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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

It is my distinct honor to present the 2020 edition of *Report*, the West Point undergraduate history review. This edition features articles covering a wide array of topics ranging from modern warfare in Asia to the development of the Marshall plan in post-WWII Europe. While each of our authors covers a different time period and place, they all engage with themes of individual agency and the role of theory in explaining historical phenomena. As such, they serve as a tremendous reflection of the interdisciplinary nature of undergraduate historical study and its importance to understanding the macro-historical processes at work in our world today.

I hope that you find our collection of essays informative and that you appreciate the vast amounts of work that our authors, editors, and faculty advisors put into making this journal what it is today.

We at *Report* strive to share outstanding undergraduate scholarship with the West Point community and beyond. We accomplish this by maintaining a committed core of volunteer editors—cadets who take the time out of a busy schedule of military training, athletic responsibilities, and other academic work to bring this research to you. In compiling this volume, I sincerely hope that we have helped to broaden your perspectives and excite you about the possibilities of undergraduate research.

Enjoy Volume 10 of *Report* and we look forward to your continued support. *Sapientia Per Historiam!*

Regards,

Daniel J. Berardino '20
Editor-in-Chief

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CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUACY: RUSSIAN OPERATIONAL FAILURE AT THE BATTLE OF LIAOYANG IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

BY DREW POLCZYNSKI

As negotiations between the Russian Empire and Japan foundered at the turn of the twentieth century, the two countries inched toward war. The Russian and Japanese governments had been locked in a power struggle over Manchuria and Korea, with the Russian Empire seeking to establish a warm-water base of operations in Korea. Japan interpreted the Russian effort to establish the port as an act of encroachment into their sphere of influence. War broke out when the Japanese attacked an anchored Russian fleet at Port Arthur. Generally, Russia was ill-prepared to fight a war in the Far East. The deployment of Russian troops to the front was anything but easy; there was only one rail line into Manchuria, meaning that all supplies and troops carried by rail could only be transported on the single-track railway, costing precious time. The opening battles of the war did not prove favorable to Russia either – they suffered a defeat in the first major land battle of the war, Liaoyang.

Just as in any war, the Russo-Japanese War can be divided into three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. Many historians and students of military history look to the naval-tactical domain as the most decisive domain during the war between the Russians and the Japanese. While they may not be necessarily wrong in arguing that the naval war was critical to the Japanese victory, the operational level of war is often underappreciated, and sometimes completely overlooked. Usually, this is because there is only a nuanced difference between the operational level and the other two levels of war. Military historians have struggled for years to define the operational level of war, leading definitions to be skewed, and sometimes causing the domain to be ignored because it is too difficult to understand. However, the operational level of war generally encapsulates “maneuver” and “C3I” (Command and Control, Communications, and Intelligence). Although this paper is limited in scope to only the Battle of Liaoyang, it will highlight the systemic issues of Russian C3I. These issues had a major impact on the outcome of the battle, which ended in the general Russian retreat from a stronghold and base of supply. The Russians encountered problems in all aspects of C3I – commanders failed to

maintain command and control during key points of the battle and the intelligence-gathering system suffered from systemic issues, with the practically non-existent communications network compounding the command and control and intelligence problems. In all, the Russian C3I problems prompted commanders to make decisions on little or no information, resulting in uncoordinated attacks and retreats and this denied Russian commanders the ability to communicate with one another.

The Russians faced systemic military intelligence issues. Ultimately, the military intelligence network of the Russians was completely lacking. Officers that were chosen to be intelligence officers often did not have any experience not only in the challenging terrain of Manchuria but also in the ascertaining of enemy troop positions during reconnaissance.¹ In addition, cavalry reconnaissance was poorly executed. The Don Cossacks, the main cavalry arm of the army, was unable to infiltrate through the advance guard of the Japanese and thus failed to reconnoiter the positions of the Japanese.² Even when Cossack reconnaissance parties did not come into contact with the Japanese advance guard, they could not locate the Japanese.³ The Russians also made a poor attempt at employing scouts other than the Cossacks. The mounted scouts taken from the main body of the infantry, though they were the most intelligent of the soldiers, were not numerous enough to gather intelligence even for a small unit.⁴ Thirdly, the Russians lacked trained intelligence interpreters within the general staff.⁵ The inadequate military intelligence network led Russian commanders to make poor or uninformed decisions on the battlefield. In a conference at Mukden at the beginning of the war Russian leaders met to discuss the Russian course of action. The conference ended with plans drawn up, “but with scarce an item of sure information on which to build, [it ended] in confusion of thought and uncertainty of

¹ Evgeny Sergeev, *Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904-1905* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 102.

² *Ibid.*, 107.

³ War Office, Great Britain, *The Russo-Japanese War: reports from British officers attached to the Japanese and Russian forces in the field* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1908), 156. The British officer remarked that the reconnaissance parties “had found out where the enemy was not, but not where he was.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

⁵ Sergeev, *Russian Military Intelligence*, 109.

purpose.”⁶ Russian decision making in the war, especially during the Battle of Liaoyang, followed this example. The Russians proved to be completely unprepared with regard to their intelligence network, and the failure of the Russians to have adequate, timely intelligence most certainly helped establish their defeat in the Battle of Liaoyang.

Furthermore, the intelligence gathered sometimes did not reach commanders or was conflicting. Intelligence was issued from the central intelligence staff but did not reach the lower echelons of the army.⁷ So, corps and division commanders, not only the commander-in-chief, made decisions based on no intelligence. Likewise, intelligence was gathered at the lower echelons too.⁸ Commanders were thus receiving two channels of intelligence: top to bottom intel, and intel gathered by lower-level units and passed up to commanders. Certainly, this system *could* work; however, it was more likely that the commanders received conflicting information. Commanders who received conflicting information either had to bet on one report being right or disregard both reports altogether. In one instance, Lieutenant General Georg von Stackelberg, commander of the I Siberian Corps, disregarded a report concerning the location and numbers of the Japanese on the right.⁹ Stackelberg chose not to act when he received the report that a twenty-thousand man Japanese force was moving northward, threatening his corps.¹⁰ This was not an isolated occurrence – confounding reports were common and subordinate commanders received confusing reports derived from bad intelligence.¹¹ The Russian army could not have possibly hoped to be successful if they did not have the proper intelligence network to gather information about the disposition, composition, and capabilities of their enemy.

⁶ Robinson H. Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang* (Constable, 1914), 36.

⁷ Alex Marshall, “Russian Intelligence During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905,” in *Intelligence & National Security* 22 (2007): 686.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 686.

⁹ War Office, Great Britain, *The Russo-Japanese War: reports from British officers attached to the Japanese and Russian forces in the field*, 156.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* As the British officer noted, Stackelberg paid little or no attention to reports of his cavalry patrols. The officer also noted that his distrust of the cavalry’s reports stems from an earlier occurrence when the cavalry gave him bad intelligence.

¹¹ John Steinberg, *All the Tsar’s Men: Russia’s General Staff and the Fate of the Empire* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 138.

Without those three factors, the Russians could not have properly prepared for battle, and since they were in a defensively arrayed position, they were starting at a disadvantage.

General Alexei Kuropatkin, the commander-in-chief of Russian forces at Liaoyang, made the majority of his decisions with weak or no intelligence. The Japanese offensives proved to be costly at the beginning of the battle; almost all Russian forces still held their positions after the first Japanese attacks while the Japanese themselves suffered many casualties, after many assaults on the Russian defenses. Kuropatkin was indeed ready to seize the initiative, so he drew up a plan for a counterattack. However, his plans, called Disposition No. 4, were drawn up without proper intelligence. The X Corps in the center was to serve as the main effort of the counterattack to push the Japanese back.¹² Yet, he made this plan without the knowledge that Manju Yama, a hill to the east of the city of Liaoyang, was taken by the Japanese, threatening the left flank of any would-be attacker from the X Corps.¹³ Even Kuropatkin's defensive tactical abilities suffered from the poor intelligence system. Since Kuropatkin did not know the size of the enemy and only knew the general disposition of the Japanese forces, he chose to have a large reserve force (sixty-six percent of frontline troops) in the center whom he could deploy to where they were needed on the line.¹⁴ However, the large, center reserve force resulted in the inability of Kuropatkin to concentrate his forces in any one area because he and his commanders were unwilling to release the reserves to one specific area of the line.¹⁵ The resulting deadlock crippled the Russian ability to hold off wave after wave of Japanese attacks.

Kuropatkin's order to retire, however, is the most stunning example of the appalling Russian intelligence system. On the left flank, Kuropatkin's forces were threatened by those of General Kuroki Tamemoto, commander of the Japanese First Army. However, even though in reality he outnumbered Kuroki, Kuropatkin was informed that the Japanese forces had four divisions when they, in fact, had only two.¹⁶ Fearful that his left flank would be overrun by superior forces,

¹² Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 226.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Steinberg, *All the Tsar's Men*, 136.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Lord Brooke, *An Eye-witness in Manchuria* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1905), 119.

he ordered Stackelberg to shift some of his corps, who were under constant contact, to the left flank of the defenses and aid the European divisions who were retreating to inner lines.¹⁷ On the left flank, the Japanese did not succeed in breaking through the lines and were driven back two miles.¹⁸ Kuropatkin overestimated the Japanese threat to his left, weakening Stackelberg's position on his right. The order of general retreat from Liaoyang was also given under the circumstance of having insufficient or wrong intelligence information. First, he underestimated his supplies – he thought that the army had exhausted its ammunition when in fact, a train carrying more than enough ammunition had arrived.¹⁹ Secondly, he estimated that his numbers were not superior to those of the Japanese.²⁰ Both of these factors convinced Kuropatkin that he and his forces were in a dire situation, when in fact, they were not. He was fearful throughout the entire battle that the Japanese had superior numbers, which led him to fear a Japanese envelopment of his forces, specifically on his left flank.²¹ Kuropatkin was operating under either false information or no information. The inability of the Russian intelligence system to gather information about the numbers of the Japanese force, and then Kuropatkin's decision to act on misinformation or no information reflects poorly on the Russian military intelligence system. Overestimating the Japanese force led Kuropatkin to recall troops to the center, and while it shortened his lines which made them easier to defend, it also presented the Japanese with the opportunity to surround the Russians. The general retreat that Kuropatkin ordered based on insufficient intelligence ultimately cost the Russians the first major battle of the war. The Russian forces retreated from one of the most fortified bases of supply that they occupied.

The Russians also suffered from immense, deep-rooted command and control problems. Kuropatkin proved indecisive during the battle, and his general passivity proved to be fatal for the Russian effort. His indecisiveness was clear in one example of his leadership at

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Maurice Baring, *With the Russians in Manchuria* (London: Methuen & Co., 1905), 131.

¹⁹ Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 239.

²⁰ Ibid., 240.

²¹ Bruce Menning, "Miscalculating One's Enemies: Russian Military Intelligence before the Russo-Japanese War," in *War in History* 13 (2006): 155.

the onset of the battle; he ordered that the corps commanders may make offensives at their own discretion.²² However, Kuropatkin later backtracked, ordering his commanders to back down after one, Lieutenant General Sluchevski, commander of X Corps, asked for Kuropatkin to clarify the specifics of the “offensive.”²³ In addition, he made questionable decisions with regard to the retiring of troops. After the first two days of the battle, Kuropatkin lost six thousand men.²⁴ Under the pretext of losing six thousand men, he decided to withdraw to a more concentrated position since he was concerned about his communications being cut off in a turning movement executed by Kuroki.²⁵ He underestimated the ability of his forces. After all, he had twenty-six battalions, eighteen squadrons, and one hundred seventy-four guns guarding the left flank alone.²⁶ The six thousand men that he lost were divided between the center and two flanks. He had more than enough troops to stay in their positions, who could prevent the Japanese from inching forward to Liaoyang, and thus, being able to break off to the north, threatening the single-track supply line. His decision also decreased the Russian defense-in-depth ability to absorb Japanese attacks. Indecisiveness and overly cautious decision-making hallmarked Kuropatkin’s command and control during the Battle of Liaoyang.

However, Kuropatkin was not the only culprit of bad command and control; competition between generals and a lack of general control over the situation stifled Russian success. Especially during the counterstroke (Disposition No. 4), there was significant friction between the generals. During it, “the troops receive direct orders from Kuropatkin, Sakharov, Bilderling, Dobrjinski, Ekk – in fact, from anyone, apparently, who feels inclined to interfere. In the evening it is equally difficult to discover the real commander.”²⁷ While overt insubordination was certainly not the case, many commanders attempting to make the situation better actually made the situation much worse. The different corps commanders, thinking they had a better idea than the other and imparting their knowledge to shape the

²² Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 213.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 215.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 217.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 233-234.

operational plan, made the situation more confusing than it already was. The poor intelligence gathering only compounded the command and control issue, making it much worse. Certainly, a single commanding general is needed in every battle to direct the efforts of the army. With the breakdown of command and control, and all generals putting forth their outlook on the operation, command and control was effectively taken away from Kuropatkin. The Russian counterstroke thus became uncoordinated and ineffective.

Kuropatkin, although it may not have been his fault, also had no general command or control over the situation. In an instance during the counterattack, “the right flank and left flank started to close in on the center, retreating.”²⁸ Although Kuropatkin issued no order for retreat, the commanders took it upon themselves to fall back to defensible positions. However, two decisions by Kuropatkin directly allowed command and control to unravel. First, he had a tendency to give in to his subordinates’ reports that they were “bested,” freely accepting the dismal reports of subordinates.²⁹ Secondly, Kuropatkin left his post of command to view his plan unfold, paying homage to old and outdated Napoleonic tradition.³⁰ Unfortunately, both of these factors contributed to Kuropatkin’s lack of control over the counterattack. It devolved into a series of uncoordinated attacks by exhausted Russian units, ending in a retreat to the inner lines of defense.

The Russian communications system was also weak and inefficient, which only worsened the issues of command and control and intelligence. No communication occurred between Kuropatkin and General of Cavalry Alexander von Bilderling, commander of XVII corps, regarding Disposition No. 4. In fact, Bilderling ordered Major General G. Orlov, the commander of the 54th infantry (whose entire division would later be routed and Orlov himself injured), to support a XVII Corps attack to secure Manju Yama even though Orlov’s division played a key role in the counterattack by serving as the flank guard of the attack.³¹ Bilderling was completely unaware of Kuropatkin’s plans. Worse, Orlov was unaware of the important role that he and his unit were supposed to have in the counterattack. He received a message

²⁸ Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 237.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Steinberg, *All the Tsar’s Men*, 138.

³¹ Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 227.

from General Kharkevitch, the quartermaster general, stating, “if XVII Corps is not attacked, to act in the manner that has been indicated.”³² Of course, Kharkevitch is referring Disposition No. 4, but Orlov did not receive the counterattack order in the first place. Orlov sent a message to Bilderling to clear up the confusion, but upon a lack of response from Bilderling, he assumed nothing had changed and subsequently prepared for the attack on Manju Yama.³³ The counterstroke was worsened because communications between generals broke down during the fighting, leading to uncoordinated attacks and retreats. In the attack, someone in the 35th division ordered a ceasefire, to which the entire front adopted and then started to retreat.³⁴ The retreat of the 35th division caused the flank of XVII Corps to be left open, unguarded, causing XVII Corps the retreat.³⁵ The ensuing chaos was a snowball effect in which Kuropatkin was powerless. Men retreated without order, and Kuropatkin had no way to turn them around.³⁶ Contingencies for communications were also quite lacking. Although the Russians were “amply provided with telegraph and telephone apparatus, they had no flag signalers nor do they seem to establish an efficient communication system of any sort.”³⁷ A British observer also remarked, “the Russians took no care to build good roads for communications networks.”³⁸ The lack of proper communications systems paralyzed Russian commanders in Liaoyang. Kuropatkin, unable to communicate with his subordinate officers, failed to maintain control of the counterattack, dashing any Russian hopes of victory.

The Russians failed in all aspects of C3I – command and control, communication, and intelligence all proved to be limiting factors for the Russian effort at Liaoyang. However, these issues are not exclusive to one another. The different aspects of C3I all affected the others in some way or another. Poor communication led to poor

³² *Ibid.*, 228.

³³ *Ibid.*, 228.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 235

³⁶ Perhaps messengers could have delivered orders to continue the counterattack, but since Kuropatkin was observing the attack, he was in no position to send orders to his subordinate commanders.

³⁷ Rowan, *The campaign of Liao-yang*, 235.

³⁸ War Office, Great Britain, *The Russo-Japanese War: reports from British officers attached to the Japanese and Russian forces in the field*, 138.

intelligence, and poor intelligence led to poor command and control, and vice versa. Whether or not Alexei Kuropatkin was a tactical genius, he could not have hoped to be successful if he could not master C3I and the operational domain. Although Liaoyang is only one example of the war, it is an important one. It proved the backwardness and insufficiency of the Russian military intelligence and communications systems. Liaoyang highlighted systemic issues within the Imperial Russian Army that contributed to its ultimate defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, the major factor being the inability of the Russian General Staff to conceive the operational domain, the ever-important domain in 19th-century industrial warfare. Both the intelligence and communications systems contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Russian army's command and control structure. Although it was the first major land battle between Russia and Japan, it set the stage for the rest of the war. It served as a large blow to the Russian war effort from which Kuropatkin and his army could not recover.

THE HAND OF THE CHANCELLOR: OTTO VON BISMARCK AS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

BY ROBERT SWANSON

Lady Russell penned the following to Queen Victoria from Berlin, “the great Chancellor revels in the absolute power he has acquired and does as he pleases. He lives in the country and governs the German Empire without even taking the trouble to consult the Emperor about his plans...Never has a subject been granted so much irresponsible power from his Sovereign.”¹

This essay examines the role of Otto von Bismarck in starting the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Though there were many other factors contributing to the initiation of the conflict, including nationalism and Great Power tensions, the primary cause of the Franco-Prussian war was Otto von Bismarck’s use of his diplomatic skills to lead the French into a war. He did this in order to unite the various German states and increase Prussian power in the Concert of Europe system. This essay examines various other theories, including individual, internal, and systemic arguments and why the individual level Bismarck Culpability Theory is the most plausible cause of the war in comparison to the others.²

Individual Theories

This section highlights several individual-based theories that contradict the Bismarck Culpability Theory. These include the French Ministry Theory, the Napoleon III Theory, the Queen Theory, and the Italian Diplomat Theory. Each theory will be explained and analyzed to determine the strength of its argument and the supporting and contradicting evidence.

The French Ministry Theory states the cause of the war lay in the French Ministers' aggressiveness prior to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, as stated by Robert Howard Lord. This theory focuses on the French ministers’ desire to show French prominence in

¹ Emily Russell, *Lady Emily Russell, Berlin, to Queen Victoria, London* (December 27th, 1880), accessed at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1835

² This theory name is my own creation as are several others in this paper.

the European system. In this theory, French Ministers and not Bismarck, are responsible for the war because they ignored Prussia's attempts to make peace.³ Evidence for this theory is that the French Ministers, such as Duc de Gramont and Ollivier, were extremely anti-Prussian, die-hard nationalists, and had an overconfident view of the French Army. They assumed that they could win a war against what they saw as an inferior army.⁴ They rightfully were angry with the Hohenzollern Candidacy, however, Gramont's speeches further incited the French populace, the French Ministry's demands that Wilhelm promise never to support another such venture (which they knew to be blatantly aggressive), and their declaration of war demonstrates their full responsibility for the war.

However, this theory is only valid if they intentionally planned on using the Hohenzollern Candidacy to provoke a war. Evidence indicates the French merely reacted to the situation that Bismarck continually stoked. His tampering with the Ems telegram to further provoke the French shows that Bismarck was the true master of the situation. Bismarck's control of the events prior to the war allowed him to manipulate the French into doing exactly what he wanted. Furthermore, Bismarck orchestrated the Hohenzollern Candidacy knowing that this would destabilize an already tense diplomatic situation and possibly lead to war. Bismarck, in testing the resolve of the French, is the real culprit behind the war.

The Napoleon III theory centers on the idea that if Napoleon III had kept a tighter rein on his ministry, then the war could have been averted. This theory blames the Emperor for not taking the necessary steps to ensure that peace was preserved in Europe. It further states that he was attempting to make an example of Prussia to preserve French

³ Robert Howard Lord, *The Origins of the War of 1870: New Documents from the German Archives* (New York; Russell and Russell, 1924), 4; S. William Halperin, "Bismarck and the Italian Envoy in Berlin on the Eve of the Franco-Prussian War," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March 1961), 34. Here the Russian diplomat, "vigorously criticized the conduct of the French government. He blamed its arrogance and precipitancy for the strain to which the peace of Europe was being subjected."

⁴ *Scientific American*. "FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR," *Scientific American*, Vol 23, No. 12 (September 17 1870), 184. "The war was worse than a blunder; it was a crime against civilization. The French inaugurated it, and civilization now rejoices at the just punishment they have received."

dominance in the European system.⁵ Evidence for this theory points to the fact that Napoleon III could have used his position as a populist emperor to sway the public opinion away from war. He also could have been more willing to hold back the ministry and be more cautious in how he approached diplomacy with the Prussians. However, this theory is rather weak given the fact that Napoleon III was physically sick and weak at the time of the crisis. His government had begun hiding his illness out of fear of the opposition. He had abdicated much of his authority to his ministers who were running the country. The Napoleon III theory also places undue power in Napoleon's hands. Napoleon III had ridden to the throne on a wave of populism and was dependent on the people's support for his continued reign.⁶ He had become especially unpopular in the cities and was thus dependent on the mood of the people in order to make decisions. When the voice of the people was in favor of the French Ministry's decision to go to war, there was nothing that he could do to counteract this. This theory also excludes the manipulations of Bismarck in pushing the French into a situation where they felt trapped. His diplomatic skills effectively cornered them into losing face or going to war.

David Wetzel hypothesized that Empress Eugenie of France was the cause of the war due to her persistence in promoting anti-Prussian leaders and advocating for harsher measures in public that led the people of France to become incited and ready for war. Evidence for this theory rests on the harsh anti-Prussian rhetoric of the Empress and her determination to revive the French glory. But, like the previous theories, the Empress, in reality, had less power than her husband and would have been unable to promote the war by herself. Like her husband was responding to a crisis organized and orchestrated by Bismarck who used the vehemence of leaders like Empress Eugenie to bring the French into a war with the Prussians. In order for the Empress to be the cause of the war, she would have had to push the ministry to make the declaration of war, which there is no evidence for in the sources.⁷

⁵ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20.

⁶ Roger D Price, *Napoleon III and the Second Empire* (New York; Routledge, 1997), 61.

⁷ David Wetzel, *A Duel of Giants: Bismarck, Napoleon III, and the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (Madison; University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).

The final individual theory of war indicates that it was because of an Italian diplomat that the Bismarck pushed the French towards war. The Italian diplomat Count Edoardo de Launay left an account of his interaction with Otto von Bismarck the day that the Hohenzollern candidature was withdrawn on July 12, 1870. In that interaction, he recorded that the Chancellor pressed him to know if rumors were true that Italy would send 80,000 men to assist France in the case of war with Prussia. The diplomat responded that Italy would pursue only a course of neutrality, though that was not a policy that was set in stone.⁸ The author of this theory, S. William Halperin, states that Bismarck, “used Italian neutralism to press the South Germans for an immediate commitment to join forces with Prussia.”⁹ This theory does not take into account that Bismarck had already been looking for ways to bring about the inevitable war between France and Prussia on his own conditions. Though logically it seems that the efforts of the Italian diplomat assisted Bismarck in having confidence in moving his plot forward, the Italian diplomat was not the reason behind the war. Bismarck indicated that the war was likely to happen prior to July 12 and had already performed his maneuver with the Ems telegram which he did in an attempt to further goad the French into war.

Internal Systems

In examining internal theories there are two dominant theories as to why the Franco-Prussian war began. The first is the Nationalism Theory and the second is the Diversionary War Theory. Both these theories, though powerful, are not as persuasive as the Bismarck Culpability Theory because they fail to account for Bismarck’s direct role in the conflict.

The Nationalism Theory centers on the idea that the Franco-Prussian war was the result of nationalism in both France and the German states. This was an early theory to explain the cause of war and uses as evidence statements made by politicians and the actions of lower classes. One evidence came from the French Minister Ollivier who stated it was the will of the country and not her emperor and

⁸ S. William Halperin, “Bismarck and the Italian Envoy in Berlin on the Eve of the Franco-Prussian War”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March 1961), 36-38.

⁹ S. William Halperin, “Bismarck and the Italian Envoy in Berlin,” 39.

ministers that led to the French to declare war.¹⁰ This was demonstrated in the street protests and riots that occurred as the French press expressed outrage at the Candidacy. This theory states that because of fears of popular revolt, the French leadership heeded the mob's outcries.¹¹ Furthermore, the proponents of this theory point to the nationalism that was growing in the German states, who in 1848 attempted to form a united German government. One striking evidence of this comes from the Hohenzollern family, who implied that they only accepted the Candidacy due to feelings of devotion to Prussia and the greater good of the state.¹² Other pieces of evidence for this theory include the calls for war among the various German states who previously been anti-Prussian, but at the start of the war with France provided some of the most zealous troops against a common enemy.¹³ This theory provides much of the context for the background in which Bismarck worked, however, it should be noted that Bismarck used this nationalism and was not used by it. As one author noted, "Bismarck by his steps towards German unification in the 1860s and his treaties with the south German states after 1866 was able to tie German nationalism to Prussia's cause...it was to Bismarck's credit to have worked with and utilized this movement for his and Prussia's purposes."¹⁴ Bismarck *used* nationalism and was not used by it. He took a popular movement

¹⁰ Emile Ollivier, trans. George Burnham, *The Franco-Prussian War and its Hidden Causes* (Freeport; Books for Libraries Press, 1912), 321.

¹¹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24; Robert Howard Lord, *The Origins of the War of 1870: New Documents from the German Archives* (New York; Russell and Russell, 1924), 3.

See also Daniela L. Cagliot, "WAGING WAR ON CIVILIANS: THE EXPULSION OF ALIENS IN THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR," *Past & Present*, no. 221 (2013): 167.

¹² Josef Becker, The Franco-Prussian Conflict of 1870 and Bismarck's Concept of a "Provoked Defensive War": A Response to David Wetzel, *Central European History*, Vol 41, No 1 (January 2008), 93-109.

¹³ Otto Von Bismarck, *My Dear Heart, Homburg* (August 8, 1870), ts. Armin Harder, "Bismarck's Letters to His Wife: From the Seat of War 1870-1871," (New York; D. Appleton & Company, 1903), 11.

¹⁴ Stewart A. Stehlin, "Guelph Plans for the Franco-Prussian War," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (December 1970), 791-792.

and used it to further his designs as a Prussian nationalist.¹⁵ His diplomatic skill in crafting a crisis with the French (who since the days of Napoleon I had been viewed by Germans as a common enemy) in order to bring the southern German states into the Prussian sphere of influence. Like so many other theories, Nationalism Theory was a key part of the crisis, but Bismarck pulled the right strings in his way, not because of nationalism, but because of his own designs.

The Diversionary War Theory is also an explanation for the Franco-Prussian war that has some merit, though does not have the logical strength of the Bismarck Culpability Theory. The Diversionary War Theory is a choice chosen by regimes that are facing challenges within their populace and need to divert the social unrest away from those seeking to displace the ruling regime.¹⁶ In both the French and the Prussian cases there were local outcries against the ruling regime. The Second Empire had increasingly become unpopular and survived a vote of reform, though mostly from the rural districts of the country.¹⁷ The French government in this theory used the war in order to shore up support for the regime. On the Prussian side, Bismarck was faced with regional opposition to the Prussians in the form of King George of Hanover, who sought to rally support to reclaim his kingdom. Evidence for Bismarck using the war to cut off the Guelph Plan (a plan to restore King George to his Kingdom) by recruiting among Hanover for the war against France is promising. Furthermore, the unification of the Southern German states following the war demonstrates that this war was able to divert attention away from the crises at home (the repression of formerly independent kingdoms) by focusing on a national enemy. However, this theory loses some of its force, when it appears that though the Hanoverians were a concern for Bismarck, they lost most of their power prior to the war when the Landtag sequestered

¹⁵ *Memories of Sedan Day Festivities in the 1870s (Retrospective Account, 1930)*, accessed at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=661.

This account demonstrates the levels of German nationalism that were seen following the victory over France.

¹⁶ Amy Oakes, "Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands," *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Jul-Sep 2006), 431-463.

¹⁷ Thomas March, *The History of the Paris Commune of 1871* (London; Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1896), 8.

George's fortunes, thus inhibiting George's ability to raise troops.¹⁸ It appears that Bismarck was unconcerned about domestic politics as he was about international politics and promoting German expansion.

International Systems

Among early scholars of the war, the third level theories based on international systems were almost non-existent. However, in the 20th and 21st centuries, these theories have gained popularity in explaining the cause of war in society. These theories can be divided into two camps; the choices of the rising power in explaining decisions and a failure to balance among great powers. However, these theories fail to acknowledge the real ability that Bismarck had and his unique skills in manipulating the Concert of Europe in a way that precious few statesmen and women have ever been able to achieve.

Goddard in her analysis of Prussia's overturning the Concert of Europe states, "failures to balance might originate not within potential balancing coalitions, but in the choices of the rising state itself."¹⁹ Goddard focused her analysis and evidence on the build-up in Prussian power between the years of 1848-1870 and how Prussia perfected its rhetoric in legitimizing their conquests by appealing "to shared rules and norms" of the Great Powers. According to Goddard the Great Powers, in turn, allowed for Prussia to undermine the balancing system of Europe, designed to prevent any one power from achieving hegemony.²⁰ If this theory is true, then we should evidence of other states agreeing with Prussia and allowing them in the 1870 war to destroy the system. One evidence of this is seen in the communications of the Russian diplomat at the time of the crisis who stated that "As for the powers that were not involved in the dispute over the Hohenzollern candidature, Gorchakov insisted that they must not behave like mere supernumeraries. After all, they were the peers of France. They should let France know that they could not approve the declarations which her foreign minister, the Duke of Gramont, had been making in the name of his government. It was quite clear from Gramont's language that he had

¹⁸ Stewart A. Stehlin, "Guelph Plans for the Franco-Prussian War," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (December 1970), 791-792.

¹⁹ Stacie E. Goddard, "When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/2009), 112.

²⁰ Stacie E. Goddard, "When Right Makes Might," 112.

somehow forgotten that he might be wounding the legitimate pride of the head of a great nation.”²¹ This illustrates that the other states did sympathize with the Prussians’ plight. However, this theory again fails to account for the individual power that Bismarck had. He was able through his force of personality to cut deals and secure treaties that other politicians failed to achieve. It was his force of character that allowed for the Prussian diplomacy to convince so many that Prussian ambitions were not a threat to their positions. This neglect of the unique characteristics of Bismarck is a serious critique of this theory.

The second theory is based on Mearsheimer’s theory of balance of power. He contends that in a multipolar system great powers are more willing to “buck-pass” the obligation of confronting a rising Great Power to other states. He specifically argues that buck-passing was the “preferred strategy” of the leadership of 1870 Europe.²² Another noted, “the underlying cause of the war, however, was the growing power of Prussia, the declining position of France, and the inability of the two states to establish their relative diplomatic weight in Europe through any measure other than war...”²³ and is echoed by scholars who place the root cause of the war in the Austrian loss at Koniggratz.²⁴ Scholars also point to the efforts of European leaders, such as Russia and Italy, who viewed a defeat of France not as a major setback but an advantage to themselves.²⁵ These theories of power politics point to a failure to balance among the other Great Powers in Europe. This inherently draws from realist theories about the balance of power and systemic level analyses. Like in the previous great power theory, they neglect to see the dynamic personality that Bismarck had.²⁶ Though this theory is

²¹ S. William Halperin, “Bismarck and the Italian Envoy in Berlin,” 34.

²² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York; W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 157-162.

²³ Barry R. Posen, Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 1993)

²⁴ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18.

²⁵ S. William Halperin, Bismarck and the Italian Envoy in Berlin on the Eve of the Franco-Prussian War, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Mar 1961), 33-39.

²⁶ Lord Odo Russell, *Private, Berlin* (11 Feb 1873), accessed at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1853.

useful, it ignores the power that was held by Bismarck who was able to not only incite a war but be able to negotiate peace with his former enemies to prevent their intervention in the conquest.

Bismarck Culpability Theory and Conclusion

This theory states that Otto von Bismarck used his diplomatic skills to lead the French into a war in order to unite the various German states and increase Prussian power in the Concert of Europe system. This idea relies on the Great Man Theory which states that “the history of the world is but the biography of great men.”²⁷ However, this theory of Bismarck Culpability acknowledges that the causes of war were more nuanced and that multiple factors played into the cause of war. But, the main factor, according to this theory is that Bismarck was primarily responsible for the Franco-Prussian War.

Otto von Bismarck clearly was the cause of the war because he not only was the most influential man in all of Prussia, but he believed the war was inevitable between the two Great Powers of France and Prussia. He wanted to draw the southern German states into the Prussian alliance using nationalism, so he orchestrated the Hohenzollern Candidacy to provoke the French, edited the Ems dispatch to provoke the French press, and refused to use diplomatic skills to avert a war with the regions enemy France.²⁸ This was because Bismarck believed that the time was right for Prussia to be able to beat the French war machine and form a German Empire. However, the most powerful evidence that Bismarck intentionally orchestrated the war and used his influence to produce conflict is found in his memoirs:

I put a few questions to Moltke as to the extent of his confidence in the state of our preparations, especially as to the time they would still require in order to meet this sudden risk of war. He answered that if there was to be war he expected no advantage to us by deferring its outbreak . . . [Various]

This letter from a British ambassador illustrates the way in which Bismarck was able to placate his rivals and was seen as completely trustworthy, something many diplomats could not boast.

²⁷ Thomas Carlyle, as quoted in “Strong Personalities,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 158 (Jan-Feb 2007), 2.

²⁸ S. William Halperin, *The Origins of the Franco-Prussian War Revisited: Bismarck and the Hohenzollern Candidature for the Spanish Throne*, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (March 1973), 83-91.

considerations, conscious and unconscious, strengthened my opinion that war could be avoided only at the cost of the honor of Prussia and of the national confidence in it... Under this conviction I made use of the royal authorization ... to publish the contents of the telegram; and in the presence of my two guests I reduced the telegram by striking out words, but without adding or altering...

After some discussion from his fellow officials Bismarck remarked:

It will be known in Paris before midnight, and not only on account of its contents but also on account of the manner of its distribution, will have the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull. Fight we must if we do not want to act the part of the vanquished without a battle. Success, however, essentially depends upon the impression which the origination of the war makes upon us and others; it is important that we should be the party attacked.²⁹

This piece of evidence from Bismarck's own mouth illustrates how he intended to cause a conflict with the French. Bismarck used his influence and his power to bring out this conflict in order to allow Prussia to rise in power.

Despite the various arguments, the most powerful argument explaining the cause of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 is that Chancellor Otto von Bismarck used his diplomatic skills to produce and orchestrate a conflict between the French and Prussians in order to allow Prussia to increase in power and allow it to annex all the southern German states. This is best shown by the discussions on the Ems telegram and his subsequent editing of that document. It is also shown by his unwillingness to deescalate the tensions and continued to allow the French to proceed toward war. Furthermore, it was from Bismarck's unique skill set and techniques of diplomacy that allowed him to use the various influences such as nationalism and French hatred of Prussians to score a complete victory over his enemies that left many blaming the French as the culprits of the war. Truly the hand of the Chancellor had been instrumental in orchestrating the crisis, the war, and the victory of the Prussian forces that led to the rise of the German Reich.

²⁹ Otto Von Bismarck, *Bismarck Remembers the Evening the Ems Dispatch was Edited* (July 13, 1870), accessed at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=2663.

**UNENTHUSIASTIC IMPERIALISM: WILLIAM MCKINLEY
AND THE ACQUISITION OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE
SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR OF 1898**

BY DESMOND CURRAN

In 1898 President William McKinley faced a choice that changed American history. Three years earlier, yet another Cuban insurrection for independence had broken out against their imperial ruler, Spain. Frustrated by the failure of the Captain-General of Cuba, Arsenio Martínez Campos, to quell the insurrection, the Spanish government sent General Valeriano Weyler to Cuba as his replacement. To combat the rebels, Weyler implemented a strategy to separate the rebels from their greatest resource: the general population.¹ This plan marked the beginning of the now infamous *reconcentración* policy.²

The conditions in these camps made Weyler's decree more of a death sentence than the separation policy for the Cuban citizens. The Spanish military could barely keep its own troops healthy: soldiers died frequently as they succumbed to diseases such as yellow fever, dengue, and malaria. Lacking the basic support systems available to the Spanish soldiers, the large number of Cubans in these camps could barely survive. The *Reconcentrados*, as they were called, died daily by the hundreds.³ As reports on these conditions reached the United States, widespread public sympathy for the Cuban cause quickly turned into

¹ John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 212, 213. The Spanish General Valeriano "The Butcher" Weyler implemented the *reconcentración* policy, designed to separate insurgents from the general population by placing the general population in walled-off camps. The Archivo General Militar de Madrid currently lists a total of 102,469 fatalities, but does not include Havana, where up to 120,000 additional Cubans were reconcentrated.

² Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, "Bando, Ordeno Y Mando, Habana 16 de febrero de 1896," Archivo General Militar de Madrid, Background code 2.2, boxes 3308-5127, accessed April 27, 2018. "All inhabitants of the fields in the jurisdiction of Sancti-Spíritus, Provinces of Port-au-Prince and Santiago de Cuba, must *reconcentrate* in the places where there is a division, brigade, column or troop of the Army and provide themselves with documentation that guarantees their person, within the passage of eight days from this Bando by the head of the municipality."

³ John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898*, 212.

anger and calls for action. Tensions with and distrust of Spain grew to a fever pitch, turning into a rage with the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* on February 15, 1898.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 is widely regarded as a turning point in American history, marking a new phase of American Imperialism that looked beyond the West to overseas and beyond. McKinley was a pragmatic politician who had risen in recognition due to his domestic politics and his stance on tariffs. But when he took office in March 1897, he was immediately confronted with a diplomatic emergency caused by the humanitarian crisis in Cuba. Despite his efforts for a peaceful resolution, he could not prevent the outbreak of conflict. On April 21, 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. Only four months later, on August 13, a cease-fire was signed, and with the Treaty of Paris on December 10, the “splendid little war” came to a close. Throughout the war’s short duration, McKinley maintained a focus on one primary objective: extracting Spain from Cuba. His focused approach was successful, but it also led the United States into new territory: the Philippines.

This thesis offers a new perspective on the discussion surrounding President William McKinley’s eventual decision to keep the Philippines as part of a peace treaty with Spain. A sequence of events that began before the United States’ declaration of war and continued through its completion inadvertently placed McKinley in a position where he, despite his reluctance, was obligated to have the United States take the Philippines. As the title of this thesis suggests, McKinley did not appreciate the dawn of overseas American Imperialism, despite presiding over its arrival. His hand was forced by the situation of events created by the efforts of Theodore Roosevelt, George Dewey, and Whitelaw Reid.

My first chapter addresses one economics-based interpretation of McKinley’s decision-making regarding the Philippines. The prominent historian William Appleman William argues in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and other works that McKinley’s approach towards the war, and subsequent acquisition of the Philippines, was largely driven by his interests for commercial expansion into foreign markets. I argue that McKinley’s decision on the Philippines prioritized American security and peace first, in order to enable American commercial expansion and prosperity without disruption. The economic potential of the Philippines was always present in McKinley’s thoughts, but each incentive included a strategic risk that

outweighed the commercial benefits. While McKinley left few written records of his thoughts, ample sources exist to help reconstruct the full range of his thinking about the Philippines, including his private conversations, speeches to Congress, political record, and presidential campaign platform.

This thesis also addresses shortcomings of more contemporary works such as David Trask's *The War with Spain in 1898*, often referred to as "the definitive work on the war," as well as Richard Collin's *Theodore Roosevelt: Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion*.⁴ Chapter two looks at how Trask and Collin both downplay the role and influence that Theodore Roosevelt played in the acquisition of the Philippines. Roosevelt's *Rough Riders: An Autobiography*, along with several personal letters, grant insight into his perspective on naval affairs and how his perspective motivated his actions as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. This chapter pivots away from the economics-based lens of chapter one and focuses more on how the military's strategic preparation for war influenced its outcome. The highly influential work of Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, published in 1890, as well as Ronald Spector's 1977 history of the Naval War College, *Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession*, provide critical insights into the history of the Philippines' inclusion in the strategy for war.

Chapter three presents my interpretation of how McKinley's balancing of American economic and strategic interests was ultimately shifted by the success of Admiral George Dewey at Manila. At the Paris peace negotiations, the diplomatic acuity of the American Peace Commissioner Whitelaw Reid pitted McKinley's disinterest in keeping the Philippines against his objective of ending the war. In this chapter, I continue my argument from chapter one that McKinley's perspective on the Philippines was informed by much more than economic interest. Although McKinley had initially never wanted the Philippines, he ultimately wanted to end the war more than anything else. He was prepared to accept the Philippines as a territorial acquisition—or as it was eventually framed, a purchase—if American assumption of that territory was necessary to secure peace. Documents from *Foreign Relations of the United States*, as well as *Making Peace with Spain*:

⁴ Anne Cipriano Venzon, *America's War With Spain: A Selected Bibliography* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 8.

The Diary of Whitelaw Reid, provides a valuable understanding of the peace negotiations between the Spanish and Americans in Paris. The Philippines had been previously identified in naval preparations for war with Spain as a tactical pressure point to coerce Spain into ending any conflict quickly. But Dewey's initial success in conquering Manila, aided by the groundwork laid by Roosevelt, changed the status of the Philippines. Instead of a pressure point, the Philippines became a *de facto* conquest of the United States, to be used as a bargaining chip with Spain. Whitelaw Reid recognized, and acted upon, this new status, which would ultimately force McKinley to keep the Philippines.

Chapter One: Unenthusiastic Expansion

President William McKinley took office in 1897 tasked with resolving two large, complex problems: the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Cuba, and the growing fears regarding U.S. economic stability. A year later, the outbreak of the Spanish-American War gave McKinley the opportunity to tackle both. But McKinley may have been more prepared for dealing with the American economy than for a diplomatic stand-off with Spain. Lewis Gould argues that McKinley was a product of his time, claiming that "his political career had focused on internal politics during an era when foreign policy was only a sporadic issue"; further, "McKinley began his presidency without a well-defined record on international questions."⁵ McKinley had gained political recognition from his vociferous support of tariffs and protectionism as a Republican congressman from, and then governor of Ohio. The tariff was the centerpiece policy of his 1896 presidential campaign.⁶ Up until 1897, his twenty-year career had been defined by his domestic policies. Suddenly, he faced an incredibly complex and delicate diplomatic situation, one that had vexed his predecessor Grover Cleveland and frustrated the public.

McKinley hoped to avoid war in Cuba. Fortunately, previous American interest in Cuba meant there were existing policy precedents that offered possible resolutions. The United States had attempted to

⁵ Lewis L. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley* (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980), 32.

⁶ Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, ed., *Republican Party Platform of 1896*, The American Presidency Project (University of California, Santa Barbara), accessed October 20, 2018, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/273316>.

purchase Cuba several times in prior decades. President James Polk first offered Spain \$100 million to purchase Cuba in 1848; Franklin Pierce raised the offer to \$130 million in 1854.⁷ In 1897, McKinley discreetly tried to negotiate the purchase of Cuba, citing “the policy of the United States to permit no disturbance of Cuba’s connection with Spain unless in the direction of independence or acquisition by us through purchase.”⁸

When that attempt failed, McKinley had to seek alternative options to restore peace to Cuba. McKinley’s subsequent approach to Cuba reveals a cautious, deliberate nature. McKinley maneuvered carefully between commitments to the Monroe Doctrine made in the Republican Party platform and preexisting U.S. interests in Cuba.⁹ Despite his lack of experience in foreign relations, he found a means to attempt to tactfully address humanitarian concerns by relying on the steadiness of political precedent. And while he was unsuccessful in purchasing Cuba, this commitment to policy, to well-established plans and precedents, rather than leaping into the unknown, guided McKinley throughout the Spanish-American War.

McKinley’s electoral platform also guided him as he struggled with the question of acquiring the Philippines. The Republican Party Platform of 1896 featured a detailed list of policies and plans designed to encourage the expansion of American trade to global markets. These included reciprocal trade agreements, proposals for an international bimetallic standard (while also supporting a domestic gold standard),

⁷ Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 5. Seventy years earlier in 1823, Thomas Jefferson had written to President James Monroe that “[Cuba’s] addition... is exactly what is wanting to round out our power as a nation to the point of its utmost interest.” These sentiments persisted. The 1854 Ostend Manifesto argued that the United States “can never enjoy repose, nor possess reliable security, as long as Cuba is not embraced within its boundaries.” Thomas Jefferson, quoted in Louis A. Pérez Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States & Cuba in History & Historiography* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5; James Buchanan, J. Y. Mason, Pierre Soulé, October, 1854, *Full Text of the Ostend Manifesto*, ([historyofcuba.com](http://www.historyofcuba.com)), accessed September 28, 2018, <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/havana/Ostend2.htm>.

⁸ William McKinley, “Message of the President, to the Senate and the House of Representatives, December 6, 1897,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1897* (Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., 2008), XI.

⁹ Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, ed., *Republican Party Platform of 1896*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/273316>.

expansion of both the navy and the merchant marine, and, most important to McKinley, protectionist tariffs on imported products.¹⁰ Each of these policies worked together to facilitate the expansion of American trade to foreign markets. For instance, the expansion of the U.S. merchant marine would lower the cost of shipping American products abroad, thus increasing their competitiveness in foreign markets. A strengthened navy would then protect these commercial ships and secure their trade routes.¹¹ The tariff would protect the domestic American market from foreign competition.

The general public expected this package of policies in some shape or form. In 1896 the United States was in the midst of recovering from a recession initiated by the Panic of 1893, considered by many as evidence of growing economic instability. American agricultural and manufacturing output had increased to levels that the domestic market could no longer absorb. The resulting surplus led to increased market volatility as prices for domestic products plummeted. As concerns grew around this instability, the solution appeared, to many, to be a new wave of American expansion that looked beyond continental North America.

In 1893 the historian Frederick Jackson Turner presented the first and most significant argument for expansion in his essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” Turner’s “Frontier Thesis” posited that American democracy was dependent on its ability to reach a frontier and that without a frontier, American democracy would falter, and even fail.¹² According to Turner, new frontiers would solve American economic struggles by providing new markets to absorb the production surplus. He was not alone in reaching this conclusion. Another historian, Brooks Adams, reached a similar conclusion in his 1895 book *The Law of Civilization and Decay*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Edward P. Crapol and Howard Schonberger, “The Shift to Global Expansion, 1865-1900,” in *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. William Appleman Williams (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972), 140.

¹² Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (Chicago), (December 14, 1893), accessed December 12, 2018, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/the-significance-of-the-frontier-in-american-history>.

Adams, however, went beyond Turner in arguing that territorial expansion was necessary to secure new markets, and specifically identified the Pacific as the new frontier to pursue this expansion.¹³ While Turner's work was much more widely circulated in the public discourse, Adams shared his work directly with a few select members of the Washington elite, including vocal expansionists Theodore Roosevelt and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-Massachusetts).¹⁴ Both Turner and Adams, in seeking to illustrate a link between the continuance of American prosperity and the economy, contributed to a larger American expansionist mindset. Consequently, McKinley rode into office with a popular mandate in favor of expanding American commercial presence into new frontiers, with some preference for looking towards the Pacific.

The sudden, surprising inclusion of the Philippines in the Spanish-American War brought the question of territorial expansion to the forefront of discussions surrounding American economic prosperity. At the end of the war, instead of facing questions about Cuban independence from Spain, McKinley faced a much larger question regarding the Philippines. McKinley's first response was no. "I didn't want the Philippines," he said, one year later; "when they came to us, as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them."¹⁵ It is clear that McKinley had no interest in the Philippines prior to the Battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898. McKinley not only told several confidants throughout the war that he was uninterested but after the battle in Manila, McKinley had to commission a cartographer specifically for the Philippines because he did not know entirely what

¹³ Brooks Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay: An Essay on History* (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., New York: Macmillan & Co., 1896), 29; William Appleman Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," in *A William Appleman Williams Reader*, ed. Henry W. Berger (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992), 353, 360-361.

¹⁴ Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy" in Berger, ed., *A William Appleman Williams Reader*, 93.

¹⁵ James F. Rusling, "Interview with President McKinley," *Christian Advocate* (New York) 78, (22 January 1903): 137-38, quoted in Ephraim K. Smith, "A Question from Which We Could Not Escape: William McKinley and the Decision to Acquire the Philippine Islands," *Diplomatic History* 9, no. 4 (1985), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24911695>, 364.

the Philippine archipelago and its geographic surroundings looked like.¹⁶

McKinley's lack of interest aside, he had several other good reasons to not support acquiring the Philippines. McKinley once told fellow Republican legislator Robert M. La Follette that he hoped "to round out his career by gaining for America a supremacy in the markets of the world... without weakening the protective system."¹⁷ That "protective system" was the Monroe Doctrine, the same doctrine that had guided his earlier message to Congress about the future of Cuba.¹⁸ The Philippines' most appealing quality was its proximity to China, making the islands a "stepping stone" for the United States to enter the Chinese market, one of the new frontiers as identified by Brooks Adams. Its location, however, also presented a potentially disastrous threat to McKinley's hopes.

The acquisition of the Philippines would attract attention from the several competing imperial powers in the South China Sea region (see Figure 1). This prompted the question: would those nations be hostile to a new competitor? During the period between May 1 and the conquest of Manila in August, this fear was almost realized when a force of German ships, larger and more powerful than Commodore George Dewey's Asiatic Squadron, arrived outside of Manila Bay.¹⁹ Prior to the outbreak of war with Spain, Theodore Roosevelt had raved about "our military weakness" relative to other imperial nations.²⁰ American officials feared that any possible military confrontation with a European imperial power (or Japan), would likely humiliate the United States. A United States venture into the South China Sea region could be interpreted by European powers as a renouncement of the

¹⁶ Henry S. Pritchett, "Some Recollections of President McKinley and the Cuban Intervention," *The North American Review* 189, no. 640 (1909), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25106318>, 399.

¹⁷ Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, 33.

¹⁸ William McKinley, "Message of the President, to the Senate and the House of Representatives, December 6, 1897," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1897*, XI.

¹⁹ Derek B. Granger, "Dewey at Manila Bay: Lessons in Operational Art and Operational Leadership from America's First Fleet Admiral," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 4 (2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26397247>, 135.

²⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, *Rough Riders: An Autobiography*, ed. Louis Auchincloss (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2004), 461.

“protective system” of the Monroe Doctrine and an invitation back into the Western hemisphere, increasing the risk of confrontation.

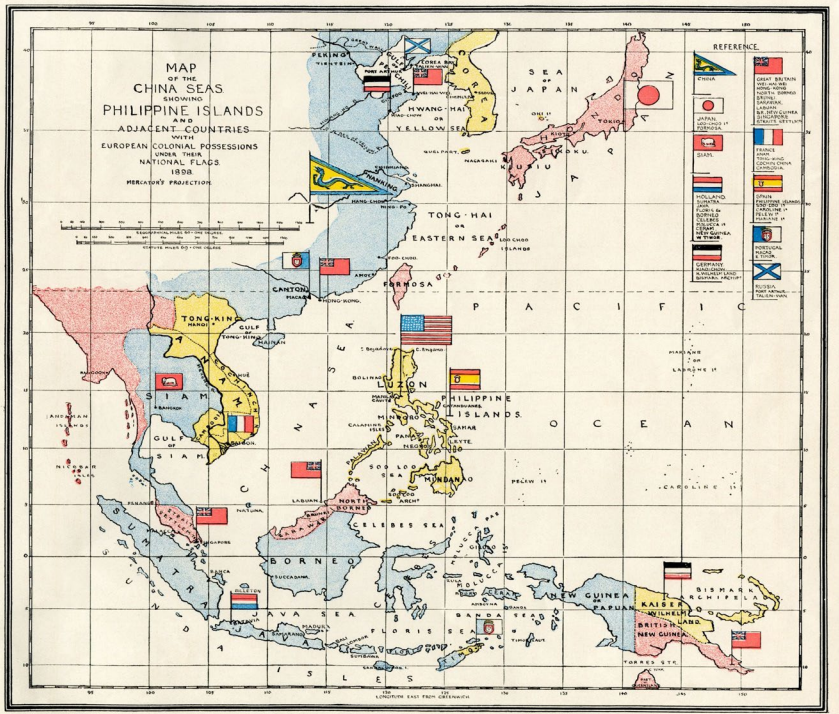


Figure 1. “Map of the China Seas, Philippines, and European colonies in the region, 1898.” Alamy Stock Photo. Printed color lithograph illustration. North Wind Picture Archives. Accessed February 20, 2019.

At the same time, there was a precarious balance of economic interests in Asia. While the United States was negotiating peace with Spain, McKinley and John Hay, then the ambassador to Great Britain, were drafting their proposal for an Open Door Policy with China.²¹ Their proposal was simple: all countries could trade equally and freely

²¹ John Hay was the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain during the Spanish-American War in 1898. He was later appointed to the position of Secretary of State on September 30, 1898, when the previous Secretary, William R. Day, stepped down to participate in the Peace Commission for the treaty negotiations with Spain. As Secretary, John Hay would announce the Open Door Policy one year later, on September 6, 1899.

within the Chinese market.²² Until that point, each Western imperial power had separately carved out “treaty ports” across China’s coast through treaties with the Chinese government, each with their own set of terms. The United States had no such agreements at that point, so McKinley sought to circumvent the existing system. By proposing that each nation trade on equal footing, the larger powers, such as Great Britain and Germany, would focus more on enforcing a balance of power among each other than reacting to the United States’ entering the region.

If the United States kept the Philippines, however, McKinley’s calls for the Open Door Policy might appear disingenuous, due to the many benefits offered by the archipelago. To address this pitfall, McKinley’s future—public—instructions to the Peace Commission in Paris included the following passage: “[W]e seek no advantages in the Orient which are not common to all. Asking only the open door for ourselves, we are ready to accord the open door to others.”²³ He made this statement with the Open Door Policy in mind, which John Hay would promulgate the following year. McKinley had to ensure that his intentions were made public early on so that if the United States did keep the Philippines, it had previously been on the record addressing any European concerns.

But perhaps the biggest reason for McKinley to so blatantly say “I didn’t want the Philippines” was that he believed that he could achieve his commercial goals without the Philippines. The intrinsic value of the Philippines was the possibility for the islands to serve as a coaling station and naval base, aiding McKinley’s efforts to increase overseas trade. By 1898, however, the United States had already secured territories that provided these same benefits, but without the potential pitfall of arousing European interest. The United States had already annexed Hawaii earlier that year, was in the process of acquiring the Samoas (American Samoa), and was preparing to enter treaty negotiations with Spain with the explicit intention to keep

²² John Hay, “Mr. Hay to Mr. White, Department of State, Washington, September 6, 1899,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1899* (Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., Inc., 2008), 129-130.

²³ William McKinley, “Instructions to the Peace Commissioners, Washington, September 16, 1898,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898* (Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., Inc., 2008), 907.

Guam.²⁴ The possession of the Philippines was unnecessary. Halfway through the war, on June 3, McKinley, hoping to pressure Spain after Dewey's success at Manila, made an unofficial peace offering to Spain: "the Philippines would remain in Spanish hands except for 'a port and necessary appurtenances, to be selected by the United States.'"²⁵ His offer also stipulated that Spain would "cede a port in the Ladroneas (Marianas) possessing a harbor and coaling station."²⁶ The offer clarifies McKinley's strategy for expanding American commerce: his objective was small, strategic acquisitions that facilitated American trade. He did not want large territorial acquisitions like the Philippines; they were potentially more trouble than they were worth.

It is clear, then, that economic considerations played a significant role in McKinley's decision regarding the acquisition of the Philippines. However, McKinley's reluctance and prior lack of interest in the Philippines proves noteworthy. His commitment to commercial "supremacy" remained rooted in reality, and much like his initial approach to resolving the conflict in Cuba reflected a cautious approach and desire to avoid instigating any armed conflict. To maintain such a deliberate approach, McKinley had to consider much more than commercial growth.

The Philippines presented an incredible opportunity for the United States to pursue a new frontier. But William Appleman Williams argues that "[m]en like McKinley... their own conception of the world ultimately led them into war in order to solve the problems the way that they considered necessary and best."²⁷ McKinley may have considered the war necessary to resolve the issue in Cuba, but only because his other options had been exhausted. If, as Williams argues, McKinley's true objective for war had been "overseas economic expansion" to defend against economic depression, which

²⁴ Crapol and Schonberger, "The Shift to Global Expansion, 1865-1900," in Williams, ed., *From Colony to Empire, Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, 142; William McKinley, "Instructions to the Peace Commissioners, Washington, September 16, 1898," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 906.

²⁵ William R. Day, "Day to Hay, 3 June 1898," quoted in David Trask, *The War with Spain* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1981), 425.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962), 38, 42.

was threatening “democracy and social peace,” how could McKinley justify the monumental challenges posed by acquiring the Philippines?²⁸

The historian Ephraim K. Smith has described McKinley as an “unenthusiastic expansionist” for this reason.²⁹ McKinley did not want to justify the acquisition. He never wanted to keep the Philippines. The islands were irrelevant to achieving his goals. Unfortunately for him, it was his responsibility to direct the Peace Commission. The eventual decision to keep the Philippines was not influenced by McKinley’s economic interests, it was largely subject to forces beyond McKinley’s control. During the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris, he was forced to contend with the unexpected reality of the American position in the Philippines that had developed from Dewey’s initial attack on Manila on May 1.

Neither Dewey nor McKinley had identified the Philippines as a target prior to the outbreak of war. As I have argued throughout this chapter, McKinley strongly preferred to follow established policy and precedent rather than diverge from the consensus. So, when Theodore Roosevelt, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, unexpectedly ordered Commander George Dewey and the Asiatic Squadron to prepare to attack the Philippines, McKinley may have been surprised but supported the decision. Why? Despite the sudden timing, Roosevelt was only implementing a plan that had been previously approved by the Navy Department. In 1896, Lieutenant William Wirt Kimball presented a contingency plan for war with Spain to the Naval War College. His plan sought to pressure Spain by attacking its colonial possessions around the world, including the Philippines. It was Roosevelt, however, who started a process in which the Philippines went from being a strategic target to an acquired asset for the United States.

Chapter Two: “You May Attack When Ready, Dewey”: Theodore Roosevelt’s Preparation for War

Secret and confidential. Order the squadron, except *Monocacy* to Hongkong. In the event of a declaration of war with Spain, your duty will be to see that

²⁸ Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 42.

²⁹ Smith, “A Question from Which We Could Not Escape,” 374.

the Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic coast, and then offensive operations in the Philippine islands. Keep *Olympia* until further orders.

— Theodore Roosevelt to George Dewey, February 25, 1898

On February 25, 1898, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt assumed the role of acting secretary since the current Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, had taken leave for a sick day. Roosevelt wasted little time and quickly issued the notorious order from above to then-Commodore George Dewey of the Asiatic Squadron.³⁰ Returning the next day, Long was shocked, and condemned Roosevelt's actions in his diary: "[Roosevelt] has gone at things like a bull in a china shop."³¹ The historians David Trask and Richard Collin have interpreted Roosevelt's order differently, however, arguing that his actions on February 25 were unremarkable and only part of a pre-existing plan.

However, Trask and Collin's interpretation overlooks the personal context behind the timing of Roosevelt's order. They do not question why Roosevelt issued the order when he did; they only examine the two questions of "why Roosevelt issued the order" and "why the Philippines." One possible answer to both is that Roosevelt was an ardent expansionist. In a letter to Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan one year earlier in 1897, Roosevelt stated, "If I had my way we would annex those islands [Hawaii] tomorrow."³² It is reasonable to assume

³⁰ Theodore Roosevelt to Commodore George Dewey, February 25, 1898, in Brad Berner, ed. *The Spanish-American War: A Documentary History with Commentaries* (Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014), 50.

³¹ Margaret Long, ed., "26 February 1898," *The Journal of John D. Long* (Rindge, N.H., 1956), 169-170, quoted in Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 80.

³² Theodore Roosevelt to Captain Alfred T. Mahan, May 3, 1897, *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 2: Letterpress Copybooks, -1916; Vol. 1, Apr. 9-July 12, 1897*. Manuscript/Mixed Material, accessed January 2, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990319/>; Wynell Schamel and Charles E. Schamel, "The 1897 Petition Against the Annexation of Hawaii," *Social Education* 63, 7 (November/December 1999): 404, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hawaii-petition>. In 1893, the Hawaiian Monarch Queen Liliuokalani was overthrown in a coup sponsored by American businessmen, who then formed a provisional government. That government was then recognized by the U.S. minister to Hawaii, John Stevens,

that Roosevelt may have had similar sentiments or interests regarding the Philippines. Yet this fails to answer a third question: why Roosevelt would choose to act in that particular moment when the order itself was not an issue.

What is perhaps overlooked is that when Roosevelt issued the order, he was much more concerned with the general preparedness of the U.S. military than with any expansionist desires in the Pacific. As such, his order to Dewey was more specifically rooted in his unease over the Navy's poor preparation. The timing of his order, only ten days after the sinking of the *U.S.S Maine*, was made in anticipation of war with Spain. Roosevelt's order was an attempt to compensate for the Navy's weakness and unpreparedness by issuing the order before war broke out, at least giving Dewey and the Asiatic Squadron additional time to prepare. As such, Secretary Long's condemnation of Roosevelt was largely justified; Roosevelt's order could be interpreted by the Spanish as bellicose, which would, in turn, subvert any diplomatic efforts. Roosevelt, however, was convinced that war was inevitable and that Dewey, the Asiatic Squadron, and the U.S. Navy at large needed as much help as he could give them.

Theodore Roosevelt's appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897 was sensible. Despite having never served in the armed services, his material knowledge made him an excellent choice. While a student at Harvard the young Roosevelt began writing his first book, *The History of the Naval War of 1812*.³³ The book was published in 1882 and was well received by naval historians and academics. More importantly, in the process of writing the book, Roosevelt gained a considerable amount of expertise regarding naval tactics and composition. With this expertise, Roosevelt examined the U.S. Navy in the 1880s and concluded that it "had reached its nadir" and was "utterly incompetent to fight Spain or any other power that had a Navy at all."³⁴

who also declared that Hawaii was a U.S. protectorate. President Benjamin Harrison then signed a treaty of annexation with that government, but before it could be ratified in the Senate, he was replaced by a new president, Grover Cleveland, who rescinded the treaty. Four years later, Hawaii still remained a protectorate of the United States, and annexing Hawaii was one of the Republican Party's top priorities as William McKinley took office in March of 1897.

³³ Theodore Roosevelt, *Rough Riders: An Autobiography*, ed. Louis Auchincloss (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2004), 460.

³⁴ Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 460.

Roosevelt's largest concern was the questionable composition of the Navy, which he characterized as "our military weakness" relative to other imperial nations.³⁵ By 1890, and even by 1898, the U.S. Navy was still catching up to other global powers, including Spain. In the two decades after the Civil War (1869-1889), the U.S. Navy had drawn down its numerical size from a total of almost 150 to around 60 active ships (see Figure 2). Starting in 1885, however, widespread alarm grew about the state of the Navy, and a general consensus emerged in favor of reversing this trend. Several "Navy Acts" were passed by Congress between 1885 and 1890 to appropriate the funds necessary to construct a new, modern, and competitive American naval force.

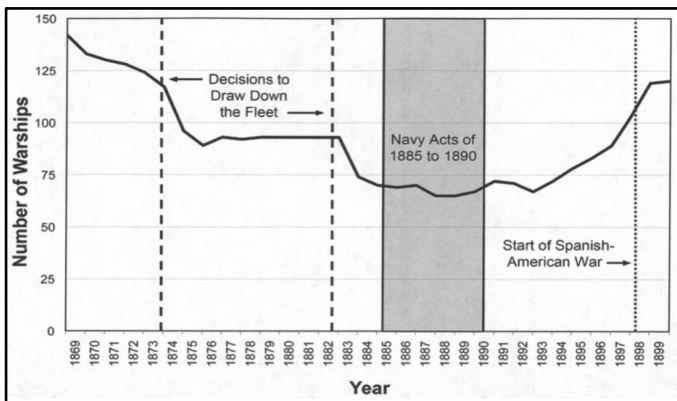


Figure 2. "U.S. Navy Warships (1869-99)." Timothy S. Wolters, "Recapitalizing the Fleet: A Material Analysis of late-nineteenth-century U.S. Naval Power." *Technology and Culture* 52, no. 1 (2011), 114.

But Roosevelt thought that these appropriations were too little and too late.³⁶ By 1898, the total strength of the fleet had almost doubled to around 110 ships, with the introduction of the "New Steel Navy." But the 50 older ships in that force were antiquated remnants from the Antebellum, Civil War, and Post-Civil War navies (see Figure 3). The critical problem was that the majority of these older ships were

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 461.

³⁶ "Shortly afterwards [the early 1880's] we began timidly and hesitatingly to build up a fleet. It is amusing to recall the roundabout steps we took to accomplish our purpose." *Ibid.*, 460.

made of wood, not steel (hence “New” and “Steel”).³⁷ They were slower and weaker than their new counterparts, making them a liability in battle and, in the worst cases, rendering them incompatible with the new additions. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt knew this better than anyone else. That’s why in his order to Dewey, he included an order to leave the *Monocacy* behind.³⁸ This imbalance fed Roosevelt’s harsh judgments of the “utterly incompetent” state of the Navy heading into the 1890s, and incompetence that he hoped to counteract with his order to Dewey.

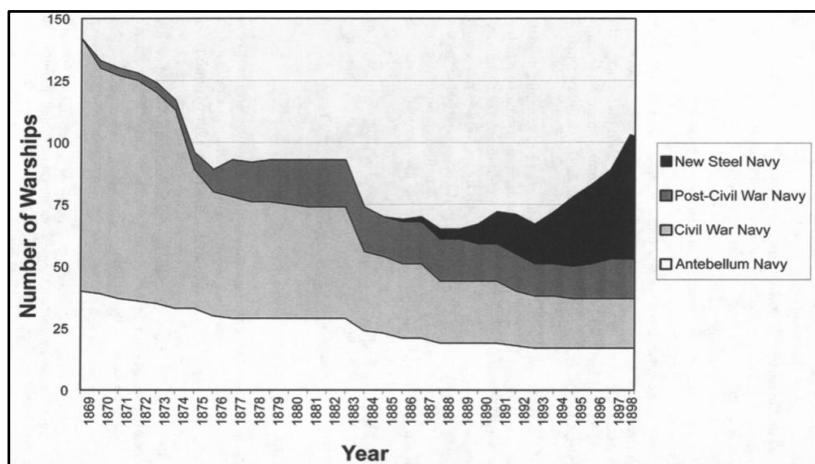


Figure 3. “U.S. Navy warships by type (1869 to the start of the Spanish-American War).” Timothy S. Wolters, “Recapitalizing the Fleet: A Material Analysis of late-nineteenth-century U.S. Naval Power.” *Technology and Culture* 52, no. 1 (2011), 117.

Roosevelt’s disquietude was further compounded by the release of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan’s landmark work in 1890, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783*.³⁹ In it, Mahan established one central point: naval power and superiority was the single most crucial asset for projecting power abroad and maintaining

³⁷ Timothy S. Wolters, “Recapitalizing the Fleet: A Material Analysis of Late-Nineteenth-Century U.S. Naval Power,” *Technology and Culture* 52, no. 1 (2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23020458>, 108.

³⁸ Timothy S. Wolters, “Recapitalizing the Fleet,” 120-121. The *Monocacy* was the only ship in entire the Asiatic Squadron from the “old navy.”

³⁹ Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 462.

international hegemony.⁴⁰ In other words, if any country wanted to develop its global presence, naval strength should be its priority. Mahan was largely inspired by the British Royal Navy, the world's preeminent naval force at the time. The Royal Navy protected the vast reach of British trade routes and colonies, effectively securing the British Empire's interests and assets around the world.⁴¹ Mahan's articulation of this blueprint for developing a global presence appeared at a critical moment in the United States, at a time when Roosevelt and other prominent leaders had begun turning their attention to developing America's commercial presence abroad.⁴²

During the decade of the 1880s, a group of advocates for the agricultural industry had emerged with a specific vision for the future of the American economy. These "agrarians" were spokesmen for collectives of American farmers, tasked with resolving the domestic surplus problem.⁴³ Industrialization had led to the production of agricultural goods at rates faster than the domestic American market could consume. The ensuing surplus drove down the prices of staple agricultural products such as corn and wheat to the point where farmers suffered huge losses and faced bankruptcy.

As a possible solution, the agrarians argued that "a more efficient and regulated transportation network for their competitive exports" was necessary to offload the surplus into foreign markets.⁴⁴ It was a straightforward idea, but with one alarming implication. Roosevelt, among other leaders, worried that a rapid American commercial expansion would lead to a commercial trade war, which could, in turn, set off a military conflict for which it was ill-prepared.⁴⁵ The United States had no intention of going to war, but in reality, it had to be prepared to defend itself if a conflict arose. Hence an additional need for a larger, modern navy capable of defending the United States and its commercial exports, during both peacetime and especially war.

⁴⁰ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890), 1, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.49015000108135>.

⁴¹ Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, 1.

⁴² Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 462.

⁴³ Crapol and Schonberger, "The Shift to Global Expansion, 1865-1900," in Williams, ed., *From Colony to Empire, Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, 137.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 137, 139.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

Mahan emphasized this point: “it may safely be said that it is essential to the welfare of the whole country that the conditions of trade and commerce should remain, as far as possible, unaffected by an external war.”⁴⁶ The “utterly incompetent” state of the Navy in 1890 threatened to undermine any possibility of realizing the “agrarian conception of the world.”

Roosevelt had mulled over these questions at length by 1898 and worried that his worst fears had been realized. War with Spain, one of Europe’s oldest imperial powers, seemed imminent. The historian David Trask describes the moment through Roosevelt’s eyes: “No reader relying on Theodore Roosevelt’s frenzied correspondence during the last weeks of peace would have believed the United States Navy was reasonably well prepared for war.”⁴⁷ Roosevelt had good reasons to be concerned. As it became increasingly obvious that conflict was inevitable, he was incredulous to find that the Department of War “had no plans” for war with Spain, and that “[e]ven during the final months before the outbreak of hostilities very little was done in the way of efficient preparation.”⁴⁸ The fact that no one else in the army shared his sense of urgency foreshadowed doom to Roosevelt. At one point, a few days before the declaration of war, he visited “one of the highest line generals of the army” and found him trying on new uniforms; he even asked Roosevelt for “advice as to the position of the pockets in the blouse, with a view of making it look attractive.”⁴⁹

Roosevelt’s shock largely derived from his exposure to the much more thorough preparations for war with Spain that the Navy Department had undergone since 1896. On June 1, 1896, Lieutenant William Wirt Kimball presented to the Naval War College his plan, “War with Spain.”⁵⁰ Kimball’s plan had one overarching objective: securing the liberation of Cuba from Spanish control.⁵¹ To achieve this, he determined that the best method was to apply pressure on Spain across the world—not just in Cuba but also its other colonies such as

⁴⁶ Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, 87.

⁴⁷ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 93.

⁴⁸ Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 475.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 74-75; Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion* (United States of America: Louisiana State University Press), 198, 112-113.

⁵¹ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 74-75.

Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and even the Spanish mainland.⁵² To maintain its global empire, Spain needed a strong navy to protect its holdings—which Kimball wanted to test in the Philippines. Both historians David Trask and Richard Collin correctly argue that Kimball’s inclusion of the Philippines was entirely due to strategic considerations—and that it was not motivated by any expansionist desire.⁵³ Both insist that “[s]trategy and tactics rather than economics and empire were the battlegrounds in the naval debate.”⁵⁴

The eventual plan adopted by the Naval War College in 1897 was “essentially the Kimball plan.”⁵⁵ It was this plan that Roosevelt set in motion on February 25, 1898. Both Trask and Collin use this point to refute previous historical interpretations, such as that of William Appleman Williams, that Roosevelt’s actions here were inspired by expansionist thought.⁵⁶ Trask and Collin emphasize that it was Kimball, not Roosevelt, who identified the Philippines as a target. According to Trask, Roosevelt’s actions were “consistent with Department thinking and reflected considerable prior planning.”⁵⁷ And despite Secretary Long’s reaction to Roosevelt’s actions, “Theodore Roosevelt’s order to Commodore Dewey was not an innocent misunderstanding.”⁵⁸ Long may have blustered about Roosevelt’s orders (he issued more than one that day), and even canceled some of them, but he allowed others, including the order to Dewey, to stand.⁵⁹ However, by minimizing Roosevelt’s agency, both Trask and Collin understate Roosevelt’s responsibility in shaping the fate of the

⁵² Ronald Spector, *Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1977), 91-92, accessed February 1, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/professorsofwarn00spec>.

⁵³ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 78; Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion*, 113.

⁵⁴ Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion*, 113.

⁵⁵ Spector, *Professors of War*, 94.

⁵⁶ “Theodore Roosevelt... did what [he] could to translate the implications of [Brooks Adams’] thesis into official American policy.” Williams, “The frontier thesis and American foreign policy,” in *A William Appleman Williams Reader*, Berger, ed., 93.

⁵⁷ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 81.

⁵⁸ Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion*, 109.

⁵⁹ Long, ed., *The Journal of John D. Long*, quoted in Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 169-170.

Philippines during the war. Roosevelt's largest fear was that the U.S. Navy was not prepared for its task. As such, he acted decisively when an opportunity unexpectedly arose. But Roosevelt's efforts to contribute to the naval preparations for war had begun even earlier.

While there was only so much that Roosevelt could contribute to the material and strategic preparations for the Navy, he was pivotal in securing the appointment of George Dewey as Commander of the Navy's Asiatic Squadron. Roosevelt saw Dewey as a man of action: "I knew that in the event of war Dewey could be slipped like a wolf-hound from a leash; I was sure that if he were given half a chance he would strike instantly and with telling effect."⁶⁰ Roosevelt knew that time was essential with war approaching. He did not want the cumbersome military command to exacerbate the weaknesses he already saw in the U.S. Navy (and Army). Roosevelt wrote that "[a]ll that was needed with Dewey was to give him the chance to get ready, and then to strike, without being hampered by orders from those, not on the ground."⁶¹ Collin concurs that Roosevelt's "most notable achievement as an assistant secretary [*sic*] of the Navy was his successful campaign to promote Dewey as fleet commander over other officers higher on the promotion list."⁶² Roosevelt's relationship with Dewey adds further context to his orders on February 25. He had already succeeded in placing an effective man into a position of command before the outbreak of war; the next step was to ensure that Dewey had the best chance to successfully execute Kimball's plan in the Philippines. Dewey would exceed Roosevelt's expectations, and his performance in battle at Manila would have a significant impact on the course of the war and its outcome.

As Trask and Collin correctly argue, Roosevelt's interest in the Philippines was purely strategic at that moment of his order to Dewey. Despite being a vocal supporter of expansion in Asia, Roosevelt's primary focus was addressing the Navy's general weakness. As President William McKinley took office with promises of tariffs, commercial expansion into foreign markets, expanding the merchant marine, and strengthened navy, Roosevelt expected that the confrontation feared by the agrarians would approach soon, while the

⁶⁰ Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 468.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 466, 468.

⁶² Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion*, 104.

U.S. was still woefully behind.⁶³ The deteriorating state of affairs in Cuba only confirmed to him that war with Spain was inevitable and that it would arrive before the United States could adequately prepare.⁶⁴

This does not mean, however, that Roosevelt's activities as Assistant Secretary of the Navy did not play a role in the eventual acquisition of the Philippines. While it was William Wirt Kimball who introduced the idea of attacking the Spanish at Manila, it was Roosevelt who had ensured that Dewey was in place and well prepared to succeed. Roosevelt's actions would not fundamentally change the value of the Philippines as a useful "hostage" for the United States.⁶⁵ But they would, however, change the realm of possibilities for the Philippines. Occupation of the Philippines was not a part of the initial plan, as it would divert valuable resources away from any campaign in Cuba.⁶⁶ With Dewey's command, occupying the Philippines would suddenly become a tangible possibility, within the constraints of Kimball's plan.

Roosevelt's order had given Dewey one crucial resource: time. Dewey had nearly two and a half months between receiving the initial order and the actual outbreak of war. Dewey attributed this preparation as the most crucial part of his victory: "This battle was won in Hong Kong Harbor."⁶⁷ Shortly after the declaration of war, Dewey was on the move to attack Manila. Ironically, Dewey did not leave Hong Kong at first because he was ordered to attack Manila, but because British neutrality required that they asked Dewey to leave before he received any communication from the U.S. (thus demonstrating Roosevelt's concerns about the slow chain of command).⁶⁸ As Roosevelt had hoped, the "wolf-hound" was at last set off his leash. The Battle of

⁶³ Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, ed., *Republican Party Platform of 1896*, The American Presidency Project (University of California, Santa Barbara), accessed October 20, 2018, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/273316>.

⁶⁴ Roosevelt, *Rough Riders*, Auchincloss, ed., 463.

⁶⁵ William Wirt Kimball to Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, 1 June 1896, RG 38, in Spector, *Professors of War*, 92.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶⁷ Derek B. Granger, "Dewey at Manila Bay: Lessons in Operational Art and Operational Leadership from America's First Fleet Admiral," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 4 (2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26397247>, 128.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, was the first major battle of the war, and a stunning and decisive American victory.

While Dewey's victory on May 1 did not conquer Manila or the entire Philippines, he had essentially seized unofficial control of the island. Dewey later wrote, "[f]rom the moment that the [Spanish] captain-general accepted my terms [not to fire on the American squadron] the city was virtually surrendered."⁶⁹ Dewey, Kimball, and to an extent, Roosevelt, had taken a "hostage" for McKinley and the United States to use to pressure Spain to end the war and to leave Cuba. What Roosevelt and McKinley could not have expected, though, was how Dewey's success would change the situation on the ground in the Philippines. Dewey's victory had stunned the Spanish so much that they offered to surrender. Dewey, however, declined, knowing that his forces were insufficient to maintain order in the Philippines as the ongoing Filipino insurrection grew around Manila and throughout the other islands.⁷⁰ But his victory delivered such a blow to the Spanish forces that their docile response continued throughout the rest of the war.

Dewey deferred any full attack against Manila for four months until August when reinforcements arrived under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt. The meek Spanish defense resulted in an easy victory for the U.S., this time securing Dewey's full conquest of the islands over the course of two days. The weak Spanish defense of Manila in August of 1898 would prove critical to the future peace negotiations between the United States and Spain and spark intense debate between William McKinley and the United States Peace Commission regarding the fate of the Philippines.

⁶⁹ George Dewey, *Autobiography* (1913), 226-227, quoted in David Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 105.

⁷⁰ Granger, "Dewey at Manila Bay: Lessons in Operational Art and Operational Leadership from America's First Fleet Admiral," 136; Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 370-373. The Filipino insurrection had begun in 1896, and its activities against the Spanish continued after the American victory at Manila Bay. Led by Emilio Aguinaldo, the insurgent forces numbered around 30,000 and were based in Cavite, the region just south of Manila. After the Battle of Manila Bay, they continued to attack the 30,000 Spanish troops throughout the archipelago under the command of Governor-General Basilio Augustín. Had the Spanish surrendered to Dewey in May, they would not have been able to defend themselves against the Filipino insurgents, and Dewey would not have been able to help.

Chapter Three: A *fait accompli*?

The United States will occupy and hold the city, bay and harbor of Manila, pending the conclusion of a treaty of peace which shall determine the control, disposition and government of the Philippines.

— Protocol of agreement between the United States and Spain
August 12, 1898

On August 12, 1898, Spain and the United States signed a protocol establishing a cease-fire and proposing a future date for peace negotiations. The protocol's articles outlined an agreement that addressed the political status of the Philippines and agreed that Spain would relinquish sovereignty over Cuba.⁷¹ The agreement was intended to establish a framework for the future peace negotiations set to begin October 1 in Paris. When William R. Day and Jules Cambon (the French representative for the Spanish) signed the protocol, both parties understood that while the United States would assume the authority in Manila from the Spanish garrison, it was only a temporary measure. Spain was still the sovereign ruler of the Philippines, but it needed help from the American military to maintain order amidst Emilio Aguinaldo's Filipino insurrection. Notice of the agreement was immediately sent to both the American and Spanish forces in Manila. When the news arrived on August 16, however, there had been a dramatic change in the status quo at Manila. Conquest, rather than negotiation, had already established American occupation and control of the city and the Philippines at large.

The day after the protocol was signed in Washington, the newly promoted Admiral George Dewey and Major General Wesley Merritt launched a joint assault on Manila and the immediate surrounding area. The Spanish only made a token demonstration of resistance. The Spanish Governor-General Fermín Jáudenes surrendered the following day on August 14, unaware that the protocol

⁷¹ William R. Day and Jules Cambon, "Protocol of agreement between the United States and Spain, embodying the terms of a basis for the establishment of peace between the two countries, Signed at Washington, August 12, 1898," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898* (Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., Inc., 2008), 828.

had been signed.⁷² This lack of knowledge was crucial, David Trask contends, arguing that “[h]ad Jáudenes possessed full information about negotiations... he might not have agreed to surrender so that the city would remain in Spanish control . . . But in the absence of such knowledge, he had every reason to avoid a serious defense.”⁷³ Here is where the weak Spanish defense becomes critical. Had they chosen to defend Manila, they might have held out long enough for news of the protocol to reach the Philippines, preventing Dewey and Merritt’s conquest. Yet the Spanish did not, largely due to control Dewey had established over Manila Bay in his victory on May 1. The defeat of Rear Admiral Patricio Montojo and the Spanish fleet had given Dewey the freedom to impose his own will throughout the region and had broken the fighting spirit of the Spanish.

Six months earlier on May 2, Dewey had asked the Spanish to use Manila’s telegram cable, connected with Hong Kong, to correspond the news of his victory with Washington. When the Spanish refused this request, Dewey responded by cutting the cable.⁷⁴ Communications between Manila and Hong Kong were subsequently delayed throughout the rest of the war, with the cable between Manila and the rest of the world not restored until August 22.⁷⁵ Because Dewey had cut the cable, news of the protocol only reached Manila on August 16, the day after Jáudenes surrendered.⁷⁶ McKinley’s biographer, Margaret Leech, writes that Dewey’s decision “reflected an egoism no less arrogant because it was ingenious... [he] avoided opening communications at all until he had consolidated his victory and could present the government with a *fait accompli*.”⁷⁷ Leech points out that Dewey recognized the strategic importance of communications, but also demonstrated a willingness to operate without them (one of his qualities that had caught Theodore Roosevelt’s attention).⁷⁸ However one characterizes

⁷² Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 420.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁵ John Hay, “Mr. Hay to Mr. Day, [Telegram.], American Embassy, London, August 22, 1898” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 980.

⁷⁶ Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 421.

⁷⁷ Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 207.

⁷⁸ Dewey was not entirely cut off from communication, but he was significantly removed from the chain of command. To maintain contact with

Dewey's actions, his cutting of the cable had a profound impact on the future of the islands. Spanish and American perspectives on the status of the Philippines had to change after the Spanish surrendered on August 14. The American victory challenged the protocol's assumption of Spanish sovereignty; the United States now had a legitimate claim to the Philippines by virtue of conquest.

Dewey's first triumph in Manila Bay had also changed McKinley's strategic thinking regarding the future of the Philippines. Three days after his victory on May 1, Dewey sent a cable to Secretary Long: "We control bay completely and can take the city at any time, but have not [*sic*] sufficient men to hold."⁷⁹ Dewey's victory and blockade of Manila showed McKinley that the Philippines were a viable target. Dewey had created a situation where he could maintain pressure on Spain with further attacks on Manila. All he needed was additional manpower. McKinley was receptive, and on May 19 he issued orders for an expedition of 12,000 men under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt to reinforce Dewey at Manila, "for the two-fold purpose of completing the reduction of Spanish power in that quarter and giving order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States."⁸⁰ The language of the order seemed clear: the United States was sending troops to Manila with the purpose of aiding Dewey in defeating the Spanish and taking the city. But this was not a sign of McKinley's intent to conquer the Philippines.

Trask believes that McKinley's authorization for Merritt's expedition to the Philippines was "merely... an appropriate follow-up to Dewey's victory."⁸¹ He describes McKinley's strategic approach throughout the entire war as "consistently [attempting] to force peace in the shortest possible time and at the cheapest possible cost... he adopted an 'indirect approach,' attacking the enemy's weakest

Washington, the ship *McCulloch* travelled between Manila and Hong Kong with dispatches. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 369.

⁷⁹ Dewey's telegram was received several weeks after it was sent, hence why McKinley made the decision regarding Merritt's forces much later after Dewey's victory. Granger, "Dewey at Manila Bay: Lessons in Operational Art and Operational Leadership from America's First Fleet Admiral," 135.

⁸⁰ William McKinley, "McKinley to Alger for Merritt, May 19, 1898," *Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain, Volumes 1-2* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant-General's Office, 1902), quoted in Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 384.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 384.

positions... with the strongest available forces.”⁸² Dewey’s victory at Manila had demonstrated that the Philippines were a weak point for Spain that the United States could continue to pressure without a need for too many additional resources.⁸³ It is crucial for the reader to recall here that while Dewey was enjoying success, the entire effort in the Philippines was considered secondary to the goal of victory in Cuba. William Wirt Kimball’s strategy had targeted the Philippines to pressure Spain on the side, while the full brunt of the American force landed in Cuba to drive the Spanish out.⁸⁴ McKinley may have issued the order, but Margaret Leech argues that McKinley was still “noncommittal about the intentions of the [U.S.] government” regarding the Philippines.⁸⁵ One victory, while confidence-boosting, was not enough to convince McKinley that taking the Philippines was worthwhile.

What is clear, though, is that McKinley’s authorization for Merritt’s expedition in May sought to build on the tactical momentum that Dewey had established in Manila. On June 3, a few weeks after authorizing Merritt’s expedition, McKinley made an unofficial offer to the Spanish for peace: “the Philippines would remain in Spanish hands except for ‘a port and necessary appurtenances, to be selected by the United States.’”⁸⁶ McKinley’s offer demonstrates his priority of reaching peace, as well as his disinterest in taking the Philippines. McKinley could have just waited for Dewey and Merritt to conquer Manila, but instead, he sought a solution that did not involve conquering the archipelago. But two months later in August, Dewey, now with Merritt, presented McKinley with a *fait accompli* of conquest. There was nothing the Spanish, nor McKinley, could do to return to McKinley’s previous offer.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 423.

⁸³ The soldiers sent to Manila with General Wesley Merritt were by and large not enlisted soldiers; the majority were volunteer militiamen from California and other states, much to Merritt’s frustration. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 383.

⁸⁴ Spector, *Professors of War*, 91-92.

⁸⁵ Leech, *In the Days of McKinley*, 210.

⁸⁶ Day, “Day to Hay, June 3 1898,” in Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 425.

Making Peace

On September 16, 1898, the American Peace Commission departed the United States for Paris.⁸⁷ McKinley gave the group extensive guidance regarding his objectives for the negotiations, including his belief that the Philippines were “therefore held by the United States by conquest as well as by virtue of the protocol.”⁸⁸ This position would give the United States considerable leverage if a situation arose where the Spanish held up the negotiations by insisting on their sovereign rule over the Philippines. However, the American delegation would not take this stance. John Hay, the new Secretary of State, wanted to honor the protocol signed with Spain: “While the Philippines can be justly claimed by conquest... their disposition, control, and government... should be the subject of negotiation, as provided in the protocol.”⁸⁹

As such, by framing their position within the protocol instead of immediately claiming the right of conquest, the American delegation hoped to establish good faith with the Spanish delegation, easing potential tensions or difficulties. The divergence between these statements also reveals that McKinley still refused to stake a claim to the Philippines, despite acknowledging that he could. If he had, Hay’s statement would have instead likely mirrored McKinley’s earlier claim, insisting on the United States’ control of the Philippines. Once these positions had been articulated, however, they were beyond McKinley’s control. He was not in Paris; it was up to the Peace Commissioners to act on them.

Whitelaw Reid, a prominent Republican and former minister to France from 1889-1892 played a significant role in managing the

⁸⁷ The members of the Peace Commission were Senator William P. Frye (R-Maine), Senator Cushman Kellogg Davis (R-Minnesota), Senator George Gray (D-Delaware), former Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Whitelaw Reid, and William R. Day as chair

⁸⁸ William McKinley, “Instructions to the Peace Commissioners, Executive Mansion, Washington, September 16, 1898” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 906.

⁸⁹ John Hay, “Mr. Hay to Mr. Day, Department of State, Washington, October 28, 1898” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 937.

relationships between the Spanish and American delegations. John Hay believed that these personal relationships made Reid the commissioner who had the most influence on the outcome of the treaty.⁹⁰ Reid's earlier time in France had given him contacts within the French government, which he utilized to foster an unofficial dialogue with the Spanish, gauging their responses throughout the negotiations. One of these contacts was the Spanish ambassador to France, Fernando de León y Castillo. On the first day of negotiations, Reid recalled Castillo saying "do not forget that we are poor... that we are vanquished... do not forget that this is the first great war you have had with a nation on the continent of Europe... that you have had an astonishing victory, and that you cannot complete it without showing magnanimity."⁹¹ It was up to the Commission, then, to decide whether to make concessions, if any, to their beleaguered Spanish peers. Throughout the negotiations, Reid's contacts with the Spanish would provide sensitive information that helped the Commissioners navigate these decisions, especially with regards to the disposition of the Philippines. It was this network in Paris that allowed Reid to operate independently from McKinley's purview, and to negotiate the future of the Philippines on his own initiative, separate from McKinley's intentions.

From the start of the negotiations, it became clear that the Spanish were desperate to keep their rule of the Philippines as acknowledged in the protocol. At the first official meeting of both delegations, the Spanish demanded that before any negotiations proceeded the United States must "join them in declaring that the status quo in the Philippine Islands existing at the time of the signing of the protocol must be immediately restored by the contracting party that may have altered it."⁹² The Americans declined. In response, the Commission presented articles of peace regarding "Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other islands in West Indies and Guam as provided in protocol," prioritizing the fate of these other islands before returning to debate the status of the Philippines.⁹³ The Spanish accepted this order of

⁹⁰ Whitelaw Reid, *Making Peace with Spain, The Diary of Whitelaw Reid: September-December, 1898*, ed. H. Wayne Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 16.

⁹¹ Reid, *The Diary of Whitelaw Reid*, Morgan, ed., 39.

⁹² William R. Day, "Mr. Day to the President, [Telegram.], Paris, October 1, 1898" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 918.

⁹³ William R. Day, "Mr. Day to the Mr. Hay, [Telegram.], Paris, October 3, 1898" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 918.

operations and spent the following weeks mainly discussing Cuba and Puerto Rico. The issue of the Philippines was delayed, but discussions had begun within the Commission regarding the fate of the archipelago.

The central question for the Peace Commission was the value of “keeping” the Philippines compared to “returning” them to the Spanish or even granting them independence. A long-time supporter of expansion, Reid contributed to the discussion at great length in favor of the acquisition. Major General Merritt also joined the Commission in Paris to discuss the feasibility of keeping the islands. He favored acquisition, believing that the Filipinos “would utterly refuse to return to the dominion of Spain, and our withdrawal to that end would probably result in horrible massacres.”⁹⁴ Merritt’s opinion was shared by other commissioners who believed that relinquishing the Philippines to the Spanish or granting them their independence were terrible ideas.

There was additional discussion of the possibility that the United States would keep only one of the islands in the Philippines, Luzon. Luzon had Manila; it was the most developed and rich in resources and offered several locations for an American naval base and coaling station to help expand American commerce into the Asian market.⁹⁵ The Commissioners and McKinley, however, quickly rejected this idea over security concerns. It did not matter who controlled the other islands: if any power other than the United States controlled the other islands, that power would present a threat simply due to their proximity in the archipelago. By late October, Davis, Frye, and Reid informed McKinley that “it would be [a] naval, political, and commercial mistake [*sic*] to divide the archipelago.”⁹⁶ These discussions began to outline the actual parameters of what “keeping” the Philippines would entail: it was a question of all or nothing.

To McKinley, who had only months previously justified a war of intervention in Cuba on humanitarian grounds, the idea of handing another colony back to the abusive Spanish was unacceptable. One of McKinley’s innate qualities, argues Nick Kapur, was that he “held high moral standards that urged him to strive for peace,” and was also “concerned with making sure the record showed that he held those

⁹⁴ Reid, *The Diary of Whitelaw Reid*, Morgan, ed., 56.

⁹⁵ William R. Day, “Mr. Day to the Mr. Hay, [Telegram.], Paris, October 9, 1898” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 926-927.

⁹⁶ Cushman K. Davis, William P. Frye, and Whitelaw Reid, “Peace Commissioners to Mr. Hay, [Telegram], Paris, October 25, 1898 (Received on 25th and 26th.)” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 932.

moral standards.”⁹⁷ McKinley had already gone on the record for Cuba against Spanish rule: “we took up arms only in obedience to the dictates of humanity and in the fulfillment of high public and moral obligations.”⁹⁸ As I argued in Chapter One, it is clear that McKinley saw the issue of the Philippines as more than an opportunity for commercial expansion. The islands were a diplomatic tool that McKinley could use to achieve his greatest priority: ending the war.

This was where Dewey’s (and Merritt’s) conquest of Manila forced McKinley into making the crucial decision on the archipelago’s future. Who was actually in control? On paper, Spain was still the sovereign ruler of the Philippines, which the United States had recognized in the protocol. But in reality, the power to determine the fate of the islands lay in the hands of McKinley and the Peace Commission. When a major disagreement over the Cuban debt threatened to derail the entire negotiations, the status of the Philippines was suddenly thrust into the forefront of the discussion. On October 7, the Spanish delegation proposed articles for the treaty regarding Cuba that Reid called “an insidious scheme... ceding the sovereignty of Cuba... [as it also would] involve the United States in accepting this cession a responsibility for the entire Cuban debt.”⁹⁹ McKinley and the Commission refused.¹⁰⁰ However, unlike their earlier protest over the “status quo” in the Philippines, where they backed off, the Spanish

⁹⁷ Nick Kapur, “William McKinley’s Values and the Origins of the Spanish-American War: A Reinterpretation” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23884754>, 32.

⁹⁸ William McKinley, “Instructions to the Peace Commissioners, Executive Mansion, Washington, September 16, 1898” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 906-907. Commissioner George Gray also recalled McKinley’s use of this phrase in a letter arguing against the acquisition of the Philippines, saying “let us not make a mockery of the injunction contained in those instructions.” George Gray, “Peace Commissioners to Mr. Hay, [Telegram], Paris, October 25, 1898 (Received on 25th and 26th.)” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 935.

⁹⁹ Reid, *The Diary of Whitelaw Reid*, ed. Morgan, 63.

¹⁰⁰ McKinley and the Peace Commission were conscious that accepting the Cuban debt could imply that they were planning to eventually “take” Cuba. This would be unacceptable to both President McKinley, and more importantly Congress (who would have to ratify any treaty), since the passage of the Teller Amendment had cemented in law that the United States would not establish any permanent authority over Cuba as a result of the Spanish-American War.

instead threatened to leave the negotiations entirely. McKinley's goal of peace was endangered.

At this critical juncture, Whitelaw Reid found a resolution that only he had the power to create. In a conversation with the Spanish ambassador to France on or around October 26, Reid made a "parting suggestion to Castillo concerning possibility [*sic*] of some concession, either territorial or financial in the Philippines," which William R. Day overheard.¹⁰¹ The next day, Day sent a telegram, not to Secretary Hay as he had normally done in correspondence with the White House, but directly listed as "For the President." Day detailed Reid's conversation with Castillo, noting that "Mr. Reid assured [*sic*] ambassador that we could not assume this debt," and that "Ambassador again said that if forced to direct answer on the question [of Cuban debt] now must answer no, and break off conference...then begged [Reid] to search for some possible concession somewhere, and inquired about Philippine islands."¹⁰² Day ended the message with a bombshell: "We are inclined now to believe that rupture to-day only averted [*sic*] because Spaniards grasped at hint thrown out in the conversation of Mr. Reid last night with ambassador."¹⁰³

McKinley was faced with a quandary. He did not want to make the Philippines an American territory, and as I've argued, there were several strong reasons supporting his position. Reid, however, had suddenly created an irrefutable stronger counterargument for keeping the Philippines: American accession to control of the islands offered an approach to peace with Spain that would salvage the negotiations. After receiving Day's telegram, McKinley conceded that there was "but one plain path of duty - the acceptance of the archipelago. Greater difficulties and more serious complications, administrative and international, would follow any other course."¹⁰⁴ There was only one option: "keep" the islands and offer financial compensation as recompense to Spain as the necessary concession to resolve the issue of

¹⁰¹ Reid, *The Diary of Whitelaw Reid*, ed. Morgan, 118.

¹⁰² William R. Day, "Mr. Day to Mr. Adee, [Telegram.], United States Peace Commission, Paris, October 27, 1898" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 936.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ John Hay, "Mr. Hay to Mr. Day, [Telegram.], Washington, October 27, 1898" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 937.

Cuban debt.¹⁰⁵ Reid had saved the negotiations; but he had also forced McKinley, against his intentions, to keep the Philippines.

Did Whitelaw Reid force McKinley's hand? On the basis of the evidence at hand, it appears so. Reid knew all too well that the Spanish were desperate. Without Dewey's victory at Manila Bay on May 1, this offer would not have been possible. The destruction of the Spanish fleet, the severing of the telegram cable to Hong Kong, and the eventual conquest of Manila effectively delivered the Philippines to McKinley. Unfortunately for McKinley, he simply did not fully appreciate this at the time. McKinley may have acknowledged the strength of the American claim to the Philippines, but where he chose not to act upon it, Reid did.

Conclusion

On December 10, 1898, the "splendid little war" came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. For the United States, however, the enduring consequences of the war were neither splendid nor little. Cuba would remain under the temporary supervision of the United States military for several years and would eventually be granted its nominal independence. In the Philippines, American forces were quickly dragged into another conflict that was much longer, costlier, and deadlier: the Philippine-American War.

Whether he liked it or not, McKinley's decision helped realize the aspirations of both Frederick Jackson Turner and Brooks Adams. The Philippines, along with Guam and the newly annexed Hawaii, provided the naval bases and coaling stations necessary to expand American commercial trade into the lucrative Chinese market. American Imperialism had begun a new phase of expansion overseas. Unlike European Imperialism, it did not seek out vast territories to conquer; the reinvigorated American Imperialism instead sought to conquer markets, facilitated by modest yet strategic conquests and acquisitions.

¹⁰⁵ "Spain cedes to the United States the archipelago [*sic*] known as the Philippine Islands... [t]he United States will pay to Spain the sum of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) within three months after the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty." Treaty of peace between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain, December 10, 1898, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1898*, 833.

American naval power expanded alongside its growing economic presence worldwide. In 1900, the United States still lagged behind the preeminent military powers, but it had made great progress in the previous decade. Theodore Roosevelt's fixation on naval strength continued beyond his departure from the Navy Department. In 1907, as President, he ordered the new "Great White Fleet" to complete a global tour as a demonstration of the United States' ascension in naval strength.

In my research, I noted that in the past twenty years there has been a drop in the quantity of scholarship regarding the Spanish-American War, most notably since Kristin Hoganson published *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* in 1998. Several smaller works have also appeared, but focusing on smaller, more specific topics. Nick Kapur revisits various interpretations of William McKinley's character; Commander Derek B. Granger studies the influence Commander David Farragut had on Dewey's leadership leading up to the Battle of Manila Bay, and Hugh Rockoff performs an economic cost-analysis of the war and its effect on the growth of the United States military. But no works since Hoganson, or even Trask, have achieved a similar breadth or depth of examination into the Spanish-American War.

The absence of recent scholarship has left several gaps, most notably a gap in understanding Roosevelt's role in the Navy Department. The majority of scholarship on Roosevelt, perhaps understandably, focuses on his work as President, and scholarship on the Spanish-American War delves more into his participation with the Rough Riders. Yet my research suggests that Theodore Roosevelt's actions as Assistant Secretary of the Navy had an outsized impact on the fate of the Philippines, and possibly even on the outcome of the war. His activity deserves further analysis, rather than simple acknowledgment in historical studies.

The factors affecting William McKinley's eventual decision, while I have presented them at length here, also merit further inspection. Larger studies of the Spanish-American War, such as William Appleman Williams', have sought to place McKinley's decision within larger narratives. This thesis highlights the considerable complexity of the factors that influenced McKinley; the interplay between his underlying goal for American prosperity with the intersection of his domestic economic policies and his foreign policy.

As I have shown, McKinley's attitude towards the Philippines was much more nuanced than previously thought. Further scholarship in this area would not only benefit discussions of the Spanish-American War, but also the Presidential studies of both McKinley and Roosevelt.

It can be argued that Secretary Long would have eventually made the same order as Roosevelt since Long did not cancel Roosevelt's order to Dewey. But with Long, any such order would have come much later than Roosevelt's. Dewey's greatest advantage was his preparation, which was enabled by Roosevelt's audacity on February 25, 1898. Little could Dewey have known, however, that his success in Manila would give Whitelaw Reid the wherewithal to offer, even if in passing, a concession to the Spanish Ambassador relating to the Philippines. It is in these moments that history is made, with the culmination of discrete events leading to one inexorable conclusion.

CONCEIVING THE MARSHALL PLAN: A THREE-PART STUDY OF MOTIVE BEHIND U.S. DEVELOPMENT POLICY

BY MICHAEL BRYAN

Whilst the effect of the Marshall Plan is well-noted, there exists a wide range of interpretations as to what caused the United States to supply some \$13.3 billion in aid to help rebuild Western European economies following the end of WWII.^{1 2} Three dominant schools have dominated the debate over the Marshall Plan's intent: The realist, revisionist and ideological.

In these debates, historians who have defined themselves as "realist", "neo-realist," or as proponents of a "national security" perspective, have generally stressed the geopolitical motivations of the Truman administration in launching the Marshall Plan. According to realists, American control of Western Europe was of paramount strategic importance, necessary in order to contain the USSR and in accordance with a power equation that was unhindered by ideological bias. Capitalist ideology in this view was secondary to the preservation of US national security. Melvyn Leffler is perhaps the most sophisticated exponent of the neo-realist school, seeing the Marshall Plan as motivated primarily by the desire to safeguard US national security from a potential Soviet threat.

Critics of this school charge that realists, in overstating strategic considerations, neglect the role of ideology in American decision-making. These 'revisionist' critics point to the dangers of underestimating domestic economic imperatives. Instead, they adopt a "systemic" interpretation that sees the Plan as motivated by the maximization of profit rather than the amassing of geopolitical power.³ This is typified in the works of Gabriel and Joyce Kolko whose views

¹ Robert Wood, *From Marshall Plan to Debt Crisis: Foreign Aid and Development Choices in the World Economy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

² Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945–1952", *Department of State*, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/marshall-plan>.

³ Thomas McCormick, "Something Old, Something New: John Lewis Gaddis's 'New Conceptual Approaches'", *Diplomatic History* 14, no. 3 (1990): 425-432.

coalesce around the economic interest, incentive, and necessity of an expansive US development policy.

A third school is more sympathetic to the portrayal of American altruism – best represented by the works of Nicolaus Mills who understood the US to be acting in accord to self-interest as well as a continent devastated by war.

The conflict that exists is three-fold, considering not only whether the intent was inherently political or economic, but whether the United States' objective was humanitarian or self-interested in its vision for Europe and whether it was aggressive or passive in its relation to the USSR.

The interpretations of Leffler, Kolko, and Mills – to differing degrees - provide a useful platform for discerning the United States' motivation for the introduction of the Marshall Plan.

Justified by more political and self-interested considerations (than Mills), Leffler portrays American policymakers as having two major and one minor objectives in launching the Marshall Plan. Through this frame, Leffler presents the Plan as a product of long-term national security contingency-planning that necessitated pan-European economic reform.

First, Leffler argues American officials wanted to bring about economic recovery so as to undermine the appeal of Communist parties (and thereby circumscribe the latent influence of the Kremlin). Leffler reasons that in February 1947, having learned the British would no longer be able to support “Greek resistance to a communist-led insurgency or to help Turkey to modernize its military in the face of Soviet pressure”, Truman determined the US would have to help these countries maintain their independence/territorial integrity.⁴ And because the problems confronting Greece and Turkey were as much economic as they were military, the US would need to provide economic assistance to stabilize and expand their economies. Leffler presents the Marshall Planners as having based the country's security upon the reconstruction of Europe and the augmentation of its economic capabilities. This differentiates Leffler's interpretation, recognizing the ambivalence of self-interested and humanitarian motives to a greater extent than Mills.

⁴ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

In addition to circumscribing Communists in Western Europe, Leffler suggests the Marshall Plan sought to revive and integrate the western zones of Germany into a Western-oriented economic community. Leffler stresses the rehabilitation of the German industry as a motive for two reasons. First, Ruhr coal was viewed as indispensable for the economic reconstruction of the rest of Western Europe that would in-turn secure the stabilization of Western European politics and the “containment of indigenous revolution”.⁵ Second, the resilience of West Germany was seen as necessary to mitigate the threat of Soviet inroads (and thus the imperilment of European political reconstruction). Whilst Mills sees America as fulfilling a predominantly economic and ideological role (i.e. maintaining centrist political institutions so as to maintain free-market economics), Leffler ascribes an overtly political motive to the introduction of the Marshall Plan (which sees economic reform as merely an instrument of further containment). The reason for this difference may be their contrary attributions of Communism; Mills viewing Marxism as an economic ideology rather than a political force (as Leffler sees).

Co-opting Western Germany and stabilizing Western Europe were two key geopolitical concerns, connected to a third, albeit less significant, goal: the dilution of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. The involvement of Eastern European countries was welcomed to foster recovery, reduce Europe's need for dollars, and lessen inflationary pressures. Leffler dismisses Mills' interpretation (which asserts the US fulfilled a non-inflammatory role towards the USSR) and instead emphasizes the more aggressive view as Marshall sought to wean Eastern Europe from the Kremlin.

In making explicit the American desire to use Europe's “bases, infrastructure, diplomatic clout, military capabilities, and global presence in the struggle against Soviet communism”, Leffler presents the strategic interest of the US to be preventing any potential adversary from mobilizing the resources/economic and military potential of Europe for war-making purposes against the United States.⁶ In this regard, he sees the Plan as a means of protecting American security by ensuring the political stability of Europe.

Leffler's security considerations may stem from his work in the Office of the Secretary of Defense where he worked on arms control

⁵ *Ibid.*, 184-196.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

and contingency planning as a fellow on the Council on Foreign Relations.^{7 8} His exposure to the American national security apparatus and decision making structures of Pentagon officials may go some way in explaining the focus on security that defines his view.

Turning to the revisionist school, In *The Limits of Power*, Gabriel and Joyce Kolko⁹ depict the Marshall Plan as an attempt to coil the tentacles of Wall Street around the troubled economies of Europe. Rather than ascribing a humanitarian (Mills) or national security (Leffler) motive, Kolko perceives the Plan to be an act of economic imperialism and ideological coercion.

First, Kolko's interpretation revolves around the need for a wide market for American goods. In 1946, not only had GDP fallen 11.6%, but inflation rose by 16%. This economic shift had a regressive effect on lower-income families (through falling real incomes) whilst making American exports even less accessible for European markets.¹⁰ The implication was for "the French to [follow]... the British in cutting all but essential dollar purchases," which threatened jobs and lowered capital-investment spending.¹¹ Kolko, therefore, argues the Marshall Plan arose from the memory of the Great Depression that left as many as 12,830,000 people without work.¹² Coupled with anxiety for how to sustain an economy teetering on the brink, economic reform was therefore necessary for subsidizing the imports of goods so as to open up a vast market for America's "unsalable" surplus production.¹³ Thus, the Plan was enacted to create business opportunities and jobs. After all, the money would be used to buy goods from the US which would, in turn, have to be shipped across the Atlantic on American merchant vessels.

⁷ The Library of Congress, "Melvyn Leffler to Lecture on Cold War on Nov. 10", 2005, loc.gov/item/prn-05-224/melvyn-leffler-to-lecture-on-cold-war-on-nov-10/2005-10-18.

⁸ Wilson Center, "Melvyn P. Leffler", 2013, wilsoncenter.org/person/melvyn-p-leffler.

⁹ Hereafter, 'Kolko'

¹⁰ The Balance, "Compare Today's Unemployment with the Past", 2018, thebalance.com/unemployment-rate-by-year-3305506.

¹¹ Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

¹² *Ibid.*, 489.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 360.

Whilst Leffler and Mills recognize the persistence of the dollar gap in necessitating European economic recovery, Kolko goes further by describing the Plan as relentless in its drive to achieve homogeneity (so as to impose what equates to American economic imperialism). To mitigate the threat of a second Depression, Kolko suggests the United States aimed to “permanently influence and shape Western Europe’s internal economic policies.”¹⁴ This contradicts Leffler’s view – that the objective of the U.S. was innately political – and instead accentuates economic factors. The reason for this difference may be attributed to Kolko’s contrary view of international relations. Kolko perceives a world system whose chief actors are global market forces that prioritize the maximization of profit while Leffler sees the chief actors as nation-states whose main imperative is the maximization of geopolitical power.

Second, Kolko presents the ideological and political self-interested motives of the Marshall Plan by conveying the “very real extent [to which] the ECA went beyond the needs of the American economy for stable markets and pressed orthodox policies on governments of quite varied economic and political complexions.”¹⁵ Through the strict criteria of balanced budgets, stable currencies, high profits to entice investment, and low wages to discourage consumption, Kolko presents the US as from the offset, seeking to impose a capitalist ideology on incapacitated European states. This is reinforced by provisions that sought to temper socialist sympathies by “restrict[ing] their expenditure in social welfare and subsidies.”¹⁶ Kolko argues the US was indiscriminate in using any means to further its own economic gain. This argument undermines Mills’ interpretation that the US was motivated by humanitarian intent. Kolko argues the US went so far as to manipulate the economies of Europe in a deflationary way, lowering the standard of living in order to increase efficiency and provide a surplus to export.

Kolko presents a third strand where the Marshall Plan was motivated to entrench American involvement in European affairs. Reliant on European purchases, the US sought to protect its ideological base from influence by the USSR. Consequently, Kolko ascribes Marshall’s goal as “rebuild[ing] the strength of the Western European

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 359.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 430.

economies” to serve as “a bastion against the left.”¹⁷ Unlike Mills and Leffler, who recognize American policymaker’s apprehension over the USSR, Kolko’s views may be explained by his perception of the Communist threat as being nowhere near as potent as it was made out to be. Rather, the tension was exacerbated by the United States, demonstrating the ways in which they played a partially aggressive role through the introduction of the Marshall Plan.

Kolko’s interpretation is consistent with a number of historians that sought to challenge the orthodox view of American aid in the wake of witnessing the failure of containment (exhibited by the (North) Vietnamese campaign as well as negligence in China and Cuba). This, alongside firm Marxist convictions that led him to join the Student League for Democracy, may go some way to explaining his characterization of the Marshall Plan as an example of economic imperialism.^{18 19} Finally, operating under the theory of altruism in foreign policy, in *Winning the Peace*, Mills puts forward a humanitarian argument that presents the Marshall Plan as an American enterprise that was at once strategic, altruistic, and stunningly effective.

Mills presents the Plan as driven foremost by the desire to help create large, European markets, without commercial barriers and with the healthy free-market competition. He argues the integration of markets would “encourage... European nations to pool their resources while increasing their capital formation and production.”²⁰ This integration is presented as having three key benefits. First, it would aid the revival of European productivity by removing trade barriers, lowering prices and in-turn improving European standards of living. Second, it would point the way to a new era of permanent peace, with increased cooperation making war a heavier economic burden. Third, it would secure the long-term economic independence of European states from the USSR as well as the US itself.²¹ These three points serve as the components of Mills’ accentuation on the Plan’s philanthropic intent.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 429.

¹⁸ Gabriel Kolko, *Distribution of Income in the United States* (New York: Student League for Industrial Democracy, 1955).

¹⁹ Harold Lewack, *Harold Campus rebels; a brief history of the Student League for Industrial Democracy* (New York: Student League for Industrial Democracy, 1953).

²⁰ Nicolaus Mills, *Winning the Peace* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 70-113.

In addition, Mills offers a second strand that argues the Marshall Plan sought to restore Western Europe's faith in capitalism. By granting billions of dollars for the acquisition of foodstuffs, Mills argues American officials hoped to ameliorate the economic conditions upon which Communists capitalized.²² This sees “Europe’s deteriorating...political position” as a predominantly ideological conflict – suggesting that in wanting to import the American dream of economic prosperity, the US sought to diffuse the traditional class-conflicts of Europe. This demonstrates the extent to which Marshall Planners sacrificed political objectives for ideological and economic imperatives.²³

In his third and final strand, Mills portrays the Plan as answering the problem of successive failures of and deficiencies in US development aid. He captures the sense of necessity for a collective European strategy to bring their economies in-line.

Overall, Mills’ outlook is positive of American motives in introducing the Marshall Plan. The U.S. was grounded in a sense of American duty in which, having entered the war in order to defend the sovereignty of nations, they again felt obliged to act to protect the tenets of freedom and (economic) liberty. Although he recognizes American self-interest, repeating Clayton’s warning that a “weakened Europe” would endanger “American prosperity”, he accentuates the overriding duty necessitated by being the only country that had the means to provide.²⁴

Mills writes from a highly personal, emotive position, having been a child that remembered: “the CARE packages he and his friends were encouraged to send”.²⁵ With this romanticized view of growing up and seeing the Marshall Plan, it is unsurprising that notions of American benevolence permeate his writing.

With the sources established, the first conflict arises over whether the Marshall Plan’s objectives were inherently political or economic.

Mills puts forward a partially persuasive argument to suggest Europe’s civil unrest arose from reduced European capability to produce industrial and agricultural products sufficient to satisfy

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 143-145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

demand. The implication being that the problem the US sought to solve was economic rather than political (believing the former would quell the latter).

Florian Huber affirms this, giving the example that the political reintegration of Western Germany was an essential condition for Europe's economic recovery because the entire European industrialization relied on steel and coal provided by Germany.²⁶

However, Kolko's interpretation is more convincing because of his reference to US involvement in foreign internal elections, as well as the pressure applied on Britain to dismantle the Sterling Bloc.²⁷ In recognizing the overtly political actions of the United States, he provides a more substantiated view as to how the US sought to shape Europe into a free internal-market for American-exports. It is from this he argues the US prevented European markets from becoming independent so as to limit competition and ensure the primacy of US markets. This recognition enables Kolko to more persuasively argue political influence was sought for predominantly economic motives.

McCormick corroborates this view, asserting that any move further leftwards would endanger their vision of a global multilateral capitalist system.²⁸ In presenting the threat of US corporations being closed off from the European market, McCormick reiterates the economic motivations for the Plan.

In contrast, Leffler suggests economic recovery was merely a means with which to incentivize countries teetering on the ideological brink, such as Turkey and Greece, to align themselves closer to the US.²⁹ His argument is convincing because of the evidence on American strategic ideological priorities that led the Truman Administration to support cabinets whose economic policies furthered systems quite different from the one that, according to Kolko, the US was trying to transplant into Western Europe. Stoler argues that in Rome, the Americans consistently supported a government whose economic

²⁶ Florian Huber, *Global Governance und der Global Marshall Plan: Strategien, Kritik und Analyse* (Saarbrücken: AV Akademikerverlag, 2012).

²⁷ Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

²⁸ Thomas McCormick, *America's Half-Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

²⁹ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

policy did little to address the needs of workers and created a “prosperity for all” on which the New Ideal ideology hinged.³⁰ The Italian government merely appeared as the safest pro-American, anti-Communist regime that could be secured, and the Americans supported it *despite* its unsavory economic policies. In that sense, the American choice in Italy was not very different from the continuing US support for dictatorial, albeit anti-Communist, regimes. This supports Leffler’s assertion that strategic imperatives led to the sacrifice of specific American economic priorities.

Mills’ portrayal of economic necessity is undermined by Alan Milward who argues that, by 1947, the European economy was already well on its way to recovery.³¹ Milward maintains that the shortage of dollars could have been compensated for without resorting to Marshall aid. In a review of West Germany’s economy, Werner Abelshauser corroborates this, concluding that “foreign aid was not crucial in starting the recovery or in keeping it”.^{32 33} His interpretation is more persuasive given the economic recoveries of France, Italy, and Belgium began a few months before the flow of US money. Moreover, Belgium, the country that relied the most on free-market economic policies, experienced swift recovery and avoided the severe housing and food shortages seen in the rest of continental Europe.³⁴ The implication is that economic reform was not the primary motivator of the Marshall Plan.

However, without American aid, it would have been far more difficult to make the wage-concessions necessary for continued Third-Force tenure in France, for example. Tyler Cowen argues that, without the Third-Force, alternative cabinets would have had to include either the Gaullists or the Communists.³⁵ But neither alternative was viable if France was to remain solidly anchored to America. This reaffirms the

³⁰ Stoler, M. (2016). *The Marshall Plan Revisited*.

³¹ Adam Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-1951* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 1984).

³² Abelshauser, W. “West German Recovery, 1945-51: a Reassessment.” *The Three Banks Review*, 135, (1982): 52.

³³ Samaddar, R. *Government of Peace: Social Governance, Security and the Problematic* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

³⁴ Vásquez, I, “A Marshall Plan for Iraq?”, *Cato Institute*, 2003, cato.org/publications/commentary/marshall-plan-iraq.

³⁵ Gary Fossedal, “How Marshall Saved The West”, *JOC*, 1997, joc.com/how-marshall-saved-west_19970527.html.

argument Leffler makes in stating the objective of the Marshall Plan was predominantly political.

Leffler offers a powerful rebuttal to Kolko in asserting the Plan was not economically imperialist by its very nature – which sought to be a temporary provision over four years rather than a long-term investment or manipulation over Western Europe. Guo reaffirms the U.S. recognition that it would be up to the Western Europeans themselves to regulate their internal recovery.³⁶ Leffler also addresses Huber’s criticism by suggesting economic centralization was used as the means to, firstly, restrain Germany (so as to avoid the repetition of historical tragedy) and, secondly, to prevent Germany from turning to Soviet support (in-turn fulfilling two overtly political objectives).³⁷

Consequently, it may be more persuasive to see the desire to increase European economic output as a means to strengthen and speed up Western European rearmament from the Soviet specter. David Rees points out that, by 1946, the United States was already attempting to curb the expansion of the USSR in Persia,³⁸ and thus the Plan was an extension of existing American efforts to contain that threat. The restoration of Europe’s productive capability was the means by which the U.S. sought to stabilize European political structures and in turn, make them resilient to Soviet expansionism. This is substantiated by the CIA’s receipt of 5% of Marshall Plan funds (\$685 million spread over six-years), which is used to finance secret operations abroad.³⁹ ⁴⁰ This persuasively corroborates Leffler in demonstrating the extent to which the Marshall Plan was driven by political objectives rather than economic imperatives.

³⁶ Simon Guoziru, “The Marshall Plan: Generosity or Imperialism?”, *Medium*, 2017, medium.com/@simonguozirui/the-marshall-plan-generosity-or-imperialism-a99e9674cea.

³⁷ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

³⁸ David Rees, *The Age of Containment: The Cold War, 1945-1965* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

³⁹ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, “The CIA and the Marshall Plan”. 2019, [cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2011-featured-story-archive/the-cia-and-the-marshall-plan.html](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2011-featured-story-archive/the-cia-and-the-marshall-plan.html).

The second conflict arises over whether the Marshall Plan's objectives were more humanitarian or self-interested.

Kolko asserts that in using ideology to coerce European states to purchase more American goods, the U.S. acted with inherent self-interest. This is supported by CEEC accounts which suggest the US had used goods allocations to flood the European market. In shipping 40,000 tons of tobacco to France and Switzerland as 'incentive products', the U.S. was more concerned with its export figures than the people of Europe.⁴¹ Kolko's argument that the Marshall Plan was to secure a European market for American exports is in this regard more convincing than Mills' interpretation which understates the extent to which the U.S. relied on overseas exports. Mills poorly differentiates between the economic security of individual European states and the U.S. itself. Dependent on agricultural imports as well as a large enough market to sustain its balance of payments, the United States' interest in bolstering the economic and political stability cannot persuasively be construed as philanthropic without considering the disproportionate American benefits.

Kolko's argument is strengthened by the works of Hogan who asserts the U.S. sought to "Americanize Western Europe" by implanting a corporatist economy that was part and parcel of New Deal ideology.⁴² Gaddis, moreover, sees "the United States [as having] imposed its empire on unwilling clients...and into positions of economic dependency" that exemplify enlightened self-interest.^{43 44}

This view is, however, contrasted with Mills' assertion that the Plan sought to secure the long-term economic independence of European states. Milward reaches entirely different conclusions than Hogan and Gaddis, denouncing the Marshall Plan as having retarded rather than promoted European integration. According to Milward, American aid allowed European governments to pursue their own national economic agendas, which they would have had to abandon without U.S. cash. Thus, the Marshall Plan perpetuated the nationalist orientation of European economic policymaking, whereas, without the

⁴¹ Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁴² Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987).

⁴³ Billas, G. and Grob, G. *Interpretations of American History, 6th Ed, Vol.: Since 1877*. (New York: Free Press, 2010).

⁴⁴ John Gaddis, *We Now Know* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

Plan, European countries would have been compelled to cooperate far more extensively. By giving aid, Milward argues the Americans postponed integration rather than accelerating it – acting largely with humanitarian intent. What makes this argument more convincing is its logical consideration of what European governments could do, rather than Kolko’s unsubstantiated assumptions over what they couldn’t.

The most significant rebuttal to Kolko’s view of self-interest is not only the fact Western European governments used the Plan to implement their own national economic agendas, but that America achieved little that the Europeans did not already want to achieve themselves. Mill’s argument is corroborated by Behrman, who suggests “the story of the Marshall Plan belongs just as much to Europe as it does to America.”⁴⁵ He persuasively states that, rather than being a unilateral enterprise imposed upon one side by the other as Kolko argues, the Plan was a partnership in which the U.S. and Europe played co-leads. This was exhibited by Byrnes’ defense of Eastern Europe’s self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, where he vowed to respect any decision ratified by a two-thirds majority. This is also reinforced by Rees who suggests that, had the U.S. even sought to usurp political sovereignty, they would have found themselves incapable – already bogged down in the management of Japan and Germany.⁴⁶

Leffler similarly rejects the portrayal of the Marshall Plan as imposed by the self-interested United States, citing the shared desire to mitigate the threat of Communism. This was a case of what revisionist Geir Lundestad calls “empire by invitation”. Lundestad points out that Western European governments, as well as their voters, were in general just as opposed to communism as Americans and their government.⁴⁷ It would be a mistake, therefore, to see the Truman administration or American big business as imposing themselves on Western Europe. Rather, they were heartily encouraged to come in with their dollars and fight for the common cause of anti-communism.

Kolko’s interpretation is less convincing because of his underestimation of Western European governments sharing the

⁴⁵ Greg Behrman, *The Most Noble Adventure: The Marshall Plan and the Reconstruction of Post-war Europe* (London: Aurum Press, 2008).

⁴⁶ David Rees, *The Age of Containment: The Cold War, 1945-1965* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

⁴⁷ Geir Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952”, *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (1986).

paramount goal of Communist containment. Of course, politicians in France and Italy had their own reasons for ousting the Communists, but it is questionable whether they would have taken such risks without American encouragement. In this regard, Leffler and Mills put forward a persuasive argument to suggest the U.S. acted with philanthropic intent during a rare time of aligned interests.

Where there is a disagreement between the two historians is over Mills' central premise that in the absence of severe inflationary constraints and an ideologically divergent and driven the Soviet Union, the U.S. would nevertheless have authorized (a development policy on the same footing as) the Marshall Plan. Mills justifies this with reference to Marshall's speech in which he wanted his audience to "realize how the rest of the world, in contrast to America, still struggled to get back on its feet... [asking] them to support the daring concept America should be engaged in a global defense of freedom."⁴⁸ The implication is that because the U.S. saw itself as an increasing interventionist force, the Plan was motivated by the necessity of circumstance. This is described by Schlesinger as the United States' dedication to the "declaration on liberated Europe" which meant they couldn't sit back and watch the enforcement of the Soviet totalitarian regime on powerless European countries.⁴⁹

However, Leffler puts forward a more convincing case to suggest a hostile Republican party, defined by an emphatic win in the 1946-Midterms and driven by a desire for "tax cuts and reductions in government expenditures... had no inclination to incur the costs or to assume the commitments...in lowering tariffs. They appeared to be economic nationalists or political isolationists."⁵⁰ Leffler's characterization of the American political landscape undermines the assertion there was the political will for the United States to play an interventionist role with philanthropic/altruistic intentions. Not only is this view consistent with U.S. foreign policy in the twenties and thirties, but also in accordance with the stated beliefs of the GOP following WWII.⁵¹ Instead, Leffler recognizes humanitarianism as a

⁴⁸ Nicolaus Mills, *Winning the Peace* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

⁴⁹ Arthur Schlesinger, "Origins of the Cold War", *Foreign Affairs* 46, no.1 (1967): 43.

⁵⁰ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*,141.

pragmatic choice, given that “replacing the British would cost the Americans more than sustaining the British” in terms of pan-European security.⁵²

In this regard, Leffler’s argument is more compelling. Whilst Mills relies almost entirely on economic necessity (and the corresponding moral compulsion) as a justification for humanitarianism, Leffler recognizes a plurality of motivations, including national security, containment of the USSR as well as economic misery. Even Kolko makes a concerted and convincing effort to defeat other supposed motivations (e.g. characterizing security as an instrument with which to rally Congressional support). Mills’ interpretation is also undermined by its over-reliance on primary sources from politicians – who although may state their intended motive as being to help other European leaders – have an interest in being evasive.

In summary, Kolko makes no attempt to veil his anti-American values. He exculpates America’s adversaries whilst portraying America as a nation “intellectually and culturally undeveloped,” “blind to itself” - an “evil society.”⁵³ By having the starting point of his research rooted in the preposterous idea that America is a totalitarian nation, Kolko casts a negative light on every U.S. action without substantiating why this stance is deserved. Using an analytic framework almost identical to that employed by Kremlin propagandists, his arguments are preconceived to reach the same inflexible conclusion. It is this uncompromising dismissal of any philanthropic intent that serves as the fatal flaw for an otherwise cogent economic analysis.

In this regard, Mills’ argument is more compelling. Whilst Kolko relies on Soviet sources to provide evidence for American motivations, Mills employs a wider range of information, especially following the declassification of Soviet documents in 1991, which don’t give insight into what the American motivations were but do confirm the validity of American fears.^{54 55} Nevertheless, Mills’

⁵² Ibid., 140-152.

⁵³ DiscoverTheNetworks, “Gabriel Kolko”, 2019, archive.discoverthenetworks.org/printindividualProfile.asp?indid=1300.

⁵⁴ Donald Raleigh, “Doing Soviet History: The Impact of the Archival Revolution”, *The Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 16.

⁵⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Impact of the Opening of Soviet Archives on Western Scholarship on Soviet Social History”, *The Russian Review* 74, no. 3 (2015): 377.

explanation is harmed by its overreliance on the economic necessity that negates the role of self-interest without proper substantiation and justification.

Leffler, meanwhile, rejects a world-system whose chief actors are global market forces and whose main imperative is the maximization of profit. For this reason, he understates economic imperatives – without justification or sufficient rebuttal - to the detriment of his interpretation.

Nonetheless, in well substantiating his view of Communism as more of a political force than an economic ideology, he persuasively affirms security considerations.

Ultimately, the objectives of the Marshall Plan were many and interrelated. Those who have attempted to separate them and isolate one at the expense of another have ignored that the Administration itself never presented those goals as separate entities but as a comprehensive foreign policy. Consequently, the Marshall Plan was neither conceived primarily as an instrument for Western Europe's economic resuscitation, nor a pillar of the Truman Administration's incipient campaign to contain the Soviet Union, but the combination thereof.

It would be appropriate to place more emphasis on the economic motivations than Leffler does; the Plan being motivated by the duality of national security and economic fears, with humanitarianism playing an underlying role.

THE MAN WHO LOST CHINA

BY ANDREW CARTER

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek went from being one of the most powerful men in the world, with control over the majority of the world's largest population and control over armies totaling three million, to the dictator of Taiwan living in nearly constant fear that the country he had fought for since his twenties would invade his fiefdom. This fall from power occurred in just five years, from 1945-49.¹ While clearly in the dominant position following the Japanese surrender, Chiang's position was marred by a failing economy, an inefficient and corrupt government, a disloyal and logistically crippled army, and non-committal American allies. Chiang had the distinction of being the undisputed head of the Nationalist government as its President, commander and chief of its armies, and the Kuomintang's chief ideologue as chairman of the party's central committee.² Chiang Kai-Shek was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving a unified China under nationalist control because he failed to adjust his national strategy to post-WWII economic, military, and diplomatic realities.

The Chinese Civil War cannot be examined independently from the warlord period that bore the nationalist movement and the "White Terror" that marked the split between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT). The aspect that unites both turning points for China in the twentieth century was the involvement of Chiang Kai-Shek at their forefront. Chiang was born into the family of a salt merchant in rural Southern China. He was bright and was eventually selected to be an officer cadet in the Imperial Japanese artillery school.³ This tutelage in Japan would have a lasting effect on his ideological development and would culminate with Chiang's lasting hatred for imperialism. Chiang became involved with the Chinese republican movement, the Xinhai Revolution, in its infancy, and he

¹ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 1-3.

² Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 166.

³ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 584.

became incredibly close with Sun Yat-Sen under whose guidance Chiang rose to be one of the foremost military strategists of the Chinese Republic. Following Sun's death in 1925, Chiang maneuvered himself into power. While newly in office as the first secretary of the KMT, Chiang became worried about the growing influence of the communist party's cadre in the National Revolutionary Army.⁴ Consequently, Chiang and the KMT split with the Chinese Communist party in 1925 in the "White Terror", despite the fact that Chiang remained a supporter of communist ideology and the Soviet-led struggle against imperialism while maintaining that the class struggle that had been prescribed by Karl Marx was not appropriate for the primarily agrarian China.⁵

Chiang would go on to unify most of the country under Nationalist control during the Northern Expedition and end the warlord era in China. During this time, Chiang continued to consolidate power and institute limited democratic reforms while chasing down the last remnants of the CCP and its People's Liberation Army (PLA). This lasted until the Second Sino-Japanese war and the greater Second World War. The war devastated China and sapped away the best soldiers and supplies that Chiang and the Nationalists possessed.⁶ While Nationalist Armies fought the Imperial Japanese head-on, the People's Liberation Army of the CCP fought a protracted guerrilla struggle from bases in rugged northwest China. So devastating was the war with Japan for the Nationalists that Mao once remarked to Japanese politicians that "he owed Tokyo thanks for without the war, he might still be living in a cave in Yan'an."⁷ During the war, both the United States and the Soviet Union supported the fledgling "Second United Front" that temporarily united the KMT and CCP against their common Japanese enemy. Following the peace in Tokyo Bay, this support continued upon strict ideological lines and set the stage for a renewed chapter of the Chinese Civil war that would leave Chiang and his government on Taiwan.

⁴ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 49-97.

⁵ Andrew Carter, "Writing Requirement 1". (West Point, NY, 2019), 1.

⁶ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 194-245.

⁷ Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003) 460.

Chiang's government failed to address China's failing economy, which resulted in an internal conflict that further weakened the Nationalist's hold on power while strengthening the position of the communists. The massive government spending that had occurred during the war with Japan had been somewhat alleviated with the peace and the reoccupation of Chinese industrial zones by the Nationalists, often with these reoccupation forces being delivered on the decks of American warships. Chiang's temporary reprieve ended when the civil war began again, and he faced a newly rearmed PLA. As government spending increased, largely to buy American munitions, inflation increased exponentially. During one month in 1946, the wholesale prices in Shanghai rose 45%.⁸ Chiang directed the government not to pursue any austere financial measures that would increase their unpopularity.⁹ The Nationalist's lack of action directly contributed to the wave of civil unrest that followed the rampant inflation and destroyed the middle class and honest officials. From 1946-47 Shanghai was the host of over 4,200 strikes.¹⁰ While these strikes were for the most part not organized by the communists, by 1947 the communist cadre had taken charge of most student groups and factory organizations.¹¹ In response to this upheaval, Chiang directed his secret police to break up these strikes, which they did quickly and violently. After one particular student rising in Kunming, the police arrested 1,000 students and held them until midnight before pulling them out of their cells into a gravel yard while soldiers waved bayonets over their heads and shouted at them to confess to being communists.¹² This type of brutality was more the rule than the exception in Chiang's final years on the mainland and further eroded his popularity and decreased the number of those willing to pay already beleaguered tax revenue. Looking back on his failure on the mainland, Chiang wrote in his journal, "The blame lay with the Kuomintang for having done nothing to reform society and promote the people's welfare."¹³ Chiang's government failed to make the necessary economic reforms necessary to both placate the people and deprive his politically skilled communist

⁸ Ibid. 474.

⁹ Ibid. 485.

¹⁰ Ibid. 474.

¹¹ Ibid. 472-485.

¹² Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003) 475.

¹³ Ibid. 489.

enemies form gaining a foothold in his urban financial and manpower base. This strategic failure hastened the end of nationalist rule on the mainland.

Chiang failed to reform the decrepit National Revolutionary Army to address the needs of the Chinese Civil War. Chiang's direct implication in this offense was his unwillingness to share the burden of command with anyone, let alone his commanders in the field. Nowhere is this clearer than in the battles for Manchuria that marked the PLA's transition from guerilla tactics to a conventional fight. Chiang was constantly at odds with his commander in the region, Wei Lihuang, and frequently wrote contradictory orders from his headquarters in Nanking that often came too late to be relevant and without consulting his generals in the field.¹⁴ The crisis in Manchuria came to a head when "Chiang himself displayed a lack of resolution that made him willing to shift several times before ordering Wei to withdraw."¹⁵ This lack of decisiveness eventually resulted in the destruction of Wei's three army groups when they withdrew too late and were encircled by 1.3 million PLA troops.¹⁶

Further blunting the National Revolutionary Army's (NRA) fighting ability was Chiang's preference for loyalty over competence. Largely due to the many assassination attempts, coups and warlord betrayals that had been commonplace in Chiang's long career, he "went on appointing commanders for their perceived loyalty rather than their skill."¹⁷ This lack of effective leadership plagued the army and caused factionalism and personal rivalries that made it almost impossible to emulate the PLA's unified command system.¹⁸ Chiang leveraged control over all aspects of the army and often placed the blame for military defeats on his subordinates or on the lack of equipment. However, as General David Barr, Commander of the American Military Advisory Group in China put it: "setbacks in Manchuria and

¹⁴ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 161-180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 162.

¹⁶ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 4.

¹⁷ Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003) 475.

¹⁸ Chang Jui-te, "The National Army from Whampoa to 1949," in *A Military History of China*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 207.

North China were not due to a lack of ammunition: it was a lack of competent leadership and planning.”¹⁹

Perhaps the greatest strategic failure on Chiang’s part was the atrocious logistical chain of the NRA. Despite Chiang’s persistent pleas for American military aid, the Nationalist government possessed millions of tons of captured Japanese war materials as well as those made domestically. In addition to this, between 1945 and 1949 Chiang received over \$1 billion of military aid from the United States and \$2 billion in civilian aid.²⁰ These amounts were far in excess of the aid given to the PLA by the Soviet Union. It was not the number of munitions that possessed by Chiang’s government that was the problem, but rather the inability of those munitions to arrive where they were needed in a timely manner or at all. One of the largest problems facing Chinese logisticians was the immense size and breadth of the Nationalist arsenal. This is best summarized in Chang Jui-te’s writing on the nationalist army during the civil war years:

They [Weapons] ranged from centuries-old spears and lances to the very latest automatic rifles and antiaircraft guns. It seemed that no weapon was too old or too exotic for the Chinese, and they had in service at any given time weapons from countries such as Japan, Germany, France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland, along with the products of their own diverse arsenals. As the army planners were well aware, such a hodgepodge of weapons made for a logistical nightmare.²¹

This complex web of foreign weaponry was further exasperated by the influx of American motorized forces that Chiang had hoped would be a game-changer. The fuel-thirsty American vehicles and the heavy artillery they were intended to tow, although rugged, succumbed to supply shortages within weeks of being received and were abandoned to the advancing PLA.²² Supply misappropriations were compounded by the fact that Chiang lacked an effective general staff, forcing individual combatant commanders to beg Chiang directly for limited

¹⁹ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 170.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 277.

²¹ Chang Jui-te, “The National Army from Whampoa to 1949,” in *A Military History of China*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 207.

²² *Ibid.* 205.

supplies. The result was massive stockpiles of weapons being sent to political favorites rather than to places where they would have the greatest effect.²³ While the Nationalists were failing in logistics, the PLA was thriving with the help of Soviet advisors. Before the communist push into Manchuria in 1947, the Soviet Union sent 300 railway engineers to the PLA. These 300 engineers trained some 5,000 PLA troops in railway operations, which allowed the communists to create reliable supply lines through some of the most difficult terrain in China.²⁴

The NRA was further weakened by the refusal of Chiang to raise wages and keep his soldiers politically motivated. Even compared to the low wages of the time, pay for nationalist conscripts was incredibly low and had only declined since the 1930s. The monthly payment for a private second class in the nationalist army of 1943 was equivalent to 7.5 American cents.²⁵ This meant that families who had to resort to military service were seen as little better than beggars in Chinese society.²⁶ Further complicating Chiang's attempt to recruit from among his vast population was the association of the army with looting, pillaging, and rape that had been commonplace for armies during the warlord era, even among Chiang's troops. This led to a pervasive thought in nationalist China that, "good men do not become soldiers."²⁷ This same problem did not exist in areas under the control of the PLA. Following the "Long March", Zhu De, the PLA's brilliant marshal, published rules of conduct for soldiers in which they were tasked never to take from the populace, to pay for everything they used, and to aid the peasantry in their labor. This allowed the PLA to win Chinese hearts and minds in a way not adopted by Chiang and his armies.²⁸

²³ Ibid. 198.

²⁴ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 179-180.

²⁵ Chang Jui-te, "The National Army from Whampoa to 1949," in *A Military History of China*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 204.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ William Wei, "'Political Power Grows Out of the Barrel of a Gun': Mao and the Red Army," in *A Military History of China*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 345.

In this same vein, the PLA maintained a robust commissar system that Chiang had helped institute before the “White Terror.” This allowed the PLA to ensure ideological cohesion amongst its ranks. Chiang had maintained a similar system in the NRA, but due to the commissars being promoted from above in the KMT rather than from within the military, the system was wholly insufficient by the time of the civil war.²⁹ When reflecting on his defeat on the mainland in his journal, Chiang believed his biggest failure was, “not effectively maintaining the commissar forces within the nationalist armies after 1945.”³⁰ Chiang failed to remedy the many flaws that were clearly visible in the Nationalist army following the Japanese surrender and refused to make the necessary changes that may have thwarted Chiang’s monopoly on power.

Until the final days of the Nationalists’ presence on the mainland in 1945, Chiang hoped for a direct American intervention that never came. Despite a large amount of aid sent to China by the Truman administration, China was never a priority to the United States, a fact made abundantly clear by both the administration and the State Department. American opinion of the Chiang regime is best told through the words of the Ambassador to China, John Leighton Stuart: “No amount of military advice or material from us will bring unity and Peace to China unless these reforms are sufficiently drastic to win back popular confidence and esteem.”³¹ The ambassador cited the need for democratic reform in a regime that to American eyes seemed to be growing more fascist than democratic by the day. Chiang responded to this criticism in order to look more favorable to both the administration and the American people by creating a National assembly “that was to be characterized by multiparty membership but dominated by the Kuomintang.”³² In this new government over which Chiang still reigned as supreme leader, both the Communists and China Democratic League, the two largest rival parties to the Kuomintang, were banned from participating. This ruse of a democratic government fell flat in the court of American public opinion and weakened the China Lobby’s

²⁹ Chang Jui-te, “The National Army from Whampoa to 1949,” in *A Military History of China*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 195.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 207.

³¹ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 168.

³² *Ibid.* 166.

efforts in Washington.³³ Efforts by Chiang and his affluent wife, Madame Chiang, were all for naught after 1948 as the State Department's planning chief at the time, George Kennan, made it clear to the president that "China was an insignificant sideshow compared to Europe."³⁴ The primacy of affairs in post-war Europe and the growing threat of the Soviet Union combined with blatant American racism made direct American intervention impossible. As Ambassador Stuart put it, "traditional Chinese concepts themselves, deeply rooted in society, made constructive change impossible."³⁵ In the end, Chiang hoped for the defeat of Truman by Dewey and a Republican party more sympathetic to his cause, but this was not to be, and his nominal acts of democratization were too little too late to ensure direct American support.

Chiang Kai-Shek was doomed by his inability to adapt his national strategy to the realities of the post-war order. His longevity had made him leery of losing power to competent military leaders, and he feared, albeit accurately, that the will of the war-weary Chinese people was not in his favor. In the end, his inaction on these fronts cost him the land that he had fought so dearly for the majority of his life. The American support he came to rely on in the last months on the mainland failed to appear, and he was forced into exile on Taiwan only to regain American support following the outbreak of the Korean War. Ironic as it seems now after decades of American intervention during the Cold War, Ambassador Stuart summed up the reason for withdrawal of U.S. support because "if the U.S. supported Chiang much longer it may find itself accused of violating the democratic principle of the right of self-determination by aiding a dictatorship which does not represent the popular will."³⁶ In the end, Chiang fell victim to an American regime and that at the time was unwilling to use its political capital, for a brief moment, to fight another war in Asia following the devastation of WWII.

³³ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 168.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 169.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 280.

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