THE NEW NAVY AND AMERICA'S RISE AS A WORLD POWER, 1880-1919

A Report of a Senior Study

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Abstract

The years between 1880 and 1919 witnessed the rise of the United States as a respected world power driven by a world class New Navy. This thesis provides a survey of historical events outlining this development set against the greater context of national and international events during this period. By tracing the course of these events from the pre-history of the New Navy, through the Spanish-American War, to the First World War and beyond, this thesis demonstrates the application of Mahanian principles to Naval history and America's emergence as a power.
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND ITS ROLE

On August 26, 1775, amid the background of Revolution and War that was spreading across the colonies, the Rhode Island General Assembly recorded their decision to commission a fleet of ships to “preserv[e]... the lives, liberties, and property of the good people of these Colonies.”¹ The first ship to fill this role had been hired two days previously. Dubbed Hannah and outfitted with four small cannons and a few swivel guns, the schooner was paid for by George Washington himself. The motivation to commission Hannah and the ships that followed her was primarily commercial in nature. As part of the greater context of the Revolutionary War, frigates of the British Royal Navy had been harassing smuggler and merchant ships with ties to the colonial economies. Angered by this, Rhode Islanders and citizens of the other colonies knew that the most effective way to protect their trade interests was to build armed ships to discourage harassment by the British and to claim prizes, if possible.²

As the War progressed, the individual colonies consolidated their armed ships to form the Continental Navy which boldly fought against the Royal Navy - the most awesome naval force the world had ever seen at that point. Over the course of the War to its end, the Continental Navy birthed larger-than-life heroes with household names such as John Paul Jones, and legendary ships like the USS Constitution came to personify the plucky fighting spirit of the fledgling nation. From this point, the embryonic United States Navy would defend the nation’s trade interests against Barbary pirates and later the French in the Quasi-War before facing the British blockades once again and eventually engaging them in outright naval combat in the War of 1812. Over the next fifty years, the United States Navy continued to pen its early illustrious history as the instrument of American defense and local


² Ibid., 7.
influence until the Civil War when her own ships were turned against each other. What followed was a veritable dark age for the United States Navy which couldn’t have come at a more historically significant time.

The latter part of the 19th century was a crucial transitional period for the United States. The country was still perceived as a backwater of the world scene. Isolated on its own continent with a decrepit navy and without any imperial possessions of its own, the United States was in no position to compete with the great powers of Europe economically or militarily. In just a few short years, however, the United States began a shift that would lead the nation on a path to renewal, respectability, and later, to a position as a world power, ready to dictate foreign policy across the globe.

What led the United States on this path? The answer lies in the history of the creation of the New Navy in the 1880s and the wave of economic, military, and geopolitical success that followed into the twentieth century. It was at this pivotal point in American history that the transformation of the United States as a nation was mirrored in the evolution of its Navy and vice versa. From the ashes of the Civil War, a new nation with vigorous aspirations arose against a backdrop of international arms races and colonialism, and these aspirations were met through the rapid and ongoing development of the New Navy that occurred during this period. Essentially, America’s rise between the 1880’s and the end of the First World War in 1919 which set the stage for the nation’s emergence as a superpower at the end of the Second was primarily driven by the advantages this naval development provided. These developments were embarked upon in preparation for and in response to three principles of naval functioning which recurred in America’s conflicts during this period. These three principles are as follows:

1. The necessity of a navy to protect trade interests.
2. The effectiveness of a navy in projecting power, both hard and soft, within a nation’s sphere of influence and abroad.
3. The use of a navy in setting and defeating blockades.
These three principles were codified in the publication of Alfred Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, a work which was hugely influential in the various reform and modernization efforts that characterized the Navy’s development from 1880 onward. In consideration of this, two questions arise. First, how important were these three principles in affecting the birth and rise of the New Navy? Secondly, does the history of the United States Navy vindicate Mahan’s theses? There is no question that Mahan’s concepts were extremely influential in the development of the Navy. What I am investigating, essentially, is to what effect they were applied and endured during these critical years in American Naval history, and in a broader sense, how the developments they inspired affected the growth of the nation as a whole. The period from 1880 or so to 1919 can be divided into three rather distinct epochs which both spurred and tested the Navy’s development. The first is the initial establishment of the New Navy and its early utilization. The second marks the beginning of America’s first overseas imperial adventures and how the Navy helped drive these endeavors and reacted to challenges they offered. The third marks the establishment of the Navy as a respected international force and the backbone of America’s modern military might. Each of these three epochs and their associated wars, struggles, and so on contain instances of the Navy exemplifying and responding to Mahan’s three aforementioned key principles. By tracing the Navy’s development through these stages, it becomes clear that the United States’ rise to the position of a world power relied on conditions fostered by this progression.

CHAPTER I
In his 1890 magnum opus *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*, Alfred Thayer Mahan famously proposed that a capable navy is an absolute necessity if a nation wishes to secure for itself the benefits of being a global power. He recognized that to meet this effect, the purpose of such a navy should be the “[capability] of reaching distant countries” to project power in their waters, at best, or “to keep clear the chief approaches to its own [waters]” at the very least.³

Mahan identified a number of factors that fit within this concept of sea power. He noted that a nation's sea power is dually governed by “military strength afloat that rules the sea … by force of arms” as well as the capability to defend “the peaceful commerce and shipping from which alone a military fleet naturally and healthfully springs.”⁴ He noted that historically, the “wise or unwise action of individual men has … had a great modifying influence upon the growth of sea power.”⁵ The basis of Mahan's conception of sea power is that a strong navy should arise, almost symbiotically, from a nation's natural need for free trade while the promotion and protection of this trade, in and of itself, demands a strong navy. Mahan knew that instilling the influence needed to build up such a navy was easier said than done. Since he also realized that pragmatically, the question of sea power was “eminently one in which the influence of the government should make itself felt,” the government would have to be the primary means through which a navy was built.⁶ He had to account for the fact that powers within government are sometimes less than efficient, and reliant on the often flawed whims

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⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 87.
of the people that made up the government— the “unwise action of individual men” that he refers to. In the case of the United States around the end of the Civil War, the actions of these unwise men seemed to rule the day.

The months following the end of the war in 1865 signaled the beginning of a dismal time for the US Navy indeed. Though the percussion of field guns no longer rocked the land, and bullets had finally ceased to tear through the countryside and men alike, an entirely new type of conflict was beginning to brew— one that would usher in a twenty year long dark age for the Navy. The question that arose in the wake of the war that nearly tore the United States apart was what to do with the Federal Navy's seven hundred ships, which included sixty-five then state-of-the-art ironclads. The war-weary American public simply did not perceive a need for a large, expensive navy, and under the supervision of Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, the systematic deconstruction of the Navy was set in motion. Within nine months of the end of the war, four hundred ships were scrapped, sold, or otherwise disposed of, and the iconic ironclads were left to decay in dry dock, their turrets rusted in place like totems to the awesome power which they formerly represented. It would seem that at this point, the United States had wandered far from Mahan's ideal, and by extension essentially rendered itself incapable of defending its own economic interests, or projecting any sort of power, either at home or abroad.

The reality of the situation was much more nuanced however, as history demonstrates that the post-Civil War United States was not actually a complete embarrassment in regards to enforcing and protecting its trade and exploratory interests. This is perhaps best illustrated by the United States' 1871 Korean Expedition, which simultaneously demonstrated the potential value of the Navy, as well as

8 Ibid., 60.
9 Ibid.
some of its shortcomings.

Prior to 1871, a number of shipwrecked American merchants were murdered off the coast of Korea, prompting Rear Admiral John Rodgers of the Asiatic Squadron to sail to the region with the intent of establishing a treaty to protect foreign shipwreck survivors in the future. Rodgers’ other objective, if possible, was to establish a rapport with Korea that would hopefully open them to trade with the United States. This was not an easy feat considering that Koreans viewed westerners as barbaric and signing treaties with them as tantamount to treason. Nevertheless, Rodgers established a temporary anchorage at Boisée Island, from which contact was made with Korean authorities who were assured that Rodgers’ surveying party was non-aggressive. The survey party itself consisted of a few small craft that were ordered to survey the rivers near Kangwha Island, which was heavily fortified by a number of concealed fortresses. The expedition was rather uneventful until a single shot rang out from one of the Korean fortifications, followed by a barrage fired from concealed positions. The American boats fired back and evacuated back to Boisée after the shifting coastal tides began to create dangerous currents in the treacherous river.

Rodgers was infuriated upon receiving the report from the expedition. Two men had been wounded in the seemingly unprovoked barrage and Rodgers decided to give the Korean government ten days to apologize for the attack - a convenient length of time because the tides would have rendered the river safely navigable again by the tenth day, in case his terms weren't met and he was forced to retaliate. On June 9, 1871, with no response from the Korean government, Rodgers ordered Commander H.C. Blake to take punitive action against the Koreans by destroying the fortresses that

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
had fired upon the expedition in order to “demonstrate [the flotilla's] ability to punish such offenses at 
pleasure.”

The next day, Rodgers launched his retaliatory amphibious assault on the Korean 
fortifications with a contingent of 759 Marines and sailors, though only 651 men landed on shore while 
the ships' guns provided support. The Koreans fought fiercely with crude firearms and even resorted 
to throwing rocks at the American forces before they were overwhelmed. By the time the smoke 
cleared, three Korean forts had been taken by US forces, 243 Koreans were dead (a sharp contrast to 
the 3 Americans who were killed), and 481 Korean artillery pieces from five batteries had been 
destroyed. Despite an overwhelming American victory in terms of sheer military might, Korean 
officials continued to resist negotiations and Rodgers had to sail away before the arrival of typhoon 
season.

This incident revealed a great deal about the state of the post-Civil War American Navy. For 
one, it demonstrated the usefulness of a navy's ability to rapidly deliver and support combat troops in 
hostile environments (which offers obvious benefits for opening trading opportunities). But it also 
exposed the vulnerability ships faced with the threat of inclement weather. Additionally, it is important 
to note that US forces crushed the Korean forces which relied on vastly inferior firepower and 
technology. How would the United States hold up against a much more industrialized European power 
in open naval combat, should the need arise? More realistically, how would the US Navy effectively 
protect American trade interests from much more technologically advanced competitors? The world 
was changing rapidly, and despite its demonstrated semi-effectiveness, the United States desperately

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
1977), 195.
needed to modernize its navy if it hoped to gain an edge.

Luckily, the early to mid-1880s marked the beginning of a Renaissance for the United States Navy. Despite unavoidable ongoing tensions, the nation had survived, intact, the uncertain and bloody years of the Civil War as well as the ensuing Reconstruction Era, which offered its own challenges. American business and industrial interests were invigorated, highly profitable, and eager to seek new markets across the globe. An important lesson of the previous century, however, clawed at the consciousness of every industrialist or investor who sought to trade across the sea: the ocean was a threatening place, still rife with pirates and the powerful and potentially belligerent navies of Europe. In that dangerous seaborne world, unprotected American merchant ships would be at a distinct disadvantage, as demonstrated by the events that served as a prelude to the Korean Expedition. Though Mahan had not yet written *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, the economic and political conditions required necessitating his ideal navy were beginning to arise.

The United States Navy of the time was still anemic and outdated, at best, and no new advances in warship building had been made since the great post-war scrapping of the Civil War-era fleet. President Ulysses S. Grant's Naval Secretary Adolph Borie had resigned, only to be replaced by the scandalous George Robeson, a somewhat regressive-minded individual who inhibited naval modernization by stubbornly refusing to build any new warships, and by discouraging the use of steamships outside of harbors. In response to a disagreeable Congress, Robeson championed a campaign to rebuild a number of warships from scratch, which wound up costing more than it would have to simply build new ships. By the time he left office, a great deal of the funding he appropriated for these repairs had disappeared into the pockets of his crony contractors with no consequence, and the

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18 Ibid.
Navy he left behind was described as “an obsolete fleet in poor condition.”

Essentially, burgeoning American trade interests were inhibited by the fact that merchant ships had no real way of being effectively protected in their journeys to open new markets, or even from predators such as pirates on already established shipping lanes. This is best exemplified by the fact that despite the unquestionable technological superiority that guided John Rodgers to victory over the Koreans, his actions had no direct or immediate effect on opening Korea to trade. Additionally, there was also a pervasive and understandable anxiety among American entrepreneurs and others that trade rivalries with foreign powers as a result of economic expansionism could erupt into a full-scale naval war- a worst case scenario for which the United States would certainly be woefully unprepared. The United States' economic troubles and inward focus on Westward expansion of the past twenty years had blossomed into economic extroversion that sought new investments on foreign shores. In order to take full advantage of these developing economic interests, the United States needed a modern navy, just as Mahan would suggest, and numerous influential individuals were finally becoming acutely aware of this fact.

Enter William H. Hunt, Secretary of the Navy under President James Garfield, who took office with a progressive vision of how to modernize the United States Navy. Hunt immediately challenged what he perceived to be a backward naval establishment, as well as a skeptical Congress, and set his modernization plan into motion by creating a Naval Advisory Board in 1881.

\[\text{References:}\]

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., 195.
22 Ibid., 196.
24 Miller, The U.S. Navy, 196.
25 Ibid.
short-lived, however, as he was soon replaced by William E. Chandler by order of President Chester A. Arthur, who had just taken office after the assassination of Garfield.\textsuperscript{26} It would seem that, at this point, any hope for revamping the Navy would be lost. However, Chandler enthusiastically implemented the plans that Hunt's advisory board had previously suggested, earning for himself the epithet “Father of the New Navy.”\textsuperscript{27}

The beginnings of the “New Navy” referred to in Chandler's nickname were implemented soon afterward with a very specific purpose in mind. Unlike the nations of Europe, which required massive, heavily armed and armored battleships to protect their long-established imperial interests, the United States had much different requirements. Hunt's advisory board determined that the best way to allow the New Navy to defend and enhance American trade interests was to utilize what were known as protected cruisers - fast, lightly armored steamships that would be especially suited to lightning-quick raids on trade ports that remained resistant to the economic wishes of the United States.\textsuperscript{28}

The United States' first three ships of this type, as well as a dispatch vessel, began construction in 1883 and manifested as the \textit{USS Atlanta, Boston, Chicago,} and \textit{Dolphin,} popularly known as the ABCD ships due to their naming scheme.\textsuperscript{29} The \textit{Atlanta, Boston,} and \textit{Chicago} were hybrid ships in that they were powered by steam engines, but also equipped with full sail rigs. This hybrid design granted them a great deal of versatility, despite their ungainly appearance. They were also outfitted with a light armored deck that shielded their inner workings - a hallmark of the protected cruiser type of ships. Actual offensive weaponry on the ABC cruisers varied by ship and represented state of the art technology of the day. The \textit{Atlanta's} main armaments were two powerful long range 8-inch

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\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 196-7.
\textsuperscript{27} Morris, \textit{History of the U.S. Navy}, 64.
\textsuperscript{28} Miller, \textit{The U.S. Navy}, 197.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
breech-loading guns and six 6-inch guns. She was also armed with two fearsome .45-70 caliber Gatling Guns, as well as a number of smaller cannons. The Boston was similarly armed with two 8-inch and six 6-inch guns, but lacked the smaller cannons and Gatling Guns. The Chicago, being the largest of the ABC cruisers and flagship of the group, was heavily armed with four 8-inch guns, eight 6-inch guns, two 5-inch guns, and an assortment of miscellaneous Hotchkiss cannons and early machine guns. Though not considered a protected cruiser, the Dolphin was the first (and smallest) of the New Navy ABCD ships to be completed, and was comparatively lightly-armed with two 4-inch guns and five 3-pounder cannons.

The ABCD ships provided an excellent jumping-off point for the modernization of the Navy and served the needs of the country well while they were in service, particularly in regards to showing the rest of the world what the New Navy was potentially capable of. For instance, the Dolphin managed to complete a 58,000 mile world tour in 1889 while only stopping once to adjust her engines, which only took two hours. As for the Atlanta, Boston, and Chicago, they were used as state-of-the-art training tools for the rising generation of officers and sailors.


34 Miller, The U.S. Navy, 197.

35 Ibid.
Despite their undoubted eventual successes, the process of constructing and deploying the ABCD ships was not without controversy. For the American Naval establishment of the 1880's, the use of coal-dependent steamships was met with scrutiny. Unlike the strongest European powers of the day, the United States did not have any imperial possessions abroad from which steamships could resupply their coal stores.\(^{36}\) Admiral David Porter even went so far as to threaten to charge ship commanders for every bit of coal they used in transit. Additionally, there was still a great deal of debate over what the role of the New Navy should be. Even by the 1880s when the capable keels of the ABCD ships were laid, there was still a popular conception that the objective of the US Navy should be to defend the nation's coast with rams, torpedo boats, monitors, and other vessels most effectively used for defensive fighting close to shore.\(^{37}\) Nevertheless, the role of the Navy as a long range force was cemented with the successful completion of the ABCD ships, as well as subsequently built ships, such as the second-class battleships *Texas* and *Maine*.\(^{38}\)

With the great developmental strides the Navy had made in the 1880s, the question still remained as to how best to train officers and sailors to account for the bold new tactical implications the New Navy represented. As was the trend in the late nineteenth century, military matters were taking a turn for the scientific, and the Navy was not immune to this change. In the case of the United States Navy, the pragmatic, scientific approach to warfare was pioneered by Commodore Stephen Luce.\(^{39}\) Based on his experiences and observations as the commander of a monitor in the Civil War, Luce brilliantly concluded that there exist “certain fundamental principles ... of general application” in

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37 Ibid., 233.


39 Ibid.
regards to military operations. \textsuperscript{40} Essentially, Luce argued that the principles of science - that emergent patterns are observable and subject to analysis - could be applied to the effective use of the Navy. This emphasis on applicative use of scientific processes was not formed in a vacuum, and it fit into a larger context of professionalization that swept late nineteenth century military institutions across the globe. Prior to the end of the nineteenth century, military leadership was almost universally perceived as being the realm of gentlemen. \textsuperscript{41} In the United States, the most well-remembered and beloved military leaders of the previous century were not men who relied on scientific analysis of the principles of warfare, but plucky amateurs who utilized their charisma as much as their elevated social standing to achieve greatness. The professionalization of the late nineteenth century began to chisel away at this paradigm, however, to make way for a new generation of military leaders who relied on professional training in the science of war, as opposed to sheer force of personality. The leadership of the United States Navy was resistant, but not immune to, this paradigm shift, which Luce enthusiastically pushed for. Luce's ideas were initially subject to criticism by the ever-skeptical conservative element of the Naval establishment, but his perseverance was vindicated with the establishment of the Naval War College on October 6, 1884. \textsuperscript{42}

Just as the United States had done in adopting European-style heavily armed protected cruisers, so the nation did in creating a school to study the science of war. Germany had established its own Army War College, or \textit{Kriegsakademie}, in 1810. \textsuperscript{43} The British followed suit with the founding of the Military Staff School in 1873, and the French created their own \textit{École Militaire Supérieure} five years after.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 235.

\textsuperscript{42} Miller, \textit{The U.S. Navy}, 198.

\textsuperscript{43} Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 235.
Regardless, the United States Naval War College was unique in that it was the first modern military educational institute to focus on the scientific study of naval warfare, leadership, and tactics specifically, and it was responsible for training an entirely new generation of professional officers in this progressive vision.\footnote{Ibid.}

Representative of the process of modernization of the US Navy as a whole, the establishment of the Naval War College was not without its challenges. The college itself was originally housed in the ramshackle former city poorhouse on Coaster's Harbor Island in Newport, Rhode Island, and Luce was given the honor of being the first president.\footnote{Ibid.} In addition to its leaky, less than ideal housing, the Naval War College faced a very specific logistical challenge: there was a glaring lack of textbooks available to reinforce or even to serve as a basis for the school's curriculum. In keeping with the scientific principles that were to govern the curriculum of the school, it quickly became apparent that no substantial works had been written which espoused Luce's “fundamental principles of general application” in relation to the Navy.\footnote{Howarth, To Shining Sea, 236.} It would take a Naval War College lecturer to recognize this issue and set out to remedy it, and that lecturer was none other than Alfred Thayer Mahan.

Alfred Mahan was the perfect candidate for solving this problem, and his life and career make plain the formative influences that instilled this ability in him. Alfred Mahan was born to Dennis Hart and Mary Okill Mahan in West Point, New York on September 27, 1840.\footnote{Captain William Dilworth Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N. (Oxford: Alden Press, 1939), 30.} His father graduated from West Point where he served as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics and befriended Colonel Sylvanus Miller, \textit{The U.S. Navy}, 198.
Thayer, who had a lifelong influence on him.\textsuperscript{49}

After studying abroad at the French School of Application for Artillery and Engineering at Metz, Dennis Mahan returned to West Point where he became Acting Professor of Engineering - a position which allowed him the freedom to develop and edit textbooks for the Academy which he illustrated himself.\textsuperscript{50} Dennis' keen analytical abilities and deep fascination with the ins and outs of military history were passed on to Alfred by his tendency to leave books from the West Point library on the living room table for his children to read. Among young Alfred Mahan's favorite boyhood reads were books recounting stories of the Napoleonic Wars which were penned by British naval officers who experienced them. This early fascination with the lure of the sea stuck with the young Mahan into his teenage years when he determined that he would enter the Navy, to the slight dismay of his father.\textsuperscript{51}

By January of 1856, when he just sixteen years old, Alfred Mahan acquired an appointment to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland from Congressman Ambrose S. Murray with the assistance of then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis.\textsuperscript{52} As an acting midshipman in the Academy, Mahan was assigned to work as a crew-member on a thirty-two-pounder gun. He also participated in mandatory infantry drills, which most midshipmen engaged in with much scorn though Mahan didn't mind, and he was trained to fight with a broadsword and foil, as well as how to dance the waltz and behave in the company of gentry.\textsuperscript{53} After three years in the Naval Academy, Mahan graduated as a junior officer and was sent to the Philadelphia Navy Yard to serve aboard the frigate \textit{USS Congress},

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 25-6.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 31-5.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 36-8.
which was then dispatched to the south Atlantic.\textsuperscript{54} Mahan greatly enjoyed his time aboard the Congress, which satisfied his lust for seaborne adventure he had since he was a boy, though the arrival of dark days quickly put a damper on his enjoyment.

By 1861, Fort Sumter had fallen and the American Civil War had begun. In June of that year, the Congress set sail for Boston where all men aboard with ties to the south, including Mahan, were forced to declare their allegiance to the Union. Four men refused the oath and were imprisoned, only to be exchanged and enter the Confederate Navy. Mahan found himself caught up in a firestorm of divided loyalties as the rift between the two halves of the nation began to crystallize. Both he and his family were not immune to the balkanizing effects of the war. Robert E. Lee was a close family friend of the Mahans, and it pained Dennis to watch him resign his commission. Dennis Mahan was also a close acquaintance with General P. G. Beauregard, who resigned his position as Superintendent to take a commission in the South Carolina militia. Mahan's family itself was even affected. The Reverend Milo Mahan was a known Southern sympathizer, and Alfred even once called into question his own father's loyalty to the Union in regards to his affection for the State of Virginia.\textsuperscript{55} The painful division of the nation at war struck closer to Alfred Mahan himself as well. Out of his own graduating class of nineteen men, six defected to the Confederacy, while one Southern sympathizer avoided playing any role in the war.\textsuperscript{56} Mahan, despite his tenuous relations with a number of important Confederates, as well as his life-long affection for the South, remained a loyal Unionist, and he proudly served in the Federal Navy, where he was able to hone his observational and strategic skills.\textsuperscript{57}

Mahan's Civil War service as an officer aboard a number of ships made his aptitude for naval

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 46-7.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 48.
tactical analysis extremely apparent, both to himself, and others. While he was aboard the Congress, 
the CSS Sumter was making a great nuisance of itself to the Union Navy by running the Mississippi 
blockade and capturing Union ships.\textsuperscript{58} He was transferred to the USS James Adger for transport, where 
he first revealed his practical strategic insights by submitting a brilliant plan to stop Captain Rafael 
Semmes and the Sumter's spree. Mahan interpreted the actions of the Sumter as an insult to the 
fortitude of his beloved Navy, so the issue was personal. He recognized that the obvious solution to 
destroy or capture the Sumter was to blockade it. The problem was, however, that the task would 
require more cruisers than the Navy had access to, which would in turn weaken other important 
blockades. In a flash of ingenuity that reflected his seemingly innate skills, he suggested that a decoy 
should be constructed to resemble a helpless ship of the merchant marine, though this ship would 
hardly be helpless - in fact, it would be armed with a disguised pivot gun which would be used to sink 
the Sumter as it approached its would be prey.\textsuperscript{59} Mahan recognized the risks of such an exploit, which 
he downplayed, though he offered to personally command the decoy ship.\textsuperscript{60} His suggested strategy, 
despite (or perhaps because of) its out-of-the-box ingenuity, was ignored by the Assistant Secretary of 
the Navy, much to his disappointment.\textsuperscript{61} Regardless, the occurrence exemplifies Mahan's rapidly 
developing lateral thinking skills in regard to military matters. As much an historian as a tactician, he 
likened his ideas about warfare to a game of wits, and compared his adeptness at strategy to that of 
Hannibal and other great military leaders in history who he was very familiar with. This historical 
awareness, as well as his own tactical abilities, would eventually be put to paper in The Influence of Sea 
Power upon History.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 48-9.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
In autumn of 1862, Mahan was dispatched back to the Naval Academy at Newport where he became associated, both professionally and cordially, with then Lieutenant-Commander Stephen Luce, who heavily influenced Mahan's ideas with his own blossoming beliefs on the scientific professionalization of the military.\textsuperscript{62} Eight months later (and after experiencing a brief, unconsummated tryst with a married woman), he was reassigned to the \textit{USS Macedonian}, and later, the \textit{Seminole}.\textsuperscript{63} Mahan considered much of the remainder of his service in the Civil War to be rather dull, which betrayed his own romantic conception of war as a thrilling exploit, and the war ended with him placed aboard the \textit{Muscoota} as it sailed north to be taken out of commission.\textsuperscript{64}

Overall, Mahan's experiences with the US Navy in the Civil War taught him valuable lessons that would eventually find their way into \textit{The Influence of Sea Power upon History}. His extensive wartime experiences with blockading, coupled with his historiographical skills developed a keenness within him for naval strategy that he had yet to consolidate. This was about to change.

By 1883, Mahan had been promoted to Commander and given command of the \textit{USS Wachusett}, a rusting relic of the Civil War equipped with outdated guns as well as boilers and engines that were in horrible condition. His mission was to cruise back and forth between Ecuador, Peru, and Chile on his own volition in order to protect American citizens and interests in the region as the war between Peru and Chile drew to a close. His mission was successful, as he did not have to use force to defend American interests, and he was promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the fleet as a result of his actions.\textsuperscript{65} The following autumn, he was invited by Luce to become a lecturer of naval history and tactics at the Naval War College. He accepted, and inspired by Luce, he began to more seriously study

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 52-3.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 54-6.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 80-1.
military history with an emphasis on the role of navies on martial matters. It was during this time that inspiration struck him. While reading about the Punic Wars, Mahan began to think about the Roman Navy's successes and what could have happened if Hannibal had made more use of sea power to invade the Italian peninsula. Mahan began to consider the role of a nation's navy less as a means of winning limited engagements and more as a means of controlling the entire sea. From here, he began his research that would later make up The Influence of Sea Power upon History.

By 1886, Mahan, with the encouragement of Luce, began to seek out a publisher. Consolidating his well-received lectures at the Naval War College with his original research and experience-based observations, he composed The Influence of Sea Power upon History to serve as the ultimate solution to the Naval War College's textbook problem. Despite a number of frustrating obstacles to publication, the first American edition was accepted by publisher John M. Brown and published in May of 1890. The product of his hard work and dedicated research was an instant success and a hit among the who's-who of the military administrative world. Then-civil service commissioner Theodore Roosevelt remarked that he would be “greatly in error if it does not become a naval classic.” The book found great popularity among British naval leaders as well. Captain Gerard H. U. Noel of the HMS Temeraire remarked that he had never before read a “more full of interest” or “more clearly written” account of the role of sea power than Mahan's work. Captain Charles Beresford wrote that Mahan's book should “be placed on the table of every house in Britain and her colonies [to]

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66 Ibid., 81-3.
67 Ibid., 84.
68 Ibid., 100.
69 Ibid., 100-2.
70 Ibid., 102.
teach … how [Great Britain] first obtained its basis by its sea power.”71 In the end, Mahan's dedication created what was perhaps the ultimate comprehensive textbook for the Naval War College, and the theories espoused within served the rising generations of officers well in a world that was rapidly hurtling itself into modernity.

What were the primary principles that these new officers were learning from The Influence of Sea Power upon History? The book covers a broad range of topics related to the concept of sea power, and most of the work itself is composed of a historical narrative of the role that sea power has played in deciding the outcomes of various conflicts, so what actual theoretical knowledge did these officers stand to gain? In the first chapter, Mahan outlines six basic conditions of a nation that affect sea power, which includes a country's geographical characteristics, as well as the logistics of local populations in relation to naval matters, as well as seaborne commerce, among other attributes.72 The primary recurring and heavily emphasized element of his initial discussion, however, is the assertion that control of the seas - the guiding principle of the concept of sea power as a way to bring a nation to greatness - is necessary to protect seaborne shipping and trade interests first and foremost.73 Mahan acknowledged that the United States, at the time, lacked colonial possessions that would simultaneously require the use of a large navy as well as serve as refueling stations for one. He also pointed out that, based on his own experiences and knowledge of blockading during the Civil War, the US Navy's best option for securing American interests would be by becoming a force effective at both setting and neutralizing blockades.74 This doctrine soon became extremely relevant, as a wave of conflicts and revolution began to sweep across South America and elsewhere, and the interests, both

71 Ibid.
72 Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, pp. 29, 44.
73 Ibid., 26.
74 Ibid., pp. 83-5.
commercial and otherwise, of the United States were caught up in the tumult.

In 1891, as revolution swept the nation of Chile, a group of American sailors from the neutral American legation were hunted down and attacked by a mob, which killed two and wounded eighteen others.\textsuperscript{75} As a result, Chile and the United States teetered on the brink of war. A year later in the Pacific, some Hawaiian officials requested annexation of the islands by the United States in response to local turmoil. The request was initially ignored, despite the fact that it was no secret that Honolulu would serve as an important way-point between the United States and China for commercial shipping interests - a benefit that would be lost to America should the location fall into European hands.\textsuperscript{76} Whether the United States was ready or not, the need for the kind of navy Mahan recommended in his book was quickly arising as a result of changing world events.

By the mid-1890s, the seemingly ever present conflicts in South America had reached a boiling point. The Navy had made significant strides at this point, thanks to the development of the ABCD ships and other vessels, and naval fleet tactical doctrine was evolving thanks to Mahan's efforts and the ongoing professionalization of naval command doctrine. The time had finally come to put the New Navy to the test. In the midst of a naval revolt in Brazil, a U.S. Naval squadron consisting of five new cruisers and a single older gunboat was dispatched to protect United States merchantmen in Rio.\textsuperscript{77} The mission was a success with little difficulty, and blockaded American merchant ships were released from the Rio harbor by the show of force of the Naval squadron. The first real test of the New Navy’s effectiveness, however, was still yet to come just a few short years later.

\textsuperscript{75} Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 241.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 242.
CHAPTER II

THE SPEARHEAD OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

By the late 1890's, a perfect storm of events continued its steady brew in the Caribbean, and it was only a matter of time before these tensions erupted into conflict. Facing a multitude of ongoing domestic crises, the once-expansive Spanish Empire had degenerated into a crumbling husk of its former glory and power. Troubled by insurrection and yellow fever, the Spanish crown desperately clung to whatever vestiges of its former empire it could hold on to. The locus of Spain's imperial nostalgia lay with a small island nation just south of Florida: Cuba. Meanwhile, a motivated United States which was soon to be flung into a new age was seeking moral cause upon which to justify its
aims. The situation in Cuba with Spain would soon provide just such a cause.

Cuba had long proven both troublesome and tempting for the United States, given its proximity to the mainland and for its historical ties to US interests. As early as 1823, John Adams had expressed fears that a powerful Spain could cede the island to the British which would be potentially disastrous for the young nation. In response to this, and other concerns, the United States had offered to buy Spain on three occasions over the course of the nineteenth century, but Spain denied each offer in kind. By the 1890's, Americans owned around $50 million worth of property in Cuba which could be potentially threatened by the Spanish presence at any moment. If Americans could secure Cuba in one way or another, these assets would be protected and the United States would have acquired one of its earliest targets of Manifest Destiny. The United States simply needed a justification for invasion, preferably moral in nature, with wide popular support. Such a justification would present itself as tensions in Cuba exploded into violence.

In an effort to maintain a firm grip on Cuba, Spain began increasing its military presence on the island nation with marked brutality. The Spanish force on Cuba was 230,000 strong, which consisted of 105,000 Spanish regulars and 80,000 local loyalists. Despite their formidable numbers, the Spanish military presence faced considerable challenges while on the island. For one, most of the troops were conscripts with inadequate training, and their commanding officers were often wildly incompetent with little knowledge of tactics as applicable to a modern, professional military. Furthermore, infectious diseases, especially yellow fever, took a massive toll on the Spanish forces. By 1895, between 25 and 30 percent of these men were hospitalized, and American estimates figured that only around 55,000 of

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79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
the total Spanish force was in fighting shape.\textsuperscript{82} The Cuban rebels numbered between 25,000 and 40,000 strong and waged a fierce and effective guerrilla campaign against the Spanish.\textsuperscript{83} Despite having to deal with a looming deficiency of supplies and weapons, the Cuban rebels maintained a high level of motivation.\textsuperscript{84} This motivation was, in essence, partially a survival instinct and partially a thirst for vengeance which was instilled and fueled by the sheer brutality of the Spanish regime. Although the Spanish forces faced various setbacks, they responded to rebel operations by burning towns, corralling Cubans into concentration camps, and wantonly murdering multiple thousands of Cubans, civilian and rebel alike. These atrocities not only motivated native Cubans, but Americans as well, who read about Spain's brutality in their daily newspapers.\textsuperscript{85} While most American government officials initially opposed war with Spain, the public at large seethed with moral outrage at the horrors of Spain's actions in Cuba - outrage that was certainly justified in a sense, but also fueled, in part, to the point of demanding war by the unscrupulous journalistic practices of the day.

Certainly in the context of the build-up to the United States' entry into war with Spain, it is important to acknowledge the role yellow journalists played in creating a moral cause for war. Additionally, special recognition should be given to their distinguishable emphasis on the potential use of new-found American Naval might, which is evident in many primary sources of the day. But first, it is important to understand the general concept and history of yellow journalism in order to better grasp its influence on America's road to war in 1898.

William Randolph Hearst, a spunky college drop-out and publisher of \textit{The New York Journal}, learned in 1897 that sensational headlines tended to draw in scores of readers when his crack team of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 70-71.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 71.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 247.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 248.
\end{itemize}
investigative reporters produced a startling account of a grisly murder and affair that took place in New York City.\textsuperscript{86} The public was enthralled, and an eager readership began devouring the slew of sordid stories that followed. Spying an opportunity, Hearst's publishing rival Joseph Pulitzer, began printing his own sensational stories and a massive battle for newspaper circulation erupted between the men.\textsuperscript{87} Thus, the concept of yellow journalism was born, and it helped shape and excite the popular opinion of a whole generation of readers who were living out their prime in an exciting (and often uncertain) period of American history. These stories were most often characterized by scandalous content and sensational headlines meant to stir readers up in excitement in order to deliver a handsome profit to the publisher.\textsuperscript{88} Such stories eventually took on their own role in shaping the public's moral outrage at the conduct of the Spanish in Cuba.

The actual magnitude of the part yellow publications took in driving America's war fever has been contested by historians, who have been diligently re-evaluating the suggestion that yellow journalism was instrumental in pushing the public to war. Historians of journalism such as David R. Spencer have pointed out that despite sales numbers, not every publisher or journalist followed or agreed with Hearst's paradigm. The \textit{New York Post} and the \textit{New York Times} both publicly criticized Hearst's sensationalism as “a national disgrace and a public evil.”\textsuperscript{89} Victor Lawson re-printed stories from Hearst and Pulitzer's papers in his own \textit{Chicago Record} and \textit{Chicago Daily News} in an effort to mitigate the sensationalism of the articles and to maintain respectability.\textsuperscript{90} This did not stop or even discourage Hearst, Pulitzer, and their ilk, however, as their papers continued to reach an increasingly

\textsuperscript{86} David R. Spencer, \textit{The Yellow Journalism: The Press and America's Emergence as a World Power} (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 1.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 125.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
larger audience and numerous other newspapers across the country began to adopt the yellow journalism model. This trend becomes especially apparent when examining a selection of prominent newspapers from the era and aggrandized calls for war with Spain are unmistakable among the stories. For example, one article in the January 13, 1897 edition of The Sun states that “...no instance of butchery surpasses the events at Havana” in reference to the Spanish suppression of rebels in the area. The article goes on to compare the atrocities of Spanish leadership in Havana to those of Nero and Caligula. The anonymous article concludes that the “poor people [of Havana]... look to the United States as a savior” and that they need “foreign intervention... to save them.”91 The style of this particular article may seem absurdly hyperbolic, but it is not an anomaly, as nine more editorial articles on the same page serve to demonize Spain and plea for American aid to Cuba in one way or another, all within the description of tactics of yellow journalism. Apart from The Sun, many other newspapers from the same period were no different. For instance, one New York Tribune article from April 9, 1898 laments that the poor, freedom-loving people of Cuba “imbibed with the spirit of self-government” needed to have their struggle recognized by America, who they “looked upon... as a big brother.”92 The common trend when reading these articles is that America had a moral obligation to aid the Cuban people against their Spanish oppressors. But by which vehicle would the United States do so? The answer also lies within the pages of these same yellow newspapers of the era.

In addition to no lack of generally hawkish articles and editorials, many yellow newspapers commonly cited the strength of the freshly re-invented United States Navy as a means to act against Spain. A New York Tribune article from May of 1898 boasted about the launching of the Alabama and made particular note of the ship's advanced guns and their awesome capabilities.93 Another paper

91 “A Page of Blood,” The Sun, January 13, 1897, 6.
from just a few weeks prior ran a special piece on the ships of Dewey's Philippine Fleet, complete with impressive illustrations and details about the ships' speed and armaments. The article is decidedly propagandistic in tone, and it is clear that the intention was to convince the American public that New Navy was more than capable of helping to secure victory.

However significant or inconsequential their role may have been, yellow journalists had no doubt helped stoke a moral fervor against Spain while simultaneously offering a solution, in some respects: a war of liberation that would be won with the aid of the force of a modern navy. At this point the public was thoroughly outraged, but most prominent officials still remained indecisive about war - most, excluding then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt. A famously rough and tumble man by nature, Roosevelt had no use for dawdling when it came to the potentiality of war with Spain, and he prepared for conflict by assigning Commodore George Dewey to command the Asiatic Squadron. Roosevelt's envisioned strategy involved deploying Dewey and his Squadron to various places where Spanish forces would be vulnerable should conflict arise. From this point, war would seem inevitable - though a spark was still needed.

As Americans rang in the New Year of 1898, riots erupted in Havana and the Spanish brutally cracked down on civilians and rebels alike, which brought the death toll of the ongoing occupation to over 200,000. In fear that the considerably valuable American interests in the area were threatened, as well as in response to the humanitarian nature of the crisis, the United States deployed the U.S.S. *Maine* to Havana harbor, where it arrived on January 25.

The *Maine* was a formidable second-class battleship, comparable in armor and firepower to the

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96 Ibid.
British class of *Royal Sovereign* ships and Spanish class of *Almirante Oquendo*.\(^{97}\) She was armed with an assortment of guns and light cannons, as well as two Gatling guns and four torpedo tubes.\(^{98}\) Such impressive firepower required large magazines for the storage of ammunition, which happened to be located adjacent to coal bunkers, a design element that troubled one official who, in a report to the Secretary of the Navy, wrote that a fire in a bunker would pose a great danger.\(^{99}\) Nevertheless, the *Maine* remained moored in Havana Harbor as a deterrent without issue until the night of February 15, when she exploded in a massive fireball, killing 266 men aboard.\(^{100}\) Spain immediately responded with concern, but did not claim responsibility for the blast, and instead blamed it on the works of Cuban rebels who allegedly hoped to incite violence between Spain and the US. Six days later, the U.S. Government launched an official inquiry to determine what caused the explosion of the *Maine*.\(^{101}\) Less than a week later, Naval Secretary John D. Long allowed Theodore Roosevelt temporary control of the Department. Roosevelt, convinced now that war was inevitable, ordered U.S. Navy ships around the world to mobilize, including Dewey's Asiatic Squadron, in preparation.\(^{102}\) A month later, the inquiry into the sinking of the *Maine* reported that evidence suggested a mine had sunk her. The response of the yellow press was extraordinary.

Even if historians disagree on the importance of yellow journalism in shaping the attitudes of the American public before the *Maine* disaster, these newspapers - especially those owned by Hearst and Pulitzer - were instrumental in placing the blame on Spain and finally giving the U.S. Government justification for war. A sequence of official inquests into the cause of the explosion were launched

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 248-9.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., 248.

\(^{99}\) Ibid., 249.

\(^{100}\) Ibid.

\(^{101}\) Ibid., 250.

\(^{102}\) Ibid.
which resulted in contradictory conclusions. One suggested that a fire in a coal bunker ignited an explosion in one of the magazines.\textsuperscript{103} In the end, however, the court responsible for the inquests asserted that a Spanish mine was responsible for the sinking.\textsuperscript{104} Regardless of what the American people may have thought leading up to the court's conclusion, the yellow press hounded on the issue. Hearst's \textit{Evening Journal} ran headlines describing a “Growing Belief in Spanish Treachery.”\textsuperscript{105} From that point, it was only a matter of time before an official declaration of war was made.

Mobilization for war began at the end of March and beginning of April in 1898. Wary of entering into war, President McKinley deliberately gave the Spanish plenty of time to respond to his negotiations, which included arbitration of the \textit{Maine} disaster and a gradual path to independence for the people of Cuba.\textsuperscript{106} The Spanish denied the plea for Cuban independence, but McKinley continued to postpone asking Congress for a declaration of war until April 11.\textsuperscript{107} On April 19, Congress passed a resolution which declared Cuba independent of Spanish rule with an attached special amendment forbidding the United States from annexing the island. McKinley responded by ordering the Navy to blockade Cuba and by sending a squadron to the waters near Havana. By the 25\textsuperscript{th}, Congress declared a state of war - one in which the Navy played an integral role in proving its capabilities.

While the Navy had undergone a renaissance in the 18 years leading up to the Spanish-American War, the Army and the War Department were still ill prepared for conflict. The professionalization of the officer's corps in the Navy that served as one of the pillars of military modernization had not spread to the Army, and the Army was not prepared to carry out joint operations

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 249.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 250.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
with the Navy.\textsuperscript{108} The typical Army Regular, however, was well trained, highly disciplined, and armed with new Krag-Jörgensen bolt-action, magazine fed rifles. In contrast, National Guardsmen who were mustered were often poorly-disciplined and armed with outdated Springfield black powder rifles, and controversy existed over whether they could even legally serve overseas or not. Congress had initially requested 125,000 volunteers, but later asked for an additional 75,000 men, as well as 10,000 men known as “Immunes” who were thought to be resistant to tropical diseases.\textsuperscript{109} Most strategists at the time did not expect American soldiers to even have to directly fight with Spanish forces and the American military strategy mostly consisted of an ongoing Naval blockade of Cuba. It soon became apparent, though, that this strategy was unrealistic, and a number of training camps were established in semi-tropical gulf regions of the United States to prepare volunteers for their expedition to Cuba.

Despite the shortcomings of the land forces of the day, the Navy was well prepared for combat, and luckily, most of the critical maneuvers of the war relied on the Navy anyway.\textsuperscript{110} For example, Theodore Roosevelt's previous plan to station Dewey's Asiatic Squadron in the Pacific was fulfilled when McKinley ordered the Squadron to strike the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. The point of this strike and of the presence of the Asiatic Squadron in the first place was to weaken Spanish power by undermining their hold on the Philippines, which would in turn weaken their capability to hold Cuba. The plan proved successful. On April 30, Dewey sailed into Manila Bay and spent the next few hours attacking the Spanish fleet at Cavite, sinking or disabling every last ship without a single American fatality.\textsuperscript{111} His squadron then proceeded to spend the next few days destroying the shore batteries which protected Manila harbor. With insufficient men to launch a raid on the city itself, Dewey

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 323.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 325-6.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 327.
\end{itemize}
requested more land forces from the United States. During the two months it took for these forces to arrive, Dewey was placed in an awkward tactical situation. Not only did he have to blockade Manila harbor and support Filipino insurgent leader Emilio Aguinaldo, but he also had to contend with British, French, and German naval squadrons who arrived to claim the Philippines should the United States offensive fail. Thankfully, the European forces took the hint that the United States was not going to give up on its fight with Spain and they withdrew.

Meanwhile, Naval operations in the Caribbean proved to be more problematic. Because the Army relied on the Navy to insert attacking land forces on the island, and the Navy was having trouble determining where best to attack from, the initial assault on Cuba was delayed. Admiral Cervera of Spain had successfully ran the American naval blockade and established a position at Santiago Bay. Unable to attack Cervera's squadron directly, Admiral Sampson of the United States fleet fired upon Spanish forts that guarded the harbor. When this failed, he ordered Lieutenant Richmond P. Hobson to scuttle the Merrimac at the bottleneck entrance of the harbor to trap the Spanish ships. This strategy also failed, so Sampson decided instead to land Marines east of Santiago to clear out Spanish resistance for an American Naval base. The Marines efficiently eliminated the Spanish forces in the area and an American foothold was established at Guantanamo Bay.

Subsequent American maneuvers were often chaotic, initially, and wracked with logistical problems. The Tampa-based V Corps, which included dismounted cavalry, a Gatling gun company, and all active Regular Negro regiments struggled with these issues. The V Corps was the most well-prepared for combat in terms of training and general readiness, and was to be dispatched to
Santiago, but the force was plagued with problems from the beginning. Necessary supplies were delayed in shipping, rations were often spoiled and unpalatable, and troops were crammed into poorly-planned living conditions on board their transport ships. When the V Corps arrived in Santiago Bay, a number of merchant ships chartered to transport men and supplies simply refused to sail close enough to the shore to land. Horses were tossed overboard and expected to swim to shore, but many swam out to sea and drowned.\textsuperscript{116} Despite these problems, the Spanish did not strongly resist the American landing, and the V Corps under the command of Major General William R. Shafter landed and joined up with anti-Spanish insurgents between June 22 and 24.\textsuperscript{117} From this point on, American tactics were swift and aggressive. Confederate Army veteran Brigadier General Joseph Wheeler pushed hard toward Santiago with his detachment of dismounted cavalry, which helped pave the way for other units to approach San Juan Heights. Aware that hurricane season was fast approaching, General Shafter opted for a full frontal assault on San Juan Heights where Spanish forces had entrenched themselves. The American ground forces faced setbacks when Spanish troops began exploiting the conspicuousness of an American Signal Corps balloon to deliver accurate fire on advancing American troops.\textsuperscript{118} Brigadier General Henry W. Lawton was also forced to withdraw one of his volunteer units to rejoin the main force when their outdated black powder weapons gave away their position. The American force did not give up, however, and a number of Wheeler's cavalry units - which included two Negro regiments and then Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt's famous volunteer Rough Riders- attacked and took Kettle Hill. Nearby, Brigadier General Jacob F. Kent, utilizing suppressive fire from his Gatling guns, led an assault on San Juan Hill which pushed back the Spanish from their fortifications.

By this point, Spanish forces under Cervera still held out in Santiago, and there was some

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 328-32.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 332-3.
disagreement between McKinley, the Navy Department, and the commander of the V Corps over whether the Navy should attack them from Santiago Bay.\(^{119}\) Running low on food and ammunition, Cervera attempted to escape the harbor but was chased by Commodore Schley who had been given temporary command over Sampson's squadron.\(^{120}\) The men of Cervera's fleet, aware that they would probably not make it to the open sea, exited the harbor boldly with all of their flags proudly and defiantly flying high.\(^{121}\) Schley destroyed Cervera's fleet within two hours.\(^{122}\) On July 16, the remaining Spanish forces at Santiago realized that continued resistance was hopeless and were convinced by General Shafter to accept McKinley's unconditional terms of surrender. Five days later, General Nelson Appleton Miles sailed from Guantanamo to Puerto Rico with 3,000 troops to rout any additional Spanish resistance on the island, but met little and subsequently occupied Ponce to the general favor of the Puerto Rican people. By August 13, action in the Caribbean had drawn to a close.\(^{123}\)

Back in the Pacific, however, the conflict had still not ended. In the time it took for Dewey's requested ground units to arrive, tensions had begun to arise between the Americans and General Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo and his rebel insurgents were fighting for the immediate independence of the Filipino nation. To them, this meant independence from any outside power, including the United States. Many Americans, however, as well as the McKinley administration believed that the United States should maintain dominion over the Philippines once the Spanish were defeated. Angered, Aguinaldo called upon foreign nations to recognize Filipino independence with himself as president just as

\(^{119}\) Ibid., 333-4.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., 334.

\(^{121}\) Howarth, To Shining Sea, 265.

\(^{122}\) Jones, “Emergence to World Power,” 334.

\(^{123}\) Ibid.
Dewey's ground forces arrived. Major General Wesley Merritt's VIII Corps did not face the myriad logistical troubles the V Corps did between Tampa and Cuba, and the Manila expedition began efficiently and effectively by early August. Merritt positioned 11,000 troops behind friendly insurgents around the fortified city walls of Manila but held off from attacking in order to give one last opportunity for a peaceful resolution. Regardless, the Spanish Government ordered that the forces in Manila fight anyway, and they obliged.

On August 13, American units closed in on the city of Manila with supporting fire from Dewey's ships. The Spanish remnant at Manila had initially only planned to offer token resistance to an American attack - a plan that was nearly compromised when confused insurgents began firing upon the Spanish defensive positions. The situation was taken control of by American officers and the Spanish forces, knowing their situation was hopeless, surrendered with little resistance. The Spanish formally surrendered the next day and Spanish and American delegates met that autumn in Paris to discuss a treaty, which was signed on December 10. The terms of the treaty had broad and perhaps unexpected implications for the role of American power and sovereignty. Spain was forced to grant independence to Cuba and cede Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States. As part of the deal, the United States government also purchased the Philippines from Spain for $20 million which instantly transformed the nation into an imperial power - a move which would change the course of events in American history forever.

Compared to many wars, the conflict between Spain and the United States was incredibly short, decisive, and motivated by a clear moral cause with broad public support, and it played an integral role

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124 Ibid., 335-6.
125 Ibid., 336.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
in asserting the United States' budding role as a world power. The importance of the Navy in securing an American victory is undeniable and it proved several points about the usefulness of such a force, as well as about attitudes regarding its use. For one, as evident by the era's press, the public and the media were quite confident that the newly re-invented Navy could serve as a useful instrument for enforcing and defending American interests, whatever they may be. Secondly, the events in Manila harbor and the tidy defeat of the Spanish fleet signaled that the Navy could compete with, intimidate, and even destroy powerful European fleets that would have once posed an immense threat to the United States. Third, the swift American victory and the decisive, integral role the Navy played in securing it demonstrated that America could now actively and effectively fight to protect her material interests, as well as those of a humanitarian nature. All of these points reflect or validate Mahan's thesis that a powerful navy is a necessity in securing for a nation the role of a global power. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the relevance of the Navy to maintain and extend America's growing might continued to show with new conflicts, new developments, and new challenges.
CHAPTER III

BIG STICK DIPLOMACY AND THE SEEDS OF THE AMERICAN SUPERPOWER

On the morning of September 2, 1901, 42 year old Vice-President and hero of the Spanish-American War Theodore Roosevelt stood before a crowd of onlookers to deliver the keynote opening speech of the Minnesota State Fair. Famously long-winded, Roosevelt delivered a 5,300 word speech on his favorite topics such as the duties of a citizen within a nation and the duties of the United States to other nations. Though the transcriber for the Star Tribune did not write it down, this was the speech in which Roosevelt famously utilized his now oft-repeated mantra: "speak softly and

carry a big stick - you will go far." At this point, he was referencing labor relations, but he later used his aphorism to both affirm and justify his views on diplomacy and the role of the United States on the world scene. Unpacking Roosevelt's philosophy as condensed in this aphorism suggests that success, whether related to labor disputes or foreign policy, is based on the willingness to cordially exert soft, implied power with the ability to back it up with overwhelming hard force if need be. In regards to the Navy and its use as an instrument of American foreign policy at the turn of the century, this principle found a great deal of support in strategic policy circles as well as application in the field.

The end result of the Spanish-American War put the United States in a difficult position which leaders in government probably neither expected, nor prepared for adequately. The terms of the Treaty of Paris which ended the war left the US in possession of the Philippines where pre-existing tensions with local insurgents that fought on the side of the US had already begun to boil over into outright conflict. President McKinley recognized the conundrum, as he believed it would be counterproductive to American business interests, as well as outright cowardly to allow Spain to keep the islands, and it would likewise lead to a humanitarian crisis if the islands were left without stable rule. On top of this, the continuing crisis of incessant revolts, civil wars, and potential European intervention in South America troubled American politicians, especially concerning the implications for the Monroe Doctrine. The ways in which the United States met these challenges, especially considering the use of the Navy, marks a period in which the country was able to gain confidence as a power - all in preparation for the massive upheaval of the Great War that loomed on the horizon.

The ink on the Treaty of Paris had barely dried before the United States quickly learned the difficulties of enforcing imperial power. In January of 1899 as the US officially took possession of the

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April 2012.

129 Ibid.

Philippines, insurgents who had fought for their own freedom on the American side against the Spanish immediately became suspicious of American motives and perhaps of an imminent betrayal.131 By this point, Aguinaldo and his followers had established a new capital at the city of Malolos where they put together a congress to draft a constitution outlining the creation of a Filipino Republic. This was in direct opposition to American military rule in the region, and the result was violent conflict which erupted on February 4, 1899 when a patrol of insurgents challenged a US guard post. Historians disagree on the actual circumstances of the incident for two reasons: on the one hand, the attack occurred just days before the US Congressional vote on the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, which seems to suggest that the attack was a warning or a political statement on the part of the insurgents. However, Aguinaldo's forces, by their very nature, were notoriously disorganized, so it is equally likely that the attack was the result of poor communication and discipline.132 Whether the incident was calculated or not, the VIII Corps, which had already been downsized by demobilization orders, reacted by driving the insurgents from the area surrounding Manila and also put down an apparent uprising in the city proper. This severely weakened the insurgency, though they continued to carry out deadly guerrilla attacks against the American occupying force for the next two years before gradually being decimated by an aggressive Army campaign.133 Aguinaldo himself was captured alive in March of 1901, and the insurrection was declared to be over by President Theodore Roosevelt on the Fourth of July the next year.134 The situation in the Philippines continued to be problematic for the United States, however, as Islamic Moros began their own rebellion against the American presence in response to

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132 Ibid.

133 Ibid., 338-9.

134 Ibid., 339.
marginalization they experienced at the hands of the government.\textsuperscript{135}

It is important to note the political changes that occurred within the United States government in the midst of these ongoing military skirmishes in the Philippines as they directly affected the outcomes, as well as the unfolding of concurrent events elsewhere in the world. The most important of these political changes was the rise to presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt became president in September of 1901 when anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot William McKinley at an exposition in Buffalo, New York.\textsuperscript{136} Initially, it appeared as though McKinley would survive his wounds, but his condition worsened and he died just days later, making Roosevelt the youngest man to become the American president at the time.\textsuperscript{137} Roosevelt was almost immediately saddled with the responsibility of dealing with the various problems in South America, but fortunately he already had a clear inclination as to what to do about them- an inclination driven by his philosophy of Big Stick Diplomacy which could finally be put to the test with the Navy as its primary instrument.

The primary concerns the United States had with her neighbors to the south involved the enforcement and implications of the Monroe Doctrine. As early as the 1820s, President James Monroe had boldly declared that South America encompassed the United States' immediate sphere of influence and that European powers had no business interfering in the region.\textsuperscript{138} This was an audacious move at the time, because the young country hardly had the resources to project power against any European force that might enter the region in pursuit of its own interests, especially given that such a show of force would necessitate a strong Navy. That was the early nineteenth century, however, and the turn of the twentieth was a completely different story, as events would show, beginning with a debt crisis in

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 415.

Venezuela.

Venezuela, erroneously believing that the Monroe Doctrine gave them license to freely antagonize European powers, had accumulated $12.5 million in debt from European bonds. In response, German, Italian, and British warships proceeded to blockade Venezuela's ports until the bonds were repaid. Admiral Dewey's battle fleet happened to be on patrol in the relatively nearby waters of Puerto Rico, and Roosevelt ordered them into Venezuelan waters in case the Europeans, particularly the Germans, became too aggressive. The blockade ended when Venezuelan president Cipriano Castro agreed to accept arbitration, much to Roosevelt's delight who framed the outcome as a result of American Naval presence in the region. As a result of the outcome of the Venezuelan Crisis, Roosevelt began to more deeply consider the role of the Monroe Doctrine. He knew that Venezuela wasn't the only South American nation to accrue debt from Europe, and he recognized the possibility that a European power could easily turn from debt collector to colonizer, if they so chose, which would violate the Monroe Doctrine. Believing that South American and Caribbean nations needed policing one way or another, and preferring that it was the United States doing it, he outlined his Roosevelt Corollary, which served as an addendum to the Monroe Doctrine in that it validated an active, rather than passive role for the US in South, Central American, and Caribbean politics. The US had already engaged in such an active role between 1901 and 1905, this time in Panama and Dominica.

In 1901 and 1902, Roosevelt dispatched ships to the Colombian province of Panama to protect communications across the isthmus. What began as such a benign operation eventually evolved into a

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140 Ibid.
full-fledged intervention in the region as a result of tangled alliances, insurrection, and a desire to build a trans-isthmian canal. The US had aided Colombia with insurrections in the Panama Province in the past, but the end objective of the 1901 and 1902 expeditions was quite different and perfectly exemplified Roosevelt's philosophy of Big Stick Diplomacy in action.

In 1903, Secretary of State John Hay attempted to negotiate a treaty with Colombia which would grant the United States access to a narrow strip of land across the isthmus suitable for building a canal in exchange for $10 million. The United States government's interest in building a trans-isthmian canal was hardly new. Alfred Mahan himself had previously concluded that such a canal would be extremely useful, strategically. In an age where steamships required ports to serve as coaling stations, a canal simply made a great deal of sense as it would eliminate the need for ships to round the southern tip of South America, expending precious resources along the way. The Colombian government, however, refused the terms of Hay's negotiations on the grounds that America would be able to exercise sovereignty in the vicinity of the canal. Since the Colombians refused to respond to soft-speaking, the US government turned to using the big stick.

In November of 1903, three American warships were stationed off the coast of the Panamanian province with orders to prevent Colombian troops from entering Panama should insurrection arise. Little did the Colombians know that the looming insurrection in Panama was actually planned, in part, by US Army officers and would be supported by the US Navy so that the United States could essentially seize, by proxy, the Panamanian province and build the canal uninhibited. The scheme worked, and on November 18, 1903, just days after the US-supported Panamanian Revolution began, the new Panamanian government was recognized by the United States and accepted the terms of the

143 Ibid., 278.
144 Ibid.
negotiation that Colombia had previously rejected.145

Meanwhile, violence erupted in Dominica as the result of long-standing tensions and sporadic fighting.146 Fearful that the violence in Dominica could hamper the development of the canal plan in Panama, Roosevelt observed the unfolding situation, awaiting any signal that his fears may prove justified. They were, in fact, as an American sailor was killed outside of the Dominican town of Santo Domingo in February of 1904, and soon afterward, insurgents opened fire on an American ship that had been deployed to the harbor.147 In response, Roosevelt ordered the American commander in the region to do what Naval commanders had always done in such situations for as long as the United States had been involving herself in foreign matters: he ordered that American lives and commercial interests in the area be defended. Just how they should be protected, exactly, was left up to the commander, who proceeded to bombard insurgent positions and to deploy Marines to patrol the shoreline. The situation was stabilized, for the time being, and Roosevelt publicly denied any desire to annex Dominica, though he privately expressed that he would like to shift policy to occupy any nearby “nations that did not conduct themselves well” to discourage further European interference.148

The seed of the idea behind this policy had already been planted three years earlier in 1901, with the drafting of the Platt Amendment. Even after the Spanish-American War had ended, the question still remained as to what to do about maintaining an American presence in Cuba, especially in the context of the Monroe Doctrine, which was suddenly being actively enforced. The Platt Amendment was passed in the summer of 1901 as part of the conditions for Cuban independence.149 Essentially, the amendment defined US-Cuba relations in that it entrenched into law the ability of the

145 Ibid.
146 Brands, TR, 524.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., 526.
United States to intervene in Cuba under rather broadly-defined terms of domestic unrest. This premise would dominate American relations with Cuba for the next thirty years and reflected the overall scope of American hegemony in the western hemisphere.

As history goes to show, however, the persistent onward march of technological development soon threatened this hegemony. This technological threat manifested itself as the *Dreadnought* type of ships, which sparked an arms race of as of then unparalleled ferocity. The HMS *Dreadnought*, for which this class of ships was subsequently named, was built following a rather simple design principle: to pack as many big guns onto a massive ship as could possibly be fit. The end result was an enormous, steam turbine-powered ship that instantly rendered every other ship on the planet obsolete the day it first set sail. It was armed with ten 12-inch guns and could outrun any other ship of its class. The monster ship impressed Roosevelt so much that he decided he wanted one, not because he feared a war with Britain (as the result of the Spanish-American War had cemented an Anglo-American alliance) but because other less amicable nations had already begun implementing plans to build their own, namely Japan and Germany.

Japan had already set itself up to be a formidable rival to the United States in terms of naval capability. As early as 1903, the Japanese had begun construction of their own interpretation of the dreadnought concept, but the project was put on hold when they went to war with Russia. Nevertheless, the Japanese defeated Russia, primarily due to their sea power, and shocked the world by proving that an eastern nation could in fact best a western nation militarily, which only invigorated Japan's modernization aspirations. Meanwhile, the Germans began constructing the *Nassau*, which was

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149 Ibid., 567.
150 Howarth, *To Shining Sea*, 504.
151 Ibid., 284.
152 Ibid.
This was troubling to Roosevelt because American and German relations had been chilly ever since Dewey's run-ins with the German fleet during the Manila blockade and later in Venezuela. The *Nassau*, however, was hastily constructed and poorly planned. Armed with twelve 11-inch guns and twenty-eight 3.4 and 5.9 inch guns, the *Nassau* outgunned the *Dreadnought*, but the arrangement of the turrets limited its broadside firing capabilities. Additionally, her efficiency was hampered by the fact that she was propelled by outdated reciprocating engines and she required a larger than ideal crew to serve the guns and engines.

Still, Roosevelt's savvy demanded that the United States work to keep up with or surpass these efforts anyway and plans were put into motion to construct the first American Dreadnoughts. The *South Carolina* and *Michigan* were to be smaller and slower than the *Dreadnought*, and outfitted with eight 12-inch guns instead of ten, but they still would work on the all-big-gun principle of having long-range, concentrated, coordinated firing ability. Congress, however, stalled construction of the *South Carolina* and the *Michigan* and only authorized the construction of a single battleship: the *Delaware*, which became the first Dreadnought of the United States Navy. Predictably, Roosevelt was not satisfied with constructing a single ship a year, and he warned Congress that such efforts would be completely useless if the United States was serious about projecting her naval might. In response, he decided to flex his executive muscle and ordered a massive public relations campaign in the form of the Great White Fleet.

Roosevelt's Great White Fleet consisted of sixteen of the Navy's finest battleships painted white...
with gold trim and launched from Hampton Roads to great fanfare. The Fleet was to embark on a fourteen month circumnavigation of the globe with intermittent stops in various ports of call across the world as a demonstration of American Naval capability. The objective of the Fleet's voyage could be boiled down to an expression of Big Stick Diplomacy for several reasons, both explicit and implicit. Japan and Great Britain had both engaged in large scale naval reviews to show off their might as well as to boost national prestige, and the United States was no different with the deployment of the Great White Fleet. The voyage also had a more pragmatic aim in that it was also meant to serve as a massive training exercise for the officers and men aboard the ships. Beneath all the glitz of celebration and practicality of being a training exercise, the voyage of the Great White Fleet had a much more provocative aim: to prove to the Japanese that American interests were not to be toyed with and that the United States was more than capable of delivering swift reprisal should Japan become too ambitious.

The outcome of the Russo-Japanese War had not only proven that an eastern nation could defeat a western one, but it had also secured additional territory in the Pacific for the Japanese and emboldened them in their imperial aims. The Japanese had essentially taken over Korea as part of their sphere of influence, and the Russians had been expelled from Manchuria, leaving it open for continued Japanese exploits in the region. In the United States, increasing Japanese emigration to the West Coast created a host of tensions among Americans, especially Californians who feared that cheap Japanese laborers would take local jobs. Rabidly xenophobic yellow newspapers in the region only exacerbated the issue by constantly reiterating the Japanese threat. Riots broke out and a subsequent agreement between the United States and Japan to limit the number of Japanese immigrants allowed to the West Coast and Hawaii did little to allay American fears. Roosevelt was convinced that war could

158 Ibid.

159 Mark Albertson, They'll Have to Follow You!: The Triumph of the Great White Fleet (Mustang: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, LL.C., 2007), 24.
be avoided, but cautionary preparations were made anyway. Defensive shore batteries were delivered to the Subic Bay in the Philippines and coal reserves were made ready to refuel the Asiatic Squadron which was stationed in the area.\textsuperscript{160} Amid all of this maneuvering and fortifying, the arrival of the Great White Fleet in Tokyo Bay sent a clear message to the Japanese: the United States would protect her interests in the Pacific with force, should the need arise.

The Japanese got the message, and to the surprise of many, welcomed the Great White Fleet to their ports most warmly.\textsuperscript{161} The Emperor himself made a cordial appearance, as well as the aging Admiral Togo - hero of the Russo-Japanese War, who playfully mingled with American ensigns.\textsuperscript{162} After a week of festivities, the Great White Fleet sailed out from Tokyo having fulfilled its intended purpose. In 1908, just after the Fleet had left Japan, the United States and Japan negotiated the Root-Takahira Agreement which provided for mutual recognition of American and Japanese territorial rights in the Pacific and also encouraged the two powers to talk out any future tensions related to their respective interests in the region.\textsuperscript{163}

The Great White Fleet returned home on February 22, 1909 on the verge of the end of Roosevelt's second term as president.\textsuperscript{164} In some ways, its return marked the end of a transitory phase in US Naval history, as well as the history of the nation itself. Just thirty years prior, the Navy consisted of a scattered and disorganized fleet of leaky, outdated ships manned, in part, by mercenaries and commanded by plucky aristocrats. By the end of the Great White Fleet's global review, the Navy had evolved into a sleek, unified, and technologically advanced force capable of projecting both soft and hard power across the seas and in nearby waters alike, just as Mahan had envisioned. With hulking new

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item [160] Ibid., 27.
\item [161] Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 286.
\item [162] Ibid., 287.
\item [163] Albertson, \textit{They'll Have to Follow You!}, 25.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
ships fitted with the best guns and armor, and commanded by a generation of officers trained in the science of war at the Naval War College, the New Navy was ready to boldly face any martial or diplomatic challenge that may arise. Despite initial difficulties, the New Navy had proven its combat effectiveness by providing support in the Spanish-American War that was instrumental to achieving victory, and it likewise demonstrated its usefulness in projecting power within America's own sphere of influence in the aftermath. During Roosevelt's tenure alone, the Navy made exponential strides in development, rocketing from sixth place among the world's greatest navies, to second, behind only Britain - the previously undisputed masters of the seas.\textsuperscript{165} To achieve this position, Roosevelt had implemented numerous radical reforms. Though still novel at the time, he saw that twenty-seven submarines were authorized for construction to defend the American seaboards. He also increased the number of enlisted men in the Navy by almost 20,000 and added 213 new professional officers. Given the logistical and material requirements of the New Navy and her men, he helped pave the way to increase annual naval appropriations from $85 million to a whopping $140 million.\textsuperscript{166} Inspired by the glorious sight the Great White Fleet must have been to behold, and its apparent effectiveness in avoiding conflict, a prideful American people had little complaints about footing the bill. Most importantly, though, the Navy served as the backbone to ever growing American influence on the world stage - it had become both the soft voice and the Big Stick of American diplomacy, and the world was forced to take notice. The same world that was suddenly forced to consider the wishes of the United States in geopolitical affairs was on the verge of facing its own changes as well, though - changes which would manifest themselves violently and on a scale that had yet to be imagined.

While Roosevelt's presidency ended with the Navy at the peak of its development, the future

\textsuperscript{164} Howarth, \textit{To Shining Sea}, 288.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
was still uncertain. Would Roosevelt's successors continue his legacy and make sure the Navy remained up to date during their own administrations? Surely it could be dismantled on a whim as quickly as Roosevelt had built it up. Also, there was the question of the long-term effectiveness of a naval tactical doctrine that relied on the firepower of big capital ships. Pre-dreadnoughts in the Spanish-American War and dreadnoughts in the Roosevelt Era had demonstrated their worth in sinking enemy vessels and bombarding shore batteries, and later in patrolling foreign waters as a show of force, respectively, but would they prove useful in future conflicts?

Great Britain and Germany continued their arms race as Roosevelt left office and William Howard Taft took over, and Germany secured for itself the Carolinas and Marianas island groups in the Pacific. This wouldn't normally be a problem, except for the fact that the Carolinas and Marianas islands are situated between the United States and the Philippines and could serve as a base from which to attack American holdings should the Kaiser choose to do so. Additionally, Taft bungled American involvement in the ongoing efforts to foster the Open Door Policy in China, which suggested to other nations that the United States may not be as capable of enforcing its will as it initially appeared.\(^\text{167}\) Regarding the Philippines and the deployment of the Navy in the Atlantic and Pacific, Taft went against Roosevelt's advice as well as one of Mahan's major principles and allowed the fleet to remain split before the completion of the Panama Canal.\(^\text{168}\) Partially as a result, the Philippines remained insufficiently defended. These issues were just symptoms of a greater problem that had resulted from the rapid development of a battleship-backed Navy: the fleet had become dreadfully imbalanced.

The acceptance of battleships as the backbone of the Navy, coupled with administrative mismanagement had led to the Navy becoming ill-equipped to handle logistical issues. Battleships, especially dreadnought-class ships, relied on a host of support ships in order to function effectively, if

\(^{167}\) Ibid., 290-1.

\(^{168}\) Ibid., 293.
at all. Ships carrying ammunition and additional fuel, as well as repair ships, hospital ships, and armed fast attack boats and escorts were all necessary columns upon which the big battleships rested. By 1911, the fleet consisted of 173 commissioned vessels, which included 33 battleships. Supporting this fleet was one hospital ship and one repair ship. There were no ammunition ships, and other scout and escort vessels were woefully inadequate in number when they were available at all. The Navy General Board, which served as a general staff for Navy leadership concluded that the fleet would have to double its number of commissioned vessels and completely alter the proportions of different types of support vessels available if the fleet was to maintain maximum effectiveness. Despite being very advanced, many of the existing ships were plagued with technical problems. Most ships were poorly ventilated, which led to hot, exhausting working conditions for any man unlucky enough to have to work below deck in warm weather. Some ships, particularly of the Kearsage class, suffered a myriad of flaws in the design of their armor and the placement of their gun turrets. A few were only effectively armored below the waterline where enemy shells would be unlikely to strike. Others had unnecessarily oversized gun ports which were vulnerable to enemy fire and sometimes siphoned in the muzzle blast of the guns as they fired, endangering the crew within.

Secretary of the Navy George von Lengerke Meyer recognized these and other issues the Navy was facing and placed most of the blame on the bureaucratic fumbling of Naval administration. Nevertheless, despite his best efforts to mitigate the problems the Navy was dealing with, he and Taft both left office in 1913 without propagating a true definition of what the national, unified Naval

\[169\] Ibid.
\[170\] Ibid.
\[171\] Ibid., 294.
\[172\] Ibid.
At this point, and without any single strong personality to provide direction, Naval development slipped into a state of complacency and doctrine took on an air of implied non-aggression, a status that would later be reinforced by President Woodrow Wilson's initial aims of neutrality.\textsuperscript{174} Germany, which had finally seen the benefits of its naval buildup as part of its arms race with Britain, soon surpassed the United States and became the second most powerful navy in the world.\textsuperscript{175} This wasn't too concerning for the United States, though, because for all intents and purposes, the nation was strategically invincible, even considering the warts that had begun to show on her otherwise illustrious Naval power. For one, the Panama Canal was finally nearing completion after over nine years of construction under US supervision, which would allow unprecedented rapid travel for the Navy between the East and West Coasts. Secondly, in spite of continuous suspicions, the United States and Japan had achieved a degree of peace in the Pacific. And finally, the biggest threat to the United States - the newly galvanized German Navy - would not actually be able to reach the mainland without first establishing coaling stations, which was essentially impossible for them at the time.\textsuperscript{176} Considering all of these factors, it is not hard to see why the US government took the position it did concerning any further investment in naval development. Simultaneously, conditions in Europe pointed to the possibility of a continental war, though a spark had yet to be set, and it was at the time uncertain as to what capacity the United States would become involved, if at all. Perhaps sensing the inevitability of war, or possibly just building off of his own independent education on naval tactics, Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels proposed to Congress that a few more battleships, destroyers, and submarines be

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 295.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 295-7.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 296.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
More importantly, he proposed that all closed naval yards be reopened and expanded and that domestic, government-owned oil and coal production be increased dramatically for the production of war materiel. Ironically, he also suggested that the most powerful nations of the world work to limit naval arms development - a proposal which was mostly ignored.\textsuperscript{178}

Amid this small upswing in US Naval development and onshore arms production, the spark that would ignite a war in Europe flickered as Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was shot by a Serbian nationalist assassin on June 28, 1914.\textsuperscript{179} What followed was a complicated snowballing of events and collapse of diplomatic relations that hurled Europe into war. The infuriated Habsburgs of Austria delivered an ultimatum to Serbia and reminded Germany of their alliance should war erupt.\textsuperscript{180} Russia voiced her support of Serbia and began mobilizing for war.\textsuperscript{181} Caught up in confusing and binding alliances which often went back many years, most of the rest of Europe divided up according to their respective allegiances and prepared for a war that seemed to have been in the making for a long time.

While America puttered along in arms development in the early years of the twentieth century, European powers - particularly France, Britain, and Germany - had increased arms production to astronomical levels. The naval arms race between Britain and Germany continued while every major power beat their chests at each other, exasperated their old rivalries, and postured over the few remaining uncolonized areas of the world.\textsuperscript{182} Conflict may or may not have seemed inevitable at this point, but the events in June of 1914 and the resulting Crisis of 1914 removed any question.

Across the Atlantic, the United States remained wary of entering into the fray. Similarly to the

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 297.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 43-4.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 8.
sinking of the *Maine* which predicated American operations against Spain 17 years previously, the United States needed a push to become involved in the tumult in Europe. Always the pensive intellectual, Woodrow Wilson had long preferred alternatives to war- a sentiment which was strongly reflected in the opinion of the American public.\(^{183}\) Wilson had even tried, based on a policy of strict American neutrality, to get the major belligerents of the war to negotiate an end to hostilities in 1916, though his efforts were unsuccessful. Regardless, American neutrality had been tested as early in the war as 1915 when the British declared the North Sea to be a warzone and began to seize neutral merchant ships in an effort to cut off the importation of food and other necessities into Germany.\(^{184}\) This included American ships which would be surrounded by British cruisers and escorted into safe harbors for inspection.\(^{185}\) If any of these ships were discovered to be carrying contraband, the ship as well as its cargo would most often be seized. Even if no contraband was found, the ship’s cargo would likely still be seized, albeit paid for, as a cautionary method to prevent goods from entering Germany through other neutral ports. Wilson was disturbed by Britain’s actions against US merchant ships, but he did not take any direct action against their procedure, citing the importance of the cultural bond between the two nations.\(^{186}\) Germany, on the other hand, was infuriated by the blockade and launched an offensive campaign in the North Atlantic with a fearsome weapon which other nations had versions of, yet the Germans had perfected in terms of deadly efficiency: the U-boat.

The German *Unterseeboots* or U-boats were diesel submarines capable of diving and surfacing

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\(^{183}\) Ibid., 330.


\(^{186}\) Ibid., 29.
rapidly and launching submersible torpedoes at targets with devastating effect.\textsuperscript{187} While certainly capable in traditional naval combat, U-boats were utilized most effectively as a weapon of economic warfare against the Allies by targeting and sinking merchant ships and disappearing back beneath the waves before terrified crewmen would realize what had hit them. Traditional and near-universally accepted rules of engagement required that any military ship which intended to attack a merchant ship must engage in a “visit and search” procedure during which the target ship would be stopped, searched for goods or war materiel, and sunk only after the crew and passengers were evacuated by the attacker.\textsuperscript{188} This policy proved problematic for U-boats, as they would have to surface to determine whether a targeted ship fit into the category mandating visit and search procedures.\textsuperscript{189} Early in the war, merchant ship captains began arming their ships and crew, most often with rifles, machine guns, and even one or two deck mounted 4.7-inch guns, in some cases. If a U-boat captain decided to surface to follow the customary visit and search, he risked being sunk himself or riddled with machine gun and rifle fire. Additionally, the Royal Navy implemented the use of Q-boats as early as 1914, which were decoy merchant and fishing vessels meant to serve as a countermeasure to U-boats. When a U-boat approached a Q-boat, the Q-boat would drop a collapsible mock-up of a deckhouse to reveal rows of guns which would proceed to pound the U-boat with fire. U-boat captains were exasperated, and Britain’s 1915 declaration of the North Sea as a warzone only made matters worse, leading many U-boat captains and admirals of the German Navy to believe that new tactics were necessary.\textsuperscript{190} If the Royal Navy wasn’t going to play by the rules, the German Admiralty decided that they weren’t either, and Kaiser Wilhelm II subsequently approved the declaration of the waters surrounding the British

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Keegan, \textit{History of the First World War}, 252.
\item Bailey and Ryan, \textit{Lusitania}, 41.
\item Ibid., 22.
\item Brose, \textit{History of the Great War}, 114.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Islands to be a warzone. Rules regarding visit and search were abandoned and Germany began an active campaign of unrestricted U-boat attacks against any neutral or Allied ship that entered the warzone. Over the course of the next eight months, German U-boats sank almost 300 ships, though Britain’s economy was barely affected.  

Despite believing unrestricted U-boat warfare to be a tactical necessity, German leadership was acutely aware that the practice would inevitably draw the attention of neutral nations, whose ships the Kaiser had admitted would likely be sunk if found. The diplomatic balancing act that the Germans found themselves struggling with nearly tipped in May of 1915 when 128 United States citizens were killed when a U-boat torpedoed and sank the *RMS Lusitania*. The *Lusitania* was a steam-driven passenger liner measuring 785 feet from fore to aft. She was carrying 1,959 passengers on what would be her final voyage to Liverpool when Kapitänleutnant Walther Schwieger fired a single torpedo which struck just ten feet below the waterline. A powerful explosion ripped through the bulkheads and boilers of the ship which then sank in eighteen minutes. Around 1,200 passengers, including women, children, and babies were drowned or died of injuries and exposure following the sinking. The American public, governmental, and media response was peculiar. Amid a great deal of justified outrage, many Americans still clung to the idea of neutrality. President Wilson half-heartedly suggested that he might deploy US Naval forces against Germany in retaliation. The response of the American press was varied, with some editorials demanding that America use her military might to avenge the
“massacre.” Others espoused the benefits of maintaining neutrality.\textsuperscript{197} Predictably, Theodore Roosevelt demanded action, but he was mostly ignored.\textsuperscript{198} Still, fearing the might of the US Navy and wanting to maintain a modicum of diplomacy with the United States, the German Navy ceased their campaign of unrestricted U-boat warfare.\textsuperscript{199}

Even though anger over the loss of American lives aboard the \textit{Lusitania} persisted among the American people, most of them still trusted Wilson to deal with the war in Europe through diplomacy, rather than force. If the killing of American citizens was not going to be interpreted as the act of war needed to awaken the sleeping giant of the United States, then what would? The answer is twofold. In 1917, after two years of struggling to maintain neutrality among ever-complicating circumstances, the United States was faced with the first signal that entry into the war was perhaps inevitable. This first signal was the Zimmerman telegram which was intercepted by British intelligence and transmitted to the United States government, who published the note on the first of March, 1917 to widespread public outrage.\textsuperscript{200} The telegram was a diplomatic message sent from Germany to Mexico which promised to return Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico to the Mexican government if they promised, in turn, to support Germany should the United States end its official neutrality. The second signal was the German return to a policy of unrestricted U-boat warfare. By 1916, the German military was facing difficulties in making any headway with their land campaign against the Allies. Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff was convinced that only swift and aggressive action against Allied shipping could turn the tide of the war, even if the initial U-boat campaign was less than satisfactory in its outcome. The German High Command agreed and resumed an even more aggressive campaign of unrestricted U-boat

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 234-5.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 235.
\textsuperscript{199} Keegan, \textit{History of the First World War}, 330.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
warfare on February 1, 1917. On March 15, just 14 days after the publication of the Zimmerman telegram, German U-boats sank three American merchant ships. No longer able to hold onto the assumption that war was avoidable, Wilson asked a special session of Congress to declare war against Germany, which they did on April 6, followed by a declaration against the rest of the Central Powers.

American entry into the war immediately tipped the odds in favor of the Allies, thanks to the addition of United States Navy dreadnoughts to the Grand Fleet. Up to that point, Holtzendorff’s U-boat campaign had been a huge success, eventually far exceeding his stated goal of sinking 600,000 tons of British shipping a month. If this trend continued, the Allies could very well be starved out and defeated by the Central Powers. With the addition of American dreadnoughts to the Grand Fleet, however, the German High Seas Fleet was now hopelessly outnumbered, though the menace of U-boat attacks still remained. The United States Navy played a crucial role in mitigating this threat by strengthening British convoys. Due to logistical miscalculations and a bumbling bureaucracy, the tactic of moving merchant ships in convoys had long been overlooked as a solution to U-boat warfare. By April of 1918, the British Admiralty was convinced of the usefulness of the convoy, and aided by the support of American warships, they began to set sail. Coupled with massive air attacks, mine-laying missions, and anti-submarine operations, the convoy system helped turn the tide of Germany’s economic war against the Allies. By September of 1918, around 46% of Germany’s 390 U-boats had been lost along with 5,400 crewmen.

The War lasted for another two bloody months before drawing to a bitter close in November,

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201 Ibid., 331.
202 Ibid., 333.
203 Ibid., 334.
204 Ibid., 252.
Faced with horrific losses, burgeoning revolution on the home front, and mutiny, and left without any allies capable of holding out for a fight, Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated his throne and fled to Holland. On the 28th of June the next year, the Treaty of Versailles was signed between the Allies and Germany in the Hall of Mirrors in the luxurious palace of the treaty’s namesake. Idealistic to the end and aware of the United States’ role as latecomers to the War, President Wilson tried to ensure that his Fourteen Points would be considered in the drafting of the terms of the treaty. The French, however, were more interested in punishing Germany and worked hard to include harsh penalties against the nation in the treaty. Weakened by the flu, Wilson did not challenge the French much in vengeful endeavors, and the Treaty was signed with the inclusion of strict penalties against Germany including absurdly high reparations, disarmament (including the reduction of its Navy to 6 outdated battleships), and the surrender of its colonies to Allied control. The War to End All Wars was over, but global turmoil only intensified. Nevertheless, the United States survived the War years and demonstrated the effectiveness of the United States Navy, as well as the Army and Marine Corps.

Though the American Navy did not directly engage any of the Central Powers’ warships, its role in shifting the balance of overall sea power in favor of the Allies and in combating deadly U-boat operations was instrumental in achieving an Allied victory, as bittersweet as that victory may have turned out to be. The reality of the United States Navy’s role in the War, in this sense, represents a culmination of the ongoing developments it experienced going all the way back to the 1880’s and set the stage for future developments as the twentieth century marched onward through new conflicts and diplomatic challenges - all of which the US Navy would become prepared to meet.

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205 Ibid., 395.
206 Brose, History of the Great War, 376.
207 Ibid., 377.
CONCLUSION

MAHAN'S ENDURING SPECTRE:
TRADE, WARFARE, AND THE ROLE OF THE NAVY INTO THE FUTURE

It was in the landlocked city of Lima, Peru where Alfred Mahan sat dreamily thumbing through history books when he first began to formulate his conception of sea power which would eventually be outlined in *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. It is impossible to know for sure whether he had any idea that his seminal work would endure for the next 120 and more years in the legacies of the greatest navies of the most powerful nations in the world, especially the world’s current lone superpower: the United States. What can be determined, however, by examining the history of the United States Navy during its most crucial years is the level of influence his life and work played in transforming a rusty handful of ships into the beginnings of the promising New Navy and later into the military backbone of a nation that was well on its way to being set up as an embryonic superpower. And superpower is exactly what Mahan’s ideas revolved around, though the term did not exist during his lifetime.
The crux of Mahan’s work can be distilled to a few important points which were demonstrated in the course of the United States Navy’s renaissance and its aftermath that occurred between the 1880’s and the end of World War One. These points are as follows:

1. In order for a nation to achieve growth and prosperity, it must maintain a powerful blue-water navy to secure and defend merchant shipping and to open new trading opportunities.

   For a nation to remain secure in its wealth, it must be capable of projecting naval power close to shore and far away.

   In belligerent actions against other nations, the blockade is a potentially decisive factor in achieving victory.

By examining the US Navy’s development from the early 1880’s to the end of World War One, all three of these factors appear to have both inspired and been vindicated by the actions of the Navy, both in war and in peace, in a number of ways and to varying extents.

First, there is the question of trade and the defense of merchant shipping. This point is perhaps Mahan’s strongest and most heavily emphasized, and consequently it arises numerous times over the course of the Navy’s advancement. As I pointed out in Chapter One, figures such as William F. Chandler and others recognized America’s failure to open Korea to trade some years before and knew that a modern navy would be vital in future acts against unresponsive ports, and moreso as a defender of commercial interests. Their views were supported by 1894 when the Navy was sent to protect American merchant interests in Brazil, and later to discourage Spain from interfering with American investments in Cuba. The Navy’s role as both an active and passive defender of American trade interests reach a pinnacle just twenty years later when American dreadnoughts helped support convoys of merchant ships bound to relieve the starving Allies, as well as to line the pockets of American distributors and merchants who provided the much-needed goods.

Mahan’s second key point regarding the projection of power in both local and foreign waters was asserted in several instances in the late nineteenth century. For one, the Navy was instrumental in
enforcing the Monroe Doctrine in that it discouraged European interference within the United States’ sphere of influence even as nation after nation in the Caribbean and Central and South America began to default on European loans. Although the Navy at this point probably couldn’t defeat a European fleet in combat, its implied power made nations like Germany think twice about sailing into the United States’ sphere of influence to collect its debts. Later, the Navy’s ability to project power far from shore was tested and proven as powerful European ships sailed into Manila Harbor, eager to seize the Philippines as a colonial prize should the United States give up, backed down when faced with Dewey’s fleet. Finally, as a demonstration of its ability to project hard power, the Navy proved the value of its advancing firepower by pounding the legendary Spanish Navy into submission while suffering minimal casualties of its own.

This brings me to Mahan’s third point regarding the use of blockades as an integral part of utilizing military might. Influenced by his own experiences in the Civil War, Mahan believed that a strong navy should be able to blockade any foe and essentially choke the will to fight out of it. This proved true in Manila when Dewey’s blockade prevented supplies from reaching Spanish forces in the area. As a consequence of learning to operate successful blockades, the United States Navy simultaneously learned strategies to defeat them and played an important role in helping the British overcome the German’s U-boat blockade (which also, coincidentally, validated the first point of protecting merchant shipping, as I mentioned before).

By examining these instances during the crucial years between 1880 and 1919, one can gain insight into the development of the United States as a nation as it coincided with the development of its own Navy. In this sense, it is useful to think of the relationship between the Navy and the United States as symbiotic in nature. In the years following the Civil War, the United States continued to engage in its westward expansion which had been interrupted by the Interbellum years. This expansion, along with other factors, facilitated enormous population growth, which in turn created demand for new markets abroad. As these needs were met, the nation continued to grow, necessitating a larger navy to
maintain competitiveness with European powers and to continue to defend maritime trade. Encouraged by the usefulness of the navy in meeting these objectives, the United States continued its economic growth which served as the backbone for its rise as a superpower by the end of the Second World War. In short, the desire for expansion of the economy fueled the need for expansion of the Navy, which in turn enabled further economic growth and so on until a pattern was established that continued into the twentieth century - all based on Mahan’s core principles.

Regarding historiography and research avenues that the future may open, there is one question which contemporary and future military historians may address. Namely, is Mahan still relevant? And will his ideas be relevant in the future? He was undeniably a visionary in his time, but he was no psychic. There was no way that he could have accurately predicted the advent of radar, fighter and bomber aircraft (and aircraft carriers), cruise missiles, effective submarines, stealth technology, and all the other assorted technologies that have complicated the way in which we engage in warfare today. Additionally, gone are the days when nations would sail dreadnoughts past each other, their formidable turrets gleaming in the sun, to vie for influence over colonial possessions and potential acquisitions. Ours is a post-colonial world where conflict is defined by small-scale incursions, police-actions, and counter-terrorism and insurgency often characterized by fast and violent urban fighting. On top of that, no longer do large navies openly harass merchant shipping or otherwise stifle commerce on the open seas. Modern maritime trade among first world nations is characterized by an air of general cooperation built upon a complex web of trade regulations as opposed to a contest over who can forcibly open the richest ports with a fleet of protected cruisers.

Considering all of these factors, the question of Mahan’s relevancy to modern naval operation still remains. Despite the antiquated nature of his methods and details he elaborates on, his core principles are certainly relevant today, albeit in a modern incarnation. Large naval standoffs between capital ships may be a thing of the past, but Theodore Roosevelt’s Big Stick Diplomacy lives on in modern foreign policy circles and relies on the Navy. Nothing says “don’t you dare interfere with
international oil trade” like a carrier strike group parked in the Strait of Hormuz, for example, which confirms the Mahanian/Rooseveltian concept that a strong navy is useful for projecting hegemony abroad. And while German U-boats may no longer harass and sink merchant ships as they seek their ports, Mahan’s idea that a navy should defend commercial shipping still applies in that modern pirates in fast-moving boats have taken to attacking freight ships and cruise liners- action that is perhaps just as harmful to modern international trade as an analogous cruiser attack on a merchant ship in the 1910’s would have been.

But what about the future? Though strategists can make educated guesses, the ways in which nations will engage in warfare in the future are uncertain. The small-conflict/counterinsurgency paradigm may persist for another hundred years, or as of yet unforeseen events may lead to the return of large-scale battleship versus battleship duels in open water, which is unlikely, but not impossible.

One thing that is certain, however, is that mercantilism must persist to support established and developing economies, merchant shipping must be defended from whatever threats it may face- be it piracy or blockade, and the dichotomy of soft and hard power will likely remain the strategy du jour for dealing with antagonistic nations. No matter what kind of path the implementation of outright warfare may take in the future, these three inseparable Mahanian principles will endure (excluding the possibility of world peace or Armageddon). It will be up to military historians of generations to come to analyze the role the United States Navy, as well as the other large navies of the world will inevitably play in answering these issues. Furthermore, as I demonstrated regarding the establishment, rise, and utilization of the New Navy between 1880 and 1919, these future historians will undoubtedly benefit from examining the degree with which the symbiosis between the Navy and the nation remains active in the future, if at all. Will the United States continue to rely on the Navy to exert hard and soft power and to protect trade interests which will in turn spur economic and political developments on the home front fifty years from now? A hundred years? The answer is probably yes, and the details are up to the historians of the future to resolve.
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