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THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MERCHANT MARINE TO NATIONAL POWER

A lecture delivered by
Commander George D. Synon, U. S. C. G.
at the Naval War College
September 12, 1949

In considering the relation of the Merchant Marine to national power, it is perhaps automatic for members of the Armed Forces to regard a large fleet of commercial shipping as indispensible to the security of the United States. This premise has been fundamental to American naval strategy ever since Mahan enunciated his concept of sea power toward the end of the last century. It is today a proposition that is widely supported by many outstanding figures who write and speak publicly on this subject.

Here, at the War College, however, we must not fall into the error of accepting any dogma or doctrine simply because it has been demonstrated in the past to be sound or well-conceived. It is necessary, rather, constantly to re-appraise in the light of changing world conditions any and all of the strategic premises upon which our thinking may tend to become fixed.

Especially is this so in the case of the Merchant Marine. In the United States, private industry has been unable to operate ocean shipping on any wide scale without financial assistance from the Government. We call this subsidy; and we justify the payment of subsidy on the ground that the Merchant Marine is essential to economic prosperity and for the national defense. Consequently, the support of a large fleet of commercial shipping has come to be

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accepted in the United States as a proper function of government. This viewpoint is vigorously and sincerely supported by the great majority of individuals and organizations connected with the maritime industry. But there are many people who believe that an expanded Merchant Marine may be contrary to the best interests of the United States at the present time. These persons are, of course, in the minority, but their arguments deserve careful scrutiny at an institution such as the War College. One of the purposes of this discussion is to present that contrary point of view. Many of you officers here may at some time in the future be called upon to make decisions touching on the Merchant Marine. You will be helped in arriving at these decisions by a knowledge not only of the many good arguments both for and against a strong U. S. Merchant Marine, but also by those which may be frankly designed to influence public opinion.

As an example of what I am talking about, let me recall to your mind the state of the American Merchant Marine prior to World War I and II. At the beginning of the first World War, we had very little ocean shipping. Other nations carried the major part of our foreign commerce. When we finally got into that War, we simply did not have the ships we needed. Our troops and the vast bulk of our munitions had to be transported overseas in the ships of our allies. In World War II, we were in somewhat better shape—particularly as to shipbuilding—but from the standpoint of available tonnage, we were as poorly prepared to wage global war in 1941 as we were in 1917.

The backers of a strong Merchant Marine policy point to these two instances of unpreparedness as over-riding reason for us to support an expanded fleet of merchant shipping in the future.

And yet, a pretty good case can be made out for the proposition that if the United States had been supporting such a merchant fleet, the Allies would probably have lost World War I and

could not have won World War II. I shall attempt to do so a little later in this discussion.

In the meantime, however, let us take a brief glance at national power in its broadest sense, and determine, if we can, how merchant shipping, as a part of sea power, has contributed to the national greatness and prosperity of maritime states in the past. Against such a background, I shall attempt to relate merchant shipping to certain aspects of military strategy as it has historically been employed in the case of Great Britain, since that nation displays so many features that are strategically similar to our own. Then, turning to the present, we may consider a number of factors brought about as a result of World War II which, in my opinion, require a revision in our traditional concept—to some degree of sea power—but more precisely, of the function of the Merchant Marine. These factors are intimately related to the economics of world trade, without some knowledge of which it is difficult to understand the shipping situation as it exists today. And finally, a few conclusions, which may be justified by prevailing world conditions and our strategic needs for the future.

Character of National Power

The nations of the world have been broadly classified as continental and maritime powers. Many military historians agree that the character of a nation from this standpoint dictates the form of strategy that is best suited to it. The British, for example, are a maritime people, and they have, with success, pursued a maritime strategy. The Germans, on the other hand, are a continental power, and their important military successes have been on land. Mind you, this is not to say that a single nation may not combine in itself certain elements of both sea *and* land power. It is simply that such influences as geography, natural resources, population, and so forth, serve to direct the interests of a people

primarily toward the land, or toward the sea. If these forces are recognized and understood, it is possible, in my opinion, to measure the dependence of a state upon overseas trade, and thus to determine a maritime strategy best suited to preserve or increase the national power.

If we examine the nations of Europe and Asia and arrange them according to their historical pattern as continental or maritime powers, we will observe one significant difference between the two groups. All of the maritime powers—save Great Britain—seem at some time in their history to have risen to world leadership as sea powers, and then to have passed into decline—never to recover sea power once it has been lost. Whether Great Britain is now moving toward the fringes of that pattern, it is as yet too soon to say. But not so the continental powers. The great land powers—Russia, France, Germany—have lost and have regained the dominant position in Europe on numerous occasions. Even during periods of decline, they possess their political significance —as an example, we have the case of Spain today—as opposed to the almost complete loss of influence in world affairs suffered by the small nations that border on the sea—of whom Portugal is likewise a case in point.

The reason for this political phenomenon is, I believe, that continental powers retain the essential attributes of territory, material resources, manpower—which cannot be taken from them—whereas, a truly maritime power can compensate itself for the lack of these advantages only by remaining strong at sea, and sea power—for reasons that are not clear—does not renew itself.

It seems fair to say, then, that if the independent nations of the world who are truly maritime in character are forced away from the sea—whether by economic competition they cannot meet,

or by political or military means, their influence in world affairs and, correspondingly, their capacity to defend their independence, will be markedly reduced. This is the situation confronting the smaller maritime powers today.

Merchant Shipping and Maritime Power

Now, what is the connection between merchant shipping and the rise and fall of maritime states?

The Mediterranean basin is perhaps the most fruitful area for an investigation of this sort. It is the scene of the emergence of a succession of maritime powers throughout the span of recorded history. Morever, the course of warfare in Europe has been inseparably identified with sea power in the Mediterranean. Naval strength has been exerted in these narrow waters almost invariably in either of two forms: in the protection of maritime commerce or in the employment of naval and merchant ship types for the support of land armies. It is significant that the changes in weapons and methods of warfare that have taken place since many centuries before the birth of Christ have failed to alter the fundamental strategic factors that determine military success or failure in this critical area of the world. The advantages of interior lines, mobility, and freedom of action that were enjoyed by the ancient powers who were able to control and use the sea lanes of the Mediterranean persist until this day.

In 525 B. C., Cambyses, the King of Persia, invaded and subdued Egypt. Then he looked westward, toward Carthage, and sent his army overland—across the Libyan Desert—to conquer Carthage and add that nation to his empire. But the Phoenicians —blood brothers to the Carthaginians—who controlled the sea, and whom Cambyses could neither coerce nor intimidate, refused to help him with their ships. Without a fleet for the support of

his troops, Cambyses could not surmount his supply problem across North Africa—and his army perished in the desert. Yet, in 1940, the British, under General Wavell, in one of the most remarkable military campaigns on record, moved across this same stretch of North African coast to destroy an Italian army of more than 200,-000 men. But the British right flank rested firmly on the free use of sea communications for the support of Wavell's tank columns and tactical air.

Indeed, control of the Mediterranean littoral has traditionally been achieved and maintained by those belligerents who have first made secure their communications by sea. Alexander the Great recognized as hopeless any attempt to conquer Egypt until he had first disposed of the Phoenician navy which lay astride the supply routes of his land armies. So, as a first step, Alexander, unlike Cambyses, besieged Tyre, the principal Phoenician city, and reduced it after a campaign of seven months. But by this operation, Alexander removed the threat to his rear, and he obtained the cargo shipping without which he could not move against Egypt. Napoleon, on the other hand, did not percieve that sea power in the eastern Mediterranean was indispensable to the success of his armies on land. In his campaign to gain an eastern empire, Napoleon was turned back at Acre by an inferior Turkish force supported from seaward by a small squadron of British ships under Sir Sidney Smith. During the preceding year, as you will recall, Nelson had demolished the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, and Napoleon was without the means to sustain his communications in the face of British command of the sea. This engagement marked the collapse of his dream of an empire in the East. After his defeat before Acre, Napoleon retired on his base in Egypt—baffled by his inability to use the sea.

The principal states that have held maritime power in the Mediterranean are Phoenicia, Carthage, the Greek States, Rome,

Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. These States all have certain characteristics in common. Taken as a whole, they may probably be said to comprise the identity of true maritime character. And it is well to bear in mind that we are examining a period of more than 2,500 years. These States were invariably small in geographic extent. They lacked natural resources and arable land. They bordered on difficult terrain—mountains and deserts, or else the territory of unfriendly peoples. The inhabitants of the maritime States were traders and craftsmen, rather than farmers or herdsmen. And these States depended on the importation by sea of foodstuffs and raw materials they were unable to produce at home. Like all other true maritime powers, they derived a large part of their national income from hauling the waterborne commerce of other nations not inclined toward the sea. But their greatest source of wealth and power grew out of their colonies, which they all sought to obtain and exploit.

The earlier maritime powers of the Atlantic share these same characteristics—Portugal and Holland, for example. Great Britain falls into a somewhat special category, but only because of her insularity, which underlines both her dependence on the sea and the natural protection that it affords her. I would exclude France and Spain from such a grouping, despite their extensive maritime history, since they are primarily continental in character. But it is proper to add to the list of early maritime states our own New England seaboard, as it existed from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century until the Civil War, as this region exhibited so many of the features of maritime character.

As you well know, pre-eminence at sea has been distinguished by the ownership of both combat and commercial fleets, but it is well to hold in mind that combat fleets have been subordinate in the order of national power to the commercial fleets

they are designed to complement and to protect. The historian Gibbon clearly sums up this relationship in writing of Venice at the time of the Crusades: "Nor did she often forget that if armed galleys were the effect and safeguard, merchant vessels were the cause and supply of her greatness."

The decline of sea powers cannot always be ascribed to any immediate cause. In the history of nations that have risen to maritime greatness and have lost it, there are deep and slowly moving influences which I do not intend to examine here. But in the final stages of the decay of sea power, there is one clear sign for all to see: The merchant shipping of a declining sea power disappears from the seas by reason of enemy action or withers it at home through loss of profitable trade.

The Military Strategy of Great Britain

Let us now turn to Great Britain as the classic example of national greatness resulting from sea power. An understanding of the means Britain has employed to obtain and hold world power will assist us in applying correctly our own maritime strength in support of the national policy. It is not necessary to point out to this audience the similarities between our maritime position and that of Great Britain. It is, rather, the dissimilarities that must be emphasized. Among these, the most important is our lack of dependence on the outside world for food. Of almost equal importance is the self-contained nature of our economy. This is not to infer that we do not draw from other parts of the world raw materials we do not produce in adequate quantities at home, or that the revenue we obtain from foreign trade does not form an important part of our national income. It is simply that our economy is not geared to a complex machinery of imports, exports, and all their related maritime enterprises—as is Great Britain's. It has truly been said that England must export or die. That statement could

not apply to us whatever. And a final difference to be stressed is that the United States—in addition to being a great sea power—is also a great land power, despite Mahan's thesis that no nation could be both.

Britain has applied sea power with a skill that surpasses all the other features of her foreign policy. King George V called England's Fleet her "sure shield", as indeed it has been. Not since William the Conqueror has Britain been invaded in war, although there have been periods when invasion seemed imminent. And, strange to say, there have always been Britons who feared invasion at times such as these and have urged the erection of all sorts of complicated land defenses to meet the enemy when he first stepped on shore. When Napoleon stood on the Boulogne coast, with an army of 130,000 men and a great assembly of transport and cargo craft to ferry it across the Channel, the Admiralty itself was apprehensive the invasion would succeed. But Lord St. Vincent—under whom the immortal Nelson learned his trade—knowing full well the French would first have to dispose of the English Fleet that lay in the Channel, reassured the Admiralty in a classic remark that seems worth repeating. "I do not say the French cannot come", he said, "I only say they cannot come by sea."

The strategy by which Britain has employed naval strength to advance and protect the interests of her commercial fleets is well known. Less widely recognized, perhaps, is somewhat the reverse of this circumstance: whereby merchant shipping has been a primary influence in shaping Britain's military strategy. In every war, as you know, the readiness of a weapon for use exerts a controlling influence on the way the war is fought. In this sense, merchant shipping has served Britain as a weapon.

The British have gained their most notable military successes when they have been able to employ land armies of relat-

ively small size at critical points where control of the sea approaches could be assured. By this strategy, Britain has been able to minimize her lack of manpower and bring to bear against continental opponents inconvenient or distracting pressure on flank or rear. Such a strategy depends, of course, upon allies to engage the enemy frontally if the war is to be fought to a conclusion. But it has been the preferred policy of Britain not to engage in land warfare against a continental opponent unless assisted by a continental ally. Merchant ships have provided the means by which this *eccentric* form of strategy might be put to use. (And by *eccentric,* I mean displaced from the center, rather than queer or odd.) Relatively small forces have been landed by transport and cargo shipping at points remote from the main theater but which the enemy is compelled to defend if he is to remain secure all along his line.

This eccentric form of warfare is ideally exemplified by Wellington's campaign in the Iberian Peninsula. Most of the nations of Europe were allied with England against Napoleon, and the main theater of war was in mid-continent. Wellington used the Fleet to transport his army to Portugal, where he entered Europe, in the French rear. His army was relatively small but it imposed an annoying division of force upon the French. Wellington could not be ignored since he was stirring up so much trouble with the Spaniards. The attempt to dislodge him in a series of limited engagements was unsuccessful; and to have moved against him in force—which Napoleon would have been compelled to do—meant transferring the main theater of war. In such a case, Wellington would either have retired behind his prepared positions at Torres Vedras or re-embarked his army into his transports. Thus Napoleon was confronted with what all continental soldiers seek to avoid: a war on two fronts. When Wellington felt that he was strong enough to move toward France, he used the Fleet to transfer his base by easy stages along the Spanish coast-

line. "If anyone", Wellington said, "wishes to know the history of this war, I will tell them that it is our maritime superiority gives me the power of maintaining my army, while the enemy are unable to do so."

And yet, despite the maritime strategy that has been so well suited to British arms, there is a perverse streak in British military character which seeks the land battle of large proportions. Before the outbreak of the first World War, there was a clear schism in British military planning. The Admiralty group was all for employing the small British Expeditionary Force in the event of war in an eccentric move—an amphibious landing along the Pomeranian coast, in the German rear, or along the Belgian coast, at Ostend or Zebrugge, on the flank. By this means, it was contended, far more pressure would be taken off the French than if the British divisions were to take up a position on the left of the main French line. The opposing group in the War Office favored the employment of Britain's military effort in direct action against the principal German armies. Sir Henry Wilson, then Director of Military Operations, and an ardent Francophile, put over his plan to get the British army of six divisions into alignment with the French as soon after the outbreak of war as possible.

Now, if the British have a defect in their military make-up, it is their dogged persistence—once they are committed to a line of action—in following it out to the bitter end. "Maintaining the objective", they call it. The French recognize this. On one occasion, Wilson inquired of General Foch what would be the smallest number of British troops that would be of any value to France in the event of a war with Germany. "Send us one British soldier", Foch replied, "and we shall take pains to see that he is killed!"

The result was, that instead of the modest army of six divisions with which Britain had thought to assist France, she mobil-

ized three and a half million men, of whom 700,000 were killed—a disaster from which she has never recovered.

The Dardanelles campaign was the only operation of major proportions undertaken by the Allies during World War I in which this eccentric strategy was employed. Its objective was to turn the left flank of the Central Powers by knocking Turkey out of the war, and thus to obtain access to eastern Europe as a means for sustaining Russia. Notwithstanding its failure and the criticism which has attended it, the Dardanelles campaign was soundly conceived. It was a proper and logical use of the mobility afforded by transport type shipping to apply land pressure at a critical point the enemy could not readily defend. This operation failed not so much because of the brilliant defense put up by the German, Liman von Sanders, but primarily because the British were unable to support two offensives at the same time. Reinforcements that might have turned the tide at Gallipoli were withheld until after the Loos offensive on the Western Front.

Can we perceive in all this a lesson for the United States? Militarily, we possess the insular advantages of Great Britain but we possess also her corresponding disadvantage of limited manpower in comparison with that of our most likely continental adversary. It is, of course, no part of my purpose to suggest for us any basic plan for war, but it seems plain, if Britain is to be taken as any sort of an example, that we cannot afford the headlong employment of great masses of troops in land warfare against a continental opponent. If this be so, and I think it is, then we must—in the conservation of our national power—turn to an eccentric—a maritime form of strategy—and exploit the advantages of mobility, surprise, and economy of force that are conferred by sea power—at the heart of which is merchant type shipping.

Political and Economic Considerations

It was primary thesis of Admiral Mahan that for a nation to be a great sea power it must conform to three requirements: First, such a nation must have the means of production, and thus be stimulated to the exchange of products. Second, it must have shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on. And, third, it must own colonies, which facilitate and enlarge the operations of shipping. (Incidentally, our own lack of colonies led Mahan to question whether the United States could ever become truly great at sea.)

Prior to World War II, this concept of sea power was well supported in the history of maritime nations. You will observe, however, that it is a concept that grows out of the colonial system and the doctrine of mercantilism. In the period before World War I—in which Mahan wrote—the maritime powers were in constant struggle for individual advancement, and all of them owned colonies. Under the system of mercantilism, a nation seeks to obtain the materials needed to support its economy from within its own orbit and to export its production to others at a profit. Hence, each of the maritime states required its own fleet of merchant shipping, since none could depend upon its rivals to provide ships at a time when not to provide them would weaken the relative position of the other.

Taken on the whole, this theory of sea power was certainly justified by world conditions prevailing until World War II. But, as a result of that War, there have been profound changes in the military and economic workings of world politics which, in my opinion, cause us to revise our earlier ideas of what is, and what is not, in the national interest. The rise of international gangsterism and the totalitarian state has forced peace-loving nations to look toward collective action as the best means of preserving their individual security. In World War II, we used lend-lease to support nations

whose interests were tied up with our own. At the present time, we are endeavoring by means of E. C. A. to restore and sustain the economic structure of the free nations of Europe. We believe those nations must enjoy a reasonable degree of prosperity if they are to be strong enough to withstand penetration by forces or ideologies dangerous to ourselves. In order to do this, we are expending —and we are committed to expend—a vast portion of our national substance. Nobody knows what this program ultimately may cost. But it is a program, nonetheless, around which our entire foreign policy is centered.

This is a philosophy of world politics to which we as a nation have not heretofore subscribed. And it imposes upon us the necessity to review some of the assumptions which have been fundamental to our national thinking in the past. One of these is the assumption that the ownership of a large merchant marine is a source of national power. Standing alone, this assumption is good; but it fails to take into account other, more potent, factors upon which the national interest depends. As I see it, the question to be decided is whether national support of an expanded U. S. merchant fleet is in agreement with our larger policy of aid to Europe. If not, then we must find a policy for the Merchant Marine that tends to advance the program we are embarked upon in Europe at such great cost and risk to ourselves.

Since our immediate objectives in Europe are economic, let us give some attention to the economics of world shipping.

It so happens that most of the nations to whom we are extending assistance are maritime powers—Norway, Britain, The Netherlands, and Greece, for example. Or else they have large maritime interests, such as France and Italy. The life of these nations to great extent depends on the sea. Before World War II, they

shared—if we exclude Japan—the bulk of the carrying trade of the world. The transportation of ocean commerce is one of the principal services they sell to others. These countries haul freight cheaply and efficiently. Moreover, they must have the income they derive from this service if they are to maintain economic stability. It affords their peoples a means of livelihood and provides them with foreign exchange to buy the food and materials they cannot produce at home. Today, the shipyards of Europe are striving to replace the tonnage lost during the War, although the United States can supply enough shipping for all the world's needs. These nations realize intuitively they cannot turn their backs on the sea.

With this background, we may return to the proposition advanced earlier in this discussion, namely, that the existence of a large U. S. Merchant Marine would have jeopardized Allied chances of winning World Wars I and II.

First, let us recognize that the total demands of world trade will support a corresponding amount of world shipping. In other words, the more trade, the more shipping in active employment. But existing tonnage in excess of these requirements will either be operated at a loss, or it will remain idle, since there will not be enough trade to go round. Thus, at any given time, there is a pool of world shipping that provides the means of ocean transportation for world commerce. If the principles of economics are allowed to operate freely, the size of this pool will be determined by the law of supply and demand. Some nations will hold more of this shipping, and others will hold less, depending upon their ability to compete in the various world trades.

This was essentially the system that prevailed prior to World War I and II. Foreigners could operate ocean shipping more cheaply than we could; consequently, they carried the greater part of our trade.

Now, what happens when you tinker with this system? What would have been the effect if, a few years prior to World War I or II, we had, by means of subsidy, put an expanded U. S. merchant fleet into the pool of world shipping? The result, as you can very well see, would have been to force certain of the other carrier nations to cut down their merchant fleets to the level the remaining trade would accommodate.

It is not hard to see which nations these would have been. They would have been those nations whose costs of operation most nearly approached our own—which means Britain, since she has less of a margin, or cushion, to absorb the pressure of uneconomic competition from us. It is, of course, quite true that Britain's world-wide interests would have preserved for her a substantial merchant fleet—still the largest in the world—but, nevertheless, competition of the magnitude we are considering here would seriously have cut into the tonnage that was available to Britain at the outbreak of both World Wars.

There is good reason to believe the German U-Boat campaigns against British shipping in both World War I and II very nearly succeeded. If the results of the first U-Boat campaign in World War I be examined—and there were two separate campaigns in that War—it will be observed that the British barely managed to survive. With a smaller merchant fleet, there seems no doubt Britain would have been starved into submission. The United States was doing its best to remain neutral—not sending its ships into the war zone, and so forth—but we had ocean freight backed up on every railroad siding as far west as Chicago. The pressure was on to do something for the Allies, and to get that freight moving.

A larger U. S. Merchant Marine would have alleviated this situation, and we would have been able to send our industrial and

agricultural production throughout the rest of the world. Likewise, a larger U. S. merchant tonnage would have increased the potential hazard to Germany if the United States were drawn into the War; and, with the correspondingly better prospects of success of its U-Boat campaign against Britain, it seems quite likely the German High Command would not have initiated the policy of indiscriminate sinking that finally *did* bring us into the War.

The situation was very much the same in World War II. Although Britain had a greater tonnage, she had military commitments that required merchant shipping on a far wider scale. Cargo bottoms were a critical shortage for Britain throughout the War. According to the British White Paper of November, 1944, Britain started World War II with 17,500,000 gross tons of merchant shipping under her control. By the end of 1943, she had lost the astounding total of nearly twelve million gross tons!

It is not necessary for us to dwell on the probable results of the elimination of Great Britain as an opponent to Germany in either World War I or II. And I am well aware that the circumstances which I have outlined and which might have forced her withdrawal are entirely conjectural. But my point is this—we must not accept blindly the statement that a large Merchant Marine is for the United States an unfailing source of national power.

We share with Britain leadership in a world complex of sea power that rings the continents of Europe and Asia like a girdle. The members of that complex are mutually supporting. This alignment of maritime strength provides individual states in the maritime community with what is probably their most valuable single means to withstand domination by land power. A proper policy for the Merchant Marine will tend to preserve this alignment upon which the maritime position of the United States ultimately depends.

How can we go about doing this?

First, I should say we must estimate, as best we can, what will be our requirements for merchant type shipping in the event of war—not only for ourselves, but also for our prospective allies. Then we must determine how these requirements may be satisfied without adversely affecting our other vital interests not directly related to shipping.

Allied needs for merchant shipping in time of war arrange themselves naturally into two categories: the short-term needs and the long-term needs. The pool of world shipping is one of the principal sources from which this tonnage may be obtained—just as it was in the last War and the War before that. Merchant ships lose much of their nationality in time of war. Officers here can recall convoys in the last War in which the flags of half a dozen Allied nations were flown. In World War II, the merchant tonnage available to all the Allies was drawn upon as a common fund—centrally disposed of and centrally directed. We may expect some such procedure to be adopted in any future war.

If we define our short-term needs as those during the first six months of a war, it will be safe to say they can be adequately provided for from three already existing sources: (1) the tonnage controlled by our prospective allies and friendly neutrals, (2) the reserve fleets, which we must keep up-to-date and in good order, and (3) the active U. S. Merchant Marine.

I will not touch further on the first two of these sources. Nor will I discuss the merchant type tonnage available in the Military Sea Transport Service. But, as to the third of these sources of short-term shipping, it is my opinion that we can maintain under our Flag a fleet of merchant shipping which will take its proper place in the world complex of maritime power—without weakening any

of its members—and still give us a good nucleus for expansion in time of war.

Briefly stated, such a fleet may be built around three primary peacetime demands for shipping in the United States: (1) Domestic shipping. Coastal and intercoastal shipping is flat on its back. It has never returned to the level of activity it enjoyed prior to World Wars I and II. It must be restored if our maritime potential is to be maintained. I would urge the extension of subsidy or some other form of government assistance to this type of shipping if for no other reason than it is an invaluable source of seamen and of the miscellaneous smaller auxiliary craft always so badly needed upon the outbreak of war. (2) The tonnage we must operate on certain ocean routes to guarantee a continuing supply of materials we do not produce at home—manganese, bauxite, tin, and other minerals,—coffee and sugar, if you like. (3) The tanker fleet. This, gentlemen, would be a considerable merchant marine. It would by no means put us out of the shipping business, and it would avoid cutting into the economic substance of our friends in Europe.

Our long-term requirements for merchant type shipping are more difficult to estimate. They will of course, be dictated by the nature of the war on the military front and by the rate and degree of mobilization of all our other resources. Thus, it is clear we will be granted time—within limits—to produce the additional shipping we may need, as our economy and manpower are more widely mobilized. No one can say with certainty what our shipping requirements will be in the event of a long war, just as no one can say where we shall be compelled to hold and where we may be able to go forward, but it is prudent to assume that military operations widely separated on the continents of Europe and Asia will have to be supported, as will our own civilian economy and the civilian

populations of certain of our allies. This bloc of shipping may surpass in tonnage all the Allied shipping of World War II.

But whatever these requirements may be, it must be emphasized that we cannot hope to satisfy them unless we preserve the shipbuilding industry in the United States. The know-how of building ships is indispensable to sea power. It is at once an art and a science, acquired patiently and painstakingly by those who practice it. A competent force of designers and technicians upon whom the industry may expand must be maintained in peace, if the demands of war are to be met. In my opinion, a peacetime Merchant Marine of the order I have described—coupled with our naval building, the maintenance of the reserve fleets, and certainly a program of "prototype-ship" construction—will provide us with such a force and serve to keep the shipbuilding industry in a healthy condition.

Gentlemen, I have by no means given you the entire picture of the Merchant Marine. The Department of Logistics will undertake a detailed study of many aspects of this subject I have simply touched upon; and Strategy & Tactics students will be afforded a resume′ of that study later in the year.

What I have tried to do here today is simply to give you an insight into the relation between merchant shipping and national power as it has existed in the past, and to provide, if possible, some basis of policy for the treatment of other, smaller, maritime powers upon whose continued well-being our own best interests depend.

With much of what I have said, you may not agree. Indeed, I should expect you to question critically many of the arguments I have put forward. But, as you spend more time here at the War College, you will find—as I have—that one of its chief objectives is to encourage you to think things out for yourself.

That is also the purpose of these remarks.