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SOME ASPECTS OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S TERM AS THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, APRIL 19, 1897 - MAY 10, 1898

Submitted to the Department of History
of the University of Windsor in
partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master
of Arts

by

ROY LOUIS DEL COL, B.A.

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers some aspects of Theodore Roosevelt's term as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy from April 19, 1897 to May 10, 1898. The first chapter outlines the sea power thesis of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan and the second chapter establishes Roosevelt's early interest in the service which culminated in his appointment to the post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

The third chapter shows to what extent Roosevelt followed the sea power notions of Captain Mahan. While Roosevelt followed Mahan's sea power thesis in many respects he did not see its chief significance until after the Spanish American War. The significance of Mahan's sea power thesis rested on the importance of commerce.

The fourth chapter shows how Roosevelt was virtually in charge of the Department of the Navy due to the absences of Secretary of the Navy, John Davis Long. Roosevelt prepared the department and the country for war. The fifth chapter shows how well Roosevelt's preparations met the test of war and how Secretary of the Navy, John Long, attempted to obtain some of the credit for the Navy's success in the Spanish American War of 1898.

PREFACE

During Theodore Roosevelt's term as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, April 19, 1897 - May 10, 1898, interest in naval and commercial expansion in the United States came to a critical point of development. Alfred Thayer Mahan was largely responsible for making naval and commercial ideas popular. This paper examines the influence of Mahan's ideas on Roosevelt during this period.

It also examines the relationship which existed between the Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, and his Assistant Secretary, Roosevelt himself.

The first chapter outlines the theory of sea power as it was presented in Mahan's book The Influence of Seapower Upon History and in his other writings during this period. The second chapter establishes the fact that Roosevelt had a long standing interest in the navy and in important naval personages. It concludes with a discussion of the circumstances of Roosevelt's appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

The third chapter discusses the extent to which Roosevelt followed Mahan's ideas in administering the Department of the Navy. It traces the significant influence of Mahan on Roosevelt and explains the critical point at

which Roosevelt did not follow Mahan.

The fourth chapter discusses the overriding influence which Roosevelt, though only the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, came to have in the Department. The final chapter outlines briefly some of John D. Long's later views which throw into relief his relationship with Roosevelt during the period considered by this paper.

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To my parents who have helped me to maintain the fine balance between sanity and insanity much appreciation is due. Many thanks to Mrs. Haberer whose task it was to type this paper.

Roy Louis Del Col

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Theodore Roosevelt held the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy from April 19, 1897 to May 10, 1898. During these approximately thirteen months a large part of the early legend of Roosevelt was established. The developing crisis with Spain, which occurred during this period, had almost reached war proportions with the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbour on February 15, 1898. In order to deliver a crippling blow at the Spanish, should war result, Roosevelt sent a dispatch on February 25, 1898 to Dewey who was in command of the Asiatic squadron. The Assistant Secretary who was in charge of the affairs in the Navy Department on the afternoon of February 25, 1898, ordered the Asiatic squadron to Hong Kong where Dewey was to keep the ships full of coal. If war were declared it was to be the duty of the Asiatic commander to prevent the Spanish squadron from leaving the Asiatic coast. Dewey was to remain on the flagship Olympia and then begin offensive operations in the Philippine Islands.¹ It was this effort of preparedness which made possible the successful campaign of the United States fleet against the Spanish in the

¹ George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey (New York, 1913), p. 179.

Philippines.

It is often assumed that this dispatch by Roosevelt in late February was an impetuous act by the junior executive that was completed while the Secretary of the Navy was absent from the office.² But it appears to the present writer from a careful reading of Roosevelt's correspondence and other related sources that this act was really the climax of a series of efforts in an attempt to prepare the navy and the country for war. It is just one of the many instances which show for all intents and purposes that Roosevelt was really the Secretary of the Navy.

Furthermore, Roosevelt was influenced by Mahan's sea power thesis and its significance for the United States. Accordingly, Roosevelt was intensely interested in the strengthening of the navy. There seems to be a tacit assumption that Roosevelt's acceptance of Mahan's sea power

² Dulles comments on the dispatch sent to Dewey. "It had been sent by Roosevelt. Impatient for war to break out, anxious that Dewey should have authorization for prompt action, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy had seized the opportunity of his chief's temporary absence from his office to carry preparations for war a good step farther. . . ." Foster Rhea Dulles, America in the Pacific (Boston, 1932), p. 204. In a later work Dulles refers to the presence of the American fleet off the Philippines as being "due to an unusual series of events." Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power 1898 - 1954 (New York, 1955), p. 42. Referring to the dispatch John D. Long wrote in his diary that "the very devil seemed to possess" his assistant the afternoon he cabled Dewey. Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., America of Yesterday as Reflected in the Journal of John Davis Long (Boston, 1923), p. 169. Most general works seem to agree with the assumption.

thesis was total and unconditional. This seems to be too sweeping a statement.

To evaluate Mahan's influence on Roosevelt it is necessary, at this point, to outline the basic principles of Mahan's sea power thesis. Mahan's philosophy of sea power was compounded from two distinct theories. One was the theory of naval strategy and defense. The other was the theory of national prosperity based on a program of mercantilistic imperialism. From these two theories there evolved a number of basic concepts, each of which can be considered as a part of the total sea power thesis. These basic concepts were:

- (1) Force to replace arbitration on the world scene.
- (2) An increase in the size of the navy.
- (3) Preparation for war in time of peace.
- (4) Concentration of the fleet.
- (5) The adoption of a world outlook which entailed Cuba, Hawaii, the Philippines and the Panama Canal.
- (6) The importance of commerce.

Mahan saw that force was the determining factor between states.³ Arbitration was a good thing but force was a necessary factor and the navy was going to supply that force. He desired to preserve a martial spirit which alone could cope "with the destructive forces which from outside

³ Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), p. 25.

and from within threaten to submerge all that the centuries have gained."⁴ He looked upon the armaments of Europe as an insurance of peace among the Western Powers.⁵ In the struggle between nations sea power would play a dominant role.

If the navy was going to supply the force in the future struggle between nations, there existed the necessity of building ships.⁶ Mahan hoped that the United States would embark on a program of overseas expansion as this would necessitate increasing the size of the navy greatly.⁷ He was convinced that the United States was destined to become a world power.⁸ In order to accomplish this goal the size of the navy had to be increased. It was necessary to have a large fleet in order to support the entire concept of this sea power thesis.

The necessity of preparing for war in time of peace was one of the basic principles of the sea power thesis.

⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Possibilities of an Anglo - American Reunion", North American Review, CLIX (1894), 558.

⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Isthmus and Sea Power", Atlantic Monthly, LXXII (1893), 472. Also Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Future in Relation to American Naval Power", Harper's Magazine, XCI (1895), 775.

⁶ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Preparedness for Naval War", Harper's Magazine, XCIV (1897), 584, 586.

⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), p. 75.

⁸ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 816.

This principle involved the preparation of material and the ability to use that material on short notice. Only when these preparations were completed could it be said that the country was prepared for war.⁹ If the navy was going to accomplish its purpose and play a dominant role in the future of the United States, it was necessary to prepare it during peacetime so that it would be an efficient fighting machine during war. This new concept of a prepared navy would necessitate the complete reorganization of the old system. This would allow young and efficient officers to take over responsible positions. With efficient officers at the helm they would be able to use the war materials effectively on short notice. The object of Mahan's thinking was the efficiency of the entire fleet.¹⁰

Officers who were well versed in text-book principles would be utterly useless unless they had practical experience. If the navy were going to be used as an object of force as Mahan's views on arbitration indicated, it would be absolutely necessary to have trained men on board. It was imperative that the men be able to handle the war materials effectively on short notice. Training and preparedness went hand in hand. The training of men was most important if the

⁹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Preparedness for Naval War", Harper's Magazine, XCIV (1897), 583.

¹⁰ Ibid., XCIV, 586.

United States were going to follow its destiny and become a world power.¹¹ The necessity of preparing material and having efficient officers and trained men to use that material on short notice were essentials in the preparation for war in time of peace.

Mahan believed that the new American fleet had to be concentrated¹² if the United States were going to control the approaches to her own borders. The sea power thesis was very closely related to strategy and "the essence of Mahan's strategy lay in this concept of the command of the sea, this doctrine of concentration of power."¹³ It would serve very little purpose to construct coastal vessels to protect the United States. What was needed was a large fleet that was able to go abroad and destroy the enemy before he came to the shores of the United States. This fleet had to be concentrated in order to be effective, and Mahan believed in this basic principle of the concentration of the fleet.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Concentration for Mahan entailed two basic principles, the strategic location of ships at decisive points with coaling stations to support that fleet and the necessity of not dividing or dispersing the ships. The total destruction of the enemy fleet was the primary consideration and this was to be done by a superior naval force. Preying upon commercial vessels was a good thing, but it was considered as being secondary to concentration. Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), pp. 7-13.

¹³ William E. Livezey, Mahan on Sea Power (Norman, Oklahoma, 1947), p. 214.

The adoption of a world outlook which entailed Cuba, Hawaii, the Philippines and the Panama Canal was a necessary principle of the sea power thesis. The new age of technology resulted in coal driven ships. The age of sail had passed and in order to give the new warships an increased radius, coaling stations were needed. By 1890, Mahan saw that the American people were at last awakening to the greater opportunities awaiting them overseas.¹⁴ This expansion abroad would give the United States colonies which would provide resting places for the ships¹⁵ where they could coal and repair.¹⁶

The key in the coming struggle as far as Mahan was concerned was the Panama Canal. It had become "a strategic centre of . . . vital importance."¹⁷ Security of the Canal¹⁸

¹⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 816 ff.

¹⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), p. 25.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 27, 72.

¹⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 819.

¹⁸ At this early time Mahan expressed himself as being in favour of controlling the approaches to the proposed canal. Later he came to the realization that if the canal were sufficiently protected by land fortifications, this waterway would serve as an effective bridge for the fleet of the United States, thereby eliminating the need of maintaining a battleship fleet in each ocean. Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Why Fortify the Panama Canal?", North American Review, CXCI (1911), 331-9. This was the first real public expression by Mahan of eliminating the two ocean navy.

demanded the establishment of naval supremacy over the Caribbean¹⁹ and the Eastern Pacific. This in turn demanded the acquisition and development of naval bases at strategic points --- especially in Cuba²⁰ and Hawaii.²¹ It was necessary to have bases in the Caribbean²² if the United States intended to protect the future Canal.²³ Cuba was considered to be much more important than Jamaica as a naval base²⁴ as the operations of the American fleet could be easily transferred from one side of the Caribbean to the other in the event that the United States' fleet was inferior in size to the enemy's fleet.²⁵

Possession of Hawaii would serve the purpose of protecting the Canal as well as the Pacific seaboard.²⁶

¹⁹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "A Twentieth Century Outlook", Harper's Magazine, XCV (1897), 533.

²⁰ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Strategic Features of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea", Harper's Magazine, XCV (1897), 680.

²¹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Hawaii and our Future Sea Power", Forum, XV (1893), 1.

²² Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), p. 30.

²³ Ibid., p. 29.

²⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Strategic Features of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea", Harper's Magazine, XCV (1897), 690.

²⁵ Ibid., XCV, 685.

²⁶ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Hawaii and our Future Sea Power", Forum, XV (1893), 6-8.

Acquisition of the Philippines was considered necessary by Mahan.²⁷ The development of a world outlook that included Cuba, the Canal, Hawaii and the Philippines was a basic principle of the sea power thesis: "Whether they will or no, Americans must now begin to look outward. The growing production of the country demands it. An increasing volume of public sentiment demands it."²⁸ The United States could not remain an isolated continental power. By necessity she would have to adopt a larger concept of sea power.

Commerce was the most important principle of the sea power thesis. For Mahan there was a very close association between commerce and the navy.²⁹ His entire policy was one of naval, commercial expansion and the idea of protecting commerce was paramount. Mahan wanted Hawaii to support American commercial expansion.³⁰ This island would also serve as a coaling station. Just as the navy depended upon the merchant marine during wartime, so too did the merchant

²⁷ The idea of acquiring the Philippines was slow to be recognized. Roosevelt did not covet the islands until Mahan found need for them as he planned the naval strategy of the hoped - for war with Spain. Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore, 1956), p. 62.

²⁸ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 822.

²⁹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1890) (New York, 1957), p. 75.

³⁰ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "Hawaii and our Future Sea Power", Forum, XV (1893), 6-8.

marine rely on the navy during peace.³¹ Even the Panama Canal had a commercial importance for Mahan because it would modify the direction of the trade routes. The Canal was important to the Caribbean Sea: "Every position in that sea will have enhanced commercial and military value, and the canal itself will become a strategic centre of the most vital importance."³² It is important to note that Mahan placed the commercial aspect of the Canal before the military. One thing was essential for the greatness of a nation and that was commercial supremacy. In order to obtain this commercial supremacy and maintain it after it was achieved, a large and powerful navy was necessary.

Thus we have two factors that play a major role in Theodore Roosevelt's period as Assistant Secretary of the Navy:

- (a) his own aggressive, impetuous personality and
- (b) the influence of Mahan's sea power thesis on his thinking.

It is the hope of the writer to show in the following chapters that:

- (a) Theodore Roosevelt "habitually" assumed power in the Navy Department and that the famous incident of February 25, 1898, far from being an isolated

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William E. Livezey, op. cit., pp. 48-9.

32

Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 819.

incident, was really the climax of a series of events falling into the same basic pattern.

- (b) He applied to a considerable extent Mahan's thesis but with a significantly different ultimate purpose.

CHAPTER II

ROOSEVELT'S EARLY INTEREST IN THE NAVY

A. Sea Power Enthusiasts

The appointment of Roosevelt to the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy on April 19, 1897 marked the culmination of a long standing interest in that service. During the preceeding eight years Roosevelt had maintained an interest in naval affairs as well as in important naval personages. His correspondence reveals that he had spoken with Captain Mahan as early as 1890 and even at that early date they were discussing plans for exerting pressure on Congress in the interest of naval expansion.¹ Roosevelt's early interest in naval affairs is shown by the fact that he reviewed Mahan's book The Influence of Seapower Upon History in October of 1890.² The future Assistant Secretary realized that there was a need for a large navy composed of cruisers and powerful battleships that could meet those of any other nation if they were commanded to do so: "It is not economy -- it is niggardly and foolish -- short-sightedness

¹ Elting E. Morison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), I, 222. Roosevelt to Mahan, May 12, 1890.

² Theodore Roosevelt, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, a Review", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 563-7.

to cramp our naval expenditures."³ He had been won over to the sea power principle of preparedness and as a member of the group which advocated the "large"⁴ policy, he was to express those views of preparedness once he was appointed Assistant Secretary.⁵ However, a position in the navy department was not even a remote possibility in 1890. Roosevelt maintained a connection in public life with Secretary of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy⁶ from 1891 to 1893.⁷

This public connection with Tracy was maintained at the same time that he came out and expressed notions concern-

³ Ibid., LXVI, 567.

⁴ The term "large" was characteristically Rooseveltian and anything that had to do with an advanced world outlook was referred to as being part of that "large" policy. Cuba, the Canal and Hawaii were all considered as part of that policy. For a more complete understanding of who the supporters of this policy were, Julius W. Pratt, "The 'Large Policy' of 1898", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIX (1932), 219-42.

⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XXIII, 182-99.

⁶ Benjamin F. Tracy was Secretary of the Navy from 1889 to 1893. An advocate of the large navy, his first annual report was a forceful document that reflected the ideas of Captain Mahan. The United States had to have a fleet capable of driving the enemy from the coast "by threatening his own, [the enemy's coast], for a war, though defensive in principle, may be conducted most effectively by being offensive in its operations." 51 Congress, 1 Session, House Executive Document No. 1, Part III, p. 4.

⁷ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., Letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles 1870 - 1918 (New York, 1924). p. 119. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, June 20, 1891. Also ibid., p. 125. February 12, 1893, and ibid., p. 132. December 24, 1893.

ing sea power. For Roosevelt, the only way to meet any sea power was with sea power itself. The United States had to have a first class navy if it were to hold its own with the navy of any European nation.⁸ Roosevelt saw the importance of Mahan's works⁹ but Mahan's ideas were slow to be recognized in the United States. Roosevelt thought it most important to have Mahan remain in the United States. Despite the pressure that was applied, Mahan was given sea duty on the cruiser Chicago in 1893 and the visit of the Chicago to England that same year marked the beginning of fame abroad for the sea power historian.¹⁰ Roosevelt was concerned because Mahan was getting more attention in London than he was getting in his own country.¹¹ Roosevelt's strong feeling for the navy is shown in a private letter to his sister when he was informed of her engagement to a naval officer. He was overjoyed.¹²

⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon The French Revolution, a Review", Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (1893), 559.

⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, a Review", Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 563-7. Also Theodore Roosevelt, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon The French Revolution, a Review", Atlantic Monthly LXXI (1893), 556-9, passim.

¹⁰ William E. Livezey, Mahan On Sea Power (Norman, Oklahoma, 1947), p. 13.

¹¹ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 144. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, June 3, 1894.

¹² Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 464. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, July 4, 1895.

As the controversy over Venezuela took more importance on the national scene in 1895 - 1896, the future Assistant Secretary desired that the people of the United States should wake up to the need of passing measures to provide a good fleet.¹³ The boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela dated back to 1840. At that time the British Government commissioned Sir Robert Schomburgk to settle the dispute but the proposed settlement was rejected. The Orinoco River was very important to the Venezuelans and the boundary dispute revolved around the possession of land at the mouth of this river. Venezuelan propaganda began to spread in the United States in 1894 and the Cleveland administration came under fire for its lack of an aggressive attitude toward Great Britain. There was mounting protest against Britain's course regarding Venezuela. Secretary of State Olney sent a defiant note to London stating that the British were violating the Monroe Doctrine and demanding to know whether the British would submit the dispute to arbitration. After a lengthy delay, Lord Salisbury, who directed the foreign policy of Great Britain in 1895, replied in the negative. Olney and Cleveland were chagrined and they drafted a message to Congress in which the President urged that the United States run the boundary line itself and if necessary

¹³ Ibid., I, 512. Theodore Roosevelt to William Cowles, February 11, 1896.

fight to maintain it. It was a genuine crisis and war was possible. Roosevelt was overjoyed with the strong stand taken by Cleveland. The virile Roosevelt wrote: "I rather hope that the fight will come soon. The clamor of the peace faction has convinced me that this country needs a war."¹⁴

Yet war did not come as the British people were unwilling to fight. International complications with the Boers of South Africa and the Kaiser of Germany convinced the British to accept arbitration of the boundary dispute. The treaty of February, 1897 provided for the submission of the dispute to an arbitral board.¹⁵ The United States had taken a firm stand and the action of Cleveland was an indication that the country had finally accepted its position in world affairs. The boundary dispute in Venezuela could have resulted in war. The need for a navy to back up the decisions made in Congress was obvious. Roosevelt wanted measures passed that would provide a good fleet and he expressed this idea to his friend and confidant Henry Cabot Lodge, Senator from Massachusetts and later Chairman of the

¹⁴ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884 - 1918 (New York, 1925), I, 204-5. Roosevelt to Lodge, December 27, 1895.

¹⁵ For a more complete discussion of the Venezuelan dispute of 1895, refer to Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, 6th ed., (New York, 1958). pp. 436-50. Also Dexter Perkins, A History of the Monroe Doctrine, rev. ed., (Boston, 1955), pp. 172-91

Senate Naval Affairs Committee: "More important than any other question is, it seems to me, the matter of providing an adequate coast defense and an adequate Navy."¹⁶ Roosevelt maintained a friendship with speaker of the House Reed.¹⁷ However, when Speaker Reed¹⁸ failed to supply the leadership needed on the questions of the navy and coastal defense, Roosevelt was greatly disappointed in him¹⁹ even though he was a good friend.

The principles of sea power were recognized by 1896. There was not a single naval debate in Congress after 1890 in which Mahan's ideas were not voiced by other men. Men

¹⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 215. Roosevelt to Lodge, March 13, 1896.

¹⁷ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 132. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, December 24, 1893. Also ibid., pp. 138-39. February 25, 1894. Ibid., p. 142, May 20, 1894 and ibid., p. 166. December 22, 1895.

¹⁸ Reed was the unquestioned leader of the House Republicans in 1882, and was raised to the chair of the speaker on December 2, 1889. He was fond of Roosevelt, but he opposed the entire concept of administrative interference in Cuba and Hawaii. Reed considered colonial expansion as contrary to the American tradition and entirely impractical. He resigned as speaker on September 4, 1899 because he was disgusted with the McKinley Administration. Reed was known to be a great debater. He seldom spoke for more than ten minutes at any one time but his brief comments often determined the course of the argument and even the fate of the impending measure. Reed did not support Roosevelt's "large" policy. William A. Robinson, "Thomas Brackett Reed", in Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1935), XV, 456-9.

¹⁹ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 178. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, March 21, 1896.

such as Morgan, Lodge, Hawley and McAdoo quoted him liberally.²⁰
 Roosevelt was concerned with his country's position with
 respect to the outside world:

Though I feel very strongly indeed on such questions as municipal reform and civil service reform, I feel even more strongly on the questions of our attitude towards the outside world, with all that it implies, from seacoast defence and a first class navy, to a properly vigorous foreign policy. I think we ought to interfere in Cuba; and indeed I believe it would be well were we sufficiently farsighted steadily to shape our policy with a view to the ultimate removal of all European powers from the colonies they hold in the western hemisphere. 21

While maintaining his public connection with the navy,²² he
 continued to correspond with Captain Mahan.²³ In the early
 part of 1897 there was talk of Roosevelt's being offered
 the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and if it
 were offered he would probably take it because he was
 "intensely interested in our Navy."²⁴

²⁰ George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None (New York, 1940), p. 75.

²¹ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 180. Theodore Roosevelt to William Cowles, April 5, 1896.

²² Ibid., p. 181. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, May 10, 1896.

²³ Ibid., p. 202. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, January 17, 1897.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 204. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, January 17, 1897.

Roosevelt's interest in the service had grown over a period of eight years to such a degree that his ultimate appointment as Assistant Secretary was considered as a victory for the sea power enthusiasts. His interest in the navy had been fostered by public connections and personal relations as well as from the reading of books. He was not one to stand idly by and when he discovered the works of Captain Mahan he found in them ideas on international affairs that were almost identical with his own.²⁵

B. Circumstances of Roosevelt's Appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy

When President McKinley chose John Davis Long to be the head of the Navy Department it seemed a definite forecast of a passive naval policy. The new Secretary, a former governor of Massachusetts, was a man of good qualities, but

²⁵ It would be false to say that Captain Mahan's work was received by all in the same light. His thesis concerning sea power was being used widely in England and Germany and was going a long way toward shaping the destiny of those two countries. Captain W.D. Puleston, Mahan (New Haven, 1939), p. 159. Yet it would be unfair to say that Mahan's writings influenced Turpitz, the recognized genius of the German fleet. William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890 - 1902 (New York, 1951), p. 441. James Bryce openly disagreed with Mahan. James Bryce, "The Policy of Annexation for the United States", Forum, XXIV (1897), 385-95. Carl Schurz disagreed with Mahan. Carl Schurz, "Manifest Destiny", Harper's Magazine, LXXVII (1893), 737-46. Fred Jane was also one to disagree with Mahan. Fred T. Jane, "Naval Warfare: Present and Future", Forum, XXIV (1897), 8-17.

he had a cautious temperment.²⁶ Naval reconstruction had begun in the eighteen eighties and if the policy of expansion of the navy were to continue leadership from within the Department seemed especially unfavourable because of the conservative outlook of the new Secretary of the Navy, John Davis Long. Leadership might have been provided by the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, but he, too, was against the expansion of the navy.²⁷

A partial victory was obtained by the advocates of the "large" policy when Theodore Roosevelt was appointed to the post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The former Police Commissioner of New York had been influenced by Henry Cabot Lodge to accept the post if it were offered. A great many people wanted McKinley to offer the post to Roosevelt because of the tremendous work he had done for the Party in helping to defeat Bryan in 1896. Roosevelt was rather indifferent in the matter and he was not sure whether he should take the position. Not only did he lack pronounced backers of political influence in his own state, but he also

26

Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power 1776 - 1918 (Princeton, 1939), p. 224.

27

The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation was the principal professional adviser to the Secretary of the Navy on technical questions and personnel. Rear - Admiral A. S. Crowninshield, who held the position of Chief of the Bureau of Navigation at this time, was an ultraconservative officer. George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey (New York, 1913), p. 167.

realized that the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy was "not a big place."²⁸ Discouragement in his position as Police Commissioner led him in the early part of 1897 to express his willingness to accept the job if it were offered to him.²⁹ While Roosevelt sat back and waited, advocates of the notion of sea power were busily at work pressing for his appointment. Lodge had gone to see Secretary Long who seemed quite impressed with the possibility of having Roosevelt as his Assistant Secretary and spoke very highly of him.³⁰ Long was willing to agree to the appointment. The only difficulty appeared to be at the White House.³¹

The way Roosevelt handled himself in the role of police Commissioner of New York caused the conservative President McKinley some concern.³² The pressure to appoint Roosevelt was increased and as a result he became the new Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Roosevelt was pleased:

²⁸ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed. op. cit., pp. 199-200. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, December 20, 1896.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 204. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, February 21, 1897.

³⁰ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 253. Lodge to Roosevelt, March 8, 1897.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt A Biography (New York, 1931), p. 165.

³³ Lodge had gone to see President - elect McKinley at Canton, Ohio in an attempt to secure Roosevelt's appointment. Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 241. Lodge to Roosevelt, December 2, 1896.

I was even more pleased than I was astonished at the appointment; for I had come to look upon it as very improbable. McKinley rather distrusted me, and Platt actively hated me; it was Cabot's untiring energy and devotion which put me in; and Long really wanted me. 34

When Long heard of the appointment he noted in his journal that Roosevelt was the best man for the place.³⁵

The appointment of Roosevelt was a victory for the advocates of sea power for Roosevelt was looked upon as being one of their own select group. He had commented favourably on the books written by Mahan and expressed his views concerning the need for a large navy in his private letters. The driving force of Roosevelt was going to counteract the slow moving conservative Secretary. Throughout the next year Roosevelt laboured to convert Secretary Long and President McKinley to his view of naval needs and policy through his administrative activities and his public speeches.³⁶

³⁴ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 207. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, April 11, 1897.

³⁵ Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., America of Yesterday as Reflected in the Journal of John Davis Long (Boston, 1923), p. 147.

³⁶ Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit (Boston, 1931), p. 81. Also Joseph B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and His Time (New York, 1920), I, 82-4. Also Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 276-8, 284. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 15, 1897, September 21, 1897 and September 29, 1897.

CHAPTER III

ROOSEVELT AND THE CONCEPT OF SEA POWER

Roosevelt in his career as Assistant Secretary reflected with reservations Mahan's thesis. Even in the absence of Mahan's ideas, Roosevelt believed that force and not arbitration was the significant factor in a country's development if it were to take an honourable place as a world power. It was in the address at the Naval War College¹ that Roosevelt expressed his ideas on diplomacy, arbitration² and preparedness. This speech, later published under the title

¹ Secretary of the Navy Chandler established the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, in Navy Department General Order Number 325 of October 6, 1884. Commodore Stephen Luce was its first president. Captain Mahan was first appointed to the college as a lecturer and served later as president. His lectures at the college later resulted in his work The Influence of Seapower Upon History. The purpose of the college is to prepare officers for higher command. In an effort to do this, naval history, policy, strategy, tactics, coast defense, naval construction, gunnery and international law are touched upon. The college is meant for senior officers of the rank of lieutenant commander and above. Officers of the other services are invited to attend in an effort to achieve co-ordination. At the request of the Naval War College, Theodore Roosevelt addressed the students in June of 1897. Captain John Stapler, "The Naval War College", United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LVIII (1932), 1157 - 63.

² Whenever Mahan made reference to non-violent methods of handling international relations, he always used the term arbitration. Whenever Roosevelt made reference to this same problem, he usually used the term diplomacy which entailed more than arbitration, and more than just the use of external force. His later activities as President with respect to the Panama Canal illustrate this point

"Washington's Forgotten Maxim",³ reflected Mahan's sea power views.

A. The War College Speech

This major address of 1897 was delivered by the Assistant Secretary on June 2 to the Naval War College at Newport. Roosevelt spoke on the subject of national preparedness. He had spoken on this before, but this is the first time that he received national attention as a spokesman for this subject.⁴

From this time until his death he was a national figure. This address showed serious thought and study. It was clearly the result of several years of contemplation.⁵ In this War College Address, Roosevelt gave his ideas on sea power. The address was notable as the first elaborate expression of Roosevelt's views on preparation. When he later became President, Roosevelt's views on national preparedness were a reflection of the principal ideas contained in this address. The Assistant Secretary stressed the need for being

³ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 182-99. This speech was first published in the official navy journal United States Naval Institutes Proceedings, XXIII (1897), and later distributed throughout the service. Report of the President of the Naval War College and Torpedo School, House Document No. 1, Part III, p. 136.

⁴ Lewis Einstein, Roosevelt, His Mind in Action (Boston, 1930), p. 66.

⁵ Joseph B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and his Time (New York, 1920), I, 74. Also Lewis Einstein, op. cit., p. 66.

prepared:

In this country there is not the slightest danger of an over - development of warlike spirit, and there has never been any such danger. In all our history there has never been a time when preparedness for war was any menace to peace. On the contrary, again and again we have owed peace to the fact that we were prepared for war. 6

In this address he appealed to patriotism in an effort to convince the people of the necessity of preparedness for war:

The United States has never once in the course of its history suffered harm because of preparation for war, or because of entering into war. But we have suffered incalculable harm, again and again, from a foolish failure to prepare for war or from reluctance to fight when to fight was proper. The men who today protest against a navy, and protest also against every movement to carry out the traditional policy of the country in foreign affairs, and to uphold the honor of the flag, are themselves but following in the course of those who protest against the acquisition of the great West. 7

His later views on arbitration were consistent with the ideas expressed in this speech:

Preparation for war is the surest guaranty for peace. Arbitration is an excellent thing, but ultimately those who wish to see this country at peace with foreign nations will be wise if they place reliance upon a first-class fleet of first-class battleships rather than on any arbitration treaty which

6 Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 182.

7 Ibid., XIII, 187.

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the wit of man can devise.⁸

The use of force was necessary: "No nation can hold its place in the world, . . . unless it stands ready to guard its rights with an armed hand."⁹ Diplomacy placed second to force: "Diplomacy is utterly useless where there is no force behind it; the diplomat is the servant, not the master, of the soldier."¹⁰ Appealing to patriotism throughout the speech, he closed on the very same note that he had opened his talk. It was an appeal for a large navy:

We ask for a great navy, partly because we think that the possession of such a navy is the surest guaranty of peace, and partly because we feel that no national life is worth having if the nation is not willing, when the need shall arise, to stake everything on the supreme arbitrament of war, and to pour out its blood, its treasure, and its tears like water, rather than submit to the loss of honor and renown. 11

The speech sounded a new note in the conduct of national affairs. It was a convincing appeal to American sentiment, but more important than that, it was a reflection of Mahan's notions concerning a large navy, preparedness for war and arbitration.¹²

⁸ Ibid., XIII, 183.

⁹ Ibid., XIII, 185.

¹⁰ Ibid., XIII, 195.

¹¹ Ibid., XIII, 198.

¹² For a comparison with Captain Mahan on these points, see above pp. 3-5.

B. Force and Arbitration

Roosevelt gave his views on arbitration in his important address at the Naval War College. The Assistant Secretary firmly believed in using force instead of arbitration. He thought that arbitration was an excellent thing, but in the end if peace were to be maintained with a foreign power little faith could be placed in an arbitration treaty. Reliance should be placed upon a "first-class fleet of first-class battleships rather than on any arbitration treaty."¹³ He wanted the United States to take its place on the world scene. If the United States were willing to press its demands and talk in terms of a major power, the navy was most important to make her position secure:

Still more is it necessary to have a fleet of great battle-ships if we intend to live up to the Monroe Doctrine, and to insist upon its observance in the two Americas and the islands on either side of them. If a foreign power, whether in Europe or Asia, should determine to assert its position in those lands wherein we feel that our influence should be supreme, there is but one way in which we can effectively interfere. Diplomacy is utterly useless where there is no force behind it; the diplomat is the servant, not the master, of the soldier. (Italics mine) 14

There were others in Congress who spoke in the very same tone. They had come to realize that force was the only thing

¹³ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 183.

¹⁴ Ibid., XIII, 195.

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that mattered.

In August of 1897 Roosevelt again reiterated his conviction that the navy should be used instead of arbitration: "As an American I should advocate -- and as a matter of fact do advocate -- keeping our Navy at a pitch that will enable us to interfere promptly if Germany ventures to touch a foot of American soil."¹⁶ Using the navy to enforce statements concerning international affairs, for example, the Monroe Doctrine, is very closely associated with the concept of having the United States come from its position of isolation to that of a world power. The advocates of the sea power thesis desired to use physical force to make the United States a world and international power.¹⁷ Roosevelt

¹⁵ Senator Charles W. Jones implied that nations would not pay attention to decrees unless the country had the physical force to back them up. "What do the nations of the earth care about your moral power after you leave your own shores." Cited by Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power 1898 - 1954 (New York, 1955), pp. 27-8. In Naval debates in Congress, Morgan, Lodge, Hawley and McAdoo quoted Mahan's ideas liberally. George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None (New York, 1940), p. 75.

¹⁶ Elting E. Morison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), I, 645. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, August 13, 1897.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that despite the backing that Henry Cabot Lodge gave to Mahan's ideas on sea power, (Henry Cabot Lodge, "Our Blundering Foreign Policy", Forum, XIX (1895), 17. and Congressional Record, 53 rd Congress 3rd session (1895) p. 3084.) he differed from the sea power historian in one significant respect. Lodge thought that the United States had to come out of its isolation but he opposed any entanglement in world politics. Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power 1898 - 1954 (New

was no exception in this respect.

When Long returned to his office late in September of 1897 after an absence of almost two months, Roosevelt presented him with a resume of the events that had occurred during the former's absence. The Assistant Secretary urged that the Administration provide a sufficient navy to enforce any assertion of the Monroe Doctrine in the American hemisphere. It would be useless to make those assertions if the Administration did not have the warships to back up its claims.¹⁸ Roosevelt knew that proposing such an aggressive policy would have very little effect on the conservative Secretary so he couched his proposition in reference to peace, a term that Long would understand: "A great navy does not make for war, but for peace. It is the cheapest kind of insurance."¹⁹ Roosevelt presented an aggressive program for the Philippines to the President in September of 1897,²⁰ and this program shows that the Assistant Secretary was willing to use force as opposed to arbitration. Roosevelt's actions after the sinking of the Maine in Havana Harbor and the

York, 1955), p. 35. Lodge desired to use the navy only to guard the western hemisphere.

¹⁸ Elting E. Morison, ed., *op. cit.*, I, 695.
Roosevelt to Long, September 30, 1897.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For a discussion of this aggressive program, see below p. 41-2.

famous dispatch of February 25, 1898, illustrate the same theme. Force had become the controlling factor in world affairs.²¹

C. Increasing the Size of the Navy

Roosevelt's correspondence during the months following his appointment as Assistant Secretary made reference to the need for a navy. In August he expressed the wish that "our people would wake up to the need for a big navy!"²² In September he wrote to Lodge informing him that a conference was held with Secretary Long concerning "the need for an increase in the Navy."²³ Roosevelt was merely restating his idea of the need for a navy which he had expressed in his address at the Naval War College: "We ask that the work of upbuilding the navy and the putting of the United States where it should be put among maritime powers, go forward without a break."²⁴

Roosevelt's efforts indicate that he was an advocate of a large navy. On August 3, 1897, he was quite concerned

²¹ For a comparison with Mahan's views on arbitration, see above pp. 3-4.

²² Cited by Joseph B. Bishop, op. cit., I, 78. Roosevelt to Captain B. H. McCalla, U.S.N., August 7, 1897.

²³ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884 - 1918 (New York, 1925), I, 284. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 29, 1897.

²⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 195.

over the armor plate business²⁵ and feared that if the yards stopped building they would never begin again.²⁶ The issue had been complicated because the bulk of the people were ignorant of naval matters and yet they were full of self confidence.²⁷ Roosevelt was making a serious attempt to

²⁵ Armor plate was first introduced in 1889 by the British. At this point, naval architecture had advanced so the term protected cruiser, no longer used, designated a warship with a thick steel deck designed to give some protection to the interior of the vessels. Armored warships - battleships and armored cruisers (which later evolved into the battle cruiser) - carried armor plate on their sides as well as on their decks. These ships carried anywhere from 14" to 18" of armor across the entire upper deck. Technical difficulties were encountered, and the ships were redesigned to have anywhere from 14" to 18" of armor at midships to protect the vital machinery, with the bow and stern covered with approximately 8" of armor plate. Armor plate was also placed below the waterline of these ships after 1900, and this led to more technical problems.

The process of making this armor plate was quite complex. It was necessary to keep the armor plates in the furnaces anywhere from 20 to 25 days depending on the hardness desired. One side of the plate was kept at a relatively high temperature (1600° F) and the other side of the plate was kept relatively low. Carbon would be placed on the hot side but would not be allowed to seep through the entire piece as this would make the plate too brittle. The plate was then removed from the furnace and cooled in oil or water. This complex process would have to be repeated if the plate had to be straightened or moulded. The furnaces to produce this armor plate were perfected by Martin Siemens. A new and faster method was perfected after the turn of the century. It was called carburo didrogino. Carlo Goffi, Tecnica Moderna Degli Acciai (Milano, 1917) pp. 13-6, 30-7, 50-3, 67-70, 156-9. Also Arturo Massenz, Lavorazione E Tempera Degli Acciai (Milano, 1921), pp. 196-201.

²⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 268. Roosevelt to Lodge, August 3, 1897.

²⁷ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 637. Roosevelt to William Cowles, August 3, 1897.

convince the people of the need for a building program for the navy: "It would be horrible folly to stop building up our navy now."²⁸ In an attempt to reach the people, the Assistant Secretary wrote to Secretary Long and sent him the proof of a proposed article. The conservative Secretary commanded that Roosevelt strike out those portions where he urged the increase in the size of the navy. The letter that Long returned showed that he was kind in tone toward the Assistant, but it also showed that despite the pressure of the Assistant, the Secretary was still against any increase whatever in the navy.²⁹

A few weeks later the Assistant again attempted to convince the Secretary that government policy should allow

²⁸ Ibid., I, 637. Roosevelt to Dana, August 3, 1897. Charles Anderson Dana was born August 8, 1819 and died October 17, 1897. A newspaper editor, he acquired the "New York Sun" in 1867 and assumed the editorship on January 25, 1868. This leader of public opinion advocated the annexation of Cuba. A follower of the large policy, he abused Cleveland for his conciliatory foreign policy. Roosevelt tried to get to the public through Dana, as the "New York Sun" was recognized as being an influential paper in 1897. Allan Nevins, "Charles Anderson Dana", in Dumas Malone and Allen Johnson, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1930), V, 49-52.

²⁹ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 273. Roosevelt to Lodge, August 26, 1897. After the Spanish American War, Long maintained this attitude concerning the building up of the navy. John Davis Long, "Shall the Navy Be Increased", Independent, LVIII (1905), 639-41. However, he did come to the realization that it was folly to wait to the last minute to prepare for war. John Davis Long, The New American Navy (New York, 1903), I, 151.

the building of two or more battleships or cruisers every year.³⁰ The steady upbuilding of the navy was a necessary principle of sea power so far as Roosevelt was concerned. On September 30, 1897, Roosevelt wrote a long and formal letter to the Secretary urging in all earnestness that the Navy Department do "all it can to further a steady and rapid upbuilding of our Navy."³¹ The exactness of the report and the conviction of the Assistant Secretary are obvious:

I believe that Congress should at once give us six (6) new battleships, two (2) to be built on the Pacific and four (4) on the Atlantic; six (6) large cruisers, of the size of the Brooklyn, but in armament more nearly approaching the Argentine vessel San Martin; and seventy - five (75) torpedo boats, twenty-five (25) for the Pacific and fifty (50) for the Atlantic. I believe that we should set about building all these craft now, and that each one should be, if possible, the most formidable of its kind afloat.³²

The pressure that had been put on the Secretary by the Assistant began to tell. Roosevelt wrote to Lodge in strict confidence informing him that the principle of the extension of the navy had been won. The Secretary had

³⁰ Elting E. Morison, ed. op. cit., I, 671. Roosevelt to Long, September 10, 1897. Roosevelt reasoned with the Secretary that if the government had a steady building program, armor for these ships could be obtained at a fairly cheap rate, but otherwise not. The best way to go about this would be to approach civilian firms. Government firms would be more expensive and there would probably be more than a few blunders at the beginning.

³¹ Ibid., I, 695. Roosevelt to Long, September 30, 1897.

³² Ibid., I, 696.

agreed to recommend one additional battleship as well as additional torpedo boats. Roosevelt realized that it was very little, yet he understood that the recognition of the principle of extension had been won and that he was not to stop.³³

The Secretary may have been won over to this principle because of Roosevelt's action. On September 14, 1897, while Long was absent from Washington on an extended summer vacation, Roosevelt had gone to the President and secured an overruling of the conservative Secretary on the principle of an increase in the navy at that time. The President was satisfied with what Roosevelt had done during the seven weeks that he was in charge of the Department:

To my great pleasure he also told me that he intended we should go on building up the Navy, with battleships and torpedo boats, and that he did not think that the Secretary would recommend anything he (the President) [sic] did not approve. Altogether I had a very satisfactory talk.³⁴

Roosevelt kept up the pressure to have the navy increased. He had told Captain Mahan that he would do everything in his power to impress sea power ideas on the Secretary.³⁵

³³ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 294. Roosevelt to Lodge, November 5, 1897.

³⁴ Ibid., I, 277. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 15, 1897.

³⁵ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 607. Roosevelt to Mahan, May 3, 1897.

The sinking of the Maine on February 15, 1898, afforded the Assistant with his best opportunity. With forceful language he sought to convince the Secretary of a need for more torpedo boats, raising that total to one hundred³⁶. On the very next day he urged Long to order additional battleships³⁷. He had proven himself to be an advocate of a large navy. His actions while in the Department were ever directed to having the navy increased in size. After Secretary Long had been eased out of the new President's Cabinet in 1902, he commented upon the procurement of ships during his tenure as Secretary of the Navy: "The labor of purchasing vessels devolved to a great extent upon the office of the assistant secretary, and Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Allen were successively efficient in procuring ships for the service."³⁹ Roosevelt saw that a large navy was necessary and he worked toward obtaining that large navy while he was Assistant Secretary⁴⁰.

³⁶ Ibid., I. 775-9. Roosevelt to Long, February 18, 1898.

³⁷ Joseph B. Bishop, op. cit., I, 85-6.

³⁸ Allen took over the position of Assistant Secretary after Roosevelt resigned in May of 1898 to join the army.

³⁹ John Davis Long, The New American Navy (New York, 1903), I, 152.

⁴⁰ To compare this with Mahan's view on a large navy, see above p. 4.

D. Preparation for War in Time of Peace

Roosevelt sought to achieve preparedness in the Department of the Navy even though he only held the position of Assistant Secretary. Before he delivered the address at the Naval War College, he had written to Mahan asking that his letter be considered as entirely confidential as his position allowed him only to carry out the policy of the Secretary and the President. The Assistant Secretary expressed the desire to build a dozen new battleships to be equally distributed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.⁴¹ Roosevelt realized that it was necessary to have ships, but he realized that it was just as necessary to be able to handle those ships effectively on a moments notice.⁴²

Throughout the critical period of 1897 to 1898 Roosevelt sought to increase the efficiency of the navy. The squadron manoeuvres illustrate Roosevelt's desire for preparedness and efficiency of the fleet. On September 23, 1897, the Assistant Secretary wrote to Senator Chandler concerning the estimates for the department stressing the need to increase the estimates where they related to warlike

⁴¹ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 607.
Roosevelt to Mahan, May 3, 1897.

⁴² On March 17, 1897, Roosevelt wrote to Lodge with reference to the completion of the former's work on The War of 1812. Roosevelt stated that it contained a strong plea for a powerful navy and the ability to handle that navy effectively. Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 255, Roosevelt to Lodge.

efficiency and decrease the estimates where they related to comfort.⁴³ An old acquaintance commented in Century Magazine that while Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary he mastered the problems of the department and made the navy an efficient fighting machine.⁴⁴

One of the problems that was hindering the navy from becoming an efficient fighting machine was the antagonism of the line officers and the engineers.⁴⁵ Secretary Long had

⁴³ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 688. Roosevelt to Senator Chandler, September 23, 1897. "We do need smokeless powder, shells and torpedoes. I am doing my best to prevent them from asking for too much for barracks, for new buildings, and for anything pertaining merely to comfort of the Department; but for what relates to its war-like efficiency I feel we should strain every effort." It must be remembered that Roosevelt was justified in concerning himself with departmental estimates as Secretary Long was absent from his office and Roosevelt was Acting Secretary.

⁴⁴ An Old Acquaintance, "The Personality of President Roosevelt", Century Magazine, LXIII (1901), 277.

⁴⁵ After the days of the Civil War, the sailing ship disappeared from the modern navies of the world. Up to the Civil War, the functions of the line officer were considered as absolutely necessary for the fighting efficiency of the ship. The engineer officer's duty was considered more as supporting the functions of the line officer. However, with the advent of modern navies, the engineer branch became more and more important because of the increased use of machinery on board ship. The status of the engineer officer did not change, and the line officer was still considered the most important. With the increased use of machinery on board ship, the line officer of necessity was becoming more and more of an engineer. It was recognized that the need no longer existed for a separate body of engineers responsible for only a part of the machinery. The need existed for a body of officers trained in the duties of the modern line officer. In the navy, then as now, there was the tendency to "empire building" within a particular branch. With the line officer becoming more of an engineer because of the increased use of machinery, antagonism resulted. The problem was partially solved by the "Personnel Bill" which amalgamated the line officer and the engineer officer.

taken an active interest in the matter and in November of 1897 he appointed a board of eleven naval officers who were to improve the organization of naval personnel. Roosevelt was assigned the duty of presiding over their sessions.⁴⁶ The "Personnel Bill" which ultimately became law in 1899 sought to provide for the line and engineer officers in an effort to eliminate the long standing antagonism between the two. The board of eleven naval officers favoured the amalgamation of the two branches. The bill that was finally proposed and ultimately passed in 1899 provided for vacancies in the navy list by enforcing retirement. Without these vacancies, promotion had been extremely slow. The new bill provided for a special board of naval officers in charge of reviewing careers that could force an officer's retirement in order to provide vacancies and speed up the promotion of able officers. The need to review the scheme of promoting officers and the need to eliminate the existing antagonism between the line and engineering officers were recognized. However, every time proposals had been made by the Secretary of the Navy or the Assistant Secretary, they had been turned down by one of the Houses.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Genesis of the Personnel Bill", Works (New York, 1926) XIV, 281-2. This article was first published in the North American Review, CLXVII (1898).

⁴⁷ Ira N. Hollis, "A New Organization for the Navy", Atlantic Monthly, LXXX (1897), 309-19.

The Assistant Secretary did not propose the need for a personnel bill but he adopted the idea and sought to give leadership to the board that had been appointed by Secretary Long. The original plan for the reorganization of naval personnel to eliminate antagonism was proposed by Congressman Francis H. Wilson and Professor Hollis⁴⁸. The detailed report submitted by Roosevelt⁴⁹ is an indication of his adoption of any method to improve the efficiency of the navy. Roosevelt sought to have the "Personnel Bill" adopted as it would make the navy a more efficient fighting machine.⁵⁰

Roosevelt sought to improve the training of men and officers so that when the time of war came they would be ready. In his address at the Naval War College, he asked that the commanders of ships have the most perfect weapons. Training was to give them skill in the handling of their ships.⁵¹ During the same month of June, Roosevelt had written to Secretary Long informing him that communications with Admiral Sicard indicated that squadron evolutions would take

⁴⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Genesis of the Personnel Bill", Works (New York, 1926), XIV, 281.

⁴⁹ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 726-40.
Roosevelt to Long, December 9, 1897.

⁵⁰ For a comparison of Roosevelt's ideas on efficiency with those of Captain Mahan, see above p. 5-6.

⁵¹ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 193.

place during August and September of 1897.⁵² Roosevelt told the Secretary that he had written to Sicard with the hope that all the armor clads would be tried in squadron. It would serve little purpose if the Captains of the armor clads were undrilled in fleet tactics.⁵³ Roosevelt placed a great deal of emphasis on this aspect of training and he intended to check the squadron manoeuvres himself.

The Assistant Secretary did follow up on the proposed fleet manoeuvres and later wrote to Long expressing his intention to be with the fleet for three days: "Monday is Labor Day: and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I shall be down with the squadron."⁵⁴ The Assistant Secretary did attend the movements of the fleet and he wrote to Lodge confirming this fact. He had visited the Atlantic fleet which included the battleships Iowa and New York, and the gunboat Puritan among others. Not only was he present for manoeuvres⁵⁵

⁵² At this time Secretary Long was absent from the office and Roosevelt was holding the position of Acting Secretary.

⁵³ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 628. Roosevelt to Long, June 18, 1897.

⁵⁴ Ibid., I, 699. Roosevelt to Long, September 4, 1897.

⁵⁵ The Assistant did not initiate the concept of exercises and manoeuvres; the Department had reorganized the cruising stations in 1894. At the very same time the Department arranged to have all vessels on each station assemble periodically for exercises and manoeuvres. Annual Report - Secretary of the Navy, 1894. 53rd Congress 3rd Session House Executive Document No. 1, Part III, p. 23.

but he was present for gun practice as well.⁵⁶ Roosevelt understood that it was worthless to spend millions of dollars in the building of a perfect fighting machine if the officers who were in command of that machine were not perfect themselves.⁵⁷ He realized that patient and faithful attention to detail not only made for an efficient navy, but it made for well trained personnel as well. For the Assistant Secretary the notion of preparedness meant getting each individual aspect of the Navy Department ready, and that included the training of men.⁵⁸

E. The Concentration of the Fleet

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt dined with President McKinley on September 20, 1897, and at that time he presented a paper to the Chief Executive showing him exactly where all the ships in the navy were. When the junior executive handed him this paper, the President was impressed. The Assistant Secretary proceeded to outline his plan of action if things looked menacing about Spain. Roosevelt would have Walker on

⁵⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 275. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 11, 1897.

⁵⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Genesis of the Personnel Bill", Works (New York, 1926), XIV, 289.

⁵⁸ For a comparison with what Captain Mahan had to say concerning the preparation for war and the training of men, see above pp. 4-6.

⁵⁹ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 278. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 21, 1897.

the Cuban coast with the main fleet within forty-eight hours after war was declared. He proposed that Evans proceed with the flying squadron to the coast of Spain and harass the enemy until some of the battleships stationed near Cuba could be dispatched to aid him.⁶⁰ He urged the necessity "of taking an immediate and prompt initiative if we wished to avoid the chance of some serious trouble."⁶¹ Roosevelt had regulated the Atlantic coast so that it was approaching a state of preparedness for war. The proposed actions against Spain were never taken, but Roosevelt had devoted his every effort to preparing the department for war.

Roosevelt attempted to organize the Pacific coast so that it too would be in a state of readiness: "Our Asiatic squadron should blockade, and if possible take, Manilla. But if we should hesitate and let the Spaniards take the initiative, they could give us great temporary annoyance."⁶²

Roosevelt attempted to prepare the Asiatic squadron as his conception of sea power demanded.⁶³

On January 14, 1898, the Assistant wrote to Secretary

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Whether Roosevelt actually contemplated the conquest of the Philippines or merely considered using the Philippines as an effective way of waging war against Spain through one of her weak positions is not clear from his letters of this period.

Long proposing to alter the position of ships on foreign stations with a view to concentrating them. The Atlantic station⁶⁴ also came under his review at this time.⁶⁵ Again he stressed the need for taking the initiative: "When war comes it should come finally on our initiative, and after we have had time to prepare."⁶⁶ Roosevelt believed that force would be used in future relations with international powers, and the best way to provide that force was to have the American fleets concentrated. The concentration of the fleet was a basic principle for Roosevelt.

While at his post, the Assistant Secretary provided the inspiration for subordinates to reorganize their charges and prepare the country during peace-time so that if war came, at least the subordinates would be ready to take the initiative and be prepared to succeed. The squadrons were concentrated and the navy could be mobilized in a most effective manner and in an incredibly short time should a crisis result with Spain.⁶⁷ Long was the conservative type

⁶⁴ The object of the Atlantic station or the Atlantic fleet was to protect the eastern seaboard of the United States.

⁶⁵ Elting E. Morison, ed., *op. cit.*, I, 759. Roosevelt to Long, January 14, 1898. An essential of preparedness taught the concentration of the fleet. For a comparison with Mahan's views on this subject see above p. 6.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 763.

⁶⁷ E. S. Maclay, History of the United States Navy 1775 - 1901, rev., (New York, 1901), II, 575.

who would not back an aggressive policy in the department. Had the Assistant Secretary not acted, in all likelihood the state of the fleet units would have been less advantageous.

F. The Adoption of a World Outlook

The adoption of a world outlook which entailed Cuba, the Canal, Hawaii and the Philippines was a major concern for Roosevelt. The acquisition of the Hawaiian Islands had long been considered as a strategic necessity by the Assistant Secretary and those who supported the "large" policy.⁶⁸ Roosevelt had written to Mahan in confidence concerning the matter:

I suppose I need not tell you that as regards Hawaii I take your views absolutely, as indeed I do on foreign policy generally. If I had my way we would annex those islands tomorrow. If that is impossible we would establish a protectorate over them. I believe we should build the Nicaraguan canal at once, and in the meantime that we should build a dozen new battleships.⁶⁹

Cuba was also a necessity as far as Roosevelt was concerned. Early in his public career he desired the Administration to interfere in Cuba.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1959), pp. 147-53, 204-5, 218.

⁶⁹ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 607. Roosevelt to Mahan, May 3, 1897.

⁷⁰ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., Letters From Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles 1870 - 1918 (New York, 1924), p. 178. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, March 30, 1896.

He described himself as a "quietly rampant 'Cuba Libre' man."⁷¹ Throughout his tenure as Assistant Secretary he desired the Administration to interfere in that island's affairs: "I have been hoping and working ardently to bring about our interference in Cuba."⁷² The island was strategically necessary so far as Roosevelt was concerned.

The famous February 25, 1898 dispatch to Dewey which ordered the squadron to be kept full of coal and to remain at Hong Kong illustrates Roosevelt's desire to promote action in that area of the world.⁷³ The Assistant Secretary wanted the United States to look outward. Roosevelt's world outlook concerned the outlying areas of Cuba, Hawaii and the Philippines. These possessions were to be used as coaling stations for the navy giving the ships an increased radius.⁷⁴

G. The Importance of Commerce

In his public speeches and correspondence as Assistant Secretary, Roosevelt followed the concept of a large navy and patriotism but had very little to say concerning commerce

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 201. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, January 2, 1897.

⁷² Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 763. Roosevelt to Sternberg, January 17, 1898.

⁷³ For a discussion of this dispatch see below pp. 62-4.

⁷⁴ For Mahan's views on a world outlook and the importance of coaling stations see above pp. 7-9.

which was an essential of the sea power thesis.⁷⁵ The fallacy of calling Roosevelt an advocate of the entire sea power thesis results from equating sea power with naval power. It is evident that the Assistant Secretary was concerned with naval power as his correspondence for the critical period of 1897 - 1898 illustrates. "But sea power was by no means synonymous with naval power."⁷⁶ Roosevelt failed to recognize the commercial possibilities of Hawaiian annexation. He saw the need for overseas coaling stations such as Hawaii but these coaling stations were to serve the navy first. The object of the navy in his eyes was to protect the homeland⁷⁷ and ensure the position of the United States on the international scene. In his address to the Naval War College he did make a token reference to the need for the navy to protect commerce. Prior to the Battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, Roosevelt apparently did not recognize the importance of commerce.

Perhaps one reason why Roosevelt did not forcefully support the commercial portion of the sea power thesis while he was Assistant Secretary revolved around the attitude of the business community during those years. Business interests

⁷⁵ To understand that commerce was of primary importance in Mahan's concept of sea power, see above pp.9-10.

⁷⁶ William E. Livezey, Mahan On Sea Power (Norman, Oklahoma, 1947), p. 41.

⁷⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, "Washington's Forgotten Maxim", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 192.

had been opposed to Administrative interference in Cuba.⁷⁸
 American business journals were opposed to war in 1897,
 just as they were opposed to colonial expansion in Hawaii
 and the Philippines.⁷⁹ After the Battle of Manila Bay, the
 business interests became definitely imperialistic if the
 desire to retain the Philippines can be taken as evidence
 of an imperialistic attitude.⁸⁰

Perhaps from reading the business opinion during
 1897, Roosevelt concluded that the most important principle
 of the sea power thesis was the building of a great navy
 with all that it entailed including the acquiring of foreign

⁷⁸ Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898
 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1959), p. 22.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 246.

⁸⁰ After the Battle of Manila Bay the American busi-
 ness opinion became imperialistic by virtue of the fact that
 businessmen desired to retain the Philippines. Julius W.
 Pratt, "American Business and the Spanish-American War",
Hispanic American Historical Review, XIV (1934), 195-6.
 American business realized that the threatened markets in
 China could be defended from this new post. Even before the
 conclusion of the peace with Spain the business segment of
 the American people was building high hopes upon the supposed
 opportunities for trade and exploitation in the Philippines.
 Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898 (Gloucester,
 Massachusetts, 1959), p. 278.

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possessions to be used as coaling stations. Regardless of what influenced Roosevelt, he did not forcefully express any notions with regard to the commercial segment of the sea power thesis.

After the Spanish American War of 1898, Roosevelt's new concern for commerce is seen in his speech before the Hamilton Club, Chicago, April 10, 1899. This speech was later reprinted under the title "The Strenuous Life."⁸²

We cannot sit huddled within our own borders and avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing what happens beyond. Such a policy would defeat even its own end; for as the nations grow to have even wider and wider interests, and are brought into closer and closer contact, if we are to hold our own in the struggle for naval and commercial supremacy [*Italics mine*] we must build up our power without our own borders. We must build the isthmian canal, and we must grasp the points

⁸¹ With regard to the question of coaling stations, it must be remembered that Cuba was not the only possibility. An offer for the Americans to take over Samaná Bay appeared as early as 1869. The project of annexing the Dominican Republic to the United States was almost realized when it was discovered that annexation was not a spontaneous feeling of the Dominican people. The negotiations then broke down. Sumner Welles, Naboth's Vineyard; The Dominican Republic 1844 - 1924 (New York, 1928), I, 359 - 408. With the outbreak of the Spanish War, popular opinion was still much opposed to the voluntary cession of Samaná Bay to the Americans but the Dictator Heureau made it known to the Americans through the Consul (April 29, 1898) that no opposition from the Dominican Republic's government would result if the American government took possession of Samaná Bay. Ibid., II, 529.

⁸² Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 319-31. This essay was one of a collection of essays included in a work of Roosevelt entitled The Strenuous Life, first published in 1900. The Strenuous Life was included in the 1926 edition of his Works.

of vantage which will enable us to have our say in deciding the destiny of the oceans of the East and West. 83

A further evidence of this new interest in commerce was his desire to keep the flag flying over the Philippines because it would create a market for American factories. On September 30, 1900, the Kansas City Sunday Journal quoted Roosevelt as saying: "We are for expansion and anything else that will tend to benefit the American laborer and manufacturer."⁸⁴ He had come to realize the importance of commerce and what it meant to the greatness of a nation, but prior to May 1, 1898, he made little mention of this important factor of national greatness. Prior to the Battle of Manila Bay, Roosevelt was convinced that the prime factor was the navy with all that it entailed. The Assistant Secretary had reached the conclusion that a big naval policy had to be followed largely because of the emotional appeal of patriotism and nationalism. The navy could defend the country and enforce the Monroe Doctrine.

Despite the very close connection maintained between Mahan and Roosevelt through their correspondence, they differed on the importance of commerce.⁸⁵ One could say that

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 323-4..

⁸⁴ Cited by Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore, 1956), p. 76.

⁸⁵ For a comparison of this with the importance that Mahan placed upon commerce, see above pp. 9-10.

because of his actions Roosevelt proved himself to be an advocate of the entire sea power thesis, expressing it largely in terms of naval power. He gave only token attention to commerce. The sea power historian, Captain Mahan, on the other hand explained the sea power thesis largely in terms of the commercial benefits that could be obtained.

Roosevelt was convinced of the need to use force to replace arbitration to increase the size of the navy, to prepare for war in time of peace, to concentrate the fleet, and to adopt a world outlook. These were basic principles of the sea power thesis. However, the Assistant Secretary had little to say concerning the importance of commerce which was the basic principle of the sea power thesis. Roosevelt's concept of sea power was based on naval supremacy and not commercial supremacy.

CHAPTER IV

SEA POWER CONCEPTS IN ACTION DESPITE JOHN D. LONG

During the period from April 1897 to May 1898 Secretary of the Navy John D. Long retained his conservative outlook on life. This was in direct contrast to the aggressiveness of Roosevelt. Long did not consider the Department of the Navy as being important and he was in the habit of absenting himself from the office and leaving Roosevelt in charge. This is possibly due to a number of reasons, one of them being his indifferent health.¹ Long had been prevented from taking an active part in the Presidential campaign of 1896 because of ill health.² Washington is noted for having very warm and uncomfortable weather during the summer and this perhaps accounts for Long's extended absence during the summer of 1897.

The idea of leaving his post may have been the result of his administrative procedures. In February of 1898 Long wrote in his journal:

I make [it] a point not to trouble myself overmuch to acquire a thorough knowledge of the details pertaining to any branch of the service.

¹ Howard C. Hill, Roosevelt and the Caribbean (Chicago, 1927), p. 26.

² Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., America of Yesterday as Reflected in the Journal of John Davis Long (Boston, 1923), p. 146.

Such knowledge would undoubtedly be a very valuable equipment, but the range is so enormous I could make little progress, and that at great expense of health and time, in mastering it. My plan is to leave all such matters to the bureau chiefs, or other officers at naval stations or on board ship, limiting myself to the general direction of affairs. 3

Long was more concerned over the small matters of the office such as "personal appeals, and personal claims."⁴

A. Selling Sea Power Ideas

Roosevelt's correspondence from April 1897 to May 1898 indicates that Long was absent from the office on a number of occasions. On April 22, 1897, Roosevelt was Acting Secretary of the Navy. Japan was showing an increased interest in the Hawaiian Islands at that time and Roosevelt took the opportunity to go to President McKinley and assure him that the cruiser Philadelphia was in the Islands and that other ships could steam there at once if Japan actually did send her forces.⁵ The door to the White House⁶ had been opened and Roosevelt was going to have access to the executive mansion.

³ Ibid., p. 157.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt A Biography (New York, 1931), 171.

⁶ The term White House was not officially used until 1902 when President Roosevelt had the term White House stamped on all the stationery coming from the executive mansion.

Roosevelt made it a point to acquaint himself with naval docks, yards and vessels. Early in May of 1897, just after taking the position of Assistant Secretary, he investigated the damage to a torpedo boat and submitted an official report to the Secretary. After informing the Secretary that no serious damage had been done the Assistant Secretary stated: "The business of a naval officer is one which, above all others, needs daring and decision and if he must err on either side the nation can best afford to have him err on the side of too much daring rather than too much caution."⁷ The report was hailed by the press as revealing a new spirit in the Department of the Navy.⁸

This new spirit in the Navy Department continued to manifest itself when Roosevelt delivered his address at the Naval War College.⁹ The speech was received very coolly by the Secretary; he did not like it.¹⁰

Roosevelt's correspondence with Long indicates that the Secretary was absent from Washington on vacation between June 16 and July 2, 1897.¹¹ Roosevelt dined with President

⁷ Cited by Joseph B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and His Time (New York, 1920), I, 73.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For a discussion of Roosevelt's address to the Naval War College, see above pp.24-6.

¹⁰ Elting E. Morison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), I, 623. Roosevelt to Mahan, June 9, 1897.

¹¹ Ibid., I, 628. Roosevelt to Long, June 18, 1897.

McKinley that same month of June while Long was absent from Washington and during the course of the evening the President expressed himself very strongly on the question of going ahead with the upbuilding of the navy.¹² It is not normal procedure for an Assistant Secretary to dine with the President as this is usually restricted to the more important government officials. However, as an Acting Secretary it was permissible for Roosevelt to confer with the President on matters of policy and this could serve to counterbalance a conservative outlook that Long tried to maintain in the Department. Roosevelt became Acting Secretary when Long left the office.

Despite Roosevelt's pressure, indications are that Secretary Long possessed a lukewarm attitude¹³ on the question of the increase of the navy. Roosevelt wrote to Long: "I know you will excuse my saying that I can't help being sorry you have reached the conclusion that we are not to go on at all in building even, say, one battleship and five torpedo - boats."¹⁴ Roosevelt proposed writing an

¹² Ibid., I, 627. Roosevelt to Lodge, June 17, 1897.

¹³ Ibid., I, 622. Roosevelt to Mahan, June 9, 1897. "In strict confidence I want to tell you that Secretary Long is only lukewarm about building up our Navy."

¹⁴ Cited by Joseph B. Bishop, op. cit., I, 82. Roosevelt to Long, August 26, 1897.

article concerning the views of the Presidents' with respect to the navy and he submitted it to Long for approval. Ever since the Address to the Naval War College, Long demanded that Roosevelt submit articles intended for publication to him. The article (apparently never published) contained a strong plea for the strengthening of the navy and the Secretary's comment upon that article shows that he was opposed to the principle of the upbuilding of that force. Roosevelt brought the article to the President's attention. Roosevelt had written to the President: "On the first page, where I speak of the need of strengthening the Navy, the words 'in my own opinion,' were put in at the suggestion of the Secretary, to whom I of course submitted the article."¹⁵

In the early part of September Roosevelt met with the President and secured an overruling of the Secretary concerning the principle of the increase of the navy. Long was again absent from Washington at that time. The President intended that the department "should go on building up the Navy, with battleships and torpedo boats, and that he did not think the Secretary would recommend anything he (the President) [sic] did not approve."¹⁶ Roosevelt had used his personal influence

¹⁵ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 644. Roosevelt to President McKinley, August 30, 1897.

¹⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884 - 1918 (New York, 1925), I, 277. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 15, 1897.

to obtain the enforcement of the sea power ideas in direct contradiction to the conservative policy that was set down by Secretary Long. It would have been difficult for Long to disagree with the President after the President had already given his approval to the theory of the increase to Roosevelt. At this time the President "expressed great satisfaction with what I had done, especially during the last seven weeks that I have been in charge of the Department."¹⁷ This would indicate that Long was absent from his office from the beginning of August and he did not return until September 29, 1897. For two straight months Roosevelt had complete charge of the Department of the Navy.

Long's absence was a test of the Assistant's initiative and Roosevelt needed very little encouragement. It was obvious that Long was not in line with the jeune école¹⁸ of the 1890's and the only way to get those ideas into effect was to act at every opportunity. Roosevelt did just that.

That Roosevelt was taking the initiative in the organization and administration of the Navy Department was implied when someone sent him an article from the Boston

¹⁷ Ibid., I, 276-7.

¹⁸ The term jeune école was used to identify those who were adopting the notions of the sea power thesis with its resultant world outlook. This school of the jeune école had adopted the notions of the "large policy". Writers who criticized this new school often used the term jeune école when speaking of it. Fred T. Jane, "Naval Warfare: Present and Future", Forum, XXIV (1897), 240.

Herald. That article, written in the early part of September while Long was on vacation and Roosevelt was holding the position of Acting Secretary, stated in effect that Roosevelt was trying to assume the functions of the Secretary. The article made Roosevelt uncomfortable and he wrote to the Secretary telling him so.¹⁹ He attempted to justify his actions to that point: "I have appreciated very much the confidence you have put in me by letting me act during these two months, and I have had constantly before me the purpose never either to do or to fail to do anything save in accordance with your desires."²⁰ These words seem to indicate that Roosevelt lacked confidence and initiative. However, the Assistant Secretary realized that he would have to be extremely cautious so as not to let the Secretary think that he was interfering with him or presuming on his own position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.²¹

In his continuing effort to take the initiative in the Department, Roosevelt went to see the President just two days after writing to Secretary Long concerning the Boston Herald article. After dining with the President he

¹⁹ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 682. Roosevelt to Long, September 18, 1897.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., I, 609. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, May 7, 1897.

gave him a paper showing exactly where all the ships in the navy were.²² At the same time the Assistant Secretary proposed an aggressive program for the Philippines and for Cuba as well.²³ The Boston Herald article and the visits to the President indicate that during the period that Roosevelt was in charge he had gone a long way in taking over the entire Department. Long was becoming a mere figure-head in his office.

With this new position of influence, the Assistant sought to increase the pressure on the Secretary concerning "the need for an increase in the Navy."²⁴ The pressure was having its effect but Roosevelt was still disappointed with the Secretary's attitude. The Assistant wanted Long to have a more forceful attitude on international matters: "The Secretary has been a dear, as he always is; I only wish I could poison his mind so as to make him a shade more truculent in international matters."²⁵ This never came about though sea power enthusiasts saw that partial recognition

²² Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 278. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 21, 1897.

²³ For the discussion of this aggressive program that was proposed by Roosevelt see above pp. 41-2.

²⁴ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 284. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 29, 1897. Also Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 671. Roosevelt to Long, September 10, 1897. Also ibid., I, 695. Roosevelt to Long, September 30, 1897.

²⁵ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., Letters From Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles 1870-1918 (New York, 1924), p. 209. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, October 28, 1897.

had been won in early November concerning the increase in the navy: "Now in strict confidence, we have won as regards the principle of extension of the Navy with the Secretary; he will recommend one additional battleship and additional torpedo boats. It is too little but it is a recognition of the principle that we are not to stop."²⁶

B. Sea Power Ideas Actually Operating

In an effort to bring the Asiatic station to a state of preparedness, Roosevelt sought to have George Dewey appointed to the Asiatic command. The Assistant Secretary had followed the career of this officer and knew that he possessed the daring and initiative²⁷ that were essential for a naval officer in the age of sea power.²⁸ Mahan had seen the need for efficiency in the navy and had been urging Roosevelt as early as May 1, 1897, to see that the best Admiral be

²⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 294. Roosevelt to Lodge, November 5, 1897.

²⁷ Henry F. Pringle, op. cit., p. 178.

²⁸ After the Spanish American War, Roosevelt gave some idea of what other officers thought concerning Dewey. "In the summer of 1897 there were in Washington captains and commanders who later won honor for themselves and their country in the war with Spain, and who were already known for the dash and skill with which they handled their ships, the excellence of their gun practice, the good discipline of their crews, and the eager desire to win honorable renown. All these men were a unit in their faith in the then Commodore Dewey, in their desire to serve under him, should the chance arise, and in their unquestioning belief that he was the man to meet an emergency in a way that would do credit to the flag." Theodore Roosevelt, "Admiral Dewey", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 421.

appointed in the Pacific for "much more initiative may be thrown on him than can be on the Atlantic man."²⁹ Roosevelt was impatient of any red tape that would prevent his quest for preparedness from being achieved. Dewey later commented on his appointment:

With the enthusiastic candor which characterizes him, he [Roosevelt] declared that I ought to have the Asiatic Squadron. He asked me if I had any political influence. I expressed a natural disinclination to use it. He agreed with the correctness of my view as an officer, but this was a situation where it must be used in self-defence. ³⁰

Roosevelt used the political influence of Republican Senator Proctor of Vermont to have Dewey appointed to the command of the Asiatic squadron. It had been secured by the Assistant Secretary against the wishes of Secretary Long.³¹ Long wanted Commodore Howell, who was first in line to the next opening of a command because of his seniority. Long busied himself with personal appeals and personal claims while he was Secretary of the Navy and he was angered at Proctor's visit to McKinley which ensured Dewey's appointment. An indication of his displeasure is witnessed when Dewey received his orders on October 21, 1897, and sailed for the Atlantic station with

²⁹ Cited by William E. Livezey, Mahan on Sea Power, (Norman, Oklahoma, 1947), p. 125. Mahan to Roosevelt, May 1, 1897 in the Roosevelt papers.

³⁰ George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey (New York, 1913), p. 168.

³¹ Joseph B. Bishop, op. cit., I, 96.

the rank of Commodore in December of 1897.³² It was customary for squadron commanders to hold the rank of Admiral. Dewey was not appointed to the rank of Admiral until after the battle of Manila Bay. Roosevelt was Acting Secretary of the Navy on the day that Dewey was appointed. A letter recommending that Howell be appointed was held on Long's desk by Roosevelt until Dewey secured the appointment.³³ Dewey's appointment was a definite effort on the part of

³² There is a controversy over this appointment stemming from the various accounts of the participants. As shown above, Dewey on the advice of Roosevelt used political influence to obtain the position. Secretary Long speaks of the appointment of Dewey and states that: "Political or personal influence had nothing to do with his selection." John Davis Long, "The New American Navy; The Battle of Manila Bay", Outlook, LXXIII (1903), 784. He repeats this same view on another occasion: "I decided to give Dewey the Asiatic and Howell the European Station, and this arrangement, on my submitting it to President McKinley, who had made no suggestion in the matter, and who always left such matters to the Secretary, was approved by him. I remember his simply saying to me, in his characteristically pleasant way, 'Are you satisfied that Dewey is a good man for the place and that his head is level?' to which I affirmatively answered. Political or personal influence had nothing to do with his selection, which was entirely my own." John Davis Long, The New American Navy (New York, 1903), I, 177. It is wise to accept Dewey's interpretation of his appointment as Long is often inaccurate. A careful reading of his work reveals this. With regard to the appointment of the Assistant Secretary he gives the impression that he had an entirely free hand and selected Roosevelt from among several candidates. Long states: "In May, 1897, . . . I selected Roosevelt." Ibid., II, 173. On the other hand in his journal under the date of April 9, 1897 he writes: "Roosevelt calls, Just appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Best man for the place." Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., op. cit., p. 147.

³³ Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit (Boston and New York, 1931), p. 86.

Roosevelt to further his plans of promoting sea power ideas in the Department of the Navy.

The sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbour on February 15, 1898, convinced Roosevelt that some action had to be taken. On February 19, 1898, he wrote a pleading letter to Long. In view of the disaster to the Maine, the Secretary should recommend the authorization of four battleships by Congress in order to meet the needs of the country. Not only would it be of great service to the country but it would be of great service to the Administration as well.³⁴ The Assistant's letter alarmed Secretary Long and he wrote a personal note to Roosevelt in his own hand commanding the Assistant to revoke an order he had issued in regard to getting naval vessels ready for action and informing him that he would be absent for the day: "Do not take any such step affecting the policy of the Administration without consulting the President or me. I am not away from town and my intention was to have you look after the routine of the office while I get a quiet day off."³⁵ Roosevelt's desire to enforce sea power ideas on the Department was taking the form of direct orders.

The clearest manifestation that the Assistant Secretary had adopted sea power notions was the famous dispatch

³⁴ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 780. Roosevelt to Long, February 19, 1898.

³⁵ Cited by Joseph B. Bishop, op. cit., I, 86. Long to Roosevelt, February 25, 1898.

that was sent out on the afternoon of February 25, 1898, while Secretary Long was absent from the office.³⁶ This dispatch greatly shocked John D. Long who confided to his diary:

He seemed to be thoroughly loyal, but the very devil seemed to possess him yesterday afternoon.

Having the authority for that time of Acting Secretary he immediately began to launch peremptory orders: distributing ships; ordering ammunition, which there is no means to move, to places where there is no means to store it; . . . sending messages to Congress for immediate legislation, authorizing the enlistment of an unlimited number of seamen; and ordering guns from the Navy Yard at Washington to New York, with a view to arming auxiliary cruisers which are now in peaceful commercial pursuit. 37

Many authors since John Long have treated the dispatch as the impulsive act of a subordinate who took advantage of a time when his chief was absent from his post. In fact, the dispatch was sent after consultation with Lodge³⁸ and after several weeks of serious thought. From the reaction of Secretary Long, it is plain that the message did not reflect the attitude of Roosevelt's superior, yet it did

³⁶ This dispatch is reprinted in its entirety in George Dewey, op. cit., p. 179. "The message to the Asiatic Squadron bore the signature of that assistant secretary, who had seized the opportunity, while acting secretary, to hasten preparations for a conflict which was inevitable. As Mr. Roosevelt reasoned, precautions would cost little in time of peace and would be invaluable in case of war."

³⁷ Lawrence S. Mayo, ed., op. cit., pp. 169-70.

³⁸ Roosevelt and Lodge conspired to send the dispatch to Dewey to begin "offensive operations in the Philippine Islands." They revealed this after the war was over. Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 349. Roosevelt to Lodge, September 26, 1898.

not exceed the limits of reasonable military precaution.³⁹
From that day until the time of his resignation in May of 1898, there is no indication that Roosevelt was allowed to be Acting Secretary again.

Several weeks before the actual hostilities broke out, L. A. Thurston, an Hawaiian treaty commissioner in Washington,⁴⁰ suggested to the Department of the Navy the desirability of buying all the coal in the islands in preparation for war. Roosevelt immediately sent off letters and dispatches to achieve that purpose. The purchases were completed and on April 12, 1898, the Hawaiian executive council voted to allow four additional esplanade lots for storage purposes.⁴¹ No detail was overlooked. Roosevelt was unsatisfied with the position of the Department because it was not doing more, but the organization was well on the way to being fully prepared.

With everything in readiness Roosevelt maintained his intimate connection with Captain Mahan during the last months before the war in 1898. He wanted to be certain that the best advice of this naval Captain would be offered if it could contribute in any way to the success of the entire

³⁹ Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 784.

⁴⁰ A good account of Thurston's part in the Hawaiian annexation is given in Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1959).

⁴¹ Thomas A. Bailey, "The United States and Hawaii During the Spanish American War", American Historical Review, XXXVI (1931), 555.

venture. He sent the sea power historian the tentative plan of the campaign that the Assistant Secretary and his subordinate department heads had developed: "Will you send it back to me with any comments you see fit to make."⁴² Mahan offered his suggestions on the plan a few days later, and Roosevelt promised to show the suggestions to Secretary Long and then get some of the members of the Board to go over it.⁴³ That the Assistant Secretary was anxious to have war started there is little doubt. On April 1, 1898, he wrote to his sister: "As for matters here, I'd give all I'm worth to be just two days in supreme command. I'd be perfectly willing to resign, for I'd have things going so that nobody could stop them."⁴⁴ Long remained at his post and Roosevelt could do no more. If a war came, it would be a test of the preparedness of the Department of the Navy. The Assistant Secretary had gone a long way in his attempt to sell sea power ideas to the important men of the country. Now he could only wait.

⁴² Elting E. Morison, ed., op. cit., I, 796. Roosevelt to Mahan, March 16, 1898.

⁴³ Ibid., I, 797. Roosevelt to Mahan, March 21, 1898.

⁴⁴ Anna Roosevelt Cowles, ed., op. cit., p. 212. Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, April 1, 1898.

CHAPTER V
SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Roosevelt did not have to wait long for war as it was officially declared on April 25, 1898. Manila Bay was a test of the completeness of Roosevelt's preparations. The Navy had only to take the initiative to obtain the advantage. Dewey made the first move to locate the Spanish fleet, but if Roosevelt's preparations had not been complete the Asiatic Squadron in all likelihood would not have succeeded. Commodore Dewey steamed into Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, and completely demolished the Spanish fleet after several hours of fighting. The United States' fleet was barely touched and suffered few casualties in comparison with the Spanish. Dewey was successful, but without the Assistant Secretary's preliminary labours the naval victory at Manila Bay would likely have been impossible.¹

Lodge realized that Roosevelt's efforts in the direction of preparedness had produced the desired results: "You in the midst of your own triumphs and dangers I know will have many thoughts for the glory won by the American

¹ George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey (New York, 1913), pp. 170-72. Also Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power 1776 - 1918 (Princeton, 1939), p. 230.

Navy, which you did so much to prepare."² An anonymous contributor to the Harper's Weekly Magazine commented upon the record of the administration and implied that the war was fought out before it was begun. The preparations that had been made in Washington (largely due to the efforts of Roosevelt) were so completed during the time of peace that when war did come the Secretary knew at what point on the map every ship could be most promptly reached by cable. Naval yards had been organized so that the yards knew how long it would take to put idle ships into commission. The position of ammunition and stores³ was known. The Department was so well organized that any question that the Secretary could ask could be answered in five minutes.⁴ The conduct of the war and the speed with which it was terminated made this a valid observation.⁵

After the war with Spain had been fought, the former

² Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884 - 1918 (New York, 1925), I, 319. Lodge to Roosevelt, July 6, 1898.

³ Stores is a naval term and it includes provisions and all material that is not permanently attached to the ship.

⁴ Anonymous, "The Record of the Administration", Harper's Weekly, XLV (1901), 251.

⁵ The reference here to the preparation for and the speed with which the war was terminated refers to the Department of the Navy and not the Army. The army had trouble with its logistics and the confusion at Tampa where the army was preparing for the expedition to Cuba bears witness to this fact. Frank Freidel, The Splendid Little War (New York, 1958), pp. 47-55.

Assistant Secretary realized the major factors which influenced the outcome. In the first place, the navy won because it was prepared. Secondly, the navy won because of the seamanship and gunnery that had been handed down by service tradition and which had been perfected by patient work.⁶

Because of the never ending practice in the handling of ships and guns at sea in all kinds of weather, the blockade of Santiago was successful and the Battle of Manila Bay likewise.⁷

The commodores and captains who took active part in the war had commanded fleets in sea service, or at least had been in command of single ships in these fleets. There was not one thing they were to do in war that they had not done in peace save actually receive the enemy's fire. ⁸

The navy won because it was prepared, and Dewey won the Battle of Manila Bay because of the splendid seamanship of the service.⁹

⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "Preparedness and Unpreparedness", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 409. This article was first published in The Century (1899).

⁷ Ibid., XIII, 416.

⁸ Ibid., XIII, 417.

⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, "Admiral Dewey", Works (New York, 1926), XIII, 424. This article was first published in McClure's Magazine (1899). This article contains a very fine defense for the need of training personnel. "The victory would not have been possible had it not been for the unwearied training and practice given the navy . . . by the admirals, the captains, and the crews who incessantly and in all weathers kept their vessels exercised, singly and in squadron, until the men on the bridge, the men in the gun-turrets, and the men in the engine - rooms knew how to do their work perfectly, alone or together." Ibid., p. 427.

The Administration had received criticism for its actions,¹⁰ but Long realized that despite the criticism, the war was a success. If one were to read Long's account of the war written in 1902, the Secretary would emerge as a sea power enthusiast: "The war with Spain taught afresh the value of sea power."¹¹ The movement of the ships in the Atlantic and Pacific¹² and the object of crushing the Spanish squadron in the Philippines while controlling the Atlantic¹³ are spoken of as objectives of the Department. Of course, as head of the Department Long would get a share of the credit when in reality these timely moves were the result of Roosevelt's initiative and inspiration. Even the orders to Dewey that were sent on February 25, 1898 are spoken of in terms of a Departmental action.¹⁴ Roosevelt's name is hardly mentioned

¹⁰ Former President Cleveland was quite critical of the actions of the administration during this year. He regarded the proposed annexation of the Hawaiian Islands as a perversion of the national mission. Statement to the Associated Press January 24, 1898, in Allan Nevins, ed., Letters of Grover Cleveland 1850 - 1908 (Boston, 1933), pp. 491-2. Many of Cleveland's letters during this year have a querulous and critical tone. He was against the jingoism which swept the country into war with Spain and the wave of imperialist feeling which led Americans to support the policy of overseas expansion. Ibid., p. 471. These were principles of the sea power thesis.

¹¹ John Davis Long, "The New American Navy; Building the New Navy", Outlook, LXXII (1902), 844.

¹² John Davis Long, "The New American Navy; Preparing for the War with Spain", Outlook, LXXIII (1903), 576.

¹³ John Davis Long, "The New American Navy; The Battle of Manila Bay", Outlook, LXXIII (1903), 780.

¹⁴ Ibid., LXXIII, 786.

and all directives are spoken of in terms of the Department. The work Roosevelt attempted to do with respect to the preparation of the navy was certainly not due to the leadership of Long as he was against the principles of the sea power thesis. Yet Long states:

The difficulty experienced in adding warships to the navy when the country was on the eve of hostilities shows the danger and folly of a policy which trusts to the last moment to make preparation. 15

He had come to the support of the sea power thesis, but his actions while Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary were much the opposite.

While Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary all indications are that Long did not agree with the principle of the sea power thesis and was opposed to the increase of the navy. He may have admired Roosevelt¹⁶ but the Secretary proved to be an obstacle when it came to introducing the notions of the "large policy". It would be foolish to imply that Roosevelt was completely responsible for the introduction of sea power ideas into the Department of the Navy but it must be stated that his correspondence and memoranda gave the needed inspiration for these

¹⁵ John Davis Long, The New American Navy (New York, 1903), I, 151.

¹⁶ Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., op. cit., I, 253. Lodge to Roosevelt, March 8, 1897. Lodge had spoken to Long concerning Roosevelt at which time Long stated: "Roosevelt has the character, standing ability and reputation to entitle him to be a Cabinet Minister. Is not this too small for him!"

ideas which are lacking in the conservative outlook of Long. Throughout this period Long appears as the kindly old man who was susceptible to personal influence. Roosevelt was never at rest and it was his leadership and inspiration in the absence of Secretary Long that was largely responsible for the introduction of the notions of sea power into the Department of the Navy. Long might have been able to control his department to a greater degree had he remained at his post continually and not left Roosevelt in charge.

Looking back on Roosevelt's period as Assistant Secretary of the Navy we can see two main themes running through his activities. The first of these themes reflects his application of Mahan's ideas in Roosevelt's peculiarly chauvinistic way, emphasizing the power aspect to the point of even ignoring the central commercial orientation of Mahan's ideas.

Having used Mahan's means almost to the neglect of Mahan's goals he pushed in a Rooseveltian, aggressive fashion for the navy that was to make his country's world power felt.

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