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Chadwick, Rear Adm. J. C.

Closing Remarks of the President

of the

Naval War College

September 30,

1902.

CLOSING REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

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I am not going to inflict upon you any sort of a closing address or farewell speech, as with but one exception, you are to stay here a little ^{while}/longer. Most of you, however, will probably leave within a not lengthy period, and there are a few things I would like to mention as of importance to keep in mind.

1st, That we have come to a point where the easy-go-lucky mental life of the Service in the atmosphere of which we were practically all reared, is in its last days. The mere fact of a material increase of the Navy to some degree would account for this. But there are much more powerful influences at work than mere quantity, or the size and complexity of the ships with which we deal. There is the fact that we have stepped forward onto the world's rostrum, so to speak, have demanded to be heard, and have taken over new responsibilities which heavy as they are, are but the fore-runners of others yet heavier. It is the study of these responsibilities, of the character of the paths into which they are to lead us, of the methods we shall employ to meet them, from a naval point of view with which we are concerned. This is, in some degree, an ^{iteration} ~~interrim~~ of the remarks I made in June, but I want to emphasize if I can the necessity of

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such study on the part of the Naval Officer. I do not think any Officer can be connected long with what may be termed staff work without recognizing to a pretty full degree the great role the Naval Officer must play in the future settlement of international questions, not only as a director of the physical forces at his command, but as a great factor in diplomacy.

The world is in a mighty state of flux which we must recognize. The mind is prone to accept present conditions whether humanitarian or political, as at any given moment fixed. But we have only to think a moment and we recognize that the human race is increasing in a way which must in a moderate time call for immense political and social readjustments: that the western world itself in which we live has practically come into being in the space covered by four lives of sixty years each, and that what promises to be the dominant factor in the world's politics, the United States, has developed into its great importance only in the last forty years. To help assure this importance is our business.

A favorite phrase with Mr. Edward Phelps, our late minister to England, was that the Navy was the right arm of the diplomatic service, but it is coming to be more than an arm: it is part of the brain as well.

We have, of course, only begun such studies. We all know that the War College was for a number of years, on the part of many, a thing to scoff at. I think this has passed, almost

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as much as has passed the attitude of mind of the officer of Smollett's day regarding the personal qualities of Naval Officers. The College is far from having arrived at any completeness of methods, hampered as it is by the dearth of officers in the Navy, but it is, I think, in the right way, which in my opinion is that of becoming the worker out of all General Staff questions. This duty does not, in my view, run counter to the objects with which a special class is detailed for duty here in the summer, but it is wholly in a line with it. The class in fact is, or should be, but an additional number to the more permanent working force.

2nd - There are a good many things with which we have struggled this summer which have had no complete result, but this incompleteness but emphasizes the necessity of more thorough work on the part of all the adjuncts of a General Staff; as upon our naval attaches, our intelligences officers afloat, and our commanding officers. If we do not know all about Corea, the situation in Manchuria, the transport, food supplies, Russian railways, the mines of coal worked within reach of the sea, in Asia, the fault is ours, through a failure of the Service, to appreciate the necessity of knowing everything there is to know, which will have a bearing upon naval action. It is there for us to find out.

3rd - Nor do we seem to have advanced greatly in some other things which touch us more nearly. We are still afield as to most tactical ~~xyzkens~~ questions, considerably so as to

signals, and very much so as to the constitution of the fleet. I doubt if there is a man here or I may say anywhere, in the Navy who feels himself prepared to go into action with a fleet of say eighteen battleships and armored cruisers against a fleet of somewhat like strength, but that is what some of us now in the Service have to look forward to doing sometime. If we have a powerful sense that the duty was going to fall ~~on~~ to us next year, we should, I think, get forward faster. There is the ever present idea that the need is not imminent which is undoubtedly one cause of our backwardness in tactical development. I will read what we have reached as definite:

Tactical Conclusions.

Advisable never to fall below standard speed, and to use reserve speed as necessary in performing evolutions.

Constant speed as thus qualified is held to be of sufficient importance to be made the basis of our tactical system.

It is not considered advisable to attempt to keep head on to the enemy.

The majority think that rectangular movements are to be preferred to oblique or so-called direct movements.

The methods of changing the line of bearing as illustrated by numbered diagrams, are very generally favored, except Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16. Nos. 3 and 4 were objected to by several while some others of the officers approved all the methods proposed.

Line at right angles to the bearing of the enemy is the formation for approach favored by the majority.

A minority favored column, while line of bearing and indented column had individual advocates.

For the battle formation column and line of bearing are the choice, the advocates of each being very equally divided.

If both hostile forces are armed with torpedoes, the majority do not believe it likely that approach will intentionally be close enough to use ram or torpedo, though admitting its possibility.

It was the unanimous opinion that if both sides were armed with torpedoes close action would not be inevitable. It was held that the winning fleet ought not to close, while the worsted fleet should strive to close.

Opinion was practically unanimous that submerged torpedoes should be part of the armament of our new ships.

This is a mighty poor showing of course, but it is to be hoped it is an indication of better things.

One good sign is the tendency to insist upon a battle-fleet, and not to waste so much upon ineffective ships. I do not think we are going to build any more unless we build for speed, or power, or ~~xxx~~ for both, unless possible we may accept light gun boats. The day of building ineffectives in war is drawing to an end. We are rapidly tending to the thoroughly practical, and getting more and more the attributes which belong to a real navy. Fine as has been our naval history, it has been a history chiefly of individual action: the single ship has played a much larger figure than the squadron or fleet. I do not remember that

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we ever had, even in peace in the old days, more than one line of battleships in any squadron. We are ^{thus} growing out of our dwarfhood, some to speak, into something like grown-up proportions, and we are going to find the conditions very different.

I mention these things, not because you have not thought of them yourselves. I have no doubt the same ideas are in your own minds, but I say them in order to give a concrete expression to them, and with the hope that each one who has been here during the summer may take some pains to inculcate in the Service at large the necessity of the sort of study in which we have been engaged.

I want to express my thanks, gentlemen, for the very evident interest which everyone has taken, and I am sure that whatever the drawbacks or whatever the shortcomings under which we have labored, the result has been to add something of a loftier ideal of our profession and something in the way of enlargement of view to each one of us.

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