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NATIONAL POLICY PLANNING BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS: CONFLICT BETWEEN ENDS AND MEANS

by

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When one writes about national policy between the two World Wars, it is difficult to avoid irony. Military policy planning was taken seriously by those engaged in the activity, yet at times it seemed like so much "drill." This was so because, at the national level, there was very little in the way of policy to support. These were years of isolationism-noncommitment, in a political sense, to any international organization or bilateral arrangement--thus there was a minimum foreign policy to occupy the attention of the military staffs. It was just as well that this was so. What military planning that did take place was done in a hostile political-economic environment, without arms or forces, or even the hope that Congress or the Bureau of the Budget would allow adequate armed forces to make the plans real. Most inauspiciously, this planning was carried on by senior officers, particularly those in the Navy, who were convinced that war was sure to come in the not-too-distant future.

The era of the 1920's and 1930's is really too remote for the current generation of military students to have experienced as adults. Because of this it may be useful to examine that period politically and economically to assist understanding of the climate in which the military planning decisions were made.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



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period to that after World War II, the contrasts with the better known era should assist us in appreciating the more remote decades of the twenties and thirties. In doing this there are six general points of contrast that shed light on the interwar years, 1919-1941.

Years of Peace--Years of War. From an American point of view, the years after World War I were ones of peace; this has not been true of the post-World War II years. Since 1945 we have

engaged in two shooting wars, have called out the reserves on three occasions, and have maintained a steady posture of armed readiness. To look back to the 1920's and 1930's is to observe a period that is almost beyond imagination. Not only were those peaceful years, but the period was one of minimum commitment to international affairs on the part of the United States. We had no defensive alliances and belonged to no international organization designed to keep the peace such as the League of Nations. The nation refused to join the World Court, innocuous as it was, and had no concept that the defense of the United States lay off the shores of other countries. When reading Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the average American drew the wrong lesson: he concluded that wars, civil wars included, were not for us to be concerned about. He missed the prefatory message of John Donne that we are all part of this world and must be concerned with what happens to others.

The post-World War II period has been one in which Americans have been acutely aware of a national menace--the military power of the Soviet Union and its allies and, more recently, the growing power of the People's Republic of China. This situation did not exist after World War I. There were no enemies in sight, at least not until the middle-1930's. As we shall see, the military planners of the 1920's and 1930's felt quite strongly that the United States was on a collision course with Imperial Japan and later Nazi Germany; but the man in the street did not feel this way. Congress reflected his attitude when it slashed military budgets year after year. The voting public and its Congress simply did not feel menaced.

Years of Depression--Years of Prosperity. The years between the wars consisted of a decade of relative affluence for most Americans, then a decade of depression and great personal depri-

vation for many. Americans have not had this experience, on a national scale, since World War II. We have had more than 20 years of continuing prosperity, with an occasional "recession." This makes it all the more difficult for us today to understand the 1930's when men were so deeply concerned with personal economic survival that they could hardly give a second thought to affairs in Europe or Asia. That the Japanese were taking over in Manchuria made little impression on the 1932 "bonus-marcher," encamped on Anacostia Flats, facing eviction by General MacArthur's troops.

Weapons Development. In weapons technology one finds another point of contrast between the two periods. The rate of weapons obsolescence in the past 23 years is staggering. The use of jet engines put almost all World War II planes into the obsolete category immediately--despite the continued presence of the ubiquitous Beecherfts, "gooney birds," P2's and A1's. Nuclear propulsion has not made the more traditionally powered naval surface vessels obsolete, but who can say that the day is not coming? And missiles have completely revamped the concept of strike forces and deterrence from the air. Seldom in history has a weapons system become obsolete as quickly as the B-36 and that day for the B-52 is at hand. In contrast to the speed of change in the post-World War II period, the post-World War I era in America was one of relative stability. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's the weapons and tactics of World War I continued to dominate the scene. The battleline of the U.S. Navy, and this meant the battleships, most of which were laid down before 1916, was viewed as the "first line of defense." Aircraft carriers in the U.S. Navy were just emerging as a new attack weapon; but most of the fleet commanders still used them for scouting and protecting the battleline.

Because of engine and airframe inventories from the World War, aircraft development moved slowly in the 1920's, and it was not until the middle 1930's that such innovations as metal skins, monoplanes, and bombers with 2,000 mile range began to be designed. Attractive as they were aesthetically, the P-26, P-35, and B-18 added little to the defense of the Philippines, nor did the Curtiss SOC give the floatplane pilot much comfort against Japanese fighter aircraft.

Prominence of Leadership. When one considers leadership within the armed services after the two wars, there is another striking contrast. Because of the length of the Second World War and the enormous need for flag-rank officers, the period 1941-1945 provided the armed services in the postwar years with generals and admirals into the 1960's. The five-star officers, by war's end, had become household words; and the careers of Marshall, MacArthur, and Eisenhower continued into the postwar era with equal prominence. Neither the Navy nor the Air Force was to have its top officers continue to occupy the main stage, but the next level of leaders coming out of the war were well known to the public--men like Radford, Burke, LeMay, and Vandenberg--thus they could influence Congress and the public to support the armed forces. But this pattern did not exist after World War I. The war was much shorter, for the United States, and men with long years of seniority before 1917 dominated the wartime leadership--and just as quickly passed onto the retired list. Very few people in the 1920's could have identified Gen. Peyton March (Army Chief of Staff), Adm. William S. Benson (Chief of Naval Operations), or Maj. Gen. Mason M. Patrick (Chief of the Air Service, AEF). Only General of the Armies John J. Pershing was to continue to influence public thinking about the Army. The other two significant names

that come from this period--Brig. Gen. William "Billy" Mitchell and Adm. William S. Sims--made their marks in a negative sense; both managed to outrage their services, or Congress, at one time or another. For the 1920's and 1930's this pattern meant that the armed services did not have nationally recognized leaders to press for support of their services or, more importantly, to build up a public following that would insist that Congress appropriate the necessary funds to keep the Army and Navy up to date.

Planning Staffs. Associated with leadership in the Armed Forces are the planners and their staffs. The contrast between the two postwar periods is most striking in respect to the manpower devoted to the planning aspect of military operations. In the years since 1945 we have become accustomed to a very large policymaking and planning infrastructure. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and their Joint Staff could take the field as a battalion, though it might be a bit overstrength in field grade officers; and there are a variety of other agencies like the National Security Council and the Standing Interdepartmental Group of the State Department that are willing to take a hand in the planning function for the military. The manpower involved here far outclasses anything dreamed of before 1941. The Joint Board of the Army and Navy, the Joint Planning Committee, and later the Joint Strategic Planning Committee never totaled 50 officers; and these same 50 were also serving in the War Plans Divisions of their own services. While the pressure on the planners was never very heavy in the 1920's, Saturdays with the family became a casualty of deepening international crises after 1937. Problems for the planners to consider grew in complexity in these years, but the number of officers that could be spared for this duty remained fairly constant--Parkin-

son's Law to the contrary notwithstanding.

Political Leadership. Finally, there was another significant difference between the two postwar periods that should be recognized for its influence on the Armed Forces. The Democratic Party has remained in control of the National Government for 15 of the 23 years after 1945. This meant that the transition into peacetime was under the guidance of the same executives and politicians that had taken the country into war and had fought it. Many, like Cordell Hull, had been Wilsonian Democrats and remembered well the lessons of the earlier war. On the other hand, in 1919 Congress went Republican, and in 1921 Warren Harding led the Republicans back into the White House. The break with the Wilsonian period was sharp and complete. Wilson's dream of American entry into the League of Nations was rejected brutally and with finality. Service budget plans laid under Josephus Daniels (Secretary of the Navy) and Newton Baker (Secretary of War) began to be scrapped in the spring of 1919, and the pressure to reduce service appropriations never let up until 1933.

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In dealing with the interwar period, we might well begin with the objectives of military planning. Here we meet the traditional goals to be obtained by military and foreign policies working together.

First there was defense of the United States and its outlying possessions. While not stated specifically, the military planners began to distinguish between those areas to receive high priority in defensive planning and allocations, and those that would be of lesser importance. In the former category we have defense of the national littoral having the highest priority, particularly by the Army and the Army Air Corps.

Canal, Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These areas guard the approaches to the national littoral or are vital for the movement of the Navy, as in the case of the Panama Canal. In lowest priority, as planning in the 1930's was to demonstrate, came defense of Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

Defense of the Monroe Doctrine was a second goal for military planners in these years. The Monroe Doctrine is a fairly slippery item to define very precisely at any time, but the planners interpreted it to mean that the United States would not allow a foreign power (from outside the region) to obtain a lodgment in the Western Hemisphere if such a lodgment could endanger the United States directly or put the intruder in position to menace the Panama Canal.

A third charge on the military planners of the 1920's and 1930's, particularly those in the Navy, was protection of the Open Door Policy. Like the Monroe Doctrine, the Open Door in China meant many things to many planners; but it was commonly understood to mean that the United States wanted the right to trade and invest in China and other areas in the Far East on a basis of equality with all powers. The United States did not mind other nations having spheres of interest or influence in Asia as long as it was permitted to trade and invest within such spheres on terms of equality with the privileged power. The Open Door Policy had a subsidiary policy, designed to keep the door "open"; this was the maintenance of the territorial and political integrity of China. If China were broken up, or colonized, then the United States probably would not be able to gain access to those areas that became colonial property of another state. The U.S. Army, very obviously, could not do much planning for the defense of this policy, except to keep an expeditionary force in readiness for another

operation like the Boxer intervention. The Navy had a greater stake in supporting the Open Door Policy because of its traditional role in defending American commerce in Asia.

These then were the national planning goals of the armed services: defend the nation and its dependencies; maintain the integrity of the Monroe Doctrine; and protect the Open Door in China. We can use the older language of the planners and call these three items the "Mission" of the armed services; in the same type of language, then, we can also describe the "tasks" which the services set for themselves in their furtherance of the national mission. As an approach to understanding the tasks of the services, we will look at the Army, Navy, and Army Air Corps in terms of the defensive and offensive roles they expected to play.

The Army. In these peacetime years the Army was organized for expansion in time of national emergency. The National Defense Act of 1920, in theory, called for a regular Army of 252,000 soldiers and 28,000 officers on active duty backed by a National Guard of 435,000 and an even larger Army Reserve. In fact, the regular Army of 1920 had 201,918 in it (15,451 officers and 184,848 enlisted) and fell in strength annually until it "bottomed" out in 1932 at 134,024 (12,314 officers and 119,913 enlisted). In June 1939, after the war in Asia had existed for 2 years, the Munich Conference had brought "peace in our time," and Austria and Czechoslovakia had been absorbed by Germany, the regular Army was back to 188,565 (13,039 officers and 174,079 enlisted). These levels of forces--and the National Guard and Army Reserve were even less adequately manned--meant that the Army could not field the five effective divisions for which it had planned. The statistics also meant that battalion-sized cadres were scattered all

over the United States, too thinly staffed for any military purpose and barely able to turn in their daily muster rolls. In materiel the Army was so poorly equipped as to be almost ineffective. Of its troops, 25 percent were in overseas garrisons; and the struggling Air Corps had been able to grow in size only at the expense of the ground forces. Many general officers in the Army wondered if there would be an Army to expand if an emergency came.

Yet the tasks of this corporal's guard were formidable. On all coasts there were fixed fortifications designed to prevent access to the important harbors, and these forts had to be manned. In the 1930's General MacArthur, the Army Chief of Staff, attempted to organize his skeletonized Army in two ways: it was to serve as cadres for expansion purposes; and it was to be immediately available as an "Initial Protective Force" at the level of at least five divisions. Lack of troops and such items as artillery, motor transport, and ammunition emasculated these ideas--but the plans lived on. The Army was also supposed to be ready to provide an overseas expeditionary force, on short notice, but again the plans and the materiel did not coincide. Nor did the sea transport exist either. While at minimum strength, and working with obsolete equipment, the garrisons in the Philippines and the Canal Zone came the closest to being combat forces.

Army Air Corps. The Air Corps had as many problems as the Army as a whole. Its defensive mission was to find and destroy any enemy approaching the coasts of the United States or its possessions. This we might call a strategic role; with success, it could terminate the aggressive moves of any enemy seeking to attack the United States. The Air Corps had certain tactical missions as well, in association with the ground forces, but these need not detain us here. More importantly, the Air Corps

planners had developed an offensive mission, based on the ideas of Trenchard, Donhet, and Billy Mitchell, which called for long-range strikes against the enemy's industries and population; but they had not sold their parent service on this role. Because its aircraft were not capable of crossing the Atlantic or Pacific until the 1930's, and this did not include the capability of returning, no one was willing to place much credence in this strategic mission.

Since its airmen and officers came out of the manpower pool allotted to the Army by Congress, the Air Corps was constantly hampered in its ability to expand. With the rest of the Army, the airmen suffered from low budgets for materiel, though they did get a boost at the end of the 1920's with the 5-year development plan. The results of constantly being pinched by the budget were obsolete planes, not enough money for research and development (though the Air Corps regularly received 10 percent or more of the Army's R & D budget), and aircraft shortages. Those planes the Air Corps did obtain were usually 50 percent less than the numbers needed to meet war plans commitments.

The Navy. Continuing this dismal tale of military readiness in the interwar years, the Navy had its problems, but they were not of the magnitude of the Army's. Ironically, this situation was partly the result of the Navy having been limited by naval disarmament treaties. The allowed tonnage became a target toward which the Congress could plan. More importantly, those who had to consider national defense strategies down through the years recognized that a navy could not be extemporized; therefore planning assumed that the U.S. Navy would fight future wars with the fleet it had in the water and on the ways. Public relations jargon, in a minor sort of way, also helped the Navy. By the 1920's, Congress and the public

expected that the United States would possess a "Navy second to none"; and even the smallest tot learned, with his Pledge of Allegiance, that the U.S. Navy was the nation's "first line of defense."

In keeping with the other Armed Forces, the nation envisioned the Navy's most important tasks to be defensive. Its principal job was to meet an enemy attacking force at sea and defeat it before it could assault or lay siege to the nation's coasts or overseas possessions. The Navy was also expected to protect American shipping on the seas, in peace and war, and assure that the country enjoyed all the privileges of a maritime neutral when other nations were at war. When on the offensive, the Navy's goal was to defeat the enemy's fleet in a grand engagement. Once obtaining "command of the sea," the fleet would destroy the enemy's merchant marine, blockade its coasts, and possibly bombard its harbors and coastal cities. If necessary, the Navy was expected to land its Marine Expeditionary Force and protect it at the water's edge. Finally, the Navy would escort the Army into the theater of operations and cover it through an amphibious assault, if this were called for.

To accomplish these tasks the Navy had to be "second to none" in size and quality of materiel—unfortunately it was not. Without presenting a mass of data at this time, or detailing the intricacies of the Washington Conference's Five Power Naval Treaty of February 1922, we can generalize by saying that the U.S. Navy planned to be as powerful in tonnage, ships, and fighting power as the British Navy. It also expected that the Japanese Navy would be no more than 60 percent of the U.S. Navy in size. What happened during the 1920's and 1930's was that the U.S. Navy never received the necessary appropriations to build up to the British Navy's treaty strength, and the Japanese laid down every ton they were legally entitled to build. In a relative sense, the U.S. Navy

fell almost to third place behind Great Britain and Japan.

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With this general background, we can now turn to some specific planning problems that the Armed Forces, and particularly the Navy, had to manage in these interwar years. To start with, we might ask the fundamental question--as many in the Army and Navy War Plans Divisions did--What was the threat? Who was the enemy? Before the World War it could have been Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Mexico, France, or even Chile. After the war, until 1931, there were just two genuine possibilities: Great Britain, Japan, or the two in alliance.

In the 3 years following the close of World War I, international relations remained tenuous than most people thought reasonable. One source of this tension, and a rather expensive one at that, was the onset and development of a naval construction race among the great powers. Simply put, two nations--Japan and the United States--continued large shipbuilding programs after 1918. The American construction program had been authorized in 1916 and was further augmented legislatively in 1918. Appropriations were made available for construction in 1916 and the years following. The U.S. Navy had to vary its original 1916 building program because of the wartime needs for escort vessels (destroyers principally) and merchant shipping. With the armistice, the Navy then turned to capital ship construction (battleships and battle cruisers) that had been deferred and also began construction of light scout cruisers (*Omaha* class) that were needed to round out the fleet. The Japanese had begun building their 8-8 program, eight battleships and eight battle cruisers to be completed in 8 years. The American and Japanese building programs would yield navies that were significantly modern, particularly in post-Jutland capital ships. The British could not match these vessels

with their prewar fleet; therefore, they then entered the race. Following in the wakes of the great powers, and straining mightily to do so, were the navies of France and Italy. From an economic point of view, only the United States could afford the race; but the nationalism of the period would not allow even the French to bow out.

In England the American construction program was particularly resented. The British could not afford to modernize their navy at the rate of U.S. construction, and they therefore accused the United States of taking advantage of Britain's weakened condition to move ahead. While not particularly liking the idea, the British could not object in principle to the United States having a Navy as great as England's, but they could not see why the United States wanted such a large Navy--Whom were they going to use it against?

On the other side of the water the American Navy had quickly cooled in its friendly outlook toward its former comrades in arms. Admirals William S. Benson, Hugh Rodman, Henry B. Wilson, Hilary P. Jones--the Navy's top leadership--were all, to varying degrees, anti-British. This was due largely to the British questioning the American building program and drive for a Navy "second to none." But it was also the result of having had to work with the British in a junior partner relationship during the war. The Army had not experienced this, due to the organization of an American Expeditionary Force under General Pershing; but the Navy had to work within a different command arrangement. What this all meant was that there was tension in U.S. relations with the British. No one in the U.S. Navy expected war with the British; but few were willing to say it could not come about, particularly since the British were tied to the Japanese by the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The attitude of American military planners toward Japan was considerably different than their feelings toward the British. From the turn of the century, and particularly since the crisis period of 1906-09, Navy and Army officers recognized that war with Japan was always a distinct possibility. Through personal observations and intelligence reports, the military knew the temper of the Japanese and their feelings about America. The Japanese intensely resented the actions taken by Californians, and other Pacific Slope states, to limit Japanese immigration to their states and economic penetration of their economies. The Japanese believed, correctly, that part of the American attitude was rooted in racial prejudice—and they did not like it. The U.S. military also knew that American foreign policy toward the Japanese had been to block them in their attempts to expand in Asia or to achieve hegemony over markets that the United States felt were protected by the Open Door Policy. The planners recognized that the Japanese knew that United States was trying to “contain” them and guessed that this would not set well with the Japanese leadership.

This early postwar period of tension was terminated by the Conference for the Limitation of Armament held in Washington, November 1921 to February 1922. The Conference resulted in three major treaties and a host of minor agreements that had the effect of “freezing” the Pacific. *The Four-Power Treaty* terminated the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and was an affirmation by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France that they had no aggressive designs on the Pacific or Far Eastern territories of one another. *The Nine-Power Treaty*, signed by those powers with interests in China and its border area, stated that the Open Door Policy would be supported by all. These two agreements wrote into treaty form protection for America’s Far Eastern inter-

ests: the Philippines would no longer be menaced; the Open Door would remain open. Lacking any type of sanctions, the treaties depended on the good faith of the signatories.

The Five-Power Naval Treaty was by far the most important of the Conference’s treaties. While land armaments and implements of aerial warfare were beyond the abilities of the conferees to control, they did find a way to put an end to the capital ship race. Capital ship and aircraft carrier tonnages and numbers were allotted on a 5-5-3-1.7-1.7 ratio basis to the United States, Great Britain, Japan, Italy, and France; and a capital ship building holiday was declared. To arrive at the treaty tonnages, all nations had to scrap a variety of ships in commission, ships under construction, and many file drawers of plans. To give each nation a degree of security in its own area, all fortifications and base developments in the Western Pacific (with certain exceptions) were to remain *in statu quo*. No limits were set on the numbers of cruisers, destroyers, or submarines a nation might have, but cruisers could no longer be built which displaced more than 10,000 tons or carried guns above 8.0 inches caliber. This last provision did lead to a minor naval race in cruiser construction, but on the whole it satisfied the people in the various nations involved. The fact that admiralties and navy departments of all signatories considered the Five-Power Treaty something execrable led many to judge that the Conference was a success.

Because the Five-Power Treaty bound the United States for 15 years and created enormous problems in terms of preparing for war after 1936, we need to look briefly at a few of its strategic implications.

The treaty ended the capital ship naval race, but it was flexible enough to allow experimentation and modernization of vessels where needed. The older

battleships (*New York, Texas, Wyoming, Arkansas, Utah, Florida*) could be protected against aerial attack by strengthening the decks and adding anti-aircraft batteries. These vessels were also converted to oil-fired boilers, and "hulges" were added for oil storage and additional protection against torpedo attack. Most importantly, conversion to oil burning greatly increased the cruising radii of these battleships. On the other hand, despite modernization programs, the battleline consisted principally of pre-Jutland design ships with the exception of *Colorado, West Virginia* and *Maryland*. While 66,000 tons of treaty aircraft carrier displacement were tied up in the converted battle cruisers *Saratoga* and *Lexington*, there was enough surplus tonnage to allow the Navy to experiment with several types of smaller carriers. From this surplus came *Ranger* and the *Enterprise* group.

In theory, as a result of the Five-Power Treaty, each nation was now secure in its home waters. In fleet comparisons, the naval experts used a rough rule of thumb that a fleet lost 10 percent of its effectiveness for each 1,000 miles it had to steam to a theater of naval action. Using the ratios (5-5-3) for departure, this meant that the U.S. fleet, when steaming 5,000 miles across the Pacific to do battle, would be faced with a 2.5-3 situation in Japanese waters. When the Japanese traveled to Hawaii they would be in a very uncomfortable 5-1.5 ratio situation. Unfortunately, the United States had the Philippines in the Far East, and if the ratio planning concept was valid, the U.S. Navy would always be inferior to the Japanese when trying to defend these islands. By not being able to build Manila or Guam into major naval bases for operational purposes, because of the nonfortification clause, these islands became defenseless salients to be worried about.

The British were reasonably satisfied with the settlement. Singapore was ex-

cluded from the treaty, thus they could (and did) build a major naval base to allow operations in Asian waters at full battle fleet strength, if they so desired. Unfortunately, they did a poor job of designing the defenses as time was to demonstrate.

The Japanese were more than pleased with the nonfortification arrangement, once they had the Japanese home islands excluded from the provisions. Their naval bases in Formosa, Korea, and Southern Japan were in good enough shape that holding them *in statu quo* was no great inconvenience; and they had done a little work in the Bonins before the Conference met. They recognized that the United States was now without an operating base in the Far East. The inferior naval ratio was an irritant that would be played up at later naval disarmament conferences, but the Japanese really gained too much to complain very loudly.

Once the U.S. Senate consented to ratification of the Washington treaties, and the shipbreakers went to work scrapping the required ships, the War Plans Divisions of the Army and Navy returned to work. In a desultory manner they drew up a RED plan, to fight the British, if by some remote contingency a war would be necessary; but it was never kept up to date in the years from 1922 to 1939. Even a RED-ORANGE plan (Anglo-Japanese Coalition) was attempted, but no one wanted to invest much time in it. Practically speaking, a RED-ORANGE war would be so difficult, and would have to be fought on a total mobilization basis over such a long period of time, that the planners simply used it to sharpen their thinking in isolating the main problems involved. The plan was never fleshed out, and it was never submitted to the Joint Board or the service Secretaries for their signatures.

The ORANGE plan, by way of contrast, became the center of planning interest from the end of the Washington

Conference in 1922 until 1938 when it was replaced by the Rainbow Plan series. In these years, Army, Navy, and Joint ORANGE plans were drafted by the service War Plans Divisions or by the Joint Planning Committee of the Joint Army and Navy Board. These latter plans, once accepted by the Joint Board, were signed by the service Secretaries.

Throughout the interwar years the ORANGE plan carried with it certain fundamental strategic concepts and problems that allow us to generalize. The problems arise from the Army and Navy interpretations of their role in a war with Japan and the position in the conflict of the Philippines. The constant factors are derivative from the geography involved and the political attitudes of the Government and the people: it was 2,100 miles to Hawaii from California and another 5,000 miles to Manila; the American people did not believe that defense of the Philippines or the Open Door were worth a war with Japan.

All ORANGE plans posited that war would start by action of the Japanese and probably by surprise. It was further assumed that the Japanese would immediately attack the Philippines in order to deny this area to the U.S. Navy. Finally, it was assumed that the war with Japan would be primarily a naval war, waged offensively, and aimed at destruction of the Japanese Navy, Japanese commerce, and Japanese economic life. In later editions of the plan, air attack, presumably from the sea, was also to be a part of the warfare waged against the Japanese forces and economy. From 1924 the plans envisioned amphibious assaults against and capture of certain Japanese mandated islands in the Southwest Pacific in order to secure the Navy's line of communications from Hawaii to the Philippines by way of Guam. In a 1926 modification the establishment of a U.S. naval operating

base in the Marshalls, Carolines, or Marianas was projected.

The Army's role never changed as the ORANGE plans were developed through the years. In the early 1920's it was supposed to hold onto the Philippines by defeating any Japanese attempt to take the islands. In 1924 it was hoped that the Army could hold Manila Bay, to deny it to the Japanese, and to make it available for the use of the U.S. Navy when it finally arrived in the Far East. In the 1926 plan, and thereafter, the Army was to hold the "entrance" to Manila Bay, probably by maintaining control of Corregidor, Caballo and the other channel fortifications, and the Bataan Peninsula. Everyone now suspected, as the Army had argued in 1909, that Manila would fall to armies approaching from the landward side. By the 1930's the Army felt its task was so hopeless that it argued for abandonment of the Philippines and withdrawal to a more viable defensive perimeter, the "strategic triangle" of Mahan-Panama, Oahu, and Alaska.

During the same period that the Army was becoming increasingly pessimistic about holding the Philippines, or even the entrance to Manila Bay, the Navy continued to plan—in its version of the ORANGE plans—for an offensive naval war against the Japanese. With a broad Pacific Ocean for maneuvering room, the admirals simply could not envision being tied to a defensive strategy, particularly one that called for patrolling the perimeters of the "strategic triangle." The naval vessels that were built during the 1920's and 1930's were long legged and heavily gunned. The 10,000-ton heavy cruisers were designed for trans-Pacific operations, even though it meant they would carry minimum armor. The battleships were modernized, even at the sacrifice of speed, to carry more fuel and to burn it more efficiently. Antifouling developments and underway replenishment for the fleet made it possible that the Navy of

the 1930's might have a better operating radius than had been used for planning in the 1920's. Along with these considerations the Navy and its Marines had planned to secure operating bases on the way to the Philippines, the only thing they could not guarantee was a time schedule. Thus the Navy's War Plans Division held out against a voluntary retreat from the Philippines and consistently recommended that any grant of independence to the Filipinos be accompanied by rights to naval bases in the islands.

Strengthening the fortifications of the Philippines and Guam and enlarging the garrisons to make seizure of the islands a serious business for the Japanese were the obvious measures that needed to be taken; but the Five-Power Naval Treaty stood in the way. With its December 1934 denunciation by Japan, to be effective 31 December 1936, military development of the Philippines and Guam would be possible; but it wasn't feasible politically. The Philippine Independence Act was passed in 1934 and was to lead to complete independence in 1946. One of the many reasons for this act had been a deliberate congressional and popular desire to disentangle the United States from the menacing problems of Asia. By 1934 Japan had taken over Manchuria and had laid down its own version of a Monroe Doctrine for Asia. Congress and the American public felt that continued American control of the Philippines was simply asking for trouble with Japan. In 1938 a special board, headed by Adm. Arthur Hepburn, surveyed the need for fortified naval bases and pressed for the development of a major fleet operating base in Guam. In the spring of 1939 Congress decided that construction of such a base would be provocative to the Japanese, and no monies were authorized. Though the Navy may have rejected Army ideas about withdrawing to the defense of the "strategic triangle," Congress had already made the move.

In the winter of 1937-38 the Joint Planning Committee reworked the ORANGE plan for the last time. To the Joint Board the existing plan was "unsound in general" and "wholly inapplicable." Japan was at war in China, the *Panay* would be attacked while the planners were at work, and Europe was beginning its long slide into war. It was obvious that Congress intended that American responsibility for the Philippines be transitory, to end on 4 July 1946. What was lacking to the planners, then, was a clear statement of national goals in the Far East. Defense of the Open Door had a certain hollow ring to it, with Japan occupying Manchuria and most of coastal China, and maintenance of American sovereignty over the Philippines was soon to end. The plan, for what it was worth, provided for moving to a national state of readiness, once war with Japan was obvious. With war the Army would mobilize 750,000 troops, the Navy would raise its strength to 320,000 (including the Marine Corps), and national mobilization would begin. Hawaii would become a mobilization focal point, but the Navy would not move into the Western Pacific until it was clear that there would be no conflicting demands made on it in the Atlantic. Implicit in the plans was the expectation that the Philippines and Guam would be lost immediately and would have to be regained by military action. The ORANGE war plan of 1938 was less a plan than a description of what would happen when the Japanese decided it was time for war.

The tensions that caused the Joint Board to restudy the ORANGE plan in late 1937 ushered in 4 years of intensive war planning. In the language of the streets, they were now playing for keeps. Aggression in international relations was observable everywhere to the degree that President Roosevelt had called for a "quarantining" of the aggressors in October 1937. For the first time since before the World War, Ameri-

can military planners were worried about possibilities of German and Italian penetration of the Western Hemisphere through the subverting of governments in Latin America.

Based on the lessons of writing and rewriting the ORANGE plans, the Joint Board was quite aware that it could not afford the luxury of drifting along and trying to plan without a clear picture of the nation's objectives. In the past the Joint Board and its Planning Committee had made their own determination of just what the national goals were. Their list, while not too imaginative, contained such standard items as defense of the Monroe Doctrine, safeguarding of the Open Door in China, and excluding Asiatics from immigration to the United States. In setting their list of national objectives, the planners seldom received any assistance from the State Department or the White House. In the end this pattern had proven to be wasteful. If the Joint Board misinterpreted a national policy, or the willingness of the nation to back the policy, it could engage in a great deal of meaningless planning. The ORANGE plan, to a large degree, was a fruitless effort because the nation, as shown in the actions of Congress and the President, was not willing to uphold its Far East policy if it meant war.

In April 1938 the dilemma of the military planners was clarified a bit when Secretary of State Hull, with presidential approval, established a Standing Liaison Committee made up of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Under Secretary of State (Sumner Welles). The Joint Board was delighted with the arrangement, it hoped that this meant that the military planners would be more quickly alerted to changed directions in national policy. Actually the liaison committee met irregularly, had no executive authority, and did not meet when some of the most difficult problems were under study; but it did

serve as a convenient device for getting the policymaking and the policy implementing agencies together when either felt there was something worth discussing. The committee performed its most important function, probably because of Under Secretary Welles' interests, by focusing attention on the developing problem of Latin America.

In the late summer and early fall of 1938 the German-promoted crisis in Europe was "settled" by the Munich agreements. Peace was preserved for a year, and Czechoslovakia lost its independence. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, the Joint Board ordered the Joint Planning Committee to study how the United States should go about defending itself and Latin America from Axis aggression. The Board further complicated the question by noting that Japan might be menacing American interests in Asia at the same time. Keep in mind that the Board was again setting the question, not the President or the Secretary of State, and it was working from certain assumptions: Axis activities in Latin America would be antithetical to United States safety; Japan was a nation that could menace United States interests in Asia (not Russia, for instance); and the United States had interests in Asia worth being concerned about.

The report of the Joint Planning Committee, given in January 1939, is significant for its assumptions and its findings. Reflecting the nation's dominant isolationism, the planners assumed that the United States would not be in a position nor would want to reinforce the Philippines or the Asiatic Fleet. Japan would be handled as a political problem and not as a military aggressor. It would appear that the planning committee was recommending "appeasement" of the Japanese in order to give full attention to Germany and Italy. The basis for writing off the Far Eastern interests of the United States was stated quite bluntly:

If the American government and people had so considered [U.S. Far Eastern interests to be worth anything], they would never have consented in the Washington Conference to put the security . . . [of Guam and the Philippines] . . . in pawn to the mere good faith of Japan. . . . If they had so considered, the Japanese denunciation of the Washington treaties [in 1936] would have been instantly followed by the impregnable fortification and garrisoning of the Philippines and Guam. If they had so considered, the Philippine Independence Act would never have been passed. . . . Whether right or wrong, they have successively undermined the possibility of successful defense by the Army and Navy of these possessions.*

A second assumption in the Joint Planning Committee report was that the United States would probably not have to face aggression alone. The British would undoubtedly be tied into the problem, either through an Axis menace to their American and Asiatic possessions, or because of involvement against the Axis in Europe. Thus the United States could assume that British naval assistance, in ships or bases, would be available. The assumption that there would be cooperative action with the British was the natural outgrowth of almost 10 years of constantly improving Anglo-American relations. From the London Conferences of 1930 and 1935-36 there had emerged a clear identification of Anglo-American naval interests in the face of a hostile Japan. And as the Axis powers of Europe aligned themselves with Japan, through anti-Comintern statements, the Anglo-American military planners recognized that the new alignment was antidemocratic as well as anti-Communist. This reawakened sense of community with the English was strengthened by ex-

changes of naval planning views when Capt. Royal Ingersoll journeyed to London in December 1937 and a British naval mission visited the United States in May of 1939. While not spelled out precisely, the Joint Planning Committee was laying the foundation for a "Germany first" focus in American strategic planning.

Following this January 1939 report to the Joint Board, the planning group turned to the creation of a new set of war plans, the so-called RAINBOW plans. These plans differed from earlier ones in that the "enemy" would be a coalition, instead of just ORANGE or RED. Also, there would be contingency variations depending on whether the United States was fighting alone or with allies.

The opening of war in Europe in September 1939 speeded up Joint Board planning. There was now an even greater sense of urgency for the Board to obtain a clear picture, from the policymakers, of how the United States was to relate to this war. Except for the Presidential declaration of neutrality and formal statements of sympathy for those being attacked, the Joint Board as in the past had to create its own definitions of American policies and strategic objectives. Some very searching questions had to be answered: How would the United States defend the Western Hemisphere if England were to fall? How far should the United States go in appeasing Japan in order to keep its options open for defense of the hemisphere? How should the United States relate itself to the British war effort in the event England did not fall? For a brief time there was a breathing spell as the *blitzkrieg* against Poland turned into a *sitzkrieg*, but with the reopening of German activity in the spring of 1940 by lightning thrusts against France, the low countries, and Scandinavia, and entry of Italy into the mêlée, a renewed sense of urgency gripped the planners.

*Mark S. Watson, *The U.S. Army in World War II: the War Department: Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington: Historical Division, U.S. Dept. of the Army, 1950), p. 98.

The new German campaigns also brought a new government to England when Neville Chamberlain was replaced by Winston Churchill. The "Former Naval Person" was quick to inform President Roosevelt that England needed assistance in the form of munitions, aircraft, weapons, and if the United States could provide a little naval demonstration in the Far East, against the Japanese, it would be greatly appreciated. These requests forced the President to consult the Joint Board and provide it with some badly needed guidance. In June 1940 the President wanted to know if the United States was capable: 1) of maintaining a strong naval stance in the Pacific, provided it did not involve a shooting war with Japan; 2) of supporting the British with needed military assistance, including the convoying of the material to assure its arrival; 3) and also was the United States prepared to take military actions in Latin America to prevent any Axis lodgment in the region? Out of these questions the Joint Board could deduce strategic goals: deter, but not fight Japan; supply Britain to prevent its fall; and prevent Axis entry into the hemisphere. With these goals in mind, RAINBOW 4 was created as a war plan. The military emphasis was on hemisphere defense; in the Pacific the U.S. Fleet would remain at Pearl Harbor as a gesture of deterrence, but in terms of action the Fleet was to defend the "strategic triangle."

It was fortunate that the Joint Board got as much information as it did from the President in June of 1940, for during the balance of the year, until election day in November, the Commander in Chief avoided making any major strategic decisions. A bargain was struck with the British in which the United States turned over 50 overage destroyers in return for 99-year leases on British naval and air base sites in the Western Hemisphere; but this was merely carrying out the earlier decision to

aid the British "short of war."

In the summer the Joint Board sent a team of Army, Navy, and Air Corps senior officers to London to observe the German "blitz." Discussions by them with British planners gave the Joint Board a clearer picture of the future. Rear Admiral Ghormley and his associates were sure the British would not collapse, thus it would not be wasteful to continue the supply effort. They also divined that the British were so busy with the Germans and Italians, in Europe and North Africa, that they would not be able to reinforce Singapore were the Japanese to exert any pressure. As Ghormley interpreted it, British grand strategy involved attacking the Axis Powers on the perimeter of their holdings, making assaults into the heartland area when the opportunity was there, using airpower to weaken them, and finally mounting a land campaign in Europe when the time was right. All of this was without a timetable. From the Joint Board viewpoint it could mean that the United States would be tied to British strategical thinking for an indefinite period of time.

With victory at the polls, President Roosevelt was once more able to think concretely about American defense planning. During November the Joint planning Committee began work on the most complicated of its plans, one that envisioned war with the European Axis Powers and Japan at the same time. In its deliberations the committee canvassed several strategic alternatives provided by Adm. Harold Stark, Chief of Naval Operations. He raised the question of how best to use the Navy: offensively in the Atlantic and the Pacific, defensively in both oceans, or offensively in one ocean while maintaining a defensive posture in the other. Of the alternatives, listed "A" to "D," the Joint Board on 21 December 1940 opted for "Plan Dog"—the U.S. Navy would be used offensively in the Atlan-

tic to assure a decision there first and would stand on the defensive in the Pacific. As can be seen, this was a return to the January 1939 position of the Joint Board.

The Joint Board's decision to use Stark's "Plan Dog" as the basis for strategic planning was written into the instructions that were to guide the Joint Planning Committee as it met with a new group of British representatives which arrived in Washington on 25 January 1941 for two months of discussions on how a war was to be conducted were the United States to be drawn in. While the talks were not to be political, it was necessary for the United States to clear away one feature of the British program that seemed to be more political than military. Both groups quickly agreed that Germany and Italy must be defeated as quickly as possible. There was also agreement that the Mediterranean and North African interests of the British must be recovered to make the Mediterranean safe. But the British desire to have the United States protect Singapore was firmly rejected by the American planners. They recognized the importance for Empire morale that the Japanese not be allowed to engross Southeast Asia or menace the Antipodes, but any strong moves in this region would weaken the effort against the European Axis. Thus the Joint Board representatives stuck to the "Plan Dog" decision. The Navy, and the Army as well, disliked writing off the Philippines, but the logic of their strategic studies said it must be done. If the Philippines could not be defended, the same must be said for Singapore. In the ABC-1 memorandum, which concluded these American-British conversations on 29 March 1941, it was finally agreed, concerning the Far East, that the United States would stand on the defensive in the Pacific, but that the Asiatic Fleet would do its best to help defend the Malay Barrier.

new rewrite for RAINBOW 5. As in all of the rainbow plans, RAINBOW 1 was the starting place--defense of the Western Hemisphere. With this defense provided for, then naval plans for cooperation with the British in the Atlantic were framed, and the tasks for the Navy when standing on the defensive in the Pacific were spelled out. While the old ORANGE plans for a trans-Pacific campaign against Japan were available, no campaign plans were written into RAINBOW 5. The new war plan was finally approved by the service Secretaries on 2 June 1941. But reworking of these plans, with a new optimism, began almost as soon as SeeWar and SeeNav approved them.

The German attack against the Soviet Union on 21 June 1941 opened up new possibilities to the Joint Board. It believed that there would have to be a diminution of German activity in the Atlantic and, therefore, if the United States entered the war it might be able to do more in the Pacific. Working from this optimistic premise, the decision was made to strengthen the Philippines, particularly with heavy bombardment and fighter aircraft. As more B-17's became available, and more P-40 fighters poured out of the factories, the Philippines received the bulk of them. The belief of the Air Corps leaders that the B-17 could stop a seaborne attack was accepted; the P-40's were expected to give air superiority over the islands. In this same atmosphere of euphoria, the claims of General MacArthur that the projected 10 divisions of the Philippine Army, still partly trained and armed, plus the reinforced U.S. Army garrison, could defeat a Japanese landing effort were given credence. By November 1941 there was even a belief extant in the Joint Board that offensive action would be possible by B-17 strikes at the Japanese staging areas. Unfortunately, one of the very sacred principles of war was violated at Pearl Harbor and Clark Field--security of one's forces from sur-

prise attack. Neither MacArthur's bombers nor Adm. Husband Kimmel's battleline would be available to implement RAINBOW 5.

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Are there any lessons that one can draw from this discussion of national defense planning in the interwar years? Obviously, one is not to build a war plan that depends on the use of bombers and ships and then lose them in surprise attacks, but probably we can draw a few more lessons of a more sophisticated nature if we look.

Certainly one of the more important lessons lies in the area of the "ends and means" problem. War planning requires a clear picture of the ends or goals to be achieved by a plan. The ORANGE plan of the 1920's and 1930's was more of an operational plan than a plan to meet the ends of a national strategy. The Joint Board had to assume that the United States would go to war because of Japanese interference with the Open Door or because Japan attacked the Philippines. There was little doubt that war would come this way, so the plans dealt essentially with the question of how to defeat Japan once a war began. Over a period of time these planners

assumed that the nation as a whole felt the same way. But it didn't. When the Senate accepted the Five-Power Treaty, with its nonfortification clause, it doomed any plans to defend the Philippines or the Open Door. Until a new and very mobile Navy was molded in the crucible of war, a fleet tethered to Hawaii could not do much in the Philippine area or on the China coast. The War Plans Divisions of both the Army and the Navy understood this; it was Congress and the President that did not get the message. The reason they did not get the message was because it was not nice to talk about making war, even defensive wars, in the interwar years. Occasionally, naval writers, and even an occasional pundit like Walter Lippman, would raise the issue of major commitments and little power, but their voices were not heard, or the problem was too difficult to understand. The average American, and the average Congressman as well, could not see why Japan was stronger than the United States when Japan had just 10 battle-ships and the United States had 18. But--and this is the message--Japan had a national strategy. The Japanese knew what they wanted and they knew what had to be done to obtain it.

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Peace is best secured by those who use their strength justly, but whose attitude shows that they have no intention of submitting to wrong.

Address of the Corinthians to the Athenians, 433 B.C.