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The Barometer

Frederick C. Dyer

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THE BAROMETER

(The following, from a letter received from a reader, comments on Captain Godfrey's article, "Mahan: the Man, His Writings and Philosophy," in the March *Naval War College Review*.)

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[This] article well summarizes the essence of Mahan for those who must read him quickly; and it identifies Mahan's concepts that are still valid. (When in doubt, assume that more, not less, of Mahan is valid.)

About 15 years ago—when the Armed Forces were being organized and reorganized again and again—I took several pages of Mahan's *Principles of Naval Administration* and, without iden-

tifying them, read them aloud to a group of officers and civilian employees in one of the Navy Department buildings.

One of the officers said, "You better watch it, . . . that kind of talk can get you in trouble with the higher ups."

A civilian asked, "Is that an advance copy of some military or political prize essay?"

All thought the words were contemporary—yet Mahan had been writing before 1900.

Incidents like this indicate the continuing basic validity of Mahan the prophet.

Frederick C. Dyer

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National strength lies only in the hearts and spirits of men.

S. L. A. Marshall: Men Against Fire, 1947