

1950

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Recommended Citation

Brown, John Nicholas (1950) "Requirements for World Leadership," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 3 : No. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol3/iss2/2>

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REQUIREMENTS FOR WORLD LEADERSHIP

A lecture delivered by
Hon. John Nicholas Brown
at the Naval War College
December 19, 1949

When I was first written to, many months ago, asking if I would give a lecture to the Naval War College class, on the "Requirements for World Leadership", I confess that the task seemed quite beyond me, because I am neither a college professor nor am I a military expert. And, furthermore, the requirements for world leadership seemed to me so difficult to analyze and so difficult to trace in proper relation, one to the other, that my first inclination was to write as polite a letter as I could and say, "No, thank you". But, when I realized the honor which was inherent in the invitation, and when I recalled that my experience with the navy and with the members of the War College classes in the past had all lead me to believe that they were kind in their criticisms, I decided to risk it.

Today it is a truism to state that the United States of America has world leadership—challenged, yes, but nevertheless, ours. And in thinking on what basis that world leadership shall be maintained, I have attempted to set down briefly a few remarks which I hope you will consider.

In the beginning I would like to start with a document—a document of perhaps an unusual character because it is not only current—that is to say—new, but also new from the point of view of the age of those who wrote it.

The Honorable John Nicholas Brown was former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air. He is one of New England's outstanding citizens and is a member of numerous boards and societies.

I do not know if you are familiar with a publication called "The Next Voter". "The Next Voter" entitles itself, "A New Venture in Political Commentary" and is written, edited, and published twice monthly by the students of the Political Science Course at Brooks School, North Andover, Mass. These are boys of the High School age. This publication has had a good deal of interesting comment by the newspapers and also by some of our leaders. The last issue, the December issue, contains as a lead editorial the following—and I will, with your permission, read part of it to you. The school boys start as follows:

"It is interesting though rather futile to speculate by which epithet the first half of the twentieth century will be known. We have won two wars and lost two peaces. We have experienced the rise and only partial fall of two new anti-God religions. We have witnessed the failure of the League of Nations, and have not yet seen the success of the United Nations. Fantastic dreams of the 19th century have become practical realities in the 20th: radio, television, air-communication, and atomic energy.

"The United States has abandoned the Monroe Doctrine in favor of the Marshall Plan. It has replaced isolationism by world-citizenship. From being the young and immature relative of some powerful and respected European nation, it has become the richest and strongest member of a family upon whom the burden of supporting some of the old and decrepit members has fallen.

"The United States is not only confronted with the herculean task of revivifying and re-animating Europe, but she also is faced with the problem of trying to establish a new balance of power not only in Europe but throughout the entire world. It is a task not made easier by the fact that the United States is relatively unfamiliar with European problems, and is relatively unseasoned in diplomacy.

"Which of the many changes, upheavals, reversals, crea-

tions, and annihilations will be called the outstanding characteristic of our era by future historians and generations? What label will be attached to the half-century which is about to come to an end? Only time can provide the answer.

“However, it seems to us that the real characteristic of this century has been psychological rather than material. It started with uncertainty which grew rapidly into fear—a half-century where fear has mercilessly spread its dreaded infection to every country, community, family, and individual. Close on the heels of the invading fear came hate. Both Hitler and the thirteen men in the Kremlin have found that hate is vital to their very existence.

“What are our fears? Fear of war or of impending war, fear of starvation, fear of unemployment, fear of financial disaster, and—worst of all—fear of our countrymen. At the beginning of the century Theodore Roosevelt admonished his countrymen: “Fear God and take your own part.” Indeed the majority of Americans, and free people all over the world, feared God and nothing else. On the eve of 1950 we fear so much that unfortunately God has been pushed into the background.

“This fear did not just come, however. On the contrary it was cleverly propagated by clever men. Internationally, the Nazis and above all the Soviets have scientifically and propagandistically tried, not entirely unsuccessfully, to exploit the fear. Internally the same evil forces are at their destructive work. The Communists try to make us fear the coming class war and the disruption of our society.....

“On the other hand the American Fascists at the other extreme are, in our opinion, no less dangerous. They try to teach us a perverted and exaggerated sense of nationalism which they place under the appealing guise of ‘Americanism’. They try to create fear and hatred of those who do not agree with their reactionary ideas and methods.

“Thus, while the last five decades have increased our influence abroad, they have also made for us many political and spiritual enemies.

“Fear’s mortal enemy is faith. The two cannot co-exist. Therefore to win we must maintain an unshakable faith in ourselves and in our society. The merely negative statements of belief of the last decade are not nearly enough. We must state our beliefs and follow them with vigor and almost fanaticism.

“The forces of fear, hatred, persecution, and destruction have united with the aggressive passion and persuasion of the first half of the century. Let the opposed forces of *freedom, tolerance, and fearlessness*, be united with the same determination, passion and faith in the second half of the century. It is to be our task, and we are ready for it, to give later historians the opportunity, after such an awful start to call the whole of the twentieth century: **THE AGE OF FREEDOM!**”

In this editorial our young school boys give three essentials—freedom, tolerance, and fearlessness. They have stressed what I believe is important, namely that freedom is a positive concept and should not be considered in the negative way in which lately it has been expressed. It is not freedom from fear and want, but rather freedom to act and live as we desire. By the same token, tolerance should not be considered merely as a negative virtue. Tolerance should not mean such a lack of caring and believing that anything goes. Likewise, fearlessness, that special virtue of the military, can only be a virtue if it includes the conquering through knowledge. If fearlessness is achieved through blindness and ignorance then it degenerates into foolhardiness.

It would seem that the dilemma of our time can best be pointed up by the dilemma in which the concept of liberty now finds itself. The 19th century man believed in certain tenets which

included freedom, tolerance, and fearlessness, tenets which not properly understood have left the 20th century man hamstrung by his own idealism. This does not mean that I do not trust the basic concepts. Certainly, academic freedom, for instance, must be preserved and yet, as we find ourselves attacked by those who use unscrupulously our own modes of thought, how far, I wonder, can we allow ourselves the luxury of being harassed for the sake of not being unfair to the subversive?

In thinking of America's current position it is not long before we come to a realization that the position of world power and leadership which is America's today is based upon those human qualities which are conveniently grouped under the heading Morale. Nations are in essence men and what men think and what they are is what the nation becomes.

I sometimes remember the difference between 1916 and 1942. In the first case young men marched off to war with an enthusiasm and an elan which was based upon their belief—then vivid and real—that never again would this bloody business be repeated. They came back firm in the belief that wars actually would be no more. We may now call it foolish. It certainly has been proved unfounded. But at the time that idealism seemed valid indeed. Perhaps the greater sense of realism in the early 1940's was a healthy thing. Yet the cynicism which prevailed during the second world war, and certainly in the four years which have elapsed since its conclusion, has left us with fears and doubts, and wars and rumors of wars. I have always marveled at the magnificent job which the Army, the Navy, and the Marines succeeded in doing in inspiring this great body of young Americans with the spirit and the morale which was necessary to win. It shows that a proper understanding of the problems of military personnel, combined with other factors, makes for the success of these enterprises.

So, gentlemen, I come to state as my first requisite for world leadership—Morale. Whether in peace, so-called, or in war it is this human factor which is all important. In the concept of morale I should like to mention three components.

First, and by far the least important, I call well-being. Certainly the economic and material side of the picture is of great importance and I need not spend time in talking too much about these things. We all know our great economic strength, and yet I submit that this aspect of the case is far less important than some others. Certainly under bombardment and alarms, and having the very opposite of well-being, Great Britain showed the stuff of which her citizens were made, and so did Germany and Japan.

Secondly, I name leadership. Leadership is a function which you gentlemen have been called to exercise professionally all your lives. It would be an act of supererogation for me to tell you much about personal leadership, but in a discussion of the nation's morale there comes in not only the military but also civilian leadership. In civilian leadership I wish to include not only political leadership but also the kind of day to day standing-in-a-community which is represented by the doctor, the clergyman, the school superintendent for instance, as well as the harassed business man who gives his time to head some civic drive. All of these have their important place, yet on the political scene can sometimes assume too great importance as, we know so well, happened in countless other countries all through history.

Third, of all the prerequisites for national morale by far the most important is a basis of common belief. I fear that this comes close to Education for Education today in the minds of many Americans has taken the place once held by Religion. Perhaps that is another way of saying that Education was always part of religion—or putting it another way around, that Education is Religion with

God left out. Whatever it is, Education is the modern way of welding America together. I am greatly disturbed by the tendency in this country to abandon the Liberal Arts in American education. The natural sciences, important, perhaps essential, as they are, nevertheless contain within themselves a contradiction in terms, for the basis of scientific education is the training in how not to believe. Scientific education is synonymous with the education of scepticism. Alas, what is needed today is the belief held by all of what the material things of this world shall be used for. What good is it simply to know the means if the ends are ignored or misunderstood? It, therefore, seems to me tremendously important that the roots of our civilization be thoroughly understood; that we realize the streams with headwaters in Greece, in Rome, and in the Hebrew world, which flow together to form our own Christian civilization. For without these understandings and without knowing the wellsprings of Man's greatest geniuses, how can we find our common words anything but trite and hollow epithets. That is one of the reasons why so many of us shudder when we hear over the radio words like Democracy, Way-of-Life, even the sacred word Freedom itself. We know that the people who utter these shibboleths have no understanding of their overtones.

I have called *Morale* the requisite for national world leadership. But there is a second factor very closely akin yet separable, which I shall call, simply, *Belief*. We are now moving from the lesser to the greater, for one can have *Morale* without *Belief* but not *Belief* without its attendant result *Morale*. I am not now thinking purely in terms of religious belief, important as that is. I am thinking of the national requirement for belief in America's mission. Does it seem very old fashioned to speak once more of our mission? Yet I believe that there is only one reading of history. To use a phrase of the end of the last century—I call it, "America's Manifest Destiny". It is ours, whether we like it or not—this fearsome thing called *Power*. Our problem is how to use

it. Certainly one of our fundamental requirements is to understand it and thus believe in it.

We Americans are a curious mixture of shyness and bombast. Perhaps the psychologists would tell you that our boasting comes from our basic feeling of insecurity—I don't know. But I do know this, that we are not only the most powerful nation on the face of the globe today, but that there is no reason why we should not stay so for a long time to come; that the vistas of opportunity and adventure which lie before us are immeasurable; and that all we need is a little courage, a little steadiness, and above all a belief in the rightness of our cause. I believe in the inevitability of our triumph, not of the collapse of Capitalism, as is so loudly shouted at us today. I believe in this self-adjusting mechanism we own and operate, a political and economic mechanism which already has proved incomparably better than any tyranny that has ever existed. Do these things sound like political clap-trap? I submit I am merely stating facts.

Sometimes, when I get discouraged by the silliness of the American scene, I am helped by an historical analogy. I know how dangerous historical analogies are. They really are unsound and yet they are fun and, if not taken too seriously, sometimes lead to a new understanding. So with your permission I should like to call to your attention the parallel between our present state and Ancient Rome.

Let me hasten to say that I am not trying to prove that we are at a point analogous to the breakup of the Roman Empire. I admit the barbarian tribes do seem rather close sometimes. No, we have a long way to go before a modern Alaric sacks our modern Rome. By 410 A. D. Rome had been master of the civilized world for over half a thousand years. She had reached the apogee, had

ered a process of fission, and eventually had succumbed. We not nearly at that stage. I say this first because we are still too young, second, we are still expanding, and in my opinion I continue to do so.

It is not any one historic event to which I wish to draw logy but rather to a certain similarity between the modern merican scene and certain characteristics not so often explained in the schoolboy textbooks but nevertheless obviously present in greater or less degree through the long stretch of Roman history.

First off, let us look at the fact that Ancient Rome was founded by a conglomeration of refugees of different races much as our own country was. This process of bringing together men of different nationalities continued throughout her long history. While at first a certain stamp, or homogeneous attitude, existed, as Rome increased in world importance there flowed to her men of every nation, particularly men from the older civilization to the East. Thus we see a truly cosmopolitan civilization based upon the bringing together and merging of numerous ethnic and cultural strains. One example of this is the large number of Jews in Rome at the beginning of the so-called Roman Empire. Indeed the presence of Orientals is known about from the description of their religious beliefs and practices. I think particularly of the chapel dedicated to the Mithraic rite which is found under the Christian church of San Clemente.

I should also like to point out that in the Empire period men from the provinces rose to great prominence. Many of the most famous Emperors—such as Trajan (53-117) Spain; Antoninus Pius (86-161) family came from Nimes, France; Diocletian (245-313) in Dalmatia—did not come even from Italy.

Thus it can be seen that Rome derived her power from the

amalgamation of different strains and the welding together by means of a melting-pot-process of many races and cultures.

Perhaps of all the similarities between our own American scene and Ancient Rome the genius for material as against spiritual things is the most obvious. The Ancient Romans were never creators of things of the spirit, either in art or in literature, as had been the Greeks; but for this lack they made up by giving the world the finest engineering civilization that existed until the modern age. Their great roads, amphitheatres, and aqueducts are still scattered over the face of Europe from the walls of Hadrian in Scotland to the deserts of Africa and on into the East. We still find these remains of Ancient Roman glory and power exemplifying the greatest tradition of building in the large which the world was to see for many a long century.

Furthermore, the Roman age is characterized by emphasis on rapid communication. The courier system based on the excellent military roads spanned the civilized world and made possible a centralized administration to control the vast Empire under its command. While of course the telephone and the radio were not available, the Classical equivalent never approached by any other people was the fast mail service developed by the centralized system of Government which emanated from the Eternal City itself.

The study of the territorial expansion of the Roman state leads me to point out that, first, it is based upon the use of a Navy and, second, it was not always agreeable to the inhabitants of Rome itself. What I mean is that the invention of a more seaworthy and faster naval vessel which could actually grapple with the enemy made it possible for Rome to control the Mediterranean and so on through the first half of her history we see the essential role which sea power played in her expansion. But this expansion, as I indicated, was not always looked upon by certain conservative

segments of the population as desirable any more than we today, all of us, agree with some of the entangling alliances this country seems engaged in making. In other words, there was an isolationist party in Ancient Rome as well as in America; but the logic of events forced Rome to her Imperial destiny just as I believe we today are forced into taking an ever stronger position as world leader. The necessity of maintaining control over the grain shipments from Egypt and from what was then the fertile North African coast, the threat to her commerce by means of the inroads of business from the East and the North, the importance of maintaining what she already had by increasing her boundaries, seem to me analagous in so many ways to our situation today. Inevitably, as nations increase in power they find it necessary to expand further, not for the sake of expansion itself but in order to protect what they have. This process can be seen today in the actions of the Soviet Union which has attempted to throw around its own heartland a zone of puppet states. Certainly Okinawa today is in our hands because we already possessed Hawaii, just as Hawaii was originally acquired because we controlled the Pacific Coast. Now comes the problem of Formosa and its relation to the Philippines. And so on will the problems extend just as ripples flowing from a stone thrown in a millpond.

The Roman people originally set up a city state, a remarkably coherent system of government which worked for two or three hundred years with marked success but, like all governments basically designed for relatively small operations, it broke down under the stress of world responsibility. The period which interests me most in the long history of Rome is the last century B. C., when through a series of events, each associated with an individual name, deep rifts were caused in the basic structure of the Republic. Take for instance the armed uprising led by Marius, the people's champion, and then by his rival Sulla, who represented the conservative

element. These so weakened the structure of Government that it bowed beneath the weight of its world responsibilities and became prey to the dictatorial genius of Julius Caesar. Yet the interesting thing to me is that after Caesar was murdered, his young nephew Octavius, his self-styled heir and eventual master of the world, proceeded to revive the ancient Republic. He refused any Eastern title such as King, insisted upon the elections as in the past, but saw to it that he kept the power inherent in the Tribuneship of the people. If you had been living in Rome at that time, Octavius would not have seemed to have the attributes that history books associate with the world Emperor. Indeed this was merely a military title somewhat similar to Field Marshall or General of the Army. Octavius strove to revive and reconstitute the Republican constitution which had been put aside during the Civil Wars and yet, as so often in history, restorations become new entities themselves. The position of First Citizen—or Princeps—assumed by Octavius and passed on to the long series of men we call Roman Emperors, ceased to signify what was originally intended and became in fact the central autocratic power which we now associate with the Roman Empire. At the same time the inadequate and overburdened Republic civil administration was greatly expanded and there developed the inevitable Governmental bureaucracy which seems always to be present with the consolidation of great civil power.

On the educational and cultural side, I should like to point out that Rome conquered Greece and removed forever any further threat from Macedon and, in conquering Greece, she brought to Rome Greek teachers, Greek drama and literature, and the treasures of Greek art. Roman youth was sent to finishing school in Athens and in Rhodes. Greek teachers were brought into the households of patrician families to be tutors to their children. This is a situation very similar to the American conquest of Europe from where, over the last years, we have ourselves brought to this country large

quantities of European art and have found great satisfaction in sending Rhodes scholars to Oxford and other young men to study on the Continent. Yet we find it very difficult in this country to develop any original artistic style of our own.. Our painters derive from the School of Paris and even in the realm of the movies the great technical supremacy of Hollywood rarely equals the artistic excellence of many films made in Europe.

Furthermore, the Romans were a fickle people. Their athletic heroes were exalted one year and cast down the next. They rejoiced in great spectacles like our Middle Western football games or even our World Series. Roman youths cared more about taking their exercise vicariously as some of us do. Others competed in the Ancient Grecian games, but in Greece, as witness the Emperor Nero, who at sixty-six, made a tour of Greece and was successfully and successively acclaimed at all the games which he had arranged to have held all in the same year.

Lastly, I want to speak of what I consider to be the most important subject for us to study, namely the gradual increase in franchise granted over the years by Rome itself. It was largely on this basis that she managed to maintain so long her hold on so varied a population. The vast so-called Provinces like North Africa, Spain, Gaul, and the Provinces in the East were ruled by former consuls who were rewarded for political success at home by being given a position of complete dictatorial power over these pro-consular provinces. This was a very lucrative post as the pro-consuls were able to extort enormous sums of money from the people under their sway. The tax gathering system by which taxes were farmed out to companies who paid an agreed upon sum and then proceeded to collect as much as they possibly could, led to a great, if nefarious business. Yet it was the bringing of men of military experience, who often became the governors and rulers of these provinces, as ad-

ministrators back to the central capital which eventually amalgamated the different parts of the Empire and brought into a closer harmony the different kinds of administrations. It could be said perhaps that the Empire was the conquering of the City of Rome and its basically Republican constitution by the more autocratic type of Government which had existed in the provinces. Yet we must never forget that the vestigial remains of the Republican system of Government continued in the presence of the Senate in Rome to the end of the Empire.

Now you may ask why do I mention these matters which seem to have little or no relation to the current American scene. It is only because I believe our particular destiny—call it Imperial if you will, although this word must be defined quite differently in our time—is already forcing us to place people in positions of responsibility in foreign countries much as did Rome so many centuries ago—our General Clays and MacArthurs for instance are not too dissimilar to Roman pro-consuls. I am not trying to say that we can draw a close analogy from the past or that by analogy we can predict with any degree of accuracy things to come. I do submit, however, that the same causes bring similar results and that, while no two causes are ever exactly alike, I do think that over the years the destiny of America will be toward a world hegemony, not like the Roman but having nevertheless many points of similarity. Many of our troubles today in this country come because our Republican Government, quite adequate at first to the town meeting in New England and then made to function as an adequate government for a continental nation, is finding difficulty in adjusting itself to the demands of world leadership. The Isolationists in this country were correct when they looked with grave mistrust at America's ability to do anything about the outside world. Yet events have overleapt our own desire and against our will we are forced into the difficult position of power and, therefore, of responsibility for

which as yet we are not entirely fitted. But I look forward with the sure conviction of ultimate success because I believe that, if there is one characteristic of the American people, it is our adaptability. We come from so many races and have a system of government so flexible and so easily managed that we have proved in the past, as we know we shall in the future, our ability to develop a leadership where it is needed and which will be adequate to the strains and stresses of world responsibility. All we need is to believe in our destiny and we shall find the way.

Lastly, I want to point out that it was the gradual increase by Rome of the franchise, the right of citizenship, to other people—first to the surrounding natives of the Italian Peninsular and then to the provinces as they became more closely akin in civilization to Rome itself, that she developed her rule of Law. We remember that St. Paul, a Jew, living 2,000 miles from Rome, claimed his Roman citizenship and thus his right to be tried under what was certainly the most nearly fair administration of justice so far devised. I believe that we in this country must develop increased interest in Law and in the propagation of our Anglo-Saxon code of justice and that by some method of world association yet to be devised we must form a government, not so much supranational in the sense that the World Federalists speak of, but rather by means of a system of international citizenship under our own system which can have a two-fold advantage—first a single system of justice and the economic advantage which comes therefrom and, second, the calling forth of responsibility which is inherent in all citizenship, because citizenship is fundamentally two-way. The privilege of citizenship is to serve as well as to derive the benefits of protection from the central authority. But, gentlemen, these matters are in the womb of our destiny—they are to be worked for continually but not to be expected immediately. The day to day events are trivial compared to the long swing of history and thus as the Pax Romana

brought peace and prosperity to the conglomerate peoples of the ancient world, so I believe, with proper faith, with the belief in the rightness and justice of our cause, with the infusion through our own body politic of the tradition which has already made us great, we can look forward to a long era of American leadership and the Pax Americana. But the Pax Americana, this world leadership of ours, is not to be thought of as something imperial in the old sense. Imperialism and Colonialism, as practiced in the old days are gone forever. Dr. Vannevar Bush in the beginning of his new book *Modern Arms and Free Men* points it up when he says:

“It is highly important that the general outlook of the people be sound as we face the future. If we had been in abject terror, facing a new inevitable war that would destroy our cities, our farms, and our way of life, we would have followed some Pied Piper in the last election who would have led us into the sea. This we emphatically did not do. In spite of alarms, in spite of the prophets of doom, we face the future with resolution. If, as a people we had felt all-powerful, that we could speak and the world would tremble, that we had a mission to rule the unenlightened, that we were a super-race, we would have followed a demagogue. There was not even a single demagogue of the sort in sight on the national horizon. The steadiness of purpose of the American people is our hope and refuge.”

This steadiness of purpose is the essence of Morale. On national morale depends the existence of this country. With the prospect of our glorious future and armed with the knowledge of what can be done and also what cannot, we may confidently look forward to the epithet our schoolboys have suggested for their age
—THE AGE OF FREEDOM.