

vice League tied conscription in the public mind with, to use a modern phrase, "Colonel Blimpism."

(5) The linking of conscription with home defence tied it to the militia tradition. But the danger of invasion could be questioned. This issue, and such subsidiary issues as the use of conscription for training in citizenship to check the rising tide of "socialism," diverted attention from more serious questions of military policy. (The whole concept of the army as a school is, incidentally, a fasci-

nating subject for research.)

The failure of the conscriptionists to define their aims and methods more precisely had an odd sequel. When Kitchener took the helm in 1914, he did not use the Territorials (who had been so vigorously attacked as inadequate by the conscriptionists) to expand the army. Nor did he follow up the conscription campaign (bringing down Mr. Amery's retrospective wrath on him too). He chose to raise an entirely new army on a volunteer basis.

III

1898: THE UNITED STATES IN THE PACIFIC

BY LOUIS J. HALLE*

Historical studies—if a non-historian may venture into definition—are properly studies in perspective. I use "perspective" in the sense given it by Funk & Wagnalls': "The relative importance of facts or matters from any special point of view."¹ Note that importance, here, is only relative. It depends on a "special point of view."

I do not believe that the subject of civil-military relations was given importance or was much debated by us Americans, if at all, around the year 1898. About that time the aged Prince Von Bismarck published some wise remarks on the subject in his memoirs,²

but we Americans had been happily without experience in the conduct of war for over a generation. Therefore we lacked any "special point of view" that would have given the subject importance.

Happily or unhappily, this is no longer true today. Our experience has accumulated and we begin, at last, to equal Bismarck. Few subjects in the realm of our governmental organization today loom larger than that of civil-military relations. How the civil and military elements should work together for the determination of our foreign policy has become a major preoccupation.

To establish our own special perspective, let me now quote from an article by Dean Acheson in the *Yale Review* of Autumn, a year ago. "It may seem extraordinary," writes Mr. Acheson, "but it is nevertheless true, that not until General Marshall's tenure

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¹*New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (New York, 1949.)

²"... the object of war is to conquer peace under conditions which are conformable to the policy pursued by the state. To fix and limit the objects to be attained by the war, and to advise the monarch in respect to them, is and remains during the war just as before it a political function, and the manner in which these questions are solved cannot be without influence on the method of conducting the war. . . . The negotiations at Nikolsburg in 1866 show that the question of war

or peace always belongs, even in war, to the responsible political minister, and cannot be decided by the technical military leaders." Prince Otto von Bismarck, "Reflections and Reminiscences," translated under the title *Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman* (New York: Harpers, 1899), II, 106.

as Secretary of Defense had the Secretary of State and his senior officers met with the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for continuous discussion and development of policy. And yet foreign policy and military policy divorced from one another are both operating in the field of phantasy."³

What was true of our practice half-a-dozen years ago was certainly no less true in 1898. I am reminded of a lecturer who, having for his topic "The Natural Resources of Libya," began his lecture with the statement: "Libya has no natural resources." In addressing itself to our civil-military relations at the time of the war with Spain this paper also treats of what is, in some respects, a non-existent topic.

I say this, however, with diffidence and shall make due qualification in a moment. With diffidence, because no one can be sure of a general negative. I can say that I have found no evidence of civil-military relations over a wide area; but I cannot say that, in my researches, I have exhausted all the nooks and crannies where such evidence might be found, and I cannot say that no civil-military relations existed even though no evidence for them remained anywhere today. Who can be sure that Captain A. S. Crowninshield, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, and Assistant Secretary of State William Rufus Day, meeting perhaps on the golf-course in Arlington of a Sunday morning, did not discuss the political and military situation in the Pacific? On the historical record, however, they did not.

This diffidently advanced negative applies to relations between the military services or

³"Decision in Foreign Policy," *The Yale Review*, XLIV, 11. A more limited form of consultation at a subordinate level had already been developed before Gen. Marshall became Secretary of Defense. It was represented by the activities of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) and of the National Security Council's "Senior Staff." But the full reality of continuous consultation at "the summit" did not come until 1950.

the service departments and the Department of State. Obviously it could not apply to the position in which the top military commanders stood with respect to the civilian service Secretaries and the civilian President. But it apparently came almost as near to applying, even here, as our Constitution would allow. The case in point is Commodore Dewey's famous attack on the Spanish squadron in Manila Bay, with its momentous and unhappy consequences, political and military, for the position of the United States in the Far East. I say "unhappy" consequences, because the attack left us with the Philippine orphan on our hands, and our consequent commitment for its defense has kept us strategically over-extended in the Far East ever since.

Who planned the attack that brought this about? Who studied its political implications? Who was consulted?

For many decades we had maintained a small naval squadron in the Western Pacific, apparently to support our commerce and "show the flag." Commodore Dewey's predecessor in command of that squadron could not have ignored the fact that war with Spain was an imminent possibility. He also knew, surely, that the Philippine Islands existed and that a Spanish naval squadron was at hand to defend them. Thus, although Secretary of the Navy John Davis Long was less than reliable on some points when he came to composing his memoirs, he was at least plausible when he stated that Dewey's predecessor had made plans for an attack on the Spanish forces in the Philippines, and that he turned those plans over to Dewey with his command.⁴ Such action by a naval officer in such a position is less noteworthy, perhaps, than would have been its omission.

Making plans which may or may not be called for is, however, not the same as mak-

⁴John D. Long, *The New American Navy* (New York, 1903), I, 179.

ing policy. It was not within the authority of the Far Eastern commander to decide whether, in case war came, American forces should undertake any belligerent activities in the Western Pacific. That was for the civilian commander-in-chief, the President, to decide. But the President, together with his Secretary of the Navy, had no experience in the making of war and was, in any case, focusing his attention on Cuba, which was the only object of our quarrel with Spain.

In a real sense, no positive decision ever was taken to adopt a policy calling for an attack on the Philippines. The President merely found that this was the naval policy that the Navy had in mind, and he seems to have assumed that it must be right. "While we remained at war with Spain," Admiral Dewey later wrote, "our purpose must be to strike at the power of Spain wherever possible."⁵ This implication of unlimited war, which might have given a Bismarck pause, was unquestioned among us at the time. The *political* objective of the war was to liberate Cuba; but the *military* objective must be to hurt Spain wherever we could until she cried quits. The western Pacific was one of the principal places where we could hurt her. Given these tacit premises, the naval officers were right in assuming that we would strike at the Philippines in case of war. A special policy decision would have been needed rather to exempt them from the area of our military operations than to include them.

I see no evidence that President McKinley or Secretary Long gave much thought to the policy problems involved, or gave any thought at all to the matter on their own initiative. The Navy Department made preparations for the attack at a subordinate level and almost as a matter of routine. And if there were political implications in such an attack to be considered before ordering it, that was

hardly the business of the Navy. The President would be the one to decide that, with the advice of his Secretary of State if he wanted it. But no one raised a question, and no one knew of any question that might be raised.

Too much has sometimes been made, I think, of the role played by our energetic young Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt. The attack on the Philippines has been represented as an extraordinary conception of his imagination for the realization of which he conspired against his own chiefs, Secretary Long and President McKinley. Surely, however, he was not being original when he included operations against the Philippines among the actions that he recommended to the Secretary of the Navy for the contingency of a war with Spain.⁶ And his support of Dewey for the command of the Asiatic squadron, on the grounds that Dewey was a competent and aggressive officer, hardly involved more conspiracy than is the daily fare of office-politics in Washington. There is nothing inately sinister about wanting an outstanding man in command of a squadron that is likely to see action. If the job was to be done it made sense to get hold of the man who could do it best. And no one questioned that the job should be done.

Certainly Roosevelt did go too far on the famous occasion when old Mr. Long gave himself a day off—February 25. Then Roosevelt acted like any willful and enthusiastic youngster who finds himself in sole command for the first time, issuing all sorts of dynamic and rather silly orders over his own signature as Acting Secretary of the Navy. One of these was the order instructing Dewey that, in the event of war, his duty would be "to see that the Spanish squadron does not

⁵George Dewey, *Autobiography* (New York, 1913) p. 239.

⁶See Roosevelt to Long, Sept. 20, 1897, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1951), I, 683.

leave the Asiatic coast, and then offensive operations in Philippine Islands."⁷ Mr. Long was astonished and dismayed upon his return to discover all the things, sensible and unsensible, that Roosevelt had done in his brief absence. He felt it necessary to tell his young subordinate, *inter-alia*, that the instruction to Dewey should not have been sent without consulting him or the President.⁸ But he allowed the instruction to stand, so we may suppose that he did not disagree with it. Not the action, but the procedure in taking it, was what he objected to.

Finally, when war had begun, President McKinley approved the order for Dewey to strike at the Spanish fleet in Manila.⁹ The degree to which he or anyone else in Washington was putting himself in command of events, however, is indicated by the fact that action to draft and send the order was undertaken only in response to an urgent cable from Dewey, reporting that the British declaration of neutrality forced him to leave Hong Kong immediately and requesting instructions. While the order sent in reply was approved in the presence of Assistant Secretary of State Day (who was about to become Secretary), apparently the only question that ever arose had to do with the precise form of words to be used.

The simple fact appears to be that no one, military or civilian, saw any part of the vast political implications in this action. This is attested by the surprise of everyone concerned when the political consequences did immediately follow, consequences that left us vir-

tually no choice but to assume the strategic liability of having to discipline and defend a colonial possession that we did not want.¹⁰

I venture to include among those who were surprised by the political consequences such leaders of the "expansionist" school as Captain Mahan and Roosevelt himself. So far from having plotted for us to acquire the Philippines, Roosevelt appears to have been slow in coming to the conclusion that, having ousted Spain, we should make them our own. Writing privately to his fellow expansionist, Senator Lodge, on May 25, almost a month after the event, he expressed the hope "that peace will only be made on consideration of Cuba being independent, Porto Rico ours, and the Philippines taken away from Spain."¹¹ When he did accept the conclusion which others had reached before him, that we had to keep the Philippines, it was on the basis of a duty which, as he saw it, had been imposed upon us by an unanticipated destiny. In a few years he was to find this predestined duty so onerous that he would be ready to have us seek any honorable way out.¹²

The main reason, then, why civil-military relations, as we understand them, were not organized to deal responsibly with the conduct of our Pacific campaign in 1898 is that no one in authority saw any problem until it was too late. The conduct of naval operations was the business of the Navy, just as the conduct of diplomatic negotiations was the business of the Department of State. The hyphenated term "politico-military" had not entered our thinking except in the realm

⁷"Appendix to the Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, 1898" (Washington, 1898), p. 65.

⁸See Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit* (Boston, 1931), p. 112. (Millis does not give his source, and I have not found this information in the Long papers or elsewhere.)

⁹A controversy later arose over the circumstances in which the order was prepared. See letter from A. S. Crowninshield to Long, July 3, 1901, *Papers of John Davis Long*, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 78, 1939, p. 379; and Long, *The New American Navy*, New York, 1903, I, 181-182.

¹⁰A convincing argument can be made that by the time war had broken out it was already too late, if only for domestic political reasons, to hold our Asiatic squadron in check, even though the consequences of not holding it in check had been foreseen. My only point here is that we were, in fact, walking blind.

¹¹*Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge* (New York, 1925), I, 301.

¹²See A. Whitney Griswold, *The Far-eastern Policy of the United States* (New York, 1938), p. 35.

of grand theory, divorced from particular operations, where Captain Mahan was most at home.

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Note, now, the utility of studying history critically, as a philosopher might study it. With the war over and the Philippines on our hands, the strategy and conduct of the war became a matter of the historical record. That is to say, it was added to the record of experience from which human wisdom is drawn. We Americans, especially, were enriched by one more lesson in the great Book of Lessons.

Ideally, being a nation of unexcelled historians and philosophers, we would immediately have read that lesson aright. We would have noted that military actions, although taken only with military ends in view, may entail large political consequences. It would then have been evident to us that, in the future, we must always take possible political consequences into account in making choice among alternative courses of military action. Since the taking of such account would transcend the competence of the military, it would have followed, in our thinking, that the competent civil authorities must participate responsibly in the future planning of military strategy. Ideally, being the nation of historians and philosophers that I have imagined, we would have recognized at the conclusion of the Spanish war that our government had defaulted in not making provision for civil-military relations that required this kind of civilian participation. And we would immediately have repaired the fault by setting up, perhaps, a National Security Council and arrangements for liaison between the military chiefs-of-staff, the service Secretaries, and the Secretary of State.

Not all of us, however, then as now, were

historians and philosophers, and those who were lacked the "special point of view"—being creatures of their own times, unfortunately, rather than of our times. The most general reaction among our leaders was to unload the whole responsibility for what happened onto the shoulders of Destiny. In a later decade, after the first world war but before the second, it appeared that Destiny should no longer be made to bear the onus. It was placed, instead, on Roosevelt, Lodge, and Mahan, who were charged with having engaged in a deliberate conspiracy to lead our nation blindfold up the path of imperialism until it was too late for it to turn back.

While the years rolled by and the lesson remained unlearned we experienced other wars which left, as an historical residue, similar lessons. These tended to accumulate in our consciousness, gradually increasing our sophistication by their sheer weight, until that happy if belated ending of this particular tale which Mr. Acheson has supplied in his reference to the establishment for the first time in 1950 of relations between our Secretary of State and our military authorities for the "continuous discussion and development of policy." (Even as I note this "happy ending" I must add, parenthetically, my awareness of the fact that, unlike fiction, history has no endings. What we hold as final now will have to be rewritten later. No historian, so far, has ever got beyond the semi-finals.)

In some respects, the record of civilized mankind appears as a race between historical disasters, on the one hand, and historical lessons learned on the other. We have suffered a number of disasters since 1898, and now in the second half of the twentieth century we have, I think, learned a lesson.