic bearing on the outcome of the war).

They did not cause a critical diminishment of the strength of the Japanese Navy.

The Southwest Pacific drive could not have been accomplished without the simultaneous advance, protection, and support of the drive through the Central Pacific. The latter, on the other hand, was in no way dependent on any contemporary activity or advance in the Southwest Pacific. The Southwest

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was dependent on the Central Pacific; the Central Pacific was not dependent on the Southwest.

These are positive, categorical statements for me to make so I should like to support them with a few figures. My first source is the official post-war listing of the Joint Army Navy Assessment Committee. With respect to naval vessels I use the area between 50 north latitude and the coast of Australia and bounded on the west by Singapore and on the east by about longitude 160 E. Please note that this includes the South Pacific as well as the Southwest Pacific areas of activity since those two forces were engaged in essentially the same operation. Assuming that the pressure was lifted from Australia by the end of 1942, I have taken the figures for the remainder of the war. In this general area, after 1942, there were sunk by all of our forces other than submarines two old Japanese light cruisers (smaller than the one we gave to Russia), twenty-seven destroyers, and fifteen submarines. The total of Japanese destroyer, submarine, and cruiser tonnages sunk in the Southwest Pacific after 1942 was eighty three thousand. The total sinkings of Japanese naval vessels (and I refer here to submarine and destroyer and larger types) during the war were 1,781,785 tons. This indicates that of these major combatant vessels sunk during the war, between 4% and 5% was sunk in the Southwest Pacific after 1942.

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With respect to the assertion that the air effort in the Southwest Pacific Theatre after 1942 up to the Philippines did not critically affect the course of the war, I am on less firm ground statistically. The Japanese Army burned its records and very little of the Japanese Navy documents had been recovered when the Strategic Bombing Survey was compiled. That survey, by the way, is a statistician's nightmare. I made a very sincere effort to correlate the tabular data appearing in the various volumes of that survey and they simply do not jibe. Publication number 71, for instance, on "The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan" is written entirely on the basis of combat claims of that Air Force. Beyond question there was a diminution of Japanese pilot quality, in part a result of actions in the Southwest Pacific from the end of 1942 to the Philippines, but the best evidence that I have been able to find indicates that the number of Japanese combat planes continued to grow at a steady rate until the Turkey Shoot and the Philippine strikes in the middle and late months of 1944 finally turned the curve downwards.

The attrition of man-power was not a major element in the defeat of Japan. Early in 1945 the estimated strength of the Japanese Army was 4,000,000 men. Japan had 2,000,000 available and fit for service who had not been called up and an additional 1,500,000 between the ages of 17 and 20 who

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were not then subject to draft. My source on this statement is the 1950 Statesmen's Yearbook.

And as for my assertion that the Southwest was dependent on the Central Pacific and that the reverse of this was not true: I simply cite the facts of the war. The movements of the Southwest forces were not possible without the direct support and the flanking protection of the Central Pacific. On the other hand, no Central Pacific move was dependent on any action in the Southwest. They were correlated, to be sure, but they were not dependent.

Our subconscious awareness that this campaign in the Southwest was superfluous is quite clearly illustrated when we recall the prevalent wartime classification of this as the "forgotten theatre" of the war. There was good reason for this.

Rather than our profiting by the campaign in the Southwest, I believe that Japan, by using troops not needed elsewhere and by using comparatively few ships and planes, caused us to make an extravagant expenditure of men and materials in the Southwest Pacific campaign.

Then comes the question: Why did we actually have the Southwest Pacific Campaign?

In my opinion the primary reason why we conducted what were almost two separate overseas wars in the Pacific was the ego involvement of one commander.

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This factor of the ego involvement of the commander has, all through history, been a critical determinant in strategic decision. I think its importance has too long been overlooked.

This matter of the influence of an individual on history (and that actually is the root of the matter we have under discussion here) is a most interesting subject. Professor Sidney Hook, for instance, the chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the New York University Graduate School, has written a fascinating book the title of which is, "The Hero in History." By 'hero' he means (and I am quoting him)..."...the individual to whom we can justifiably attribute preponderant influence in determining an issue or event whose consequences would have been profoundly different if he had not acted as he did."

Professor Hook goes on farther in his book to say:

"The event-making man....finds a fork in the historical road, but he also helps, so to speak, to create it. He increases the odds of success for the alternative he chooses by virtue of the extraordinary qualities he brings to bear to realize it. At the very least, like Caesar and Cromwell and Napoleon, he must free the path he has taken from opposition and, in so doing, display exceptional qualities of leadership. It is the hero as an event-making man who leaves the positive

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imprint of his personality on history--an imprint still observable after he has disappeared from the scene."

The man we are discussing I believe did more than merely find a fork in the historical road. In a very real sense, he made it. His heroic promise to return to the Philippines, his withdrawal to Australia, his brilliant military reputation, his stature which made it impossible to subordinate him to any other commander, all superimposed on the emotional hysteria of this country and the political panic of Australia, combined to let him make the fork that he chose to tread.

Within the terms of this discussion, then, I think that General MacArthur can be classed as a hero, as an event-making man. He leaves an imprint on the War in the Pacific that must remain long after he is gone. The unquestioned strength of his personality and of his legend forced a decision to conduct the Southwest Pacific campaign. The point of particular interest to us is why was this decision made. Was it because it was a strategically sound decision? Or was it because of a uniquely powerful ego involvement? In my opinion it was the latter.

This question of the ego involvement of the commander is not a new one. Col. Schmidt mentioned the effect of the Kaiser's nepotism on Moltke's plan. You can find it in the story of war after war. It is with us today. But too little conscious attention has been given to the result of it.

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And it is to bring this too-often forgotten fact to your attention that I cite this instance of the Southwest Pacific campaign, this waste of men and material in a campaign which I believe to have been strategically without valid purpose.

In any of our major plans for war we must recognize, and we must consider not only the military or political brilliance but the pride, the ego, and sometimes the downright selfishness, of some of the men concerned in the planning and the direction of that war. We must not, if we can possibly avoid it, permit ourselves to be led into unsound or extravagant strategic decisions because we have been unduly influenced by the hero whose interests or whose vision might be too narrow for the ultimate good.

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A little earlier I mentioned the employment of submarines in the War in the Pacific. I am going to return to the submarines now and use them as the focus of a new field of inquiry, that of broad strategies of war. There are many ways to dissect a war in analyzing its strategy. It can be broken into, say, Army, Navy and Air Force; or it can be divided into defensive, defensive-offensive, and offensive; or it can be cut into military and non-military; or it can be divided in terms of time. But there is, I believe, another way one can slice up a war for purposes of

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analysis; a method which I have not seen written about by anyone so far, and which I first heard mentioned conversationally last year here at the War College. This is the slicing of a war by what we might term its modes of operation.

And here I am going to discuss two types of strategies and to employ descriptive adjectives not normally used in our discussion of strategy. I am going to discuss sequential and cumulative strategies.

Normally we consider a war as a series of discrete steps or actions, with each one of this series of actions growing naturally out of, and dependent on, the one which preceded it. The total pattern of all the discrete or separate actions makes up, serially, the entire sequence of the war. If at any stage of the war one of these actions had happened differently, then the remainder of the sequence would have had a different pattern, the sequence would have been interrupted and altered.

The two great drives across the Pacific, MacArthur's campaign in the Southwest Pacific, and the Central Pacific drive from Hawaii to the Coast of China, can be analyzed as sequential strategies. Each one of them was composed of a series of discrete steps and each step could clearly be seen ahead of time, could be clearly appraised in terms of its expected result, and the result in turn would lead to the next step, the next position to be taken or the next

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action to be planned. This is what I mean when I refer this morning to a sequential strategy.

But there is another way to prosecute a war. There is a type of warfare in which the entire pattern is made up of a collection of lesser actions but these lesser or individual actions are not sequentially interdependent. Each individual one is no more than a single statistic, an isolated plus or a minus, in arriving at the final result.

Psychological warfare might be such a matter, for instance, or economic warfare. No one action is completely dependent on the one which preceded it. The thing that counts is the cumulative effect. And as a military example of this cumulative strategy I suggest to you the submarine campaign in the Pacific as a superb example.

The tonnage war waged by the American submarines in the Pacific is quite unlike the serial, the sequential, type of strategy. In a tonnage war it is not possible to forecast, with any degree of accuracy, the result of any specific action.

Any such war as these tonnage wars is an accumulation of more or less random individual victories. Any single submarine action is no more than one independent element in the cumulative effect of the total campaign.

So that in the Pacific, from 1941 to 1945, actually we conducted two separate wars against Japan. We conducted

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the sequential strategy campaigns, our drives across the Pacific to the coast of Asia and up to the shores of the Empire. And apparently quite apart from that we conducted a cumulative strategy aimed at Japan's economy. Oddly enough, these two went along together in time but essentially independently in their day-to-day activity.

We were able, with some degree of success to predict in advance the outcome of the sequential strategy. We were not able, or at least we did not take advantage of whatever ability we had, to predict the result of the cumulative strategy. Somewhere along in 1944 we brought Japan, in large measure by means of this cumulative strategy, to a condition in which she had only two alternatives: To give in, or to approach national suicide. We are not, even today, able to tell precisely when that took place. But it did take place. Japan started the war with about six million tons of merchant shipping. During the early years of the war she acquired almost four million more. And by late 1944 nearly nine of this total of ten million tons had been destroyed. Japan had long since passed her point of no return. But we seemed not to know it, and it may even be that the Japanese did not know it.

The point to be made is this: I think there are actually two very different kinds of strategies to be used in war. One is what I call here the sequential, the series of visible,

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discrete steps, each dependent on the one that preceded it. The other is the cumulative, the less perceptible minute accumulation of little items piling one on top of the other until at some unknown point the mass of accumulated actions may be large enough to be critical. They are not incompatible strategies, they are not mutually exclusive. Quite the opposite. They are usually interdependent in their strategic result.

The sequential strategies I think all of us understand; the cumulative strategies I think we do not. The latter, the cumulative, has long been a characteristic of war at sea. But I find no conscious analytical differentiation of this cumulative warfare from the sequential in any of the writings that I have yet encountered; and I have found no major instance in which a cumulative strategy, operating by itself, has been successful. The French, for instance, were long addicted to their *guerre de course* at sea, but they never had it pay off in decisive victory by itself. The Germans have twice concentrated all their maritime effort on a cumulative strategy and have twice seen it fail them. But when these cumulative strategies have been used in conjunction with a sequential strategy, directed at the main object of the war, there are many instances in which the strength of the cumulative strategy has meant the difference between success or failure of the sequential. History abounds with examples in which a comparatively weak sequential strategy

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was enabled to reach victory by virtue of the strength of the cumulative strategy behind it. The Waterloo Campaign, the Peninsula Campaign in Portugal, or our own War between the States are three that come to mind. The first World War is another example. In this last war I believe we did not appreciate the strength of our cumulative strategy against Japan, operating as it did in support of the direct thrust to the critical goal.

Recognition of the existence of these two basically different kinds of strategy presents a new challenge to us, I think that it is a vitally important one. Our strategic success in the future may be measured by the skill with which we are able to balance our sequential and our cumulative efforts toward the most effective and least costly attainment of our goals. If we could judge the progress and the effect of our cumulative strategy, not only would we control an important element of strategy which up until now we have been forced to leave to chance, but we might more effectively shape the conditions which will exist when the war is over.

And so I offer two suggestions: The first is that we recognize the existence and the power of these cumulative strategies and integrate them more carefully into our basic plans; and second, that we study them more closely than we have done in order that we may be able to determine whether

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or not they profitably could be critical, and if they could then to identify the points in their development at which they do become critical determinants in the progress of war. When we do that we will be able to use them more efficiently than we have in the past.

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There is one more point which I should like to emphasize. In spite of the fact that every one of these topics this morning was directly developed from the War in the Pacific, not one of them is limited in its application either in time or place or to a particular tool or tactical technique. Every one of these seven subjects, every facet of strategy that we have taken up this morning, is primarily a matter of how men thought. The tool or tactic was subordinate. In every case the resultant action was controlled by an idea from one man or another. And so in this conclusion I suggest to you that the most important factor in war is the idea, the thought, the brain of the commander. May I close then, with a quotation by Liddell-Hart. He has written:

"The influence of thought on thought
is the most influential factor in
history."

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