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The U.S. Navy's Search for a Strategy, 1945-1947

Robert E. Fisher

IN LATE 1945, THE UNITED STATES NAVY confronted a postwar world wholly unlike the strategic situation for which it had, for decades, planned. The Imperial Japanese Navy and the German fleet were vanquished; no power could challenge the U.S. Navy on the high seas. Suddenly there was no obvious threat, no maritime foe, around which U.S. naval thinking could crystallize—not at least in a form anything like what had long been familiar. In certain ways, the naval officers of that postwar era had to address an intellectual challenge clearly similar to that faced by those of today. Accordingly, this article explores the U.S. Navy's search for a strategy in the two years following World War II. First, a brief overview of international events, especially the Yalta Conference and the factions it engendered, sets the political background. Second, a discussion of the relationship between the services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff shows the linkage between seemingly independent naval and administration policy making in the immediate postwar period. The article then concentrates on the development of naval policy.

The international system that arose in the aftermath of World War II created an imperative for new American policies at all levels of national government. The nation had suddenly lost its president, early in his fourth term; it had little

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objective understanding of the immensely altered global situation; and it possessed no clear vision of what it wanted from the postwar world. As a result, and until the concept of global containment of communism was fully articulated by Harry S. Truman in 1947, American foreign policy was hesitant, ambivalent, and often contradictory. Simultaneously, the United States Navy, while supreme at sea, faced a profound reevaluation of its goals, force requirements, and even its prospects for institutional survival.¹

The Yalta Agreements

To a hopeful American people, the February 1945 Yalta Conference of the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union had defined both the strategic plan for completing the war and the framework for a postwar world in which democracy, international cooperation, and American commerce would be in the ascendant. (See the box for a chronology from events of 1945 to 1947.) The agreement formalized the Soviet commitment to enter the war against Japan after Germany was defeated, called for free elections in Poland, declared a free Eastern Europe, and promised full allied participation in the United Nations Organization based on the Atlantic Charter.² Offering an idyllic picture of a postwar world characterized by international cooperation, the Yalta accords seemed the final fulfillment of the 1941 Atlantic Charter, which had to some extent reaffirmed President Woodrow Wilson's principles of collective security, national self-determination, freedom of the seas, and free trade.³

Indeed, Franklin D. Roosevelt shared Wilson's vision, but he was also a supreme pragmatist. His goals at Yalta were tempered by the reality of a relatively weak military position—on 5 February, the first full day of the conference, the Soviet Army was less than forty miles east of Berlin; Poland had been occupied, and a communist government installed. The rest of Eastern Europe, other than Greece, had been liberated by either the Soviets or communist clients like Tito in Yugoslavia. Roosevelt had conceded during the 1944 election campaign that the Soviets would do what they wished in the areas they occupied. "We cannot afford to get into a position of merely recording protests on our part unless there is some chance of some of the protests being heeded." Just before Yalta, the president had acknowledged that "the Russians had the power in Eastern Europe [and] that it was obviously impossible to have a break with them."⁴

Roosevelt's bargaining position was further weakened because the Western allies were only just recovering from the Battle of the Bulge; also, the fighting in the Pacific was still fierce, with heavy losses expected on Iwo Jima, where the Marines were about to land, and in the planned assaults upon Okinawa and the Japanese home islands. Although work on the atomic bomb was proceeding well, its success was not assured, and the weapon could not be considered in the

1945

February: Yalta Conference.

April: FDR dies, Truman becomes president.

July: Byrnes becomes Secretary of State.

July-August: Potsdam Conference.

September: London Foreign Ministers Conference.

December: Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference; Soviet-supported coup in Azerbaijan; Soviet demands for Iranian oil concessions.

1946

January-April: Iranian crisis.

January: Byrnes upbraided by Truman; Iranian appeal; Soviet interference in UN.

February: Stalin's election acceptance speech; Kennan's "Long Telegram"; JCS appraisal of Near East options; Byrnes's speech at the Overseas Press Club.

March: Churchill's Iron Curtain speech; Soviet tanks reported twenty-five miles from Tehran; Byrnes backs Iran in UN Security Council; USS *Missouri* sails alone to Istanbul; Soviets announce troop withdrawal from Iran.

April: USS *Missouri* arrives at Istanbul.

July: JCS input to Clark Clifford.

September: USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* task group arrives at Piraeus, Greece; Forrestal's policy statement on the Eastern Mediterranean; Clifford-Elsey report.

1947

February: Sherman briefs Truman on the new Navy strategy.

March: Truman Doctrine presented to Congress.

correlation of forces. In addition, Roosevelt was convinced that a debt was owed the Soviet Union for engaging the bulk of Germany's forces alone for three years, for Allied failure to open a second front in 1942 and 1943, and for the most recent Soviet winter offensive, launched early by Stalin in part to relieve hard-pressed Anglo-American forces in the Ardennes.

Thus the president had to set his priorities carefully. The highest were the immediate defeat of Germany, establishment of a United Nations with the Soviet Union as a member but not the dominant one, and, perhaps most importantly, a commitment from Stalin to join the war in the Pacific as soon as possible. For

his part, Stalin wanted reparations to rebuild his shattered country, "restoration" of Asian possessions, a weakened Germany that would be unable to threaten again the Soviet Union, and a security buffer in Eastern Europe. Both sides got what they wanted, in a series of *quid quo pros*, notwithstanding the portrayals of a more idealistic agreement. The Declaration of Liberated Europe and rhetoric evoking the Atlantic Charter aside, the Yalta accords were a great-power spheres-of-influence deal. They were not the Wilsonian internationalist agreement that most Americans, Truman included, thought they were.⁵

Roosevelt's style was personal, subtle, devious, and ambiguous; Truman's was virtually the opposite. Moreover, Truman inherited Roosevelt's advisors when he became president on 12 April, but he could not know how much or how little his predecessor had followed their counsel. While most of those advisors—excepting James F. Byrnes (director of the Office of Economic Stabilization) and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson—already had aligned themselves at either extreme with respect to the USSR, Roosevelt himself seemed to have chosen a pragmatic, middle path. As a result, Truman found little in the way of a systematic organization for processing information or formulating policy. For the preceding year as vice president he had been apprised of few key policies and programs (such as the Manhattan Project or Roosevelt's foreign policy objectives). Therefore, though the new president was eager to adopt a forceful and consistent foreign policy, his not having been kept "in the picture" combined with mixed signals from his staff to produce at first confused and often contradictory results.⁶

With respect to Yalta, Truman relied heavily on his new Secretary of State, Byrnes, who, like the president, took the Yalta agreements at face value—an interpretation that, by summer 1945, Byrnes himself realized was flawed. Although present at Yalta as an advisor, he had not been on hand when President Roosevelt had agreed with Stalin on Soviet influence in Poland (probably as a trade-off for Soviet cooperation on the United Nations and British influence in Greece). Stalin was not about to accept less than total Soviet control in areas he perceived as essential for security.⁷

Until the end of 1945, Truman himself was torn between two schools of thought as to dealing with the Soviets. The first has been called the "Riga" approach, for the Latvian city from which American diplomats had studied Russian affairs before the United States recognized the Soviet Union in 1933. It was the hard-line view; it reflected the hostility and suspicion toward the Soviet Union characteristic of the American diplomatic envoys who gained their experience in Riga and subsequently rose in the State Department hierarchy. Having reported the worst Stalinist purges of the mid-thirties, these observers felt that Soviet foreign policy would reflect the "intractability of the ideologically bound, authoritarian Soviets." In contrast, what can be thought of as the "Yalta" perspective reflected wartime amity and "posited that Soviet-American

cooperation in the postwar era could be recognized through agreements that respected each side's interests."⁸ The hard-line "Riga" faction (which included the Under Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, his Near Eastern and African Affairs office chief, Loy W. Henderson, and the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, W. Averell Harriman) tended to be more persuasive within the administration than was the more cooperative Yalta group. Its sway, however, was not yet absolute, its opinions not yet gospel. The Secretary of Commerce (and former vice president), Henry A. Wallace, being a steadfast believer in the "Yalta" axioms and international cooperation, the administration's senior officials were divided.⁹

While Byrnes was slowly realizing his mistaken understanding of the Yalta agreements, Truman was growing irritated by Soviet duplicity. He believed the Soviets were clearly violating the spirit of the declaration of a Liberated Europe and of free elections in Poland. As early as 23 April 1945 (that is, less than two weeks after becoming president), Truman had lectured the Soviet foreign minister, V.M. Molotov, on moral diplomacy and the requirement to keep agreements made in good faith. After delivering what amounted to a personal dressing-down, Truman gave Molotov a strong note to pass to Stalin. Ironically, in his attempt to pursue what he thought had been Roosevelt's goals at Yalta, the new president instead convinced the Soviets that he was actually changing United States policy.¹⁰ This, then, was the uncertain and confused American political situation in which the Truman administration looked at the postwar world.

The Joint Chiefs and Service Relationships

Under its chairman, Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) consisted of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and the Chief of the Army Air Forces. Theoretically, the chiefs formed a link between administration and service strategic thinking. The duties and responsibilities of the chiefs had not been formally or clearly defined, but the four officers acted essentially as the principal military advisors to the president, to whom each had direct access for operational matters. In this role, they neither coordinated with nor officially kept informed the civilian service secretaries, who, functioning primarily as administrators, were outside the operational chain of command. In foreign policy, the JCS became the primary source for the Secretary of State of military positions on major issues, through the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, or SWNCC. The forerunner of today's National Security Council, the SWNCC consisted of senior civilian representatives of the three departments. It was chaired by the State Department, and its principal military advisors were the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹¹ Several interservice committees

supported the JCS, most notably the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, for long-range planning, and the Joint Planning Staff, for the preparation of detailed plans. The members of these and the other committees that assisted the chiefs were primarily representatives of their services, not true joint staff officers. Yet because of the nature of consensus building and committee work, it was possible for the president and the Secretary of State to consider the JCS collectively as an "honest broker." JCS inputs, however, were often delayed or diluted by growing interservice rivalries.¹²

There was in practice no coordination between naval and administration thinking. The mid-level Navy staff officers who sat on the joint committees were removed from the mainstream of thought and activity in their own service. Operational fleet commanders exercised great latitude and autonomy, largely isolated (as were other major commanders and their staffs) from strategic direction by the administration. Only the Chief of Naval Operations and, presumably, his senior staff—notably the Deputy CNO for Operations—were actively engaged with JCS strategic planning. Since 1941, Ernest J. King, now Fleet Admiral, had held the combined position of CNO and Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet. In keeping with Roosevelt's hands-on and informal style, King had direct access to the White House, virtually bypassing the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, and his successor, James V. Forrestal. The latter's own dealings with Truman revolved around organizational and administrative affairs; on policy matters, he generally supported the War Department.¹³ King and the other admirals who had fought the war in Washington were accustomed to autonomy and were protected from interference, whether by civilians, other services, or even the JCS. As a result, the Navy had been planning for the postwar world in a vacuum. Its "Basic Postwar Defense Plan 1," signed by King in March 1945, was coordinated with neither the civilian nor the military hierarchy, much less with the State Department or other parts of the administration.¹⁴ The result was that the administration and the Navy developed policy in a simultaneous, but unrelated, fashion.

A Navy without a Mission

At the end of World War II, Europe had become a naval backwater, and the enemy in the Pacific had been completely vanquished. With no prospective maritime opponent, the Navy was hard pressed to keep a large fleet in existence for the sole purpose of being a police force.¹⁵ Yet the naval establishment was firmly convinced that its inadequate force structure in the prewar years had been directly responsible for American defeats and weakness during 1941 and 1942. Navy interests, therefore, centered on retaining a large peacetime fleet.

However, only the recognition by policy makers of a potential threat that the Navy could effectively counter would justify such expenditures.¹⁶

The Soviet Union was the most likely hypothetical enemy, but not at sea, and the U.S. Navy, although globally deployed, was unable to project power far inland. Unlike the air force, the Navy had no immediately available way to confront or engage the Soviets, except on the periphery: its attack aircraft had a combat radius of little more than three hundred miles, and it possessed no nuclear strike capability. Even if aircraft ranges had been upgraded to five hundred miles, the Navy could have achieved little strategic or geopolitical leverage.¹⁷ The planes of a carrier task force in the Adriatic, for example, could barely reach Soviet soil; however, Army Air Force B-29s taking off from the strip then being built at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, could hit targets in the oil fields in the Caucasus, some 1,200 miles away.¹⁸

As relations with the Soviets deteriorated, United States foreign policy focused on the "Northern Tier" states of Greece, Turkey, and Iran; but the overwhelming preponderance of naval forces, as well as most of the tactical thinking and operational perspectives, and most leading admirals outside of Washington, were still in the Pacific. In European waters—which the Navy had long considered secondary—there were only a light cruiser and two destroyers, in the Mediterranean, with no units permanently stationed in Great Britain until January 1946. The Navy's postwar strategy (and for that matter, that of the JCS) still focused on consolidating bases won in the Pacific, including in China.¹⁹ By contrast, and reflecting the long range of its bomber and transport aircraft, the U.S. Army Air Force linked its own postwar strategy to a series of air bases throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, for logistic resupply, forward defense, and deep strategic attack.²⁰

A consequence of the Navy's parochialism was the persistence of outdated perceptions of its roles and missions. The pre-World War II assumption that navies existed primarily to fight other navies left planners unable to conceptualize a maritime mission in the new era, unable to conceive of sea power as a counterpoise to a land superpower. Second, the lesson of Pearl Harbor not only eliminated the idea of "cheap" physical security but fostered an almost paranoid assumption that the next major war would be initiated by a massive strike on the nation. The Navy's persistence in thinking, in effect, along the lines of the "Yalta axioms" as regarded the USSR, while the administration moved toward the more confrontational "Riga" view, further bifurcated naval and administration planning. Therefore, while Secretary Forrestal had as early as the fall of 1944 identified the Soviet Union as the main postwar threat, the uniformed Navy was either unwilling or institutionally unable to accept that assumption.²¹

All naval force planning to this point had focused on keeping Pacific strength at a two-to-one advantage over the Atlantic; the Mediterranean, considered a

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British sphere, was of tertiary interest. A memo of 24 September 1945 from Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (DCNO) for Air, to Forrestal reflected this persisting World War II mindset; Mitscher did not recognize the Soviet Union as a naval threat, and he concluded that the U.S. Navy should keep the preponderance of its force in the Pacific.

Events, however, were pointing to a new naval role, in a new theater. On 27 July 1946, in response to a special request from the White House Special Advisor, Clark M. Clifford, the JCS formally recommended a policy of military deterrence to counter the Soviets. In a departure from past positions, it called for what amounted to worldwide containment, based on Soviet capabilities in a worst-case scenario rather than on a more difficult assessment of Soviet intentions and limitations. As a result, the JCS called for strong defenses, concluding that too much faith should not be placed in the military capability or support of allies in the early phases of a conflict. The United States should have forces and overseas bases of its own sufficient not just to deter an adversary but to protect the nation until it could mobilize for war.²²

The JCS document was, in effect, a declaration of cold war. It formed the basis for the more extensive Clifford-Elsley White House report to the president on 24 September, and it was the framework for the Truman Doctrine presented to Congress on 12 March 1947. By this time, Truman was indeed tiring of "babying the Russians" (in the words of his diary). As early as February 1946, George F. Kennan's famous "Long Telegram" had started to polarize administration thinking; likewise the JCS now viewed the Soviets as the major threat, as its July report would make official. At the national level, alignment toward the "Riga axioms" was well on its way.

Strategic Convergence

As for the Navy, by spring 1946 Forrestal had made substantial progress in a campaign, which had begun soon after the war ended, to clear conceptual roadblocks, particularly by reorganizing the Navy at the highest levels and bringing to those levels new people from the combatant fleets.²³ By the end of 1945, with the accession of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Chief of Naval Operations, Forrestal had completed the first phase, that of consolidating the bureaucratic power of the Secretary's office. In September 1945, at Forrestal's insistence, Truman had issued an executive order that effectively subordinated the CNO to the Secretary of the Navy, returned control of the bureaus to the Secretary, and cut the CNO's direct line to the president. When Forrestal agreed to appoint Nimitz to replace King, he had extracted from Nimitz an agreement to honor the letter and spirit of the recent executive agreement, limit his tour to two years, and coordinate all senior staff appointments with the Secretary.²⁴

Dissatisfied with Basic Postwar Defense Plan 1, which did not explicitly name the Soviets as a threat, Forrestal had ordered a panel of three flag officers to reevaluate the plan's content and conclusions. In the fall of 1945, Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill, one of Nimitz's amphibious experts from the Pacific theater, disagreed with his two counterparts, battleship proponent William H.P. Blandy and aviation partisan Arthur W. Radford, and argued for a balanced force of air, surface, subsurface, amphibious, and support units "capable of effecting a landing and occupying territory against land-based air and ground opposition."²⁵ Hill's conception was of a Navy for power projection and logistical support of American or friendly forces ashore—a means to engage a land power not possessing a fleet. In place of the previous deployment imbalance in favor of the Pacific, Hill called for equal forces in the Atlantic and Pacific, each with the ability to respond to any crisis. Hill's memo, attached to a 5 November 1945 report from King to Forrestal, clearly identified Soviet Russia as the major threat.²⁶ Nimitz, when he became CNO, concurred with Hill.

Soon thereafter, two important flag officer appointments were made. Vice Admiral Hill was named president of the Army-Navy Staff College at Fort McNair in Washington, and in March 1946 Admiral Raymond A. Spruance became president of the Naval War College. These two officers would do much to change the thinking of the Navy and the nation.²⁷ Also within a few months of Nimitz's appointment, other flag officers, new and often relatively young, many of them aviators and all from combat commands in the Pacific, were appointed to or elevated within OPNAV. Exemplifying the new breed were Forrest P. Sherman, the DCNO for Operations (known as OP-03), Louis Denfeld for Personnel (OP-01), and Robert B. Carney for Logistics (OP-4); all of these would later become Chiefs of Naval Operations. Radford, who replaced Mitscher as DCNO for Air (OP-05) in March 1946, would later be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Both Richard L. Conolly of Intelligence (OP-2) and Blandy of Special (that is, nuclear) Weapons (OP-6) were slated for important operational commands and later consideration for CNO.²⁸ Forrestal and Nimitz soon put their talents to good use.

Nimitz, however, assigned particular importance to the Naval War College, which he considered to have been a key to victory in World War II. In 1965 Nimitz would declare that—except for the kamikazes—"nothing that happened in the Pacific was strange or unexpected. We had gamed it all out at the War College" in the years before the war.²⁹ As Chief of the Bureau of Navigation just before the war (when that Bureau was responsible for personnel matters), Nimitz had forestalled a move to close the College in the event of hostilities. Nonetheless, wartime demands during the war had drained the school of its normal complement of instructors and students and had reduced its emphasis on

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higher-level strategic and operational thinking, planning, and execution. Nimitz's instructions to Spruance when he became the new president were brief: revitalize the Naval War College, increase its prestige, and find for it a new direction.³⁰

In Spruance the Naval War College had a leader who was a proven expert in operational and tactical planning and execution. This would be his fourth tour at Newport;³¹ he was chosen not for his hard-line stand against the Soviets—that evolved later—but for his background and steady competence. King had once called Spruance the most intellectual flag officer in the Navy. He was also a symbolic bridge between the old naval thinking and the emerging perception of a Soviet menace. Spruance had no axe to grind about the Soviet Union, seeing it as a land power posing no threat of conflict with the United States or its navy. In fact, he had told a press conference in August 1945 that the Navy should be substantially demobilized, since there was no longer any naval power to oppose. In early 1946 Spruance still agreed with the older admirals who saw their *raison d'être* in grappling with an enemy's fleet and crushing it. However, by the fall of that year his alarm over world events would lead him to a harder line on the Soviets.³²

Spruance's impact on the Naval War College was swift and clear. Strategic problem solving and war gaming were his first priorities. Whatever his views at the outset toward the Soviets, he still needed an enemy for his games; in view of the defeat of the Axis powers and of U.S. friendship with Britain, the USSR was the only choice. Spruance appointed Commodore Penn L. Carroll to develop new strategic issues for gaming scenarios. A battleship sailor with a keen intellect and an appreciation for the technological innovations spawned by the war, Carroll saw conflict with the Soviets as most likely in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean.³³

In fact, at the very time when Spruance and Carroll were preparing the incoming class at the Naval War College with this new strategic focus, crisis with the USSR over Iran was coming to a head. Allied forces had occupied that nation during the war to prevent a German takeover; British and American units had withdrawn after the war ended, but Soviet forces remained in northern Iran beyond January 1946, and Stalin was now refusing to remove them. Also, thousands of other Soviet troops were being massed on the borders of Turkey, and Moscow was pressing demands about the Turkish straits and even for a Soviet military presence in the former Italian colonies of Tunisia and Ethiopia.

In Newport, by the end of March 1946 a new seminar-type war game that pitted the United States (BLUE) against a thinly disguised Soviet Union (PURPLE) had been designed and implemented. The scenario opened with a general overview of the world situation. BLUE had experienced postwar cycles of prosperity, recession, labor unrest, and internal dissent, but its people were likely

to unite if threatened by yet more war. RED (Great Britain) and BLUE were de facto allies and would be aligned if hostilities broke out with PURPLE. A series of incidents in the eastern Mediterranean led to a PURPLE thrust through the Northern Tier. The game laid down military responsibilities that closely reflected the realities of late March 1946: BLUE's major mission was to protect the North Atlantic, by occupying Iceland, and secondarily to provide RED with logistical support. Because of RED's influence in that area, BLUE was "to have no major responsibilities in the Mediterranean." The Pacific theater received only passing mention.³⁴ With this war game, Spruance and the Naval War College enunciated both a general Soviet menace and a specific threat to the Northern Tier. However, because of friendly relations with regional powers, they could not yet articulate U.S. naval interest in the eastern Mediterranean.

That the Navy did nonetheless have real interests in that region, however, soon became apparent. The eastern Mediterranean gave the Navy access to valuable targets to a degree impossible from the Pacific or northeastern European waters. In a conventional confrontation, for anything other than nuisance raids, the Navy could be useful only by supporting units ashore, and these simply did not exist—that is, outside the Northern Tier. From the Dardanelles or the Aegean, naval tactical aviation could reach far into Turkey and Greece, where friendly ground forces might be engaged against communist troops. These countries also constituted both an air defense buffer and a safe route for attacking and returning aircraft. Of greater significance, and often lost in the context of diplomacy, the Turks in particular possessed a large, reasonably capable army of nearly a million men, potentially a friendly or even allied ground force that the U.S. Navy could support.³⁵ Only in this tactical context could the service in some way recover the strategic advantage now monopolized by the air force.

While Spruance established new concepts in Newport, his counterpart in Washington, Hill, was playing a similar role. On 1 April 1946, the Army-Navy Staff College at Fort McNair was redesignated the National War College. With a new and broadened curriculum, it became organizationally the highest-level educational institution for the armed forces, and it also served the Department of State. A new faculty was drawn from the armed forces, the State Department, and private universities. Among the first of its new members appointed by Hill were Bernard Brodie of Princeton and George F. Kennan, fresh from the Moscow embassy, as department head for political affairs.³⁶

When Brodie joined the National War College, he had already established himself as an analyst of naval strategy. Because so many naval officers had studied his *The Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, its third edition (1944) dropped the word "*Layman's*" from the title. With Hill, Brodie saw newly matured capabilities like those of the aircraft carrier and submarine as best used, in

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balanced concert with surface combat units, for ensuring freedom of the seas. The ultimate naval goal was to "control transportation over the seas during wartime" and to project armies and air forces ashore across the seas. Air power was part of the sea control equation, an instrument of naval power that should not—really could not—be entrusted to the separate air force envisioned by proponents of that service.³⁷ Brodie's views on naval strategy were propounded at the National War College as Brodie himself undertook one of the first serious examinations of nuclear strategy.

Kennan, for his part, was in frequent demand for lectures, and in October 1946 he spoke to the students at the Naval War College. He reiterated the theme of his "Long Telegram," adding a denunciation of a recent "soft-line" speech by Secretary of Commerce Wallace and placing emphasis on naval affairs. He reaffirmed his belief that although war with the USSR was not immediately probable, a stand against Soviet advances was mandatory. By this time, Kennan's position on the Soviet menace was shared by his host, Admiral Spruance.³⁸

Kennan's speech to the future leaders of the U.S. Navy, by an authoritative representative of both the State Department and the senior military educational institution, was a symbolic fusion of administration and Navy thinking about the Soviet Union. For different intellectual as well as practical reasons, administration and naval policies had converged; the Navy viewpoint, which had been six to nine months behind that of the administration, now caught up.

The evolution of the navy's postwar policy can be seen in two phases: acknowledgement of the Soviet Union as the major threat, and the recognition of the eastern Mediterranean, particularly the Northern Tier, as the key operational area for the Navy. By the close of 1946, both the Navy and the administration had recognized the Soviet Union as the nation's greatest threat, and the attention of both had been ineluctably drawn to the eastern Mediterranean. Once the Navy began to focus on the Soviet Union and the Northern Tier, its forces would quickly follow, starting with the first solitary visit of the USS *Missouri* (BB 63) in April 1946 and progressing to the more emphatic and better coordinated visit of the aircraft carrier *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVB 42) and its task group in August. Forrestal's policy statement of September 1946 confirmed that there would be a continuing U.S. naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean, and Forrest Sherman's Maritime Strategy statement of early 1947 presaged President Truman's March declaration of the doctrine of containment.

Notes

1. Thomas G. Paterson, "Inevitable Conflict: The Unstable International System," Thomas G. Paterson and Robert J. McMahon, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1991), pp. 102-3; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power* (California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 25, 55, 100; Thomas

C. Hone, *Power and Change: The Administrative History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946-1986* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1989), pp. 9-12; Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1988), pp. 1-6; and Vincent Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 179-81.

2. Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hogan, *American Foreign Policy: A History Since 1900* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1991), pp. 373-423; and U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States [hereafter FRUS]: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington: 1955). The eight-point Atlantic Charter was a statement of war aims by Prime Minister Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Argentina Conference in August 1941. It was deliberately more vague than, but quite similar in tone and concept to, Woodrow Wilson's idealistic Fourteen Points of 1918. It encompassed the principles of collective security, national self-determination, freedom of the seas, and liberal trading practices. In the Atlantic Charter the powers denied themselves territorial aggrandizement and agreed on economic cooperation leading to "social security."

3. Paterson, Clifford, and Hogan, pp. 374-5; and *FRUS 1941* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1958), v. 1, p. 378.

4. For both quotations, Robert L. Messer, *The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 42.

5. Messer, pp. 43-4; and Paterson et al., *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 410-3.

6. Daniel H. Yergin, *The Shattered Peace: Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 71-3, 84-6; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (United Kingdom: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 14-8; and Leffler, pp. 25-30.

7. Leffler, pp. 32-3; Gary Hess, "Roosevelt as Practical Idealist," Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, Volume II: Since 1914* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1989), 252-4.

8. Thomas Paterson, in the introduction to Daniel Yergin, "American Ideology: The Riga and Yalta Axioms," Paterson and McMahon, eds. *Origins of the Cold War*, p. 35. The "Riga-Yalta" typology was devised by the historian Daniel Yergin in his *Shattered Peace*, pp. 17-68.

9. See Leffler, pp. 25-33, for an excellent explanation of the byzantine bureaucratic inconsistencies within the early Truman administration.

10. Arnold A. Offner, "Harry S. Truman as a Parochial Nationalist," in Paterson and McMahon, *Origins*, pp. 49-60; Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, p. 81; Historical Division, Joint Secretariat, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)*, v. 1, 1945-1947, James Schnabel, ed. (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1979), pp. 146-9, 186-91; Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: Norton), pp. 212-4; and Leffler, pp. 30-3.

11. Schnabel, pp. 4-8.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10; and Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 2-8.

13. Leffler, pp. 26-30.

14. Hone, pp. 8-9; E.B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1976), p. 401; Davis, p. 98; and Palmer, pp. 4-7.

15. Palmer, pp. 11-2.

16. Davis, pp. 23-4, 33-5; and Palmer, pp. 5-6.

17. Davis, p. 180; Bernard Brodie, *A Guide to Naval Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1944), p. 222. The figure of three hundred miles is based on the characteristics of the aircraft that made up carrier air wings during the immediate postwar period, experience of the Third Fleet in attacks on Japan in 1945, and on operations of propeller-driven aircraft from carriers in the Korean War. Aerial refueling was still unknown.

18. Joseph C. Grew to Truman, 26 June 1945, *FRUS 1945* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1967-1969), v. 8, pp. 915-7.

19. Command Narrative, *Commander Naval Forces Europe History, August 1945 to March 1947*, 9 May 1947, Command File-Post January 1946, Operational Archives, Naval History Division, Department of the Navy [hereafter OA], pp. 108-16; Palmer, pp. 12-3; and Schnabel, pp. 32-3.

20. Schnabel, pp. 299-311; Herman S. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force, 1943-1947* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, 1984), pp. 55, 114.

21. Hone, pp. 7-9; and Palmer, pp. 2-6.

22. JCS 1696, 25 July 1946, encl. A, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45) sec. 9, RG 218; and Schnabel, pp. 160-4.

23. Hone, p. 12.

24. Executive Order 9635, 29 September 1945, enclosed under King to All Staff, 2 October 1945, folder A3-1, box 106, Strategic Plans Division File, OA; and Potter, p. 404.

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25. Hill to King (29 October 1945), enclosed with King to Secretary of the Navy, 5 November 1945, folder A16-3, box 106, Special Plans Division, OA.

26. Basic Postwar Plan No. 1, 7 May 1945, folder A-16-3, box 106, OA; Palmer, pp. 6-7; King to Secretary of the Navy, 5 November 1945, enclosing Hill to King (29 October 1945), Blandy to King (18 October 1945), and Radford to King (29 October 1945), OA.

27. For the backgrounds of these and other flag officers brought into OPNAV in this period, Potter, *Nimitz*, pp. 409-10, 429, 436; and E.B. Potter, *Admiral Arleigh Burke* (New York: Random House, 1990), chaps. 15-6; and Henry Kent Hewitt, Biographical Files, OA.

28. Hone, pp. 17-20; George W. Anderson, interview with John T. Mason, Jr., U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Md., 1983, OA, pp. 161-3.

29. Thomas B. Buell, "Admiral Raymond A. Spruance and the Naval War College: Part I—Preparing for World War II," *Naval War College Review*, March 1971, pp. 31-51.

30. Thomas B. Buell, *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1974), pp. 383-5.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 378.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-3.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 389-91.

34. Naval War College, Operations Problem 5, Command and Staff Class of June 1946, Newport, R.I., 29 March 1946, 6168-5768-PS, Record Group 4, Publications.

35. *FRUS 1946*, v. 1, p. 810.

36. Harry W. Hill, Biographical Files, OA.

37. Brodie, pp. 1-15.

38. George F. Kennan, "Russia," a lecture to the Naval War College, 1 October 1946, Newport, R.I., 8 October 1946, 6292-5792, Record Group 15, NWC Lectures; and Buell, *Quiet Warrior*, p. 389.

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The Naval War College advocates no dogma, nor doctrine, nor any fixed set of rules by which campaigns can be conducted or battles won. There are no such rules. But it can and does endeavor to show that there are certain fundamentals, the understanding of which assists a commander in the orderly thinking and planning necessary to solve a military problem.

Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN
President, Naval War College, 1946-1948

