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From Our October 1948 Issue . . .

Logistical Planning for War

Vice Admiral Robert B. Carney, U.S. Navy

LOGISTICAL PLANNING FOR WAR IS a vast effort involving the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Security Resources Board, the Munitions Board, the Research and Development Board, the Chief of Naval Operations' strategic and logistical planners, the bureaus, the field commands, and the Army and Air Force counterparts to the Navy agencies I have mentioned. Be of good cheer—I shall make no attempt to give any all-inclusive coverage to the subject. Elsewhere, you will read or hear competent discussions on the various specialized aspects of logistical planning; so, today, I shall content myself with acquainting you with some of the broad problems which constitute a challenge to those who must shape logistical policies in the national military establishment. If I digress from time to time, it will be in the hope that by so doing I may here and there leave a thought worthy of your consideration, as officers interested in acquiring, fostering, and furthering knowledge of logistics.

Last year, as the first class in logistics was getting under way, I expressed the great satisfaction I felt on that occasion. Today, I know an even more profound satisfaction in which there is a good leaven of relief that so many obstacles have been overcome in launching the Logistics Course, and confidence in the assured preservation of the Navy's hard-earned logistical know-how.

But the launching is only the beginning of the voyage. The lessons of the past, however well learned, will not entirely suffice for the fluid and mercurial times that are upon us and ahead of us. History alone might lead to false conclusions, and history's basic principles can easily be confused with history's special lessons. The bony framework of truth will often be difficult to discern

This lecture was the first article ever published in the *Naval War College Review*, then known as the *Naval War College Information Service for Officers*. Vice Admiral Carney, who during World War II had served as Admiral William F. Halsey's chief of staff, was at the time of this undated address to the College's students the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics. From 17 August 1953 to 17 August 1955 Admiral Carney was Chief of Naval Operations. He passed away in 1990.

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through new garments and in the tricky lighting of enthusiasm or prejudice. The magic of the future must be weighed against the proofs of the past, for the new and fantastic of today frequently become tomorrow's commonplace. So there devolves a special burden of imaginative, yet practical, foresight on the planners of today.

"Imaginative, yet practical"—a not-too-common combination, but one which is especially needed in logistical planning. "Practical" encompasses technical competence, and to the qualities of imagination and professional competence must be added a capacity for work, for there is no shortcut to excellence in logistical planning.

All of these necessary attributes can be summed up under the heading of clear, energetic, and articulate thinking.

Clarity of thinking is a priceless commodity in our profession or in any other great and complex enterprise. Its intrinsic value is established both by its rarity and by the dividends it yields to the stockholders. Many years ago, a group of far-sighted naval officers turned to the formal mechanics of logic as a method of insuring the evaluation of all pertinent factors in the solving of our problems. You are all familiar with the results of that project, which became second nature to most of us; I refer, of course, to the time-honored order form and method of estimating the situation. From time to time, we have elaborated on the format, but the basic principles are still immutable and provide the best known structure for building toward sound decision.

However, even with a prefabricated framework available to us, there is always the danger of fallibility inherent in ignorance or disregard of factors which should properly be considered. Our system of military reasoning can be likened to the business machines and electronic computers in that the final answers can be no better than the statistical input; the complexities of modern logistics do not alter the principles of reasoning, but they do vastly increase the difficulty of listing all pertinent factors. The Naval War College is now firmly committed to a project which can do much toward instilling a general understanding of the proper approach to this difficult business of logistical planning.

Expanding that thought, we come to another essential strength element in which the Naval War College has a profound and influencing interest: indoctrination.

The great strength of our Navy in earlier days lay in the fact that we had a relatively small, compact, like-thinking officer corps which could be depended on, from top to bottom, to advocate and pursue actions which in the final analysis would support our policies, plans, and programs. Our leadership, our size, and the circumstances of the times all conspired to produce this fortunate result; the situation today in an expanded, heterogeneous, and more complex Navy is such that many serious obstacles have been raised to militate against

the re-establishment of that splendid and necessary spiritual and mental cohesion.

In order that I may indelibly impress on you the need for and importance of sound universal indoctrination, let me go back to a day in October, 1944. Admiral [Thomas C.] Kinkaid and his Seventh Fleet were under General [Douglas] MacArthur's command; the Third Fleet, under Admiral [William F.] Halsey's tactical command, was a component of Admiral [Chester] Nimitz's Pacific Ocean Areas forces; the submarines of the Pacific Fleet were positioned by remote control from Pearl Harbor. The sum total of the American naval forces in the Philippine Sea area constituted the greatest assembly of naval might the world has ever seen or may ever see again—far greater than the strength which the Japanese Navy could muster in that area. And yet, mark you, there was no effective single command agency which could weld all of our naval forces into a single fleet under a single command; Admiral Nimitz did not have that authority, nor did General MacArthur; and no higher echelon could or would step into the breach. The details of the second battle of the Philippine Sea will keep you, and the student generations to follow you, occupied for decades to come. Obviously, there were many things done which could have been done differently in the light of hindsight; obviously, there were things left undone which could have been undertaken to great advantage. But to me, in retrospect, the vital and important thing is that, although not unified under a single authoritative command, all of those separated commanders were thinking in sufficiently like terms to construct a mosaic of tactical victories fitting together into a greater mural of strategic victory which effectively terminated Japanese sea power. There were gaps in communications and gaps in mutual understandings among the commanders, but the great principles of sea power had been inculcated in all of those commanders and were literally second nature to them, so that even without authoritative coordinating command, they instinctively moved in directions which were basically sound. Some critics have said that disaster was narrowly averted—we can not concede that: the “ifs” of the critics are too improbable if one understands the profound basic indoctrination that actuated Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey, Admiral Kinkaid, Admiral [Jesse B.] Oldendorf, Admiral [Charles A.] Lockwood, and all of those who derived their own tasks and contributed their own parts to the over-all victory. The War College played an important part in that indoctrination—and the War College must continue to exercise leadership in channeling Navy thinking along indoctrinated lines which will meet tomorrow's innovations and complexities.

I have stressed certain mental attributes and emphasized sound indoctrination, because without them the achievement of good logistical planning is impossible.

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Your reading will have highlighted the evolution of logistical planning prior to World War II and during the war years, and you are aware of the evolutionary gropings that characterized the period immediately following the beginning of hostilities. I shall therefore waste no time on the past, but will sketch a vignette of the Washington logistics workshop as it is today in Year One of unification.

Let me say first, that the title of my discussion today—Logistical Planning for War—is not merely academic. Regardless of the strivings of men of good will, powerful national pressures are still being exerted in furtherance of national policies; nations still seek and use coercive devices for imposing their national wills upon others. Even the most hopeful and altruistic person must realize that we are being pressured from without and within, by unpeaceful methods, to bend our will to conform to other views; this pressuring, so far, has not involved shooting or the overt use of force, but we are sitting on a powder keg which could be ignited by a careless spark. The recent governmental and congressional record of action is prima-facie evidence that the nation recognizes the danger of war and is strengthening its defenses. Therefore, I say that the logistical planning which we are doing today is in every sense logistical planning against the tragic contingency of war, even while it is our earnest hope that diplomacy, firmness, and our latent power may serve as deterrents to another holocaust.

The genesis of our security thinking and the sequence of planning events are, although altered in the detail by unification, essentially the same as in former years: national objectives are weighed against national capabilities—suitable strategic plans are drawn and their feasibility tested and the ultimate plan is shaped to conform to our national capabilities.

The formulation of the National Security Act of 1947 was largely predicated on the need to be able to do those things more efficiently at the highest government level, and I firmly believe that the creation of the [National] Security Council and the Security Resources Board, together with the staff agencies of the Secretary of Defense, has provided a mechanism which will enable us to make a far more accurate estimate of our national needs and capabilities than was ever possible before.

But here is an interesting point: unification has *complicated* the job for military planners rather than simplified it. Formerly, each service derived its own statement of its own needs and passed the buck to the Bureau of the Budget and the Congress for decision. Now, however, the military planners are confronted with the necessity for presenting a mutually reconciled recommendation, arrived at within the military establishment. Needless to say, strong and enthusiastic proponents of the various arms and weapons are often in disagreement and, therefore, I say again that unification has increased the burden and complexities confronting the military planners.

The recent supplementary appropriations, the passage of draft legislation, and other legislative and executive actions clearly support the military belief that our defenses need strengthening, and clearly reflect the popular acceptance of that thinking. Consequently, I am violating no confidence when I say that we are building up toward a goal of greater strength: nor am I violating any confidence when I state the obvious truism that we have calculated to the best of our ability the intent and capabilities of those who may well be inimical to American hopes and ideals.

Having faced the reality that armed conflict is a dangerous possibility in today's surcharged atmosphere, the next question is: How and where shall we fight if conflict is thrust upon us?

Unfortunately, a peaceful nation without aggressive objectives must wait for the first blow to fall, and can not surely select, in advance, its initial area of conflict and its initial objectives. We are, therefore, forced to a position of watchful waiting, and to the maintaining of forces and the formulation of plans which will care for every reasonable contingency. Possibly, we can eliminate some geographical areas as possibilities for the enemy's early use; nevertheless, we must be sufficiently flexible in our thinking and preparations to weather the first unpredictable squall, and enable us to build up toward a winning offensive. We must at least have some agreed-upon concept as to the general scheme of waging war. It should be noted here that radical changes from the broad concept will surely involve radical changes in production schedules, which, in turn, take time. And right at this point comes the first impact of logistics on our broad military thinking.

It is a matter of public knowledge, through the medium of the press, that the Joint Chiefs for a long time could not agree upon a general plan of action. Nevertheless, the need for procurement planning and mobilization planning was so urgent that the three departments initially proceeded on a unilateral basis to derive their own missions and tasks and to translate those missions and tasks into a statement of requirements and end products, in order that the Munitions Board might canvass industry as to our ability to meet the military demands. In the Navy Department a strategic plan was evolved together with a statement of necessary forces and desired phasing for reactivation, mobilization, and the initiation of offensive operations. These requirements were, in turn, translated into procurement items and schedules, and, concurrently, the logistical feasibility of the strategic plans and requirements were subjected to test. Aside from any impact on industry which the requirements of the Army and the Air Force might have, it became apparent that we in the Navy had set our sights too high, and it became necessary to inform the strategic planners of the forces and equipment which could actually be made available on a phased schedule after the outbreak of hostilities. This statement of bold fact automatically places

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restrictions on Navy strategic planners, and brings home the fact that logistical feasibility is an inescapable control.

Each of the other services must go through the same process—and yet, even when they have done so, the logistical planners still will lack the refinement of directive which they need in order to finally firm up the difficult and detailed business transactions necessary to fulfill the operator's "what, when, and where." The second-run refinements of the three services must again be evaluated by the Munitions Board in terms of industrial capacity, and by the Resources Board in terms of the relative needs of the supporting civilian economy, and of the requirements of our potential allies. If industry can not meet military requirements, even as revised downward, then the Joint Chiefs of Staff must review the strategic requirements and, in the last analysis, it may be even necessary, at the government level, to drastically revise our national policies and aims.

Up to this point, I have philosophized, in more or less general terms, on the interlocking difficulties of arriving at a coordinated statement of requirements which will put the three military services in balance, put military demands in balance with the requirements of the civilian economy, and put American requirements in balance with the needs of those who will support us in varying degree throughout the world. Now, I must come down to some of the day-to-day realities if you are to understand the problems of the logistics planner.

It is axiomatic that the elements of our national strength entail far more than weapons and men in uniform. Our total strength is made up of the elements of moral strength and courage, spiritual strength, fiscal and economic strength, strength in resources, strength in international ties which may yield support in men and materials. That being so, an inordinate percentage of the national peacetime income spent for military purposes can weaken the greater strength structure. For that reason, the administration has imposed a dollar ceiling on our expenditures even while it recognizes the urgent need to build up our military strength.

So, on the table there is a round sum which must be prorated between the three military services. If each of the services were to acquire the things that it undoubtedly needs to provide perfect security, that available sum would not be enough. Obviously, then, someone must make the decision as to how much of the pie goes to each of the services.

And therein lies the nub of the most complex and vexatious problem confronting the national military establishment today.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff must evaluate the programs of each of the departments and must determine those areas of principal emphasis which must be favored and those areas of less importance which can be shaved with the least detriment to national security. If the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree—and any understanding person will perceive the strong possibility of such a situation

—someone must make that decision. Let me say, rather, that someone in the military establishment must make a *recommendation*; decisions can only be made by the Congress of the United States through its power to appropriate public monies.

These difficulties and problems are not the prime nor sole responsibility of the logistic planner, but he is frequently called into consultation and he waits impatiently for the decision which will permit him to go ahead with final detailed planning.

I should say here that if the Joint Chiefs of Staff fail to agree, such lack of agreement can not be allowed to block the entire process of government, and it is inevitable that in the case of such disagreement the Secretary of Defense must assume the grave burden of “formulating the national military budget” with all of the strategic implications involved.

One of the greatest bars to effective coordinated planning has been the lack of an inter-service Esperanto which will permit us to discuss our needs and deficiencies in terms that are mutually understandable. For example, the total Navy effort is broken down into such plans and programs as Fleet Employment, Shore Station Development, Material Improvement, Shipbuilding and Conversion, Aircraft Procurement, Personnel Allocation, Shore Station Operating Plan, Research and Development, etc. The very nature of Army and Air Force operations is such that their approach to program and budgetary planning is on an entirely different basis in many respects, and we find it mutually difficult to identify similar activities within the three services by reason of operational and administrative differences, as well as by reason of different terminology. Obviously, if the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense are to compare the relative desirabilities of various Army, Navy, and Air Force programs (for the purpose of making budgetary cuts), there must be common language and common definitions to enable the arbiter to understand what he is cutting, and what the penalties of such cuts will be. This need is in the process of development, and it will be necessary to give wide distribution to the common vocabulary if we of the different services are to really accomplish a tolerant and mutual understanding of our problems and difficulties.

The logistic planner, concerned as he is with strategic directives, calculating requirements, dealing with technical people, and rubbing elbows with industrial mobilization, must have an extraordinarily broad professional grounding. Furthermore, he has great and constant need for the mental attainment and indoctrination which I stressed in my early remarks. In these days of unification, there is now added the necessity for an understanding of the logistical workings of the other departments also.

These new problems which I have cited, arising from the new requirements of unification, afford a valid and logical explanation of what might otherwise

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appear to be extremely slow progress in the implementing of the National Security Act. It is only human that the administration and the legislative branch at times have become exasperated with the apparent lack of progress. It is also quite understandable that failures to reach early agreements in the military establishment would be subjected to criticism by a public and a press that expected miracles from unification. Nevertheless, the accomplishments of unification are real. For example, they are virtually complete in the field of procurement, despite some ill-advised statements to the contrary.

I could not dismiss the subject of unification without commenting on an oddity which seems to have escaped the attention of nearly all observers; I refer to the general assumption that with authoritative unification there should automatically follow a complete eradication of argument and disagreement. To expect such a result is to completely ignore the basic philosophy of the Constitution of the United States and the basic tenets of our American principles of government. For example, when it comes to the public's attention that there are differences of opinion within the military establishment, we hear that unification is a "flop" or that so-and-so is insubordinate; and yet an examination of the fundamentals of our form of government immediately indicates that an honest argument before the proper forum is valuable assurance that our democratic processes are still functioning. Suppose that differences of opinion exist, but that under the scheme of unification the Secretary of Defense were empowered to make a decision and to suppress the opinions of the departmental secretaries and service chiefs; when the matter came to a head before the appropriations committees, the Congress would thereby be denied the opportunity to hear the conflicting views. Extending that thought a little farther, such a system would prevent Congress from having access to any technical and professional opinion which was not in accordance with the thought of the Secretary of Defense. Obviously, unless the Congress of the United States were to abdicate its rights and responsibilities in the matter of sifting out the facts before granting appropriations, there could never be any unification founded on the right of one individual to make sole decisions.

If this aspect of the problem is fully appreciated by the American people, they will make sure that Congress never does so abdicate and will make sure that no arbitrary military authority will ever be in position to hide fact and opinion from the representatives of the people sitting in the Congress.

There has been public criticism also of the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have difficulty agreeing on the roles and missions of the three services. The same thinking with respect to the rights and responsibilities of the Congress applies here as well. The fixing of roles and missions has obvious merit as a means of eliminating certain undesirable overlaps and duplications, but it also has profound inherent possibilities for danger. Conceivably, the designation of one

service as the sole agent for employing some weapon or type of attack might well deprive the United States of an opportunity to exert earlier pressure through the use of one of the other services. Such an arbitrary restriction could delay victory or have even more serious consequences. Such a contingency is minimized when the Congress is actually the final denominator of unification through its appropriating power—and we may be thankful that that is so.

New high planning levels in the government structure—unification with its superimposed demands and controls—integration of military and civilian effort—guided missiles and galloping scientific development—mass destruction weapons—new equipment to meet the challenge of supersonic flight—arctic implications in today's strategy—electronic computers to work out logistics programs—all of these factors now further complicate the business of logistic planning, and they offer a worthy challenge to the best-trained thinkers the Navy, the military establishment, and the country can produce. Logistical planning for war—or even for the peace which may only be preceding war—may well hold the key to our future in the future's deadlier and swifter tempo. It is an all hands maneuver—Line and Staff—soldier, sailor, and flyer—military and civilian. Every rank will encounter it in some degree.

And I regretfully tell you that, from my own observation, the future holds no promise of relief for you gentlemen—no rest for the weary and no reward of idleness for the venerable. Flag officers must, because of their responsibilities, struggle even harder than their subordinates, if they are to keep *au courant* with the kaleidoscopic changes in the professional pattern. And the specifications for the good logistical planner are growing increasingly exacting with time and with advancing rank.

My contemporaries are making their land-fall on Snug Harbor, and with our passing from the scene, the Navy will undoubtedly go to hell, as it always does. But if the War College fulfills its high mission of sound indoctrination, the up-and-coming reinforcements will improve on the work of their predecessors—as they always have in a dynamic, forward-moving Navy.

And now one last word. As Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics, I am deeply appreciative of the support which Admiral [Raymond A.] Spruance gave to the launching of the Logistics Course. But, more than that, I feel an admiration for the man which needs expression. Battle—grave responsibility—prolonged strain—none of these things ever visibly dented the armor of his resolution and integrity; no stress ever changed the quiet warmth and friendliness of his personality. Nothing ever distorted his thinking or warped his even disposition. The War College and the Navy were fortunate that the last tempered years of his active service were devoted to imparting something of his wisdom to the Navy he has served so splendidly.