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XIX. United States Naval Policy

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Naval policy is the system of principles, and the general terms of their application, governing the development, organization, maintenance, training and employment of a navy. It is based on and is designed to support national policies and interests. It comprehends questions of character, number and distribution of naval forces and shore activities; of the number and qualifications of personnel; and of the character of peace and war strategy and operations.

Fundamental Policy

To maintain the Navy in strength and readiness to uphold national policies and interests, and to guard the United States and its continental and overseas possessions.

General Policies

To develop the Navy to a maximum in fighting strength and ability to control the sea in defense of the nation and its interests.

To make effectiveness in war the objective of all development and training.

To organize and maintain the Navy for major operations in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

To maintain and develop naval aviation as an integral part of the naval forces.

To maintain the Marine Corps in such strength as to provide the requisite fleet marine force and detachments for other naval purposes.

To develop and maintain shore activities, including bases suitably located and defended, for the support of the mobile forces.

To locate shore activities in such geographical areas and construct them in such sites and in such manner as will promote security against air and other attack; and to apply this policy to existing activities as practicable.

To advance the art of naval warfare and to promote the development of naval material.

To maintain and train the officer and enlisted personnel requisite for the regular establishment and to provide for the procurement and training of the personnel required for the expanded war organization.

To plan the procurement of materiel to meet wartime needs and to foster civil industries and activities useful in war.

To exercise economy in expenditures as compatible with efficiency.

To make systematic inspections of naval activities and materiel.

To encourage the growth of the merchant marine and of commercial aviation.

To cooperate fully with other departments and agencies of the government.

Fleet Building and Maintenance Policy

To keep the fleet at the required strength, balanced as to types of ships, by a continuing building program.

To make superiority in their types the end in view in the design and construction of all naval vessels and aircraft.

To keep characteristics and designs for ships and aircraft up to date.

To maintain all ships and aircraft at the maximum of material readiness and fighting efficiency consistent with their age and military value, incorporating such improvements as are duly warranted.

Combatant Ships

To build capital ships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers, mine layers, submarines and other combatant types in numbers adequate to maintain a well-balanced fleet of the required strength in under-age vessels.

Aircraft

To build and maintain aircraft in numbers and classes adequate for the fleet requirements and for all other essential naval purposes.

To build and maintain nonrigid airships for coastal patrol and for other naval uses.

To build and maintain rigid airships as necessary to explore and develop their usefulness for naval purposes; and to cooperate with other agencies in developing commercial airships.

Auxiliary Vessels

To build or acquire and to maintain the minimum number of auxiliary vessels of the several types needed for the normal operation of the fleet, and for the maintenance, supply and potential defense of outlying bases and stations.

To cooperate with other government departments and agencies in planning for and in designing new merchant and government vessels which can be utilized as naval auxiliaries.

To maintain plans for rapid acquisition and effective conversion of merchant vessels for naval use in time of war.

Minor War Vessels and Small Craft

To build or acquire and to maintain such minor war vessels and small craft as required for naval districts and special service, developing suitable types as necessary.

Fleet Operating Policy

To keep in commission, fully manned and in active training, the number of ships necessary to provide a fleet of required strength in all types.

To organize the forces afloat to obtain maximum flexibility, mobility and effectiveness in strategical and tactical operations.

To give full effect to established command principles, stressing unity of command and appropriate decentralization in both execution and administration.

To operate forces afloat under balanced schedules formulated to secure excellence in strategy and tactics, gunnery, engineering and other technical performance, and in material upkeep; and also to promote proficiency, contentment and discipline of personnel.

To keep the United States Fleet strategically disposed and to assemble the fleet for a period of

not less than two months annually for advanced training.

To operate and maintain the Asiatic Fleet and other detached forces in readiness for incorporation into the United States Fleet.

To make foreign cruises for cultivation of friendly international relations and for varied training of personnel.

To operate a naval train and a supply service sufficient for the upkeep and mobility of the forces afloat and for the maintenance and supply of outlying bases and stations.

To assign suitable vessels and facilities for training Naval Reserves.

To operate vessels necessary for surveying strategic and commercial areas outside the coastal limits of the United States and its possessions.

Shore Activities Policy

To develop two main bases on each coast and one in Hawaii.

To develop air and other essential bases, coastal and outlying, for the support of naval operations.

To maintain a system of naval districts and corresponding district forces for the control and security of district waters, coastwise sea lanes, and adjacent sea areas; for cooperation with the fleet; and for the coordinated administration and protection of naval bases, navy yards, and other naval activities within the particular district.

To maintain all navy yards and naval industrial plants in such condition of readiness as to sustain the fleet in war.

To construct such naval vessels in navy yards as necessary to assure the continued availability of experienced technical personnel.

To encourage civil industries and activities useful in war.

To insure the effective availability of private shipbuilding and other private industrial plants for the national defense by a continuing program of naval construction therein.

To procure and maintain suitable facilities for the training of naval and Marine Corps personnel, including reserves.

To maintain and operate the facilities necessary for the collection and dissemination of hydrographic, astronomical, and aerological information essential to the Navy and useful to governmental and commercial interests.

Personnel Policy

To maintain the personnel at a high standard of efficiency and in sufficient numbers to meet the requirements of the naval service.

To develop and coordinate systematic courses of instruction and training for officer and enlisted personnel.

To assign officers to duty in foreign countries to broaden their professional education.

To maintain a reasonable excess of petty officers and noncommissioned officers over peacetime requirements in order to facilitate wartime expansion.

To restrict the transfer of personnel to that compatible with a high degree of training, morale, professional experience, and service efficiency.

To build up, train, and maintain Naval and Marine Corps Reservists to provide for mobilization.

To cultivate close relations of personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps with the Reserves.

Communications Policy

To provide and maintain a naval communication system based on war requirements.

To operate the communication facilities as required, primarily, by the current operating force plan and for direct communication with overseas possessions.

To continue the use of naval communication facilities to increase safety at sea and in the air, including adequate communication with the United States Merchant Marine and commercial aircraft flying overseas.

To cooperate with American commercial communication activities so as to enhance their military value in time of national emergency and to safeguard the communication interests of the United States.

Information Policy

To acquire accurate information concerning the political, military, naval, economic and industrial policies and activities of all countries.

To analyze and preserve information for ready reference and for historical purposes.

To disseminate useful information systematically throughout the naval service and to other government departments and agencies.

To provide protection against espionage and sabotage in cooperation with other departments and agencies.

To keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security.

Matériel Policy

To plan, in cooperation with other government departments and agencies, and with industry, for timely procurement of supplies and munitions necessary to maintain and augment the mobilized Navy.

To procure and maintain reserves of supplies and munitions in quantities to cover essential requirements beyond the productive capacity initially available in an emergency.

To procure and maintain, in cooperation with other government departments and agencies, adequate stocks of strategic raw materials.

To cooperate with other government departments and agencies, and with private industry, in the development of standards and specifications and of inspection organizations, methods, and procedures.

To promote by continuous research and investigation the application of scientific discoveries and technical invention to the improvement of naval matériel.