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The Political Influence of Naval Force in History,

Jan van Tol

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officers as Vice Admiral Struble; it was actually Rear Admiral Doyle. Struble was aboard his own flagship, the cruiser *Rochester*. According to protocol, MacArthur should have been aboard Struble's ship; however, he elected to go with Doyle instead. The irony is that Doyle and Struble enjoyed a strong mutual antipathy.

It would have been useful to be able to refer to Weintraub's sources to trace the origins of his errors, but unfortunately, he condescends that "endnote numbers are eschewed as intrusive, as are most footnotes." He believes that "extensive back matter notes" on each chapter's sources would suffice. (It is worth mentioning that the Marine Corps Fleet Marine Force Manual 1-0, *Leading Marines*—primarily intended for young enlisted Marines—shows there as FMFM 101.) It is impossible to ascertain from his back-matter notes where specific material originated, unless one compares the text line by line with each source mentioned. I tried to do that for the dialog the author offers for the famous 23 August 1950 "showdown" meeting regarding the Inchon landing. Parts comport with published accounts and participants' recollections, but some of it I have never seen before. Perhaps it came from sources unnamed, but without notes one cannot be certain.

Notes are not a luxury or, to use Weintraub's word, an "intrusion." The author must know that. Notes are at the heart of rigorous scholarly research. Research is a social process, and its linchpin is the ability of other scholars to check the validity of reported findings. Ultimately, *MacArthur's War* contributes little to our understanding of the Korean War. It is so fraught with errors that it cannot be taken seriously.

It is a regrettable book.

DONALD CHISHOLM
Naval War College



Cable, James. *The Political Influence of Naval Force in History*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998. 213pp. \$59.95

Sir James Cable is a noted writer on naval affairs. His *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919–1991* is a well regarded classic on the role of naval force.

His latest work is a historical survey of the political purposes for which governments have made use of naval force. Cable defines "naval force" as that "exercised by fighting ships manned by disciplined sailors at the direction of a central command responsible to the political leadership." His definition is necessary to distinguish naval force as we understand it today from the force exercised by pirates, privateers, adventurers, and users of "landing craft" (such as those that brought Roman soldiers to Britain in 55 A.D.) or galleys, which served merely as conveyances to bring soldiers together for seaborne hand-to-hand combat.

Cable examines the extent to which naval force furthered the political purposes of the governments that used it—the scale and nature of the force employed are not otherwise considered relevant. He focuses on examples of the use of force "for political purposes in which the naval element is significant, the facts are reasonably well established, and the degree of success or failure and the durability of the result are clear enough for useful conclusions to be drawn."

This definition thus largely excludes consideration of fighting at sea before the 1500s, because standing navies were rare, thus precluding the presence of disciplined officers and sailors. Portugal in the sixteenth and the Netherlands in the

seventeenth century first used naval force for political purposes, with great success in founding large empires. The establishment of global empires and expanded seaborne trade fostered the emergence of significant national navies (as opposed to privateers and pirates).

Cable surveys various instances when the use of naval force had profound, long-lasting political effects. Obviously, victories in major sea battles like Trafalgar or Tsushima, the ultimate use of naval force, could have significant political fallout. Yet the uses of naval force did not have to be that dramatic to have such effect. Cumulative efforts—such as those of the British to attain command of the seas in the eighteenth century; of the British (and others) to stamp out the slave trade in the nineteenth century; of the Union navy to blockade the Confederacy during the Civil War; of the German submarine campaigns to interdict sea traffic to Great Britain; and of the Japanese campaign to conquer Southeast Asia—all had long-lasting political consequences, even if the eventual outcomes were not always intended.

Discrete exercises of noncombat naval forces have also had huge political consequences. For instance, the Dutch navy's successful landing of William of Orange in England enabled the Glorious Revolution and all that followed from it in Britain (and Ireland). French naval intervention off Yorktown in 1781 was critical in ending the American Revolution. ("Indeed, we can scarcely expect to encounter any result of the use of naval force for political purposes that is larger or more lasting than the independence of the United States.") The U.S. Navy's "opening of Japan" had profound effects on that nation's development and thus Japan's impact on subsequent world

history. More recently, the Royal Navy's attack on the French navy in July 1940 was intended in part to influence American political opinion concerning British resolve to resist Nazi Germany.

Political influence from naval force can be latent as well. German construction of its High Seas Fleet, as well as British contemplation of "Copenhagening" that fleet in the decade before World War I, negatively affected the political environment of that era. The rise of the Soviet Navy in the 1970s and 1980s significantly affected U.S. political debate about national security; arguably, "the growth [in the 1980s] of the U.S. Navy probably caused greater harm to the Soviet Union than all the confrontations at sea put together."

Cable does not really address "dogs that did not bark"—that is, the *absence* of naval force, or more properly, the failure to use it. A counterfactual argument is usually difficult to make convincingly. However, the Royal Navy's failure to stop Italy from using the Suez Canal in 1935 during the Ethiopian campaign, and the impact of that failure on the European political scene, would appear to be a good case in point. It has been thought that the absence of strong Royal Navy forces in Singapore in 1941 played into Japanese political calculations. This would seem a good area for inquiry as the United States enters the Quadrennial Defense Review season. The Navy, like the other services, generally makes affirmative arguments for what it provides the nation; the possible consequences of *not* having the capability to be engaged is less often argued, yet may be even more compelling.

Cable ends with some "lessons and speculations." These are, unfortunately, not sharply focused. As he admits, it is hard

to discern any real patterns from his historical survey, and even if any exist, the stockbroker's warning that "future results cannot be predicted from past performance" applies. At best, "if anything approaching a principle emerges from the confused record of the past it may be that the natural political environment for navies, their *raison d'être*, is the unforeseen. . . . Warships allow choice, naval force is a flexible instrument."

The book is a good short summary of the political uses of naval force, both intended and unintended, over the past fifty years. However, it is of limited value in helping today's defense analysts and policy makers think through the requirements for tomorrow's naval forces.

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Lambert, Nicholas. *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1999. 364pp. \$39.95

This is a very good book and a very important one. Nicholas Lambert has followed in the path of Jon Sumida's *In Defense of Naval Supremacy* to present a lucid, compelling, and comprehensive analysis of the policies of Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Royal Navy in the decade before 1914. This work is based upon Lambert's doctoral study of the development of the submarine, but it goes much farther than his original work in explaining the fundamental elements of Fisher's naval policies and their effects on the Royal Navy.

Lambert's command of the primary sources is remarkable. He supplements grand strategy, national financial policy, and politics with the details of

operational and tactical concepts with a skill that illuminates the linkages between the various levels and gives them all sufficient and appropriate weight. His treatment not only lays bare the superficial nature of much previous historical research in this era but also indicates the degree to which that superficiality has caused our understanding of the period to be profoundly flawed.

The book is not an easy read, but Lambert's solid prose and grasp of his narrative allow the reader to follow his way through the labyrinth that was British naval policy in the Fisher era. To detail all its facets would take up an entire issue of the *Naval War College Review*, but some explanation is worthwhile.

Lambert makes clear that Fisher was installed as First Sea Lord in 1904 primarily to cut spending at a time when the British government desperately needed to achieve economies in its budget. He shows that Fisher developed extraordinary schemes to utilize emergent technology to maintain Britain's naval dominance when that dominance was being increasingly challenged and the country's ability to pay becoming ever more dubious. He shows too that Fisher's ideas of dominance always focused on Britain's worldwide requirements, particularly in the protection of sea communications (the threat from Germany was not the primary motivation of British naval policy until much later).

Lambert shows the devious way in which Fisher operated, often concealing his true motivations from politicians and naval colleagues alike, but he also maps out the logic behind the admiral's approach. To Sumida's explanation of the origins of the battle cruiser as the worldwide instrument of commerce protection, Lambert adds the concept of the "flotilla," by which small craft—both surface and