

From Our Archive: NATIONAL POLICY AND THE TRANSOCEANIC NAVY by Samuel P. Huntington

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By almost any measure Harvard Professor Sam Huntington was the preeminent political scientist of his generation. When he was but 27, three years before he wrote *The Soldier and the State*, the classic on civil-military relations, Professor Huntington authored a May 1954 Proceedings article, 'National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy'. In this powerful essay, he laid down a challenge to the military services that resonates today even more than it did over 50 years ago: "If a service does not possess a well-defined strategic concept, the public and political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service . . . and apathetic or hostile to the claims made by the service on the resources of society." And specifically of the Navy, "What function do you perform which obligates society to assume responsibility for your maintenance?"

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I The Elements of a Military Service

The fundamental element of a military service is its purpose or role in implementing national policy. The statement of this role may be called the strategic concept of the service. Basically, this concept is a description of how, when, and where the military service expects to protect the nation against some threat to its security. If a military service does not possess such a concept, it becomes purpose-less, it wallows about amid a variety of conflicting and confusing goals, and ultimately it suffers both physical and moral degeneration. A military service may at times, of course, perform functions unrelated to external security, such as internal policing, disaster relief, and citizenship training. These are, however, subordinate and collateral responsibilities. A military service does not exist to perform these functions; rather it performs these functions because it has already been called into existence to meet some threat to the national security. A service is many things; it is men, weapons, bases, equipment, traditions, organization. But none of these have meaning or usefulness unless there is a unifying purpose which shapes and directs their relations and activities

towards the achievement of some goal of national policy.

A second element of military service is the resources, human and material, which are required to implement its strategic concept. To secure these resources it is necessary for society to forego the alternative uses to which these resources might be put and to acquiesce in their allocation to the military service. Thus, the resources which a service is able to obtain in a democratic society are a function of the public support of that service. The service has the responsibility to develop this necessary support, and it can only do this if it possesses a strategic concept which clearly formulates its relationship to the national security. Hence this second element of public support is in the long run, dependent upon the strategic concept of the service. If a service does not possess a well defined strategic concept, the public and the political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service, uncertain as to the necessity of its existence and apathetic or hostile to the

claims made by the service upon the resources of society.

Organizational structure is the third element of a military service. For given these first two elements, it becomes necessary to group the resources allocated by society in such a manner as most effectively to implement the strategic concept. Thus the nature of the organization likewise is dependent upon the nature of the strategic concept. Hence there is no such thing as the ideal form of military organization. The type of organization which may be appropriate for one military service carrying out one particular strategic concept may be quite inappropriate for another service with a different concept. This is true not only in the lower realms of tactical organization but also in the higher reaches of administrative and departmental structure.

In summary, then, a military service may be viewed as consisting of a strategic concept which defines the role of the service in national policy, public support which furnishes it with the resources to perform this role, and organizational structure which groups the resources so as to implement most effectively the strategic concept.

Shifts in the international balance of power will inevitably bring about changes in the principal threats to the security of any given nation. These must be met by shifts in national policy and corresponding changes in service strategic concepts. A military service capable of meeting one threat to the national security loses its reason for existence when that threat weakens or disappears. If the service is to continue to exist, it must develop a new strategic concept related to some other security threat. As its strategic role changes, it may likewise be necessary for the service to expand, contract, or alter its sources of public support and also to revamp its organizational structure in the light of this changing mission.

Penetrating deep into the "World Island," the Mediterranean provides an unusually dramatic example of the possible theatre of operations of a

transoceanic navy. In the above photograph, the destroyer Gearing is shown fueling from the cruiser Newport News, a routine operation for the "base-less" Sixth Fleet.

II The Crisis of the Navy

That the United States Navy was faced with a major crisis at the end of World War II is a proposition which will hardly be denied. It is not as certain, however, that the real nature and extent of this crisis has been so generally understood. For this was not basically a crisis of personnel, leadership, organization, material, technology, or weapons. It was instead of a much more profound nature. It went to the depths of the Navy's being and involved its fundamental strategic concept. It was thus a crisis which confronted the Navy with the ultimate question: What function do you perform which obligates society to assume responsibility for your maintenance? The crisis existed because the Navy's accustomed answer to this question—the strategic concept which the Navy had been expressing and the public had been accepting for well over half a century—was no longer meaningful to the Navy nor convincing to the public.

The existence of this crisis was dramatically symbolized by the paradoxical situation in which the Navy found itself in 1945: It possessed the largest fleet in its history and superficially it had less reason to maintain such a fleet than ever before. The fleet battleships, one hundred aircraft

carriers, seventy cruisers, three hundred and forty destroyers, and two hundred submarines of the United States Navy floated in virtually solitary splendor upon the waters of the earth. It appeared impossible, if not ridiculous, for the Navy still to claim the title of the Nation's "first line of defense" when there was nothing for the Navy to defend the nation against.

Critics of the Navy were not slow in undermining the latter's public support by pointing out these paradoxes. As one high ranking Air Force officer put it:

Why should we have a Navy at all? The Russians have little or no Navy, the Japanese Navy has been sunk, the navies of the rest of the world are negligible, the Germans never did have much of a Navy. The point I am getting at is, who is this big Navy being planned to fight? There are no enemies for it to fight except apparently the Army Air Force. In this day and age to talk of fighting the next war on the oceans is a ridiculous assumption. The only reason for us to have a Navy is just because someone else has a Navy and we certainly do not need to waste money on that.

The public appeal of this simple logic was enhanced by the widespread postwar reaction against the military, the popular desire to reduce the defense budget, and

the fact that one of the Navy's sister services possessed in intercontinental atomic bombing a strategic concept which seemed to promise a maximum of security at a minimum of cost and troublesome intervention in world politics. It is hardly surprising that as a result a 1949 Gallup Poll revealed that 76% of the American people thought that the Air Force would play the most important role in winning any future war whereas only 4% assigned this role to the Navy.

This lack of purpose had its organizational implications also. Most important among these was the tendency to increase naval opposition to unifications of the armed forces. Without an accepted strategic concept the Navy had to rely upon organizational autonomy rather than uniqueness of mission to maintain its identity and integrity. This had additional unfortunate implications for naval public support, however, since it enabled its critics to paint the picture of a willful group of die-hard admirals opposing unification for purely selfish purposes.

The causes of this crisis of purpose and its unfortunate political and organizational implications were to be found, of course, in the redistribution of international power which occurred during World War II, the new threats to American national security which emerged after the War, and the consequent shifts in American foreign policy to meet these threats. The critics of the Navy argued in effect that these changes left the Navy without a strategic concept relevant to the postwar world. If they were to be proved wrong and if the Navy were not to be reduced to a secondary service concerned exclusively with protection of supply lines, the Navy must find a new role for itself in national policy. It is the principal thesis of this article that out of the postwar uncertainty, demoralization, and confusion, there has developed a new naval doctrine which realistically relates the Navy to national goals. The substance of this concept has already been described and formulated by a number of naval writers and leaders, and the development of this doctrine must eventually have a significant effect on the public support and organization of the Navy. This doctrine, however, will require a fundamental revolution in naval thinking. Consequently before describing it in detail, it will be appropriate to consider briefly the nature of the relation between the Navy and national policy in the past.

III The Navy and National Policy: Continental Phase

The first stage of American national security policy may best be described as the Continental Phase. This lasted approximately from the founding of the Republic down to the 1890's. During this period the threats to the national security arose primarily upon this continent and were met and disposed of on this continent. The limited capabilities of the United States during these years did not permit it to project its power beyond the Western Hemisphere. And, indeed, the history of this period may also be interpreted as the history of the gradual struggle by the United

States for supremacy within the American continent. This policy manifested itself in our refusal to enter into entangling alliances with non-American powers, in our promulgation and defense of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, and in our gradual expansion westward to the Pacific.

During these years those threats which arose to the national security were generally dealt with on land, and sea power consequently played a subordinate role in the implementation of a national policy. The most persistent security threat, of course, came from the Indian tribes along the western and southern frontiers. These could only be met by the army and the militia. Similarly during the War of 1812 the American Navy was unable to prevent the British from reinforcing Canada, seizing and burning the national capitol, and landing an army at New Orleans. Instead, each of these threats had to be countered by what land forces there were available. The Mexican War was likewise primarily an army affair, although the Navy in the closing campaign of the war performed yeoman service in landing Scott's army at Vera Cruz. Still later in the century when the activities of the French in Mexico violated the Monroe Doctrine, the threat was met not by cutting the maritime communications between France and Mexico, but rather by massing Sherman's veterans along the Rio Grande. American power was thus virtually never utilized outside the American continents during this period and was confined to the gradual elimination of all potential threats to American security which might originate within that Hemisphere. This phase may be said to have come to an end with the final pacification of the Indians in the 1890s and its termination is symbolized in Olney's bold statement to the British government during the 1895 Venezuela boundary dispute, "Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its laws are law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."

The Navy's subordinate role during this Continental Phase of policy is well indicated by the miscellaneous nature of its military functions. These were basically threefold. First, there were the Navy's responsibilities for coastal defense. From the time of Jefferson's administration down through the 1880s this resulted in the construction of a whole series of gunboats and monitors designed solely for this purpose. Secondly, the Navy was responsible for protecting American commerce overseas and, in the event of war, raiding the commerce of the enemy. For this purpose the Navy was deployed in half a dozen squadrons scattered about the world from the Mediterranean to the East Indies and was largely equipped with fast frigate-cruiser type vessels. Thirdly, during the Mexican War and the Civil War, when the United States was fighting two nations powerless at sea, the Navy performed valuable functions in blockading the enemy and assisting in amphibious operations. These miscellaneous military functions did not, however, exhaust the activities of the Navy during this period. Since these military functions were of a general secondary nature, the Navy tended to acquire a wide variety of essentially civilian functions and directly related to any security threat. These included the support of general scientific research, the organization of a number of exploring expeditions, the frequent

performance by the naval officers of diplomatic functions, and the utilization of members of the naval service to administer civilian department of government. In general, during this period the Navy had no clearly essential role to play in meeting any major security threats and consequently tended to dissipate its energies over this wide variety of civilian and military functions.

The subordinate role of the Navy in implementing national policy was reflected in the weak public support which it received during this period. The continuous expansion of the nation westward tended steadily to decrease the political power of those sections most sympathetic to the Navy, and after the Federalists were swept out of office in 1800 it is not inaccurate to say that the government was generally dominated by political groups either indifferent to or actively hostile towards the Navy. The farmers of the interior tended to view the naval establishment as an unnecessary if not dangerous burden on the national economy. Consequently the Navy was frequently allowed to fall into fairly serious states of disrepair, reaching its lowest point the post Civil War years.

Since the Navy had no definite role to play in implementing national policy, it was unnecessary for it to have a type of organization which emphasized a distinction between its military and civilian functions. Consequently, although there was a major change in naval organization in 1842, when the bureau system was introduced, nonetheless the basic pattern of naval organization remained the same throughout the entire period. Neither under the Board of Naval Commissioners nor under the bureaus was there any clear differentiation between the military and the civilian functions of the naval department under the supervision of the Secretary. When during the Civil War the Navy was called upon to perform a significant military function, a special officer had to be designated to direct the military activities of the fleet. With this exception, however, naval organization reflected the inability of the Navy to develop a strategic concept relating it to the goals of national security policy.

IV The Navy and National Policy: Oceanic Phase

All this changed in the 1890s when the United States began to project its interests and power across the oceans. The acquisition of overseas territorial possession and the involvement of the United States in the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe and Asia necessarily changed the nature of the security threats with which it was concerned. The threats to the United States during this period arose not from this continent but rather from the Atlantic and Pacific oceanic areas and the nations bordering on those oceans. Hence it became essential for the security of the United States that it achieve supremacy on those oceans just as previously it had been necessary for it to achieve supremacy within the American continent. This change in our security policy was

dramatically illustrated by the war with Spain. What began as an effort to dislodge a secondary European power from its precarious foothold on the American continent ended with the extension of American interests and responsibilities to the far side of the Pacific Ocean.

This new position of the United States made it one of several major powers each of which was attempting to protect its security through the development of naval forces. This meant dramatic changes in the position of the Navy, and the role of the Army in implementing national policy became secondary to that of the Navy. Instead of performing an assortment of miscellaneous

duties none of them particularly crucial to the national security, the Navy was not the Nation's "First line of defense." In a little over twenty years, from 1886 down to 1907, the United States Navy moved from twelfth place to second place among the navies of the world. This dramatic change required a revolution in the thinking of the Navy, the operations of the Navy, and the composition of the Navy.

The revolution in naval thinking and the development of a new strategic concept for the Navy reached its climax, of course, in the work of Alfred Thayer Mahan. The writings of this naval officer accurately portrayed the new role of the Navy. Attacking the old idea that the functions of the Navy were related to coastal defense and commerce destruction, Mahan argued that the true mission of navy was acquiring command of the sea through the destruction of the enemy fleet. Mahan vented his scorn upon the "police" functions to which the Navy had been relegated during this previous period of national strategy was undergoing a profound change, he failed to realize that these "police" functions had been just as well adapted to the achievement of national aims in this period as his "command of the sea" doctrine was just beginning. To secure command of the sea it was necessary to have a stronger battle- fleet than the enemy. This could only be secured by building more ships than other nations, insuring that the ships which one did build were larger and had more re power than those of other nations and keeping those ships grouped together in a single fleet instead of deployed all over the world in separate squadrons. The net results were naval races, big-gun battleships, and the theory of concentration as the chief aim of naval strategy.

As generalized in the preceding paragraph, the Mahan doctrine was accepted by virtually all the world's naval powers. Each country, however, also had to apply the doctrine to the threats peculiar to it. Down until World War II the United States was about equally concerned with the threats presented by the Japanese and German navies. The fleet was kept concentrated on the Atlantic coast- this was the location of most of the shipyards and the Navy's most consistent public support-and the Isthmus canal was rushed to completion. With the destruction of German surface power the fleet was shifted to the Pacific, and throughout the following two decades American naval thought was oriented almost exclusively towards the possibility of a war with Japan. This was responsible not only for the

location of the fleet but also for the development of weapons and techniques which could be effectively employed in the broad reaches of the Pacific. In the 1941-1945 naval war with Japan, the Navy in effect realized the strategic concept which dominated its planning for twenty years.

The increased importance of the Navy to national security towards the end of the nineteenth century was paralleled by the increased prestige of the Navy throughout the country. Public opinion came to view the Navy as the symbol of America's new role in world affairs. Business groups which were now playing an increasingly important role in government were generally more favorably inclined towards the Navy than the agrarian groups which had previously been dominant. The Navy League of the United States was organized and played a major role in interpreting the Navy to the public. Presidents – particularly the two Roosevelts – and congressional leaders turned a more sympathetic ear to the Navy's requests for funds. Thus the Navy was able to get that public support which was necessary for it to implement its strategic concept.

The emergence of a well-defined military function for the Navy meant that the old organization of the Navy Department had to be altered also. The formation of the fleet and the development of its purely military role permitted the business of the Department to be roughly divided into the two categories of military functions and civilian functions. The reformers within the Navy hence campaigned for an organizational structure which reflected this duality of function. This campaign resulted in the creation of the General Board in 1900, the institution of the naval aids in 1909, and eventually the creation of the Office of Naval Operations in 1915. In time, the Chief of this latter office assumed the responsibility for the military aspects of the Navy while the bureau chiefs continued to report directly to the Secretary on the performance of their civilian duties.

V National Policy in The Eurasian Phase

From one point of view, the sea itself has become the base for the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and the Fleet is the base, in turn, for operations that can project sea power a thousand miles in any direction.

The close of World War II marked a change in the nature of American security policy comparable to that which occurred in the 1890s. The threats which originated around the borders of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans had been eliminated. But they had only disappeared to be replaced by a more serious threat originating in the heart of the Eurasian continent. Hence American policy moved into a third stage which involved the projection, or the possible projection in the event of war, of American power into that continental heartland. The most obvious and easiest way by which this could be achieved was by long-range

strategic bombing and consequently American military policy in the immediate post war period tended to center on the atomic bomb and the intercontinental bomber. Subsequently the emphasis shifted to the development of a system of alliances and the continuing application of American power through the maintenance of United States forces on that continent. These two approaches furnished the Air Force and the Army with strategic roles to play in the implementation of national policy. What, however, was to be the mission of the Navy? How could the Navy play a role in applying American power to the Eurasian continent? This was the challenge which the new dimension of American foreign policy placed before the Navy, which temporarily caused the Navy to falter and hesitate, and which finally was met by the development of a New Naval Doctrine defining the role of the Navy in the Cold War.

VI The New Naval Doctrine: The Transoceanic Navy

This new doctrine as it emerges from the writings of postwar naval writers and leaders basically involves what may be termed the theory of the transoceanic navy, that is, a navy oriented away from the oceans and toward the land masses on their far side. The basic elements of this new doctrine and the differences between it and the naval concept of the Oceanic phase may be summarized under the headings that follow.

1. The Distribution of International Power

The basis of the new doctrine is recognition of the obvious fact that international power is now distributed not among a number of basically naval powers but rather between one nation and its

allies which dominate the land masses of the globe and another nation and its allies which monopolize the world's oceans. This bipolarity of power around a land-sea dichotomy is the fundamental fact which makes the Mahanite concept inapplicable today. For the implicit and generally unwritten assumption as to the existence of a multi-sea power world was the foundation stone for Mahan's strategic doctrine. Like any writer Mahan grasped for the eternal verities and attempted to formulate what seemed to him the permanent elements of naval strategy. But also like every other writer his theory and outlook were conditioned by the age in which he lived. That age was one in which the decisive wars were between competing naval powers. This multisea power world had its origins in the rise of the European nation-state system, the discovery of the New World, and the resulting competition between the European nations for overseas colonies and trade. This period of sea power competition lasted roughly from the middle to the seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth and is divisible into two sub-periods. The first sub-period lasting to 1815 was characterized by intense naval competition and warfare between Spain, the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain. In the end, after the

series of exhausting conflicts culminating in the Napoleonic Wars and Trafalgar, Great Britain emerged as the dominant sea power. From 1815 down to the 1890s she maintained this position without serious challenge. By the end of the century however, a new round of competition developed as Germany, the United States, and Japan arose to challenge British naval supremacy. This second period witnessed the defeat of the German and Japanese navies in World War I and World War II respectively, and ended with Anglo-American, or, more specifically, American naval power dominant throughout the world.

In the light of this naval history it is important to recognize that Mahan's entire thought was geared to this sea power stage in world history. Basically what he did was to study intensively the first sub-period in this stage and then apply the principles gained from such study to the second sub-period in which he lived. This technique gave a superficial air of lasting permanence to his doctrine: for if the principles underlying seventeenth century naval warfare and sea power were applicable at the end of the nineteenth century, then surely these must be universal principles valid throughout history. In actuality, these two sub-periods were, however, unique in their similarity. The first coincided with the initial surge of European colonialism into the New World, and the second coincided with the later surge of that colonialism into Africa and Asia. These are not situations which will be repeated again.

It should also be noted that it was not just chance which led Mahan to concentrate his historical studies on the period from 1660 to 1815. For, although he admitted in a letter to Rear Admiral Stephen A. Luce that "there are a good many phases of naval history," he nonetheless believed that he had been "happily led to take up that period succeeding the peace of Westphalia, 1648 when the nations of Europe began clearly to enter on and occupy their modern positions, struggling for existence and predominance." And it was also generally characteristic of this period that, as Mahan said except for Russia and possibly Austria, the force of every European state could "be exerted only through a navy."

All the other facets of Mahan's thought rest upon his assumption of the existence of two or more competing naval powers. The idea that the purpose of a navy is to secure command of the sea, that to achieve this end concentration of force in a battle fleet is necessary, and that victory will go

to that fleet with the biggest ships, the biggest guns, and the thickest armor, all rest logically on this premise. For obviously the concentration of force in a battle fleet is necessary only if the enemy is capable of doing the same. And, as Bernard Brodie has pointed out, the idea of developing a battle fleet to secure command of the sea originated in the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the middle seventeenth century, at the beginning of this sea power phase of history.

To deny the permanent validity of Mahan's theory is not to deny the brilliance of Mahan's insight. To describe and formulate the principles underlying the major

developments in world history over a period of three hundred years is no mean achievement. But we must not permit the impressiveness of Mahan's accomplishment to blind us to the inapplicability of his strategic concept at the present time. A world divided into one major land power and one major sea power is different from a world divided among a number of rival sea powers. The strategy of monopolistic sea power is different from that of competitive sea power. The great oceans are no longer the no man's land between the competing powers. The locale of the struggle has shifted elsewhere, to the narrow lands and the narrow seas which lie between those great oceans on the one hand and the equally immense spaces of the Eurasian heartland on the other. This leads us to the second element which distinguishes the new strategic doctrine from the old.

2. The Site of Decisive Action

The Mahan theory justly emphasized not only the influence of sea power but also the decisiveness of naval battle. The sea was a battleground, "a wide common," and the only avenue through which every power could strike at the interests of every other power. Major fleet actions were the decisive events in most of the principal wars of this period from the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 to the dispersion of the remnants of the Japanese Fleet in the Battle of the Philippine Sea in 1944. Between these encounters there were a whole series of naval battles which significantly influenced the course of history: Lowestoft, The Texel, Beach Head, Ushant, Trafalgar, Manila Bay and Santiago, Tsushima Straits, Jutland, Coral Sea, Midway. Mahan demonstrated the decisive character of the naval engagements in the first round of naval competition; and his teachings and his successors have illuminated the decisiveness of the subsequent ones. While not denying the importance of land battles, nor the significance of such techniques as naval blockade, the strategic concept of this previous age nonetheless emphasized the significance of naval engagements fought solely at sea.

In a world in which a continental power confronts a maritime power, this is no longer possible. As most recent naval writers have recognized, major fleet actions are a thing of the past. The locale of decisive action has switched from the sea to the land; not the inner heart of the land mass, to be sure, but rather to the coastal area, to what various writers have described variously as the Rimland, the Periphery, or the Littoral. It is here rather than on the high seas that the decisive battles of the cold war and of any future hot war will be fought. Consequently, naval writers in the period since 1945 have not hesitated to admit and, indeed, to proclaim the importance of ground force. The reduction of enemy targets on land, Admiral Nimitz stated, "is the basic objective of warfare." Criticizing

The Mahan doctrine for tending to erect sea power into an independent thing-in-itself (a view

which was not far wrong when the conflict of sea power against sea power was the decisive event in war), Walter Millis argues that:

Korea is one long lesson in the double fact that all military power is "land power"; and that it can be effectively exercised, under the conditions created by modern technology, only by the most skillful combination and concentration of all available weapons, whether airborne, seaborne, or earthborne to achieve the desired political ends under the particular circumstances which may arise.

3. The Mission of the Navy

This fact that decisive actions will now take place on land means a drastic change in the mission of the Navy. During the previous period, this mission was to secure command of the sea. "(In war," Mahan said, "the proper objective of the navy is the enemy's navy," and as he further remarked in another classic passage:

It is not the taking of individual ships or convoys, be they few or many, that strikes down the money power of a nation; it is the possession of that overbearing power on the sea which drives the enemy's flag from it, or allows it to appear only as a fugitive. And which, by controlling the great common, closes the highways by which commerce moves to and from the enemy's shores. This overbearing power can only be exercised by great navies...

Since the American navy now possesses command of the sea, however, and since the Soviet surface navy is in no position to challenge this except in struggles for local supremacy in the Baltic and Black Seas, the Navy can no longer accept this Mahanite definition of its mission. Its purpose now is not to acquire command of the sea but rather to utilize its command of the sea to achieve supremacy on the land. More specifically, it is to apply naval power to that decisive strip of littoral encircling the Eurasian continent. This means a real revolution in naval thought and operations. For decades the eyes of the Navy have been turned outward to the ocean and the blue water; now the Navy must reverse itself and look inland where its new objectives lie. This has, however, been the historical outlook of navies which have secured uncontested control of the seas, and as Admiral Nimitz has pointed out during the period of British domination, it is safe to say that the Royal Navy fought as many engagements against shore objectives as it did on the high seas." It is a sign of the vigor and flexibility of the Navy that this difficult change in orientation has been generally recognized and accepted by naval writer and the leaders of the naval profession.

The application of naval power against the land requires of course an entirely different sort of Navy from that which existed during the struggles for sea supremacy. The basic weapons of the new Navy are those which make it possible to project naval power far inland. These appear to take primarily three forms:

(1) carrier based naval air power, which will in the future be capable of striking a thousand miles inland with atomic weapons;

(2) fleet-based amphibious power, which can attack and seize shore targets, and which may, with the development of carrier-based airlifts, make it possible to land ground combat troops far

inland; and

(3) naval artillery, which with the development of guided missiles will be able to bombard land objectives far removed from the coast.

The navy of the future will have to be organized around these basic weapons, and it is not utopian to envision naval task forces with the primary mission of attacking, or seizing, objectives far inland through the application of these techniques.

4. The Base of the Navy

In the old theory the sea was the scene of operations and navies consequently had to be based on land. In the ultimate sense that is still true since man must still draw his sustenance and materials from land. But it is also possible to argue that the base of the Navy has been extended far beyond the limits of the continental United States and its overseas territorial bases. For in a very real sense the sea is now the base from which the Navy operates in carrying out its offensive activities against the land. Carrier aviation is sea based aviation; the Fleet Marine Force is a sea based ground force; the guns and guided missiles of the fleet are sea based artillery. With its command of the sea it is now possible for the United States Navy to develop the base-characteristics of the world's oceans to a much greater degree than it has in the past, and to extend significantly the "floating base" system which it originated in World War II. The objective should be to perform as far as practical the functions now performed on land at sea bases closer to the scene of operations. The base of the United States Navy should be conceived of as including all those land areas under our control and the seas of the world right up to within a few miles of the enemy's shores. This gives American power a flexibility and a breadth impossible of achievement by land-locked powers.

The most obvious utilization of this concept involves its application to carrier aviation. In the words of Admiral Nimitz:

The net result is that naval forces are able, without resorting to diplomatic channels, to establish off-shore, anywhere in the world, air fields completely equipped with machine shops, ammunition dumps, tank farms, warehouse, together with quarters and all types of accommodations for personnel. Such task forces are virtually as complete as any air base ever established. They constitute the only air bases that can be made available near enemy territory without

assault and conquest, and furthermore, they are mobile offensive bases that can be employed with the unique attribute of secrecy and surprise, which contributes equally to their defensive as well as offensive effectiveness.

From this viewpoint it is possible to define the relation of the Navy's important to define the relation of the Navy's important antisubmarine responsibilities to these newer functions. Submarine warfare is fundamentally a raiding operation directed at the Navy's base. If not effectively countered, it can of course have serious results. But A.S.W., although vitally important, can never become the primary mission of the Navy. For it is a defensive operation designed to protect the Navy's base, i.e., its control and utilization of the sea, and this base is maintained so that the Navy can perform its important offensive operations against shore targets. Antisubmarine warfare has the same relation to the Navy as guarding of depots has for the Army

or the protection of its air fields and plane factories has for the Air Force. It is a secondary mission, the effective performance of which, however, is essential to the performance of its primary mission. And, indeed, the successful accomplishment of the primary mission of the Navy – the maintenance of American power along the littoral – will in itself be the most important factor in protecting the Navy's base. For holding the littoral will drastically limit the avenue of access of Soviet submarines to the high seas.

5. The Geographical Focus of Naval Operations

This new theory of the transoceanic navy differs from the old Mahanite doctrine in that its principles are applicable to only one Navy instead of several. We have seen how each nation had to adopt the old Mahanite theory to its own specific circumstances, and for the United States this eventually meant focusing its attention upon the Pacific ocean. Is there any such specific geographical area which assumes special importance in the application of the new theory? Obviously this theory applies in general to the entire littoral of the Eurasian continent from Kamchatka to the North Cape (and especially to peninsulas such as Korea). Even a superficial glance at the map of Eurasia, however will reveal that there is one area which specially lends itself to offensive naval operations against the land. This, is, of course, the Mediterranean Basin. For, in effect, the Mediterranean extends the base of American power 2500 miles inland into the Eurasian continent. From this basin naval power can be projected over most of Western Europe, the Balkan peninsula, Turkey, and the Middle East. In the event of a major war with Russia, the Mediterranean would be the base from which the knock-out punch could be launched into the heart of Russia; the industrial- agricultural Ukraine and the Caucasus oil fields. It is consequently hardly surprising to find that the Mediterranean has now replaced the Pacific as the geographical focus of attention for the American Navy.

The recognition of the crucial role of the Mediterranean Basin implementation of American foreign policy can be dated from the historic announcement by

Secretary Forrestal on September 30, 1946, that American naval forces would be maintained in that area for the support of our national policy. The increase in the strength of these forces and the creation of the Sixth Task Fleet on June 1, 1948, were further steps in the implementation of this policy. The carrier aviation, surface power, and amphibious forces of this fleet have been recognized as being of crucial importance in supporting American policy in this area. This key role of the Mediterranean has been reflected in the attention devoted to it in naval writings, and it has even been described as the "sea of destiny" – a term previously reserved for the Pacific Ocean. This concentration of attention upon the Mediterranean does not, of course, mean that the application of naval power will not be important at other points along the littoral. But it does mean that at least for the foreseeable future the Mediterranean offers the most fruitful area for the Navy's performance of its new function.

6. The Aim of Naval Tactics

Under the old theory it was necessary to concentrate naval forces in order to win control of the sea. Consequently the battle fleet emerged as the main instrument of sea power. Now, however, concentration is necessary at or over the target on land, and hence for defensive purposes dispersion and deception are essential for the fleet at sea. Planes from a number of widely

separated carriers can, for instance, be concentrated over their target and secure local air supremacy there. Only in amphibious landings would any large-scale concentration of naval vessels be necessary and even there new techniques may avoid the massing of a large number of ships in a small area. Since these new functions permit the Navy to avoid concentrating its ships a oat, there is consequently little basis for the argument that the effectiveness of atomic bombs against a concentrated eet has ended the usefulness of the Navy. Dispersion, exibility, and mobility- not concentration-are the basic tactical doctrines of the new Navy.

VII Public Support and Naval Organization

Inevitably a new strategic concept must have signi cant implications for the Navy's public support and its organizational structure. So far as the latter is concerned the implications of this concept are as yet dif cult to identify. Certainly once there is general acceptance of the new role of the Navy, the Navy will be able to afford to take a more favorable attitude to further uni cation of the armed services. Certainly also a recognition of this new function should eventually nd its way into law since the National Security Act still de nes the primary mission of the Navy as "prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea." In general, it is probable that the dual basis of naval organization developed during the Oceanic phase can continue to be the basis of naval organization. In any case, it is likely that the most important implications of the new doctrine involve

public support rather than organization.

Perhaps the rst necessity of the Navy with respect to this is for it to recognize that it is no longer the premier service but is one of three equal services all of which are essential to the implementation of American Cold War policy. The second necessity is for the Navy to insist, however, upon this equal role. To maintain its position the Navy must develop public understanding of its transoceanic mission. As it is now, the experts on military affairs-columnists such as Hanson Baldwin and Walter Millis-thoroughly appreciate the Navy's role, but too often one still hears from the average American the question: "What do we need a navy for? The Russians don't have one." This attitude can only be overcome by a systematic, detailed elaboration and presentation of the theory of the transoceanic Navy against the broad background of naval history and naval technology. Only when this is done will the Navy have the public con dence commensurate with its important role in national defense.

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