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## The Barometer

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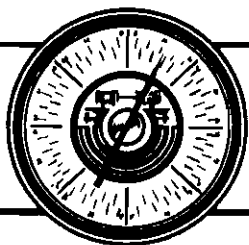
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# THE BAROMETER

(Capt. B.R. Jackson, U.S. Naval Reserve, of Whittier, Calif., comments on Professor Vincent Davis' article "Wars and Warriors.")

Professor Davis poses the question: What makes soldiers willing to fight or, conversely, unwilling to fight? This question deals with basic human behavior, essentially unchangeable, and the answers to it comprise the very foundation of the art of warfare. What Professor Davis is really talking about are attitudes toward war itself, so that I think his question ought to be restated: What makes people willing (or unwilling) to become soldiers? In this context, there is ample historic evidence to explain the attitudinal changes he describes and a close parallel in history to the present situation.

The changes in attitude are basically those which have resulted from 150 years of exposure, among the Western nations, to Clausewitzian total wars. Total war has produced two divergent lines of thought about warfare; attitudes toward war itself and people's perceptions of their nation's role in warmaking. The former are well understood and it is sufficient to observe that whereas total war was originally thought of as a legitimate, even desirable way to achieve national objectives, its increasing cost and terrible destructiveness have now caused it to be viewed as justifiable only as a response to cataclysmic events and threats originating outside one's own nation. What is less clearly understood is the effect of a people's own self-image as warmakers

on their nation's ability to make war. Basically, the Clausewitzian concept required the raising of large, conscripted, "national" armies. In order to mobilize populations to a war effort, the purposes of the war, as perceived by a substantial majority of the population, had to be strongly identified with the great interests of the nation and of its individual citizens. These perceptions, as fostered thereafter by governments, naturally come to characterize the nations' motives for involvement in the most favorable ideological and moral terms. In the American case, by emerging from wars victoriously, we have been enabled to preserve and validate our own perceptions. Paradoxically, our self-image now renders it almost impossible to establish an acceptable rationale for warmaking, and this in turn precludes the consensus necessary to form and maintain a national army for that purpose.

In many ways, our situation now parallels that of the pre-Napoleonic era: Private individuals generally felt no obligation to serve as soldiers and, in fact, assiduously avoided military service whenever possible. The average man felt no great personal identification with the purposes of the "cabinet" warmaking of the time, although he might not have strong feelings pro or con, since others did the fighting. The fighting was done by small, standing armies of paid professional soldiers who themselves may have felt no great allegiance to their employers. Governments were very limited in their warmaking capability, because

they could not afford to abuse or lose these small, irreplaceable forces. Without overdrawing the parallel, it is sufficient to say this illustrates that pay and benefits are not necessarily a realistic answer to our present situation.

*(Lt. Comdr. Richard C. Davis, USN, Strategic Plans & Policy Division, OPNAV comments on Comdr. Thomas Buell's remarks in the January February "Barometer" which emphasized the value of the study of history to the military professional.)*

As I majored in history in college, I should be among the last to disagree with Commander Buell's remarks concerning the value of the study of history as an element in the education of a military commander. However, such study must not dogmatically apply to the present or to the future the lessons learned (or mislearned) from the past. The record of history reveals as many disasters due to mistaken applications of the so-called "lessons of history" as it does triumphs owing to a clear knowledge of history.

To cite one example from Commander Buell's own letter, the Foch whose works were studied by students at the Naval War College before World War II. This was the Foch whose studies of the Napoleonic campaigns convinced him of the overwhelming power of the offensive. In the years before World War I, as an instructor at the *École Supérieure de Guerre*, Foch incessantly preached the value of attack, the superiority of morale to materiel. It needed 3 years of stalemate on the Western Front and hundreds of thousands of French soldiers killed in stubborn, unsuccessful attacks to persuade Foch that technological changes in weapons since Napoleon's day had made the defense temporarily superior to the offense.\*

Just 22 years later Foch's successors, veterans of World War I, applying the "lessons" of that conflict without regard for technological changes in war-

fare, worshipping the defensive, sat confidently behind the Maginot Line. They were shattered by the blitzkrieg, offensive incarnate, which was made possible by technological improvements in tanks, in airplanes, and in command, control, and communications.

When we study the command methods of Napoleon and Lee, of King, Nimitz, and Spruance, we must remember that their methods and philosophies were formed in light of the conditions of their times. None of these commanders possessed the "Sophisticated computer, display, and communications equipments" that exist today.

In evaluating their methods, Commander Buell has overlooked that one of the most remarkable victories of the Napoleonic Wars was that of Marshall Davout at Auerstadt, where he was independent and separated from Napoleon's "detailed supervision." He has also overlooked criticisms that have been directed at Lee's methods of command. For example, Jackson's hesitation in the Seven Days that permitted McClellan to withdraw to safety, and Longstreet's fatal near insubordination at Gettysburg have been attributed to Lee's unwillingness to force himself into what he considered to be his subordinate's sphere of command.

There seems to be a current trend in all modern organizations to centralize direction and decisionmaking at higher levels within the organization. It is an impulse made possible by the span and depth of supervision that modern communications give to a single executive. It

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\*In fairness, of course, Foch was only one of many French officers espousing the doctrine of the offensive. Harkening back to the glory of France under Napoleon I may have answered a psychological need to recover from the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War. Unfortunately, it ignored the lessons of the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, and the Russo-Japanese War. Each of these wars were far more applicable to the First World War context than the Napoleonic Wars.

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is an impulse that responds to an increasing awareness not only of the complexity and interdependence of modern institutions, but also of the reverberations through all institutions of decisions made in one. The impulse is to drive decisionmaking higher, in order to ensure that decisions are made by those whose view is broadest and most comprehensive.

The perfect example is the White House, at the top level of U.S. institutions. There has been a trend since 1941 to gather more power into the White House. Although President Nixon talks about decentralization and a smaller national government, centralization continues. To the power of the National Security Affairs Advisor and the OMB Director are to be added "co-ordinators" on the White House staff for natural resources and for human resources. Their authority will cross Cabinet and executive department boundaries, and result in more centralized control at a higher level.

The same trend to centralized control at higher levels exists within the military, and when the means to such control become available, not only are they used, they are often created to respond to the trend. Thus the Task Group Commander, possessing NTDS, uses it to direct the movement and action of his force to a far greater degree than Nelson could at Trafalgar or Farragut at Mobile or Jellico at Jutland or Spruance and Halsey in the Pacific.

In the case of war, the trend toward centralized control at higher levels is reinforced by three factors: 1. The existence of nuclear weapons, which encourages tight control to limit escalatory potential; 2. Recognition that war really is a continuation of political dialog, a means of applying organized violence to gain political ends; and 3. Realization that the U.S. public will hold its politicians accountable for what it personalizes as "their" wars (Johnson in 1968).

No matter how carefully we study and analyze history, it does not tell us how King, Nimitz, and Spruance would have met today's problems given today's tools. An analysis of World War II does indicate that the coordination of military strategy to political objectives does not seem to have been as thorough as we would now consider desirable. It is possible that if military strategy had been linked more tightly to political objectives, the command methods of King, Nimitz, and Spruance might have needed to be different. This should serve to remind us that the times in which we live differ from the times in which our predecessors lived, and their methods may not be suitable for our problems.

It is pointless to invoke the names of great commanders of the past to protest trends which we dislike. Their experience may not be relevant to our time. Technology, attitudes, the very way we perceive events are different now from what they were then. The English historian A.J.P. Taylor once remarked, "The study of history enables us to understand the past better, no more and no less."<sup>\*</sup> If the study of history teaches anything applicable to the future, it is that change is inevitable, that those who try to resist change will be swept away, that triumph goes to those who adapt, who can obtain the best performance from the tools given them by their times.

The study of history enables us to understand our origins. It may occasionally even enable us to transcend them. But we cannot neglect the study of our own time as a means to understanding the value, or the harm, of current trends, and we must always apply the lessons of history with respect for the realities of today and the possibilities of tomorrow.

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<sup>\*</sup>A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Hamilton, 1961), p. 2.

(Lt. W.D. Center, Commanding Officer of U.S.S. Exploit (MSO-440) comments on Lt. Comdr. Beth Coye's, et al., recent article on "Women in Management.")

There are two points I would like to make with regard to the excellent article on women in Navy management by Lieutenant Commander Coye, et al. First, a straw poll taken among younger officers, O-1 through O-3, indicates a substantially more liberal attitude toward the role of women in the Navy.

It would have been interesting to see the results of the survey if, for example, the students and staff at Destroyer School and Surface Warfare Officer School had been included in the sample. Perhaps this can still be done. Although it is clear that the senior officers surveyed are at, or nearer to, the policy-making level at present, the attitudes of the younger officers, men and women, foreshadow a future in which every officer will be challenged to the full limits of his or her potential.

Secondly, I believe a bias was admitted to the survey by lumping "Command" and "Management" roles in several of the questions. Although this is in line with the direction in which the officer community is obviously being asked to think, in the light of recent pronouncements on that subject, we cannot escape the fact that the majority of male officers have been raised to think in a different way. From the time

we were midshipmen or officer candidates we have been impressed with the "unique" role of the commanding officer in the Navy. Certainly none of us in command at sea billets regard ourselves as "just another manager."

My point is not that women are more or less suited for command than men. Rather, I suspect that if the questions in the attitudinal survey clearly separated attitudes toward women in "command" and women in top and middle management that a distinctly more accurate indication of the true feelings of the male officers might be obtained. I do not know if women officers have been subjected to the same prejudicial upbringing as the men in this regard, but the results of the survey would tend to indicate that at least the more senior women have absorbed some of the male attitude toward command by close association over the years.

In support of the above logic I submit the results of my own survey among an admittedly small sample of 10 officers, O-1 through O-4 (all serving at sea; some in command). One hundred percent felt that women officers could be entirely successful as project managers and should be given that opportunity while only 40 percent felt the same about women in command at sea. To paraphrase the current slogan, "It's more than ships at sea . . . it's Women in Command!"

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