

1952

## Influences of Military Alliances on Strategy

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### Recommended Citation

Eliot, George Fielding (1952) "Influences of Military Alliances on Strategy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 5 : No. 6 , Article 2.  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The four articles included in this issue are lectures presented before the Naval War College during a week devoted to *Strategy Studies*.

The purpose of these studies was to inquire into the elements and problems of strategy. In general terms, the coverage included the requirements of a sound strategy and the influence on strategy of political, ethical, ideological and military factors, with special attention devoted to the nature of sea power.

These lectures enhanced the value of the program and formed a background for seminar discussions.

The Naval War College is indebted to the lecturers who have generously devoted the time and effort to edit their lectures, and who have cheerfully given permission to publish them here for the benefit of the officers throughout the service in all parts of the world.

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## **INFLUENCES OF MILITARY ALLIANCES ON STRATEGY**

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 19 March 1952

by  
*Major George Fielding Eliot*

Admiral Conolly, Admiral Hewitt, Gentlemen:

I want to thank the President for the very kind introduction. He points out that I have been a commentator, analyst, and so on — one of those fellows whose daily prayer is supposed to be, "Oh Lord, give me this day my daily opinion and forgive me for the one I had yesterday." I will try, gentlemen, to avoid opinion as far as I can do so in presenting the subject of "Military Alliances," and will try to rely as far as possible on expositions from the facts and lessons from the past.

The creation of a military alliance presupposes a common purpose among two or more countries which no one of the Allies is strong enough to accomplish alone. That purpose may be defensive or offensive. There have been many alliances which were formed for sheer conquest and the subsequent division of the spoils over which the Allies usually fell out. In this discussion I will try to confine myself to the consideration of *defensive* alliances in which two or more states come together to defend themselves against a common peril. That is the type of alliance in which we are now engaged and in which, historically, our interest is stronger than in the offensive type.

Such a defensive alliance, unfortunately, is the only practical form even now of collective security. The Covenant of the League of Nations and the Charter of the United Nations are

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expressions of the conscience of civilized humanity, a realization of the need for some form of collective security reaching out towards the ideal of a world of peace and justice under law. But neither the League nor the United Nations have so far succeeded in creating military institutions capable of enforcing such a rule of law. Military power remains a monopoly of national, not international, authority. It can be exercised in international combination only when two or more nations are impelled by a common purpose or a common danger to contract an alliance to that end. In the presence of aggressive and expanding power in centralized hands, the law-abiding state — if too weak to defend itself alone — cannot rely upon duly constituted officers of justice. It can rely only upon which might be called the *posse comitatus* of the international community, just as our own ancestors in the Old West were unable to rely on courts and sheriffs which did not yet exist but had to form committees of vigilance to deal with outlaws in those days.

It is in reluctant recognition of this fact that the United States today, faced by the threat of expanding Soviet power has entered into a series of military alliances with other nations likewise threatened by Soviet aggression. This is the first time in our history that we have become a member of a military alliance while not actually at war and some of us are inclined to be unhappy about it. We use words such as “entangle” and “involve,” and seek to place artificial limitations on the extent of our military commitments as though we could define by Congressional resolution the precise degree of danger to which we shall in the future be exposed. Yet the primal instinct of self-preservation overrules our fears of departing from the comfortable precepts of less perilous days.

In fact, there is nothing startlingly new about the existing situation. It follows a pattern deeply woven into the history of

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the past 250 years. Four times in those two and one-half centuries the liberties of a great part of mankind have been threatened by the concentrated power and expanding ambition of authoritarian states: by the France of Louis XIV, by the France of Napoleon, by Hohenzollern Germany and by the combination of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. In each case the threat was abated; in each case this result was brought about by a military alliance of the threatened state; in each case the aggressor might well have succeeded in his design if the threatened states had opposed him singly, if they had not succeeded in achieving some degree, however imperfect, of unity of purpose and of effort. In the last two instances we ourselves became partners in the victorious alliance and our intervention on both occasions decided the outcome of the struggle.

Now once more we face a determined bid for world domination. Here, as Kipling puts it "is nothing new or aught unproven," save that this time we Americans are the leaders, indeed the very architects of the alliance which the Soviet threat has drawn together. Instead of beginning as mere spectators and later being "drawn into a foreign war," as we like to tell ourselves was the case in 1917 and 1941, we now find ourselves compelled to take the initiative, to marshal the forces of resistance and to provide the bulk of the money and weapons which give the new alliance its power. We are thus cast in the role hitherto chiefly occupied by Britain. Instead of allowing ourselves to be disturbed by vague misgivings that there is something un-American about what we are doing, we might well give some study to the history of past alliances, especially from the British viewpoint.

We have made a good beginning. The alliance of which we are the leader has drawn together well in advance of the actual impact of full-scale war. We have not lost three or four of our

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Allies piece meal before making up our minds to resist. We have not indulged our God-given democratic right of hoping for the best while failing to prepare for the worst, right up to the moment when the storm burst in all its fury. In the light of past experience we have indeed been astonishingly forehanded. In consequence, we have some reason to hope that this time our alliance may have a chance of gaining its ends without a major war.

The common purpose of the Allied powers has been defined by President Truman in very simple words: "to stop Communist aggression and achieve peace." It follows that the alliance must be sufficiently strong and well-knit: (1) to stop or contain minor aggressive attempts of the enemy, as in Korea; (2) to present so formidable an aspect that the risk of doing anything that might lead to a major war will seem unacceptable to the enemy; (3) if a major war, nevertheless, does occur by mischance or by hostile designs — to win it. The alliance may have to have considerable staying power, as the conditions of readiness required to accomplish missions (1) and (2) may have to be maintained for a long time.

These are objectives which neither the United States nor any other Western power can accomplish alone. Their accomplishment depends upon an alliance which possesses sufficient combined power to achieve them. So much that is precious to all free men and women depends indeed on making this alliance strong and keeping it strong that it seems well worthwhile to examine what the record of experience teaches about the defensive alliances of the past; the reasons for their successes and their failures; the obstacles that had to be overcome; the influence upon Allied unity of the domestic politics, and the diverging interests of the member states; of political, personal, and military considerations and of public opinion.

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It is somewhat surprising that the extensive military literature of the past 250 years contains no study of military alliances, as such, or of even the narrower and purely military problems of the conduct of coalition warfare. There is a wealth of historical material; the record is there, and it is copiously annotated, but there is no searching analysis of the military alliance as an instrument of defense against the exorbitant power of an aggressive state. One might well have expected such a book to have come from a British pen because of Britain's vast experience as the organizer and leader of military alliances, but there is little to be found save a few articles in military journals and Sir Frederick Maurice's excellent "Lessons of Allied Cooperation," which is confined to the experience of World War I. Most of the great writers on strategy, British or Continental, virtually ignore the subject of the workings of alliances save for a few pungent paragraphs in Clausewitz—which one could wish had been expanded into a chapter.

American interest in the subject of alliances is comparatively recent, not to say reluctant. Indeed, generations of Americans have been taught that the very word, "alliance," is one of evil connotation. This, too, is surprising in view of the historical fact that this country gained its independence by means of a successful military alliance. Yet, to this very day, statesmen of the isolationist persuasion repeat with great relish the famous quotation from Washington's Farewell Address: "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." This seems to them, to be conclusive. They rarely place emphasis on the word "permanent" nor invite attention to the fact that no alliance between sovereign states, by its very nature, can ever be permanent. Still less do they bring to the attention of their listeners that in the succeeding paragraph of the famous address Washington goes on to say, "Taking care

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always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." It would seem not only reasonable to expect this fuller quotation, but also a comparison of Washington's words with his actions under the burden of responsibility when he actively sought for and obtained an alliance for his country with France, then a monarchy of decidedly reactionary tendency; and, having obtained that alliance, himself conducted the operations of the Allied forces by land and sea with a masterly address which was crowned by the decisive victory at Yorktown.

Surely the legacy of guidance which the Father of his Country left to succeeding generations of Americans deserves to be assessed not only in the light of his words, but of his deeds. Nevertheless, the prejudice against alliances had become so ingrown by 1917 that when in that year we found ourselves compelled to join the alliance against Hohenzollern Germany, President Wilson was at some pains to see to it that we were not officially described as an "allied power," but as an "associated power." The reaction from that war, of course, was "never again." A whole generation of Americans was nurtured on the wistful belief that somehow we had been sucked in by the machinations of foreigners, and that the road to peace was to be found by means of legislative insulation against these evil contacts.

During the years 1919-1939, it is hard to imagine any subject in which Americans would have been less interested than the subject of "military alliances." Today, one hears frequently enough that World War II would never have happened if we had joined the League of Nations after World War I. Considering the somewhat sterile record of the League, one may wonder. But it is certain that if at the first hint of Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931, or in 1933 when Hitler marched into the Rhineland, we

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had contracted a hard-and-fast military alliance with the British and the French and implemented it with Washington's "suitable establishments," it is extremely unlikely that World War II would ever have taken place. Nothing, however, could have been farther from the political realities of the times.

Our present attitude towards alliances marks, considered against this background, a very notable advance towards realism. With all that we now have at stake, the present seems a suitable time for a thoughtful reflection on the record of the great alliances of the past which have arisen as a result of the threat of concentrated and exorbitant power in the hands of a state bent on aggression. We shall not find in that record any suggestion that a military alliance is an ideally efficient instrument for waging war. It is an improvisation and it has all the faults of improvisations. A single government, capable of making the best possible disposition of all its resources under the direction of an established military and political system, has obvious advantages over a coalition of governments which must either handle their pooled resources by some form of agreement (which frequently falls down in the execution), or must set up super-agencies for the purpose in which the lines of authority and responsibility are very difficult to define.

Unity of purpose, as we shall see, is essential to success—but to translate unity of purpose into unity of action has proven no easy task. Nor is unity of purpose as simply established as might be thought at first glance. Sovereign states enter alliances out of self-interest and remain in them only so long as that interest is served by so remaining. In a defensive alliance, unity of purpose at the outset is often no more than a desire to survive. This overrides the divergences of interest as to other matters which may exist among the Allies, but these divergences continue to hamper a full cooperation and are likely to grow more troublesome as military success abates the original anxiety.

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We find strange bed-fellows in all the alliances of the past 250 years. We find free nations as allies of the most reactionary of authoritarian states in the face of a common danger. Again and again we find the common cause imperiled by incredible blindness, selfishness, and even outright treachery on the part not only of dynastic despots but of democratic politicians. Yet we also find that free peoples have usually provided the staying power of the allowance in adversity. We find, also, that allied success has a direct relationship to the degree of common understanding and agreement which has been established beforehand. Unity of command in a given theater of operations has been a factor of inestimable importance. It has been rarely attained on a 100% basis. Unity of political direction at the highest level is of even greater importance — but, alas, of even greater rarity.

Some voices are raised to ask whether it would not be better, in view of all these pitfalls and uncertainties about alliances, to abandon that idea and substitute an organized world government — or, at least, a federal union of free states with military establishments and agencies responsible to a federal authority, on the model with which Americans are so familiar. This might be so if time and the enemy permitted. But that is not the case. Just as our ancestors of the thirteen colonies had to fight and win the war of the American Revolution with an *ad hoc* organization and with the means at their immediate command so as to gain a breathing space in which to establish a more workable form of government, so today the nations of Western civilization must meet the perils by which they are beset with the best kind of organization that can be improvised in the time at their disposal.

We have, as a British diplomat remarked recently, two jobs to do: one, to lay, the foundation of our brave, new world, and the other to keep our throats from being cut in the meantime so that

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we may live to enjoy it. The only means available to us for this second and essential task of survival is a military alliance. We cannot waste time wishing that this were not so; that we could find a more acceptable and efficient method. The old infantry drill regulations used to say (I never have understood why they cut this out in the later manual): "Any reasonable plan, even though defective in some particulars, if boldly and resolutely carried through is better than the hesitating search for the ideal." It is in this spirit that free men and women must now face a future charged with perils as great as those which their ancestors faced and overcame.

Perhaps some brief analysis of a few of these past accomplishments in collective security may throw light on present problems. I'd like to go now quite a long way back to the alliance against Louis XIV in the War of the Spanish Succession. You will find some very interesting parallels with conditions of the present day. The threat at that time, as you will remember, was a combination of the already very considerable military power of France (which was the strongest nation on the continent of Europe) with the whole of the Spanish Empire by union of the two crowns when Louis's grandson, Philip of Anjou, became the King of Spain. It was very strongly opposed by an alliance of England, Holland, the Empire, the German States and, after a while, the small Italian duchy of Savoy. These allies had various objectives. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the alliance would have come into existence at all if it had not been for the genius of the English King, William III, who was also a stadtholder and Captain General of Holland and long perceived the danger of the growing power of France. He had organized one alliance which had fought an inconclusive war to check Louis' attack on Holland and Germany at an earlier stage.

I think we may define the English objectives as, first of all.

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to prevent France from becoming the absolute ruler of the continent — the old “balance of power” principle which became later on so ingrained a factor in English policy — particularly to deny the French the occupation of the Low Countries — the extension of a strong continental power into that area having been always a British strategic objective; to prevent the French, by getting hold of Spain, from making the Mediterranean a French lake and checking British trade in that area; likewise, to prevent the French from getting hold of the whole of the resources of Spanish America and cutting off English trade in that direction, which was beginning to grow pretty fast. But, even, so, there were very different views in England as to how a war should be conducted and these views, as the war progressed, became a matter of partisan politics.

Let me read you what Winston Churchill, the present Prime Minister of England, has to say on the subject of the political views of war in the time of his great ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough.

“The Tories obstinately championed the policy that if we were drawn into a war, we should go as little to the continent, send as few troops, fight as close to the coast as possible, and endeavor to secure territory and traffic across the ocean. The Whigs, on the contrary, dwell upon the theory of the decisive theater and sought with the largest army that could be maintained to bring the war to an end by a thrust at the heart of France, the supreme military antagonist, arguing that thereafter all the rest would be added unto them. The Tories favored the popular ideas that the navy should be the stronger and the army stunted. As the reign of Anne continued, these opinions hardened themselves to a degree almost unbelievable in hard-and-fast party principles about the kind of strategy

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and operations which should be adopted. The Tories were prone to judge every action not so much by whether it was successful as by whether it was in accordance with their party doctrines. Thus, taking a town near the coast was more to be applauded than taking one farther inland. Thus, an action at sea was preferable to one ashore. Marlborough's march to Blenheim was, therefore, the greatest violation of Tory principles which could be conceived. Even dazzling success could hardly redeem such a departure from the orthodox and conventional party method of waging war. Marlborough, throughout his campaigns, was bound — apart from military facts and the enemy — to consider the character of any operation by the effect it would have on Tory opinion in the House of Commons. Both parties could use powerful and capacious arguments in support of their dogma, and neither hesitated to turn the fortunes and accidents of the war to its special account. From this, again, it followed that not only were the victories in the field or afloat classified as "Whig" or "Tory" victories, but the officers concerned in specific operations became coloured by the party hue. Generals and admirals were encouraged to have strong party affiliations and each faction had its favorites whom it would praise and defend through thick and thin."

Does anything seem familiar to you about that, gentlemen? This is 250 years ago. I don't think human nature or politicians have changed very much.

So much for the British objectives in the War of the Spanish Succession. The Dutch objectives were much simpler. The Dutch had always thought first of a barrier of fortresses, plus inundations, against the French (at that time there was no German



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threat they had to worry about very much, Germany being too divided); and, secondly, freedom of trade wherever they wanted to go — which was the source of the wealth of their nation. They wanted to sit behind their dykes and trade — earthen dykes against the sea, the fortress dykes against the French.

The Empire had a number of troubles on its hands — the Empire at this time was pretty well falling apart. It had a Hungarian revolt; it was still worried about the Turks; it was also worried about the northern war which Charles XII of Sweden was waging against Poland and Russia. But the Emperor wanted to get his share of the Spanish heritage. Indeed, his maximum objective was that his son, Archduke Charles, should succeed to the whole business, but he was willing to make a decent trade (from his point of view). He wanted security against the French, of course, but he also wanted to extend the reign of Austria over additional Italian provinces, particularly Milan and Naples.

The German States, for the most part, wanted money for hiring out their soldiers and they wanted a little territory if they could get it — but they wanted both without risk. There is no instance during this war of the head of any German State having taken any serious risk one way or another and certainly no instance of any great loyalty on the part of the German States towards their nominal feudal chief, the Emperor.

The little Italian state of Savoy is interesting because it is perched on the passes of the Alps between France and Italy. Its policy was described at the time by the English envoy, Stanhope, as being one of selling their passes to either side at the highest possible price and then reselling them to the other side, as the fortunes of war changed. However, Duke Victor Amadeus of Savoy had a much clearer idea of what he was trying to do. When Stanhope's remark was repeated to him, he took no offense. He said,

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“This is the policy which we have pursued in the past. It has been forced upon us. But my ambition is to make Savoy a country of self-defense so that it shall cease to be a road”. Incidentally, he achieved it.

The arrangements for political and military cooperation, as the alliance drew together, were urged along (as seems to be the habit of authoritarian states) by outrages on the part of Louis. These arrangements were rather tenuous. There was a treaty which fixed the contributions in men and ships of the respective members and in which all agreed not to make a separate peace. The empire never lived up to its commitments in men and ships and this was one of the excuses of the English government at a later date for breaking the agreement “not to make a separate peace”.

As between England-Holland, the association was secured by the fact that William III was King of England as well as stadtholder and Captain General of the United Provinces. Later, after William's death (and he died even before the war got under way), this was continued by the appointment of the English Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Marlborough, as Deputy Captain General of Holland — the office of Captain General being left vacant. This, of course, was to keep Marlborough a little more under control of the emissaries of the States-General — the parliament of Holland — and he had these people with him in the field practically all the time with the right of veto on the use of Dutch troops in any operation they didn't approve of. Since the Dutch policy was that “no battle must be fought that can possibly be avoided”, this created certain difficulties for an enterprising commander of Marlborough's character.

As between the sea powers—that is, England and Holland—and the Empire, the only military link that proved at all effective

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was Marlborough's friendship with the greatest of the Imperial Generals, Prince Eugene. This proved extraordinarily effective at times but, unfortunately, only in a military sense — it never seemed to be able to translate itself into politics.

Now, all of these conditions and their effect on strategy are well illustrated by the campaign of 1706. The war then had been going on for five years. There had been four full campaigns. Marlborough's great victory at Blenheim, which destroyed the only serious offensive against the Empire that the French had so far undertaken, was two years old then—that was fought in 1704. Nothing had been accomplished in the main theater in Flanders in 1705, due to Dutch timidity and the failure of the imperial government and armies to give Marlborough any support. They were then distracted by the Hungarian revolt which was growing, which indeed was draining away most of the military resources of the empire. Under these conditions the German states were growing restive. The King of Prussia was obviously meditating black treachery — he was in correspondence with Louis XIV. Denmark, which had been a source of mercenary troops — very useful ones — had gotten herself into trouble with the truculent Charles XII of Sweden by grabbing off an island which she wasn't entitled to, so that Denmark was hesitant about furnishing her contingents.

But it was in Italy that all really seemed lost. At that time the situation in Italy was about as bad, from the Allied point of view, as it could be. There was no imperial force anywhere in Italy, except in the extreme northeast where a comparatively small force under a second-class general faced a strong French force under one of the best French Marshals, Vendome. In the northwest the Duke of Savoy had been punished for two years past by the French for what they called his "treachery" in deserting their cause and shifting to the allies. He picked the time, as he thought, quite well

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after Blenheim — but it hadn't worked out. The French were all through the country; fortress after fortress had been taken and the Duke of Savoy who, himself, with a small imperial force had come to his assistance was about to be shut up in Turin — the siege of which was to be undertaken by one French Army of some 40,000 men under Marshall La Feuillade, while the other French Army under Vendome covered him against any attempt of the Imperialists to interfere. In between, the fortresses were chiefly in the hands of French garrisons.

What in prospect, then, was that in the Campaign of 1706 the whole of Italy would fall into the hands of the French. Thereafter, the French would have been able both to threaten the empire with an attack on Vienna from the south and, also, to concentrate their main force, without any anxiety about Italy, against Marlborough in Flanders.

Marlborough, the mainspring of the alliance, faced a terrible task. Fortunately, however, at this particular moment the means to deal with that task were placed in his hands by a series of what only be described as fortunate accidents. First of all, at home, where he had constantly to be anxious about his political support, things were going well. The Whigs, the war party, were in charge. The Queen, who was Tory in her sympathies, had not yet begun really to become annoyed with the Whigs. The war was well supported, so far as the British effort was concerned. Therefore, Marlborough had been able to raise the money for the payment of the Danish and German contingents. "England" (says Churchill) "was the milch cow of all and parliament was already voluble upon that pregnant point (that is rather familiar, too) — but the matter had been arranged for the time being.

Marlborough designed to stand on the defensive in Flanders

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and to move into Italy with 30,000 men to join Eugene, drive the French from Northern Italy, rescue Savoy, and prepare to invade France from the south by next year. The armies in those days went into winter quarters, so that was about all he could do in one year. In 1707 he hoped to invade France from the south. He had personal authority from the Queen to act independently of the Dutch, if necessary — a most extraordinary step to take in those days. But the French struck first — Vendome in Northeastern Italy, beat the Imperial armies at Calcinato and this seemed to seal the doom of Savoy — for it seems impossible that the Imperial forces could gather again in sufficient strength to march across Northern Italy to the relief of Turin. Meanwhile, the French Marshall Villars beat the Imperialists on the Rhine and seemed about to repeat the invasion of Bavaria, which the Battle of Blenheim had brought to an end.

All of this frightened the Dutch. They were particularly frightened at Marlborough's threat to leave them to their own devices, to make them stand on the defensive against the terrible French while he marched with the English and some of the German troops into Italy. So, in order to induce him to abandon the plan (which military conditions had since made less desirable, anyway,) they gave him a free hand for the first time. They gave him permission to despatch 10,000 of the troops in their pay — German troops — to Prince Eugene, anyway. This, under the new circumstances, was obviously the best thing to do. Marlborough immediately changed his plans, prepared to take the offensive in Flanders, while sending some German reinforcements to Eugene in Italy. He was further cheered up by the news of a considerable naval victory by Admiral Leake, who had successfully relieved Barcelona in Spain. This he knew would cause the French further serious anxiety in that area.

Marlborough was the one man who saw this war as a whole.

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He could see that if the French had to use, let us say, 10,000 men in Italy — they couldn't have those 10,000 men in Flanders. It is doubtful that any other Allied statesman or soldier was ever able to see beyond the immediate concerns of his immediate country or theater of operations.

The result of Marlborough's free hand was the crushing defeat of the French at the Battle of Ramillies in May. Louis immediately reacted to this by recalling Vendome from Italy to take over the command of the remnants that were left after Ramillies and try to form some kind of a defensive zone to prevent Marlborough from invading France.

Eugene, in the meanwhile, had received the German reinforcements. Eugene advanced against Vendome's incapable successors, who could think of nothing better to do than to march along the north side of the Po as Eugene marched along the south side, headed for Turin. Eugene relieved Turin and inflicted a very serious defeat on the French army, before that city. The incapable French commanders who were left, marched out of Italy, across the Alps into France, instead of retiring eastward on the fortress which the French still held in northern Italy.

Thus, not by the means he originally designed but by brilliant improvisation, a change of plans that had been made possible to him, Marlborough had achieved not only the expulsion of the French from Italy — but he had also beaten them so badly in Flanders that it was doubtful if they could accomplish anything in the Campaign of 1707. This is where he stood at the end of the campaigning season of 1706, and you will admit that it was a masterly series of military combinations. Now, look how it was thrown away by the lack of any political direction in the Alliance.

The French were never in a worse spot throughout the war

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than they were at the opening of the Campaign of 1707 — and what happened? The battle of Ramillies had given the Dutch their barrier. It had resulted in the fall of most of the fortresses of Northern Belgium. They felt secure. Moreover, their traders were only too delighted to start reaping the rich reward of taking over the trade of these Belgian cities, where they succeeded in making themselves thoroughly hated during the next year — so that in 1708, the Belgians betrayed two of the principal fortresses to the French because they were sick and tired of the Dutch. The Dutch refused absolutely to give Marlborough the free hand in 1707 that he had in 1706. Oh, no! he might go somewhere and take chances. The Emperor, far from using the fall of Turin to clean up the French garrisons in Italy, weakly made a deal with the French and allowed 40,000 French troops to march out of Italy to join in operations in Flanders and Spain against the Emperor's allies. He, himself, turned happily to the conquest of Naples — if it could be called a conquest; all he had to do was to march in. At that time it was the whole of Southern Italy plus Sicily.

Savoy had what she wanted. She was well on her way to being a country, instead of a road. So Marlborough's plan, which called for an invasion of France from the north and a simultaneous invasion by the Imperialists and the Savoy troops from the south, with an attack on Toulon — supported by the British fleet — that plan just fell flat. Savoy wouldn't put any weight on the attack on Toulon. Even Prince Eugene, with all his influence at the Imperial Court, couldn't get enough Imperial troops for the siege which he commanded. Here, you come to a curious bit of Eugene's character. Eugene, as Churchill remarks, was a land animal. He never could believe in seaborne lines of communication — he was always looking at that road back there and the oxcarts and the horse wagons that were coming over it. That was what he understood.

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So he discovered at Toulon he was going to be a long way from his base; he was going to be dependent on a very tenuous land line of communications. And, when it was pointed out to him that he had the British fleet, under the most capable British Admiral of the times—Sir Cloudesley Shovell—to take the place of these horse wagons and take it much more efficiently, he couldn't believe in it. He, therefore, was always fighting with one hand (psychologically) tied behind his back. The siege of Toulon was a failure.

As a result, the French were left pretty free in other directions. They inflicted a severe defeat on the Imperialists on the Rhine and they gained considerable successes in Spain. 1707, instead of being the year of victory, was a year of disaster for the Allies. None of them would do, save under Marlborough's immediate eye, anything for the common cause once the danger was removed from their own door.

I wonder how much we have learned in all the time that has past about these peculiarities of sovereign states. Certainly there is a lot to be gained from a study of what has happened before and human nature doesn't seem to have changed a great deal in the last 250 years.

In World War I, 200 years after the War of the Spanish Succession, this problem of political direction of an alliance hadn't yet been solved. The earliest attempts at unified command, even on the Western Front in France, were failures because the British and the French governments could never quite make up their minds what they wanted to do and it was held to be an insuperable difficulty that in the last analysis the British and the French commander-in-chiefs had a final responsibility to their respective governments. It was not until the crisis of 1917, with the Italian collapse at Caporetto and the knocking of the Russians out of the



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war, that under the pressure of disaster the Allies finally created an instrument for the political direction of the war — the Supreme War Council. Thereafter the subsequent appointment of Foch as Commander-in-Chief was greatly eased and he was able to perform almost a miracle of coordination, if not of unified command, in pulling the Allied war effort on the Western front together.

In World War II, we had the fortunate accident of a built-in political direction by the happy fact that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill understood each other. They got along very well. Therefore, the Combined Chiefs of Staff was possible and the appointment of Allied Commanders-in-Chief in the various theaters of war was also possible. Of course, the Russians were never in on this deal, but considering our experience with the Russians later on — perhaps it is just as well. They might have been quite difficult to persuade if they took as long to decide on a military operation as they have to decide on a truce in Korea, it might have been quite troublesome.

But, we have to consider that neither in World War I nor World War II — though the nature of the threat in both cases was pretty obvious — would the threatened states do anything beforehand. They talked, they hesitated, they hoped — until the blow fell. The agencies that they created came to life only in the actual presence of danger, and sometimes after the danger was very, very far advanced.

This time we have done a little better. We are trying to build up the North Atlantic Alliance — the new Grand Alliance — and other military agreements in other parts of the world. We have given NATO political and military leadership — or at least tried to create organs for that purpose. We have appointed a Commander-in-Chief in General Eisenhower. We have now selected an ex-

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tremely capable Secretary General in General Lord Ismay. Of course, we have better communications all over the world and better understanding of other people than was the case in Marlborough's time. And yet the fact that we are dealing with sovereign states remains, as indicated by all the hesitations and uncertainties. The effect of political internal dissensions in the Allied states remains, also.

Look at some of the things that are being said in our own election campaign not yet very far advanced, and think what will be said later. Look at the French. Look at the dissenting group in the Labor party in England. Look at the efforts of Mr. Schumacher to break up the adhesion of West Germany to the North Atlantic grouping. Comparing it to Marlborough's time, the gains are astonishing, but the factors of difficulty are still there. We learn — but we learn slowly. It is apparent now, as then, that the only hope of resisting aggression by a great centralized power is still by the united action of the threatened states, and that means as a practical matter by a military alliance — an imperfect instrument of war, but one which now, as in the past, can be brought to victory by genius and courage.

In conclusion, I've set down here a list of thoughts (I hesitate to call them principles — they rest on no better authority than my own research) which seem to me to have governed the political and military organization and leadership of military alliances. I will read them briefly: (1) alliances are the creatures of the self-interest of their members; (2) no state, unless constrained, will remain in an alliance when the interests which made it join no longer exist; (3) the strongest bond between Allies is the instinct of self-preservation against a common danger; (4) there are, however, always conflicting interests which threaten unity of action or at least create friction — these frictions increase as

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the original danger abates; (5) the essence of Allied leadership is to produce sufficient unity of purpose and action to accomplish the common objective, reconciling with this the conflict of lesser interests; (6) effective political leadership of an alliance is more important than military leadership and more difficult to establish; (7) if effective military leadership is created, but political leadership is lacking or intermittent — there will be a tendency for the military leadership to encroach upon political decisions; under the pressures of war, this becomes a certainty; (8) under the conditions of total war, no Allied political leadership can be effective which does not command the total resources of all the Allies; hence, which does not comprise an association of the highest responsible political authorities in all the Allied states.

To this I would only add that beyond these practical considerations, it seems to me of the highest importance that we should try to gain what the French General Requin has called, "the spirit of coalition". If that spirit takes hold of us, as it took hold of the common soldiers far more than of the politicians in Marlborough's day, the spirit of "all for one, and one for all" — the feeling that there is a common cause in which sacrifices of life and of national interests must be made: then to the degree that we attain that spirit — to that degree an alliance may expect to be successful.

Thank you, gentlemen !

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LECTURER**

Major George Fielding Eliot was born in Brooklyn, New York, June 22, 1894. His family moved to Australia in 1902. He was educated partly in the United States and partly in Australia. He was graduated from Trinity College, University of Melbourne with a B. A. degree. His military background is as follows:

Australian Imperial Force, 1914-1918; Commissioned Second Lieutenant, rose to Acting Major — Infantry (Dardanelles Campaign, Egypt; Western Front; 1st Somme; Arras; Amiens; Passchendaele; Hindenburg Line, etc.).

Missouri National Guard; 2nd Lieutenant, Engineers, 1922.

Military Intelligence Reserve, U. S. Army, 1922-1930; Captain and Major. (Active Duty Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Military Intelligence Division, War Department).

He is the author of several books, including: "The Ramparts We Watch"; A Study of the Problems of American National Defense, (Reynal & Hitchcock, 1938); "Bombs Bursting in Air"; The Influence of Air Power on International Relations, (Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939); "Hour of Triumph"; "The Means of Achieving Permanent Peace and World Security," (Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944); "The Strength We Need"; "A Military Program for America Pending Peace," (The Viking Press, October 1946); "Hate, Hope and High Explosives — A Report on the Middle East," (Bobbs Merrill, 1948); "If Russia Strikes," (Bobbs Merrill, 1949). He was the co-author (with Major R. Ernest Dupuy, USA) of "If War Comes," (MacMillan, 1937).

He was military correspondent and columnist, New York Herald Tribune Syndicate, September 1939-May 1947; columnist,

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New York Post Syndicate, May 1947-May 1949; and columnist, General Features Syndicate, January 1950-.

He was the author of many articles on military, political and international affairs for several magazines.

He lectured on the following platforms: Town Hall, Columbia University, New York; Foreign Policy Association, New York and Cleveland; as well as before many other audiences from coast to coast.

He was radio commentator for the Columbia Broadcasting System, 1939-1946 and the Mutual Broadcasting System, 1950-. His radio talks were as follows: America's Town Meeting of the Air; People's Platform; University of Chicago Round Table; Invitation to Learning; Information Please; Wake Up, America; America Forum, and others.

His associations and affiliations are as follows: American Association of the United Nations (Honorary Vice President), American Military History Foundation, Army Ordnance Association, Association of Radio News Analysts (President, 1943 and 1951), The Carnegie Endowment Committee on Atomic Energy, Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Policy Association, Military Intelligence Reserve Society, National Press Association, Radio Correspondents Association, U. S. Infantry Association, and U. S. Naval Institute.