INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS AND THE U.S. MILITARY’S WAR PLAN ORANGE

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the U.S. military’s War Plan Orange, and seeks to identify why no serious effort was made to rectify internal inconsistencies within the plan, despite widespread knowledge of their existence. The analytical framework for this study is the “bureaucratic politics” model utilized in the work of scholars such as Graham T. Allison, J. Garry Clifford, and Morton H. Halperin. The thesis concludes that the failure of military and civilian leaders to address the internal contradictions within War Plan Orange resulted from communication breakdowns and from competing policy goals advanced by institutional actors within the Harding, Hoover, and Roosevelt administrations.
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Steven J. Pedler
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. POSTWAR SCHOLARSHIP ON WAR PLAN ORANGE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III. HISTORY, POLITICS AND THE “EVOLUTION” OF WAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN ORANGE</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Joint Army-Navy Board and the First War Plan Orange</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors Undermining the 1914 Orange Plan</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Japan’s Acquisition of the Mandates</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Washington Naval Treaty</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Philippine Independence Movement</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1920s: The Orange Plan Revisited</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. Military and the Philippine Question</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil-Military Relations and the Philippine Question</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Asian Policy in the Early Twentieth Century</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION – BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS AND WAR PLAN ORANGE</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

On May 6, 1942, the United States’ garrison on Corregidor Island, in imminent danger of being overrun and with its supplies of food and ammunition nearly exhausted, surrendered to forces of the Imperial Japanese Army under the command of Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma. The following month saw the end of organized American resistance to the Japanese in the Philippines, as subordinate commanders on neighboring islands, at times with great reluctance, complied with surrender orders issued by Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright, the senior army officer in the Philippines. The surrender of the final U.S. command on Negros on June 3 capped a six-month campaign in which an army of 140,000 American and Filipino troops had been utterly defeated.

The surrender of American forces in the Philippines must be considered one of the greatest disasters in the history of the U.S. armed forces. Curiously, the collapse of American resistance was never subjected to the sort of elaborate inquiry that so often has followed other major defeats, such as the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor. Louis Morton, the historian charged with compiling the army’s official history of the Philippine campaign of 1941-42, laments that “Few military disasters of modern times are as sparsely documented or inadequately recorded in the official records as the defeat of America’s forces in the Philippines in the first six months of World War II.”

Nevertheless, in the years following the end of the Second World War, a number of authors conducted examinations of the Philippine campaign in an attempt to identify the factors that contributed to the American defeat. General Douglas A. MacArthur, the commanding officer in the Philippines at the time of the war’s outbreak, has been the subject of considerable criticism for his decision to utilize the under-trained and under-equipped Filipino

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army to conduct a forward defense against the Japanese, rather than stockpiling men and supplies on Luzon’s Bataan Peninsula in accordance with guidelines issued by his service superiors. MacArthur and his air commander, Major General Lewis H. Brereton, openly blamed one another for communication breakdowns that resulted in the destruction of the majority of the U.S. Far East Air Force on the ground on the first day of the war. The key element of this dispute concerned who bore responsibility for the F.E.A.F. being caught with the bulk of its planes on the ground despite the fact that both Army and Navy commanders in the Philippines had received news of the Pearl Harbor raid more than eight hours earlier.

While mistakes on the part of senior U.S. commanders in the Philippines may have accelerated the collapse of American resistance, however, the consensus among commentators is that they had no bearing on the campaign’s ultimate outcome. The true responsibility, it is argued, lies deeper—with plans and assumptions that had guided American military thinking for years, even decades, before the Second World War. In the years leading up to the outbreak of the Pacific War, the strategy that would be adopted by the U.S. military in the event of a conflict with Japan was outlined in a series of documents collectively referred to as War Plan Orange. In certain respects, the forecasts of the plans were very accurate. The Orange Plans correctly predicted that a Japanese attack upon the United States would very likely be launched without a formal declaration of war. They also accurately predicted that any conflict between the U.S. and Japan would be of a very prolonged duration. However, while at the strategic level the Orange Plans offered a relatively accurate depiction of the course of a U.S.-Japanese conflict, their expectations about the roles and responsibilities of U.S. forces in the Philippines were completely unrealistic. The American garrison was expected to mount a holding operation against an expected invasion with the ultimate goal of denying Manila Bay as a base for Japanese
naval operations. The garrison was to hold out until the arrival of a massive relief expedition from the West Coast, spearheaded by the battleships of the Pacific Fleet. Before the war began, however, the navy had quietly shelved its plans for rescuing the defenders. The relief expedition upon whose arrival rested the sole hope of the Philippine garrison would not be launched. This glaring discrepancy within the Orange Plan led historian H. P. Willmott to term it “a curious combination of the sound and the bizarre.”

Perhaps the greatest irony related to both War Plan Orange and its consequences for those charged with carrying out its provisions is that the existence of these internal inconsistencies was quite widely known within the senior ranks of the Army and Navy. In fact, the impossibility of mounting an effective operation to relieve the Philippine garrison had been widely acknowledged within the military for nearly two decades. Yet despite this knowledge, relatively little effort was ever made to revise the Orange plans to more accurately reflect the military situation in the Pacific. This thesis traces the history of the Orange plans and identifies some of the factors that led to the failure to adequately address their fundamental shortcomings. My central hypothesis is that the failure to adequately address the shortcomings of the Orange plans can best be understood as a result of competition and miscommunication between actors within the U.S. government. The data analysis leans heavily upon the extensive body of “bureaucratic politics” literature produced by scholars such as Graham T. Allison, J. Garry Clifford, and Morton H. Halperin. It is my contention that an in-depth examination of the actions and stated priorities of such actors as the Joint Board, the War and Navy Departments, the Department of State, and the administrations of Warren G. Harding and Franklin D. Roosevelt, provides the most satisfactory explanation for the failure to address the inconsistencies of the Orange Plans. The story of these

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plans offers a timely reminder of the importance of obtaining agreement among civilian and military authorities on the nation’s fundamental foreign policy goals and objectives. Such discussions, it will be argued, did not occur during the years in which the Orange Plans were in effect, and the exclusion of key institutional actors from debates over the direction of U.S. foreign policy was to have very serious consequences.
CHAPTER 1: POSTWAR SCHOLARSHIP ON WAR PLAN ORANGE

The body of academic literature relating to War Plan Orange is not terribly large, and a significant proportion of the relevant work was written within the first two decades following the end of the Second World War. However, in several instances the authors of these works were in positions that provided them with virtually unfettered access to relevant government records. For example, Louis Morton, perhaps the most prolific author of works relating to the Orange plans in the early postwar period, was one of a number of historians hired by the Office of the Chief of Military History to write the Army’s official history of the war. This position offered Dr. Morton a great deal of freedom to explore the relevant documentation, as well as the support of the extensive resources of the Army itself. On the whole, assessments of War Plan Orange (WPO) by the authors of Morton’s generation tend to be fairly negative. While several of them do express a degree of sympathy for what they concede were very grave challenges confronting U.S. strategists in the early twentieth century, they do not, for the most part, believe that the various incarnations of WPO represented a serious or effective attempt to address these challenges.

This postwar consensus came under vigorous challenge with the 1991 release of Edward S. Miller’s War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945. Miller’s work rejects the notion of WPO as a failed plan, arguing that in fact its evolution over the first four decades of the twentieth century played a major role in shaping the thinking of wartime leaders such as Ernest King and Chester Nimitz. He makes the argument that the strategies pursued by the United States in the Pacific during the Second World War were in almost every significant aspect derived directly from the provisions of the Orange plans. This assumption leads Miller to assert in the introduction to his book that “War Plan Orange…was in my opinion history’s most
successful war plan.”¹ Unsurprisingly, War Plan Orange met with mixed reviews from the scholarly community.² Miller earned considerable praise for his thorough treatment of the evolution of the Orange Plans, and more broadly for his in-depth examination of interwar U.S. naval planning. However, his conclusions about the value of the Orange Plans, and the degree to which they influenced U.S. strategic thinking during the Pacific campaign have been called into question. This introductory chapter offers a brief examination of the postwar literature covering War Plan Orange, as well as of the revisionist interpretation put forward by Miller’s book.

Scholars writing on War Plan Orange trace its genesis to the U.S. acquisition of the Philippines and Guam during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Prior to that time, the U.S. government had paid scant attention to Pacific and Asian affairs. After the war, and the subsequent suppression of a very aggressive independence movement, the U.S. government was forced “to confront the fact that it had almost absent-mindedly acquired a large and distant colonial possession that it really did not know what it wanted to do with.”³ This uncertainty about the objectives of U.S. Asian policy in general (and Philippine policy in particular) is a theme that recurs frequently in writings addressing WPO. However, it was a question that the U.S. was forced to grapple with less than a decade after its acquisition of the Philippines. In 1907, continuing disputes over the Open Door policy in China, coupled with the enactment of legislation in California that prohibited Chinese and Japanese schoolchildren from enrolling alongside white students in San Francisco public schools, triggered a war scare between the two

nations. During this crisis, President Theodore Roosevelt directed an inquiry to Robert Oliver, then the Assistant Secretary of War “[asking] what plans had been made by the Joint Board of the Army and Navy, and by the War and Navy Departments ‘in case of trouble arising between the United States and Japan.’” The services’ replies identified the Philippines as the American possession most vulnerable to Japanese attack, and four days after Roosevelt’s initial inquiry

[the Joint Board] recommended that the American fleet should be sent to the Orient as soon as possible and that Army and Navy forces in the Philippines should be immediately deployed in such a manner as to protect the existing naval base in the islands, then located at Olongapo in Subic (Subig) Bay, at the northwest extremity of Bataan.  

Even as early as 1907, some leaders within the army expressed dissatisfaction with the Joint Board’s proposed defense plans. Chief among the critics was General Leonard Wood, then serving as the Philippine garrison’s commanding officer. Wood’s specific objections appear to have been inspired by inter-service rivalry, but they highlighted what was to remain a continuing dilemma for military leaders up until the outbreak of war with Japan. The army resented the fact that the Board’s plan required the abandonment of Manila, stating (as noted above) that the army’s primary responsibility was the defense of the naval base at Olongapo. In addition to concerns about abandoning Manila, “the most valuable prize in the Islands,” the facilities at Olongapo, “in the Army’s opinion, could not be defended in any case about attack from the land side.” Wood and his colleagues believed that even in 1907 Japan possessed the ability to land a force large enough to overwhelm the American defenders of the Philippines before reinforcements could arrive from the United States. 

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4 Louis Morton. “Military and Naval Preparations for the Defense of the Philippines During the War Scare of 1907,” Military Affairs 13 (1949), 95. Morton’s article contains both a summary of the actions of Roosevelt’s administration during and after the crisis and excerpts from the reports authored by observers sent to report on Philippine defenses, among them then-captain Stanley D. Embick.
5 Ibid., 95.
6 Ibid., 97.
7 The length of time required for the arrival of American reinforcements would have been substantially longer in 1907 than in the 1920s and 1930s for two reasons. First, the navy had not yet established more than a token
Concerns about the inadequacies of the Philippine defense became, if anything, more pronounced as the military actually began to outline the objectives of what would eventually become War Plan Orange. These concerns have been documented in the work of a number of scholars, among them Brian McAllister Linn, Louis Morton, Russell Weigley and H. P. Willmott. Once again, Morton is the most prolific commentator. In a 1959 article in *World Politics*, he briefly outlines the establishment of the Joint Army-Navy Board in 1903. The Board was intended to serve as a forum in which senior military leaders could “discuss all matters requiring the co-operation of the two services in an effort to reach agreement on a program acceptable to both.” In the years prior to the outbreak of World War I, the Board’s major accomplishment was the drafting of a series of documents, known as the ‘color plans,’ “Each… designed to meet a specific emergency designated by a color, which usually corresponded to the code name of the nation involved.”

permanent presence in the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, the Panama Canal had not yet been completed in 1907, so American reinforcements could have reached the Philippines only after sailing all the way around the tip of South America from east coast ports.


10 For a comprehensive list of the color plans, with their assigned “enemies,” see Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1980), 163. Vlahos also includes a list of the war game challenges presented to students at the naval war college between 1919 and 1941. The pattern of these exercises is revealing. Throughout the 1920s, students were presented with a relatively even mix of “blue-orange” (U.S. vs. Japan) and “red-blue” (Britain vs. U.S.) game scenarios. By the early 1930s, however, nearly all of the exercises practiced by students focused upon “blue-orange” situations, with only an occasional “red-blue” or “blue-black/silver” (U.S. vs. Germany and Italy) game entering the mix. See Appendix III, 166-78.
Most of the Board’s color plans were never fully developed, most likely because the situations they were drafted to cover were deemed so unlikely that the expenditure of effort involved in doing so was unwarranted. The Orange plan, however, was to prove an exception (as was War Plan Red, which dealt with a confrontation between the United States and Great Britain). An early version drafted by the Board in 1914 was far more detailed than most of its color plan counterparts, laying out a framework that would govern the actions of the U.S. military in the event of a conflict with Japan:

If war with Japan occurred, it was assumed that the Philippines would be the enemy’s first objective. Defense of the Islands was dependent upon the Battle Fleet, which on the outbreak of war would have to make its way from the Caribbean area around the Horn—the Panama Canal was not yet completed—and then across the wide Pacific. On the way the Fleet would have to secure its line of communication, using the incomplete base at Pearl Harbor and Guam, which was still undeveloped. Once the Fleet was established in the Philippines, it could relieve the defenders, who presumably would have held on during this period, optimistically estimated at from three to four months. Thereafter, the Army forces, reinforced by a steady stream of men and supplies, could take the offensive on the ground while the Navy contested for control of the Western Pacific.\footnote{Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 222-3.}

Much of the criticism that has been leveled against the Orange Plans is directed at this notion of the U.S. fleet sweeping across the Pacific to relieve the Philippine garrison. Such criticisms have been directed at both the 1914 plan and also, albeit for different reasons, at subsequent versions of War Plan Orange,\footnote{Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 222-3.} which failed to adjust to the rapidly changing strategic situation in the Pacific.

During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of events occurred which greatly weakened the U.S.’s position in the Pacific theater vis-à-vis Japan. The first of these major changes came about as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, which formally ended the First World War. In 1915, Japan had entered the war on the side of the Allies, and had quickly overrun a number of
German colonial possessions in the Pacific, most significantly the island chains of the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas. The Paris Peace Treaty formally established these islands as a Mandate of the League of Nations, to be formally administered and governed by Japan. This gave the Japanese possession of a number of territories squarely athwart the route that any U.S. reinforcements transiting to the Philippines would be required to sail. In the event of a conflict, this would force such reinforcements to either adopt a more circuitous route in order to avoid Japanese territory, or to subdue the Japanese garrisons stationed there before proceeding on to Manila. Either of these options would increase the length of time that the Philippine defenders would be required to hold out.

If Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates had prompted some minor rethinking of the Joint Board’s plans, the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty introduced a pair of issues that the authors of War Plan Orange were never able to solve. The most significant provision of the Washington Treaty was the famous “10:10:6” ratio, under which Japan agreed to a cap upon the total tonnage of its navy’s capital ships (battleships and battlecruisers) equal to only 60% of a similar cap imposed upon the U.S. Navy and Royal Navy. On the surface, this appeared to place Japan at a significant disadvantage compared to the American and British fleets, and the treaty’s announcement met with both resentment and criticism in Japan. Even within the Japanese

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12 War Plan Orange underwent a series of major revisions in the interwar period, with newer versions of the plan put into effect in 1924, 1928 and 1938. Each of these “official” Orange plans was additionally subjected to a series of modifications during its lifespan.
13 For a brief overview of the Japanese role in the First World War, see Willmott, Empires in the Balance: 27-36.
14 It should be noted that U.S. naval leadership, at least, was not particularly disappointed with Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates, viewing it not as an obstacle but rather as an opportunity. See below.
delegation a bitter conflict, known as the “battle of the two Katōs” had been waged between
Navy Minister Katō Tomasaburō and his deputy, Vice Admiral Katō Kanji:

Viewing the problems of national defense in terms of the realities of modern total war, [Katō Tomasaburō] had ruled out a conflict with the United States and concentrated his efforts on diplomatic adjustment. For him, the Japanese navy was an instrument of deterrence, not war. On the other hand…[Katō Kanji] clamored for a 70 percent ratio as a strategic imperative, but his spirited opposition was squelched by the elder Katō.¹⁶

This debate within the IJN was to continue for much of the interwar period, spilling over at times into open violence between members of the competing factions. While the disputes within the Japanese delegation were eventually quashed by its chairman, it is clear that many Japanese emerged from the Washington Conference frustrated. In addition to the naval restrictions, Japan had been forced to accept the Nine-Power Treaty under which she pledged “to respect Chinese integrity and sovereignty and to maintain the Open Door policy beloved by Americans.”¹⁷

Given Japan’s presentation of the Twenty-One Demands to the government of China only seven years previously, the pledge to respect Chinese sovereignty represented a major diplomatic setback.

Yet if the Japanese in many ways felt slighted by both the Washington Conference and the provisions of the naval treaty, in two important ways the treaty’s provisions undermined the ability of the U.S. military to fulfill its obligations under early versions of War Plan Orange. The first of these arose, ironically, from the imposition of the 10:10:6 ratio that American and British negotiators had so vigorously sought to impose. Following the Treaty’s ratification, a number of U.S. military observers began to assert that “Japan…was the ‘greatest gainer of all…’”¹⁸ The fixed tonnage limits of the Treaty, they argued, freed Japan from having to engage in a building

¹⁷ Willmott, Empires in the Balance, 36.
race against the United States that it could not hope to win. Moreover, despite the absolute
total tonnage advantage over the IJN retained by the USN and RN, both the Americans and
British navies faced global demands upon their resources:

Because of the European and imperial commitments of Britain and the two-ocean
responsibilities of the United States, the Japanese were left with a clear local superiority
in the Far East. The U.S. was forced to divide its naval resources between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, while
Japan was free to concentrate her smaller fleet entirely in the Western Pacific. This greater
concentration of forces would go a long way toward balancing out the absolute numerical
inferiority of the Japanese fleet.

A second provision of the Washington Treaty that complicated the task of the U.S.
military as outlined by War Plan Orange was Article XIX, the nonfortification clause. This
article had been included in the treaty at the insistence of the Japanese, and it declared that “the
powers agreed to keep their Pacific island fortifications in statu quo...” Under the terms of
Article XIX, the U.S. agreed not to improve the fortifications of any U.S. possession west of
Hawaii, while Britain and Japan offered similar commitments regarding their Pacific
possessions. The impact of Article XIX:

[Was] to give Japan a strong advantage over the Western powers in the Pacific, for the
agreement virtually removed the threat to Japan posed by the Philippines, Guam, and
Hong Kong. The British still had Singapore, but the United States had lost the oppor-
tunity to develop adequate base facilities in the far Pacific.

19 Both scholars and contemporary observers argued that if Japan, in the absence of an arms limitation treaty, had
continued to build up its fleet, the United States, despite the strength of isolationist sentiment, would have been
compelled to undertake a countervailing building program of its own. A U.S.-Japan arms race would have placed
considerable strain upon both nations’ economies, but Japan, given its much more limited industrial and resource
base, would have been hard-pressed to keep up in such a contest.
63.
The decision on the part of American negotiators to accede to the inclusion of Article XIX in the Washington Treaty was bitterly resented by many military leaders, as well as a number of outside observers. One of the foremost critics was former navy Captain Dudley W. Knox, who bemoaned the treaty’s provisions in his 1922 book *The Eclipse of American Sea Power*. Others quickly followed his lead; “The United States Naval Institute in its *Proceedings*...carped continuously on the subject of the Five-Power Treaty and Article XIX.”23 The noted British naval authority Hector Bywater also criticized the Washington Treaty in a 1922 article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which “[Bywater] baldly accused the Japanese of rushing their Bonin Island fortifications to completion on the eve of the Washington Conference.”24 In the eyes of its critics, American acceptance of Article XIX had been unnecessary—Japan, they argued, would eventually have withdrawn its request for the article’s inclusion rather than risk being tarred with the stigma of having scuttled the treaty negotiations. Instead, by accepting Article XIX’s inclusion, U.S. negotiators had (in the view of the military) hopelessly complicated the task of providing an effective defense of the Philippines.

Making the challenge even more complex was the U.S. government’s passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. Enacted on March 24, 1934, the Act “provided for the recognition of Philippine independence after a ten-year transitional period,”25 during which the U.S. would retain responsibility for the defense and foreign policy of the islands. Following the Act’s

24 Ibid., 70. Bywater is hailed as one of the foremost authorities on the naval balance of power in the Pacific during the interwar period. He was also a prolific author on the topic. His 1921 *Seapower in the Pacific: The American-Japanese Naval Problem* urged Japanese and Americans, civilians and government leaders alike, to view the prospect of a war between the two nations with great trepidation. He argued that the prospective combatants were so evenly matched that any conflict between them would be long, bloody, and would result in a winner nearly as weakened as its defeated adversary. Bywater further outlined his thinking in a 1925 novel. Entitled *The Great Pacific War: A History of the Japanese-American Campaign of 1931-33*, he presented a fictional conflict between the two nations that began with a Japanese attack upon the Panama Canal, followed by the rapid conquest of the Philippines and Guam. In Bywater’s fictional campaign, the United States eventually emerged victorious, but not without suffering great losses in manpower and materiel.
passage, however, Congress proved reluctant to allocate funds to improve the defenses of the Philippines, even though such action would have been permissible following the Washington Naval Treaty’s expiration on December 31, 1936. As Morton notes, “this attitude was perfectly understandable, if short-sighted, for…the Philippine Commonwealth [after independence] would acquire possession of all fortifications and defensive installations built by the United States.”

In the face of the ongoing domestic crisis posed by the Great Depression, the development of facilities that would be turned over to the Filipinos in 1946 did not attract strong Congressional support.

The U.S. government’s ambiguity over what to do with its Philippine colony (whether to maintain possession of the islands or grant independence) mirrored a similar debate within the military relating to the question of Philippine defense. Under the early versions of War Plan Orange, possession of the Philippines, or at least of access to Manila Bay for use as a naval base, had been deemed vital to American success in the event of a confrontation with Japan. In the early 1930s, as the Tydings-McDuffie debate loomed, planners from both the army and the navy declared that “Possession of the Islands…was essential not only for military and naval operations in the case of war, but also for ‘carrying out national policies relating to Far Eastern affairs.’”

Within just a few years, however, serious doubts about the value of the Philippines began to be raised, particularly by senior Army leaders. One such individual was General Stanley D. Embick, who in 1933 served as the commander of the American garrison on Corregidor. Citing what he viewed as unfavorable changes in the Pacific balance of power during in the time since the first Philippine defense plans had been written, he declared “In these altered circumstances…it would be ‘literally an act of madness’ for the United States to attempt to carry

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27 Ibid., 235-6.
out the Orange plan.”  If the U.S. was not prepared to devote the resources necessary to permit a viable defense of the Philippines (something he viewed as neither likely nor desirable), Embick recommended:

[W]ithdrawing American garrisons from both China and the Philippines and moving the peacetime defense perimeter of the United States back to a line from Alaska to Oahu to Panama.  

To those who shared Embick’s views, the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934 seemed to offer an escape from the problems inherent in a Philippine defense. Then-Colonel Walter Krueger, in a 1935 memo to the Joint Board, argued that:

the decision to free the Filipinos enabled [the U.S.] to attain a perfect solution by “washing our hands of the Philippines once they become independent, and not to retain even a coaling station, to say nothing of a naval base there.”

Krueger argued that the U.S. did not possess a vital national interest in the western Pacific, and that therefore, “war in [the Philippines’] defense could not be justified.”

The navy, on the other hand, adamantly maintained that a continued American presence in the Philippines was vital. To some degree, this position flowed naturally from War Plan Orange’s declaration that “The first concern of the Army and the Navy in [a U.S.-Japanese] war…would be ‘to establish at the earliest possible date American sea power in the Western Pacific in strength superior to that of Japan.’” However, naval leaders also viewed the maintenance of a strong presence in the western Pacific as necessary to advance the foreign policy priorities of the U.S. government. These priorities included the preservation of peace within the region, defense of the Open Door policy, and the protection of U.S. rights with regard

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29 Ibid., 91. The Alaska-Hawaii-Panama defense perimeter proposed by Embick is sometimes referred to as the “strategic triangle.”
31 Ibid., 371.
32 Morton, Strategy and Command: The First Two Years, 28.
to the Pacific Mandates of the League of Nations. In this context, the abandonment of the
Philippines (and, by extension, the western Pacific) was extremely undesirable:

A return to isolation would, the navy contended, leave Britain to play a lone hand against
Japan, leave China to its fate, abandon the Philippines in their experiment at self-govern-
ment, deny our commercial interests encouragement and support in the Orient trade,
encourage Japan to extend and accelerate its domination of the Far East, and, finally,
weaken our international standing and influence in Europe and Latin America.  

However, while the Navy clearly advocated retention of a Philippine naval base as vital to U.S.
interests, later versions of War Plan Orange (the last of which went into effect in 1938) did not
include plans for the immediate relief sortie by the fleet envisaged in the plan’s original version:

[Rather,] the Navy wished to substitute an advance in progressive stages through the
mandated islands. During this advance, the Marshall and Caroline Islands were to be
seized in turn, and in each of these island groups bases would be developed. In this way
the Fleet’s advance would be supported by a secure line of communication stretching
across the Central Pacific and ultimately reaching the Philippines.  

The navy estimated that this campaign would require approximately two years to complete, a
figure that exceeded by eighteen months the maximum length of time the Philippine garrison was
expected to be able to hold out against an invasion. The contradictory nature of the Navy’s
position is pointed out by Russell Weigley; “That a base which cannot be held against a pros-
pective enemy is indispensable in war against that enemy is a proposition difficult to sustain
under even the most Fabian theories of strategy.”

The opinion of the majority of scholars writing about the history of War Plan Orange in
the post-World War II period is captured, once again, by Louis Morton, who labeled it “more of
a statement of hopes than a realistic appraisal of what could be done.” A combination of
factors, including geography, technological improvements, isolationist sentiment within the U.S.,

35 Weigley, “The Role of the War Department and the Army,” 173.
36 Morton, Strategy and Command, 30.
and interwar diplomacy combined to place the American Philippine garrison in a hopeless position. Yet despite a widespread understanding of the impact of these factors, military leaders (through the Joint Board), never seriously addressed the concerns they raised, either by seeking to reinforce the garrison to give it some hope of withstanding attack, or by seeking to bring about changes in foreign policy that could have permitted the garrison’s withdrawal. For these reasons, they argue that the Orange Plans represent a failure of U.S. strategic planning.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, this orthodox interpretation received a vigorous challenge with the 1991 publication of Edward S. Miller’s War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945. Miller argues that the shortcomings so often cited by the Plan’s critics are exaggerated, and that the conflicting assumptions that characterized the plan’s early stages had been resolved by the time of the war in the Pacific. Miller argues that the Orange Plan not only served as an accurate predictor of the course of the war, but also provided the U.S. and its allies with the prescription for victory.

The greatest strength of Miller’s work is his description of U.S. war planning in the early twentieth century. In particular, he delves in great detail into the competing philosophies that existed within the U.S. navy. Miller argues that during the interwar period, naval planners could broadly be identified as belonging to one of two categories, “thrusters” and “cautionaries.” The “thrusters” included those officers who advocated that in the event of war with Japan, the battle fleet should immediately sortie to the Philippines in the hope of establishing itself at a base within striking distance of Japan. This strategy, known among insiders as the “Through Ticket to Manila,” held some appeal because it “held out the hope of a short war and so reigned as the

37 Those serving in the Philippines were well aware of the severity of their predicament. Brian McAllister Linn quotes Colonel Harold H. George of the U.S. Far East Air Force, who once famously told his fighter pilots (prophetically, on December 6, 1941), “You are not necessarily a suicide squadron, but you are Goddamn near it!” Linn, Guardians of Empire, 218.
generally accepted strategy for most of the years between 1906 and 1934.”

Thrusters drew much of their inspiration from the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan, and envisaged the war climaxing with a single decisive showdown between the battle lines of the USN and IJN, presumably taking place somewhere in the vicinity of the Philippines.

Opposing the thrusters were the “cautionaries,” who rather than favoring a headlong charge across the Pacific instead advocated an advance “step by step across the Pacific by way of mobile bases set up on intermediate islands.” In the eyes of such thinkers, Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates, coupled with the nonfortification provisions of Article XIX of the Washington Treaty, represented a great opportunity. The demilitarized Mandate could serve “as a highway for a cautionary offensive rather than a barrier to an impossible direct thrust across the Pacific.”

A series of successive steps across the Pacific, the cautionaries argued, would allow time for the U.S. to bring its superior industrial potential into play, mobilize and train its army, and choke off Japanese commerce and trade, eventually forcing the Japanese to capitulate. They argued that this strategy offered a far higher chance of success than the thrusters’ approach, which, in their view, staked the outcome of the conflict on a single roll of the dice—the early clash of fleets near the Philippines. They conceded that this strategy would require a great deal of time to carry out, but argued that, if followed, it offered a virtual guarantee of eventual victory. It was this strategy, Miller argues, that eventually carried the day, and upon which the final versions of the Orange Plans were based.

Miller contends that critics of the Orange Plans have misinterpreted the historical records. He argues repeatedly that while the vulnerability of the Philippines to a Japanese attack had long been recognized, this does not constitute an indictment of War Plan Orange. Indeed, he argues,
the final version of the Plans had implicitly accepted that in the early stages of a U.S.-Japanese war, the Philippines (as well as Guam) would be lost. Instead of attempting to defend an insular position, Miller writes, the plan sought to lay down the guidelines for a naval offensive against Japan. In other words, the plan’s greatest success lay in its focus upon the “big picture,” the ultimate goals the U.S. sought to attain in the event of war.

In this respect, Miller believes that War Plan Orange was a resounding success. He argues that in many respects, the strategy actually employed by the United States during World War II corresponded almost exactly to the provisions of WPO. The plans envisaged a three-phase war; a defensive phase during which the U.S. would seek to halt Japanese expansion, an “offensive-defensive” phase where targets of opportunity would be struck while U.S. forces continued to build up, and finally an offensive phase in which the war would be carried into Japanese home waters. Miller argues that the course of the war roughly bore out these assumptions, citing, among other evidence, a quote from Chief of Naval Operations Ernest J. King:

Admiral King called the Southwest Pacific attrition campaign of 1942-43 the offensive-defensive phase of the war; the true offensive began, he said, in late 1943, when Allied bases were no longer threatened and the United States could attack when and where it chose.

Additionally, Miller argues that the “island hopping” campaign through the Central and South Pacific during the war had its genesis in the philosophy of the prewar “cautionaries.” He argues that senior commanders such as Chester Nimitz, while not responsible for the preparation of

40 Ibid., 113.
42 Miller, War Plan Orange, 335.
prewar plans, had nevertheless become exposed to them (and, he argues, inculcated in their teachings) during their time as students at the Naval War College.

Miller’s reinterpretation of the value of War Plan Orange has met with mixed reviews from scholars. He drew considerable praise for the depth of his analysis into the prewar planning process, and for the sheer volume of the archival material he was able to uncover and analyze in the course of writing the book. The most intriguing portion of War Plan Orange is Miller’s contention that U.S. Pacific Fleet commanders, in the months prior to the Pearl Harbor raid, were planning to provoke a major fleet engagement in the Eastern Pacific if war were to break out between the U.S. and Japan. No previous scholar had ever advanced this theory, and he himself admits it cannot be directly substantiated from written records. Nevertheless, he has compiled an impressive amount of circumstantial evidence to support his assertion, and this theory has now gained a considerable degree of acceptance among the scholarly community.

However, Miller’s assertions about the degree to which War Plan Orange in fact guided the U.S. to victory during the Pacific campaign have been seriously questioned. Reviewer Stephen Pelz notes that “U.S. leaders officially rescinded the plan before war broke out, and wartime planners did not consult it often.”

Miller’s somewhat selective approach to the evaluation of War Plan Orange has also drawn criticism. When evaluating the Plan’s effectiveness in terms of the conduct of the war in the Pacific, he is simultaneously broad and exclusive in choosing which material to review:

War Plan Orange has been defined in this work as synonymous with strategies broadly accepted by the American leadership before the war, whether called Orange or Rainbow

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43 Stephen Pelz, untitled review essay, 273. Shortly before the U.S. entry into World War II, the Orange Plans had been officially set aside in favor of a new series of documents known as the Rainbow Plans. The chief difference between Rainbow and Orange was that the latter had assumed that a U.S.-Japanese war would be fought without the participation of other countries. The Rainbow Plans were created to better reflect the global political situation of the early 1940s, and envisioned the U.S. engaging in war as part of an alliance against a coalition of enemies that included both Japan and Germany. The Rainbow plans also tended to reflect the “Germany first” approach that came to dominate American strategic thinking.
and whether found in the official plans or informal writings and opinions of responsible officials... Those older versions of the plan that were repudiated before the war—the “failed strategies”—have been excluded from the definition.  

This categorization is somewhat problematic. It neglects the fact that many of the “failed strategies” that Miller offhandedly dismisses continued to exert influence upon later versions of the Orange plans. Moreover, this definition makes it appear as though he has “cherry-picked” for inclusion only those versions of the plan that were successful, which opens him to the charge that his data selection was motivated by a desire to support his assertions about the overall success of the plan.

In a similar vein, Miller appears at times to stretch the historical evidence in an effort to prove linkages between War Plan Orange and the strategies actually adopted by the U.S. during the war. For example, he argues that the invasion of Guadalcanal in August, 1942 was analogous to the Orange Plan provision that had argued for the seizure of the Japanese-held island of Eniwetok:

> Guadalcanal was nowhere near Eniwetok, but the old plan was almost correct in one particular: the marines initiated Phase II [the “offensive-defensive” phase of the war] on 7 August 1942, just two months later than the postulated kickoff date.

This is a curious reading of history. Scholars of the Second World War have generally argued that the invasion of Guadalcanal was undertaken not because the U.S. desired a base in the Solomon Islands, but rather because intelligence revealed that the Japanese had begun construction of an airfield on the island. If completed, this airfield would be ideally positioned to threaten the vital shipping lanes between the U.S. and Australia. Thus, the decision to invade Guadalcanal was, in effect, a reactive decision on the part of U.S. planners, not a proactive one, as Miller implies.

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44 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 329.
45 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 335.
Finally, Miller’s favorable view of War Plan Orange fundamentally glosses over the rather severe disagreements it produced between the army and the navy. As Stephen Pelz notes, Miller may be correct in his assertion that the final Orange plans called for the abandonment of the Philippines [but] if he is, then naval leaders seriously misled Douglas MacArthur, the army chief of staff, who would eventually try to defend the colony. Miller dismisses peremptorily the fact that in the final months before the attack upon Pearl Harbor, the War Department undertook a massive campaign to reinforce the American garrison in the Philippines. If War Plan Orange exerted the degree of influence over U.S. strategic thinking that Miller claims, and if its final versions had in effect “written off” the Philippines, why would senior War Department officials have disregarded its tenets on behalf of a colonial possession they knew to be indefensible? In the face of this question, the interpretation of scholars such as Louis Morton (that the confusion over the Philippines resulted from ambiguities within the Orange Plans) seems to be more plausible.

In conclusion, while Miller has earned considerable praise for the thoroughness of his research, and for his determination to complete what remains today the only book-length study of War Plan Orange, his conclusions regarding the plans’ overall effectiveness appear to be significantly overstated. As a result, the traditional view of the Plans—as documents whose usefulness was severely undermined by their inherent flaws—appears to be more accurate. A more interesting question about the Orange Plans, however, is how these internal flaws were allowed to persist for so long, especially given the fact that many individuals, some of them very highly placed, were very much aware of these shortcomings. It is to the task of answering this question that we must now turn our attention.

46 Pelz, untitled review essay, 273.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Even a cursory examination of history reveals many instances in which the foreign, military, diplomatic, or economic policies adopted by individual nation-states do not appear, to an outside observer, to provide a rational response to the particular situation with which they find themselves confronted. War Plan Orange, it will be argued, is one example of this phenomenon. Throughout its various incarnations, the Orange plans continued to include as one of their chief goals that the U.S. navy should, “establish at the earliest possible date American sea power in the Western Pacific in strength superior to that of Japan.” In earlier versions of the plan, it was assumed that the Philippines (and specifically Manila Bay) would provide the advance base from which the navy would be able to exert this superiority. The goal of the Philippine garrison, therefore, was to hold out against an expected Japanese invasion until the arrival of reinforcements. In later years, a growing number of military leaders began to believe that timely reinforcement of the Philippines had become impossible, and the final versions of the Orange plan all but conceded that the islands would fall to a determined attack. Yet nowhere was this belief explicitly stated. The garrison’s assigned mission was never significantly changed, despite the belief of many within the military hierarchy that it was incapable of successfully performing this mission.

Confronted by the changed realities of the Pacific Theater of the 1930s, a number of potential responses suggested themselves to U.S. policymakers. If the loss of the Philippines was, in fact, inevitable, one possible response would have been to draw down the size of the army and navy presence in the islands. Doing so would have minimized the losses incurred by the armed forces in the conduct of a defense that was, in any event, regarded as hopeless. This option was, in fact, advocated by a number of army leaders during the 1920s and 1930s, but was
never acted upon. Alternatively, efforts might have been made to build up the Philippine garrison in order to bring its capabilities more nearly into line with its assigned responsibilities. For a number of reasons, this option was also largely discounted. Only in the final weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor did the Army begin an intensive effort to strengthen the Philippine garrison (particularly its air arm). This effort, however, came too late to make any difference in the outcome of the struggle over the islands, and actually may have bought the War Department the worst of both worlds. The reinforcement of the garrison increased its strength to the point that it could not be safely ignored by the Japanese, but fell far short of what would have been required to actually repulse a Japanese attack.

Both the ambiguous status of the Philippines within the strategic framework of the Orange plans, and the War Department’s equivocation with regard to the reinforcement of the garrison are, at first glance, difficult to understand. The architects of War Plan Orange, the service chiefs, and their civilian counterparts in the War, Navy, and State Departments all shared a commitment to crafting a sound foreign policy for the United States. Yet despite this shared objective, they failed to develop a policy that resolved the fundamental inconsistencies present within the Orange Plans, despite widely held knowledge of their existence. To develop an understanding of how such a situation could have arisen, it is necessary to delve more deeply into the processes by which policies are crafted.

Many studies of the way in which nation-states formulate their diplomatic and security policies regard them as solitary, rational actors. In *Essence of Decision*, his classic 1971 examination of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Graham Allison notes:

[M]ost analysts and laymen attempt to understand happenings in foreign affairs as more or less purposive acts of unified national governments. Laymen personify rational actors
and speak of their aims and choices. Theories of international relations focus on problems between nations in accounting for the choices of unitary rational actors.\(^1\) Proponents of the rational actor model understand and accept that individual decision-makers do play a part in the policymaking process. However, these individuals are assumed to operate in a manner that allows the state to be treated as a unified whole. Morton Halperin elaborates:

> In trying to explain foreign policy, most observers assume that decisionmakers are motivated by a single set of national security images and foreign policy goals. Supposedly, decisions reflect these goals alone, and actions are presumed to flow directly from the decisions. Thus, “explanation” consists of identifying the interests of the nation as seen by its leaders and showing how they determine the decisions…of the government.\(^2\)

In other words, the rational actor model assumes that those responsible for the crafting of foreign policy possess a common outlook with regard to the situation confronting their county. It also assumes the policies that these actors produce will represent the most rational policy response, based upon this shared outlook. The assumption of rationality (qualified, at times, by the limited information at the disposal of the relevant decision-makers) has played a major role in theories of international relations, most notably Realism. Realism has arguably been the single most dominant theoretical approach to the study of international relations in the post-World War II period, and its many adherents have included scholars such as Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, and public figures such as Henry Kissinger and (somewhat more debatably) George Kennan.\(^3\) At the core of Realist thought is the notion that the international system is inherently

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anarchic, with no overarching organization capable of regulating interactions among states. In this environment, each state is obligated to provide for its own security. They seek to accomplish this goal by evaluating the relative power of states within the international system. If they believe themselves threatened by an imbalance in power, they will act to redress this imbalance, either through unilateral action (such as a military buildup), or multilaterally, through actions such as “balancing” or “bandwagoning.”

Underlying the individual choices states make in such situations is the notion of rationality. States, whatever the nature of their governments, or the way in which their policy-making apparatuses are structured, are expected to be able to calculate the costs and benefits of particular foreign policy alternatives, and to adopt the alternative that maximizes benefit or minimizes risk.

However, historians often find themselves confronted by situations in which the actions taken by individual states are inconsistent with this rational actor model. The decades leading up to the outbreak of the Pacific War offer a number of interesting examples. Why, for example, did the Japanese government determine that the best way to bring its decade-long war with China to a successful conclusion was to widen that conflict by launching attacks upon the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands? Why, once it had entered into a war with adversaries whose resources and productive capabilities so greatly exceeded its own, did Japan fail to rationalize its scarce resources or adequately coordinate the activities of its small scientific community? In a similar vein, why did U.S. war planners, despite a long-held understanding of the “Philippine problem,” fail to take steps to reduce the vulnerability of the islands’ garrison, either by reinforcing it or reducing its size? In none of these cases does the course of action

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4 “Balancing” refers to attempts to form coalitions or alliances targeted against a perceived threat (usually the most powerful actor in the international system). A commonly-cited example of such behavior—albeit an unsuccessful one—was France’s sponsorship of the Little Entente in the 1930s. “Bandwagoning” occurs when states align
adopted by state governments seem consistent with the “rationality” assumed by Allison’s Model I.

The answer to this question, in the eyes of many scholars, is that policy outcomes should not be understood as actions of unitary, rational actors, but rather as the product of interactions between a number of institutions. Compromise and negotiation between these actors (whose objectives are, in many instances, quite different from one another) can yield policies that do not, from the perspective of the nation as a whole, appear strictly rational. It is the contention of this thesis that War Plan Orange offers a prime example of such a policy.

This “bureaucratic politics” approach has been outlined in the work of a number of prominent scholars, among them Graham T. Allison, J. Garry Clifford, and Morton H. Halperin. They view the bureaucratic politics framework as a means of offering insight into situations where the rational actor model cannot provide satisfactory explanatory leverage. In a 1972 article in *World Politics*, Allison and Halperin outlined what they viewed as the shortcomings of the rational actor approach:

[The rational actor model’s simplification]—like all simplifications—obscures as well as reveals. In particular, it obscures the persistently neglected fact of bureaucracy: the “maker” of government policy is not one calculating decision-maker, but rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors who differ substantially about what the government should do on any particular issue and who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actors of their government.\(^5\)

In order to develop a fuller understanding of the way policies are developed, they argue, it is necessary to examine the ways in which these organizations and political actors operate and interact with one another.

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The 1972 *World Politics* article builds upon Allison’s earlier work, most notably *Essence of Decision*. Concluding that the rational actor model cannot account for the actions of the U.S. government during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Allison explores a pair of variant theories—“organizational process” and “governmental politics.” The Organizational Process model argues that policy can be understood “less as deliberate choices and more as outputs of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behavior.” In order to fulfill their multiple responsibilities with any degree of efficiency, Allison argues, organizations must develop standard operating procedures—“rules according to which things are done.” In the absence of specific direction to the contrary, organizations will attempt to operate in accordance with their standard operating procedures, even in situations where adherence to SOPs may produce sub-optimal outcomes. Allison cites several examples of such behavior in his examination of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He notes that the American discovery of the missile facilities in Cuba resulted in part from the location of the air defense sites constructed to protect the Soviet MRBM and IRBM bases:

Soviet SAM sites were placed in the established Soviet pattern for defense of strategic missile installations. (This clue led to American discovery of the missiles on October 14. Defense Intelligence Agency analysts noted that the positioning of SAMs around San Cristobal was identical with the trapezoidal patterns with which photo analysts were familiar as a result of U-2 flights over the Soviet Union.)

Given the high degree of secrecy with which the Soviet Union attempted to emplace missiles in Cuba, why did those responsible for the construction of the SAM sites provide U.S. intelligence analysts with such an unambiguous clue? Allison argues that the most plausible explanation is that the those responsible for the construction of the missile sites simply failed to consider the importance of secrecy, focusing instead upon the technical problems associated with their tasks.

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7 Ibid., 68.
When building the missile sites and their surrounding air defenses, they fell back upon procedures that had been established to govern the construction of missile sites in the Soviet Union. For those responsible for making the Cuban missile bases operational as quickly as possible, there was “Nothing in the organization’s repertoire [that] reflected any awareness of the possible clues this pattern might present to foreign intelligence.”

Allison believes that similar organizational dynamics were at play within the U.S. during the crisis. He cites as a specific example the delay between the time authorization was given for a U-2 reconnaissance flight over western Cuba in early October, and the time the flight was actually flown. This delay resulted from internal disagreements between government agencies. The State Department, seeking to discourage the flights altogether in the wake of a recent downing of a U-2 over mainland China:

Spelled out the consequences of the loss of a U-2 over Cuba in the strongest terms. The Defense Department took this opportunity to raise an issue important to its concerns. Given the increased danger that a U-2 would be downed, the pilots should be officers in uniform rather than CIA agents, so the Air Force should assume responsibility for U-2 flights over Cuba. To the contrary, the CIA argued, this was an intelligence operation and thus within the CIA’s jurisdiction. Besides, CIA U-2s had been modified in ways that gave them advantages over Air Force U-2s in avoiding Soviet SAMs….

This “turf war” over control of the reconnaissance mission meant that the flight that ultimately uncovered evidence of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba did not take place until fully ten days after it had been authorized. While conceding that the jurisdictional infighting clearly represented a “failure” on the part of the U.S. government, Allison argues that this admission should not be surprising; “[the delay] was…a nearly inevitable consequence of two facts: many jobs do not fall neatly into precisely defined organizational jurisdictions; and vigorous organiza-

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8 Ibid., 107.
9 Ibid., 110.
10 Ibid., 122-3.
tions are imperialistic.” In other words, when a situation arises that does not fit neatly into the standard operating procedures practiced by institutional actors, the result can be confusion, bureaucratic infighting, or an attempt to “shoehorn” that situation into an operational doctrine that is not ideally suited to deal with it.

Allison claims that while the “organizational process” model can provide better insight into the policymaking process than the unitary, rational actor approach, in many cases it is not sufficient. He argues that it is necessary to further supplement the study of organizational processes with an additional level of analysis, which he terms the “governmental politics” model. At the heart of this model is the idea that:

The “leaders” who sit on top of organizations are not a monolithic group. Rather, each individual in this group is, in his own right, a player in a central, competitive game. The name of the game is politics: bargaining along regularized circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government.

Allison claims that in many cases it is this bargaining that is responsible for the final form that government policies take. The fact that policies often do not appear rational can be explained as a consequence of this bargaining process, as “different groups pulling in different directions produce a result…distinct from what any person or group intended.” Allison cites the negotiations that led to the ExCom’s recommendation of a blockade of Cuba as an example of such a process:

[In] the Cuban missile crisis the preferences of the leaders of the U.S. government covered a spectrum from “doing nothing” to “launching a surprise military invasion of Cuba.” An understanding of why, on October 24, the United States was blockading, (rather than invading or ignoring) Cuba thus requires careful attention not only to the arguments for that course of action but also to the essentially political process by which the blockade emerged as the American government’s choice.

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11 Ibid., 123.
12 Ibid., 144.
13 Ibid., 145.
14 Ibid., 186.
This “political process” included both intense debate (as advocates of the various responses sought to persuade their ExCom colleagues to adopt their preferred alternatives) and competition for the attention of President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who was his brother’s closest confidant. The eventual consensus that formed around the imposition of a naval blockade of Cuba was not, Allison argues, the neat product of careful deliberation. Rather, the decision was “part choice and part result, a melange of misperception, miscommunication, misinformation, bargaining, pulling, hauling and spurring, as well as a mixture of national security interests, objectives, and governmental calculations…”

Following the publication of *Essence of Decision*, Allison continued to revise his theory. The 1972 *World Politics* article he co-authored with Morton Halperin offers a theoretical approach most profitably regarded as a combination of his “organizational process” and “governmental politics” approaches. For the purposes of this study, this revision will be referred to as the “bureaucratic politics” model. Allison and Halperin claim that a true understanding of policy outcomes requires an analysis of both institutional procedures and political interactions between and among institutions and their leaders. They are aware that this characterization of the policymaking process can be controversial:

> Issues vital to national security are considered too important to be settled by political games. They must be “above” politics: to accuse someone of “playing politics” with national security is a most serious charge. Thus, memoirs typically handle the details of such bargaining with a velvet glove.\(^\text{16}\)

However, they, along with a number of other authors who have built upon their work, have documented a number of cases in which bureaucratic politics appears to have played a significant role in the process of policy formulation. Halperin provides a number of examples of such behavior in his 1974 *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. One case examines the failure of

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 210.
the Air Force to enhance its institutional prestige by trumpeting the key role played by its Military Airlift Command (MAC) in the Berlin airlift. Halperin quotes analyst Paul Y. Hammond, who asserts that the Air Force’s failure to extract the full public relations benefit from the success of the airlift can be traced to the service’s own senior officers:

Supporters of strategic air power, the predominant strategic doctrine in the Air Force, might have viewed the airlift as a potential threat to the primary mission of the Air Force, and feared that airlift publicity would only give substance to the charges…that the Air Force was neglecting its duty to provide air transport for Army troops.\(^{17}\)

As Hammond notes, senior Air Force leaders in the 1950s believed that the chief focus of their service should be strategic bombing. Other roles performed by the Air Force (such as military airlift and tactical air support) were seen as “essentially services it [provided] to the Army.”\(^ {18}\) Only by prioritizing strategic bombing, and by devoting the maximum possible amount of its resources to the Strategic Air Command, could the Air Force be assured of a mission that left it truly independent of its sister services.

Halperin notes that competition between institutions can have serious consequences, such as distorting the institution’s assessment of its own performance with regard to a particular task. He notes that during the Vietnam War, the Air Force and Navy systematically overstated the amount of damage inflicted by their respective bombing raids against targets in North Vietnam. The primary motivation for doing so, he argues, was a fear that honest self-assessment might result in loss of future missions to its rival, “Each service, believing (or fearing) that the other would exaggerate, decided to emphasize the positive in order to protect its position.”\(^ {19}\) While it might seem that institutions would have an interest in forthright self-examination in the short term, in this particular case it appears that this interest was outweighed by the same

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\(^{17}\) Halperin, et. al. *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, 30.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 30.
organizations’ long-term interest in preserving missions they had “won,” and, implicitly, access to the financial resources necessary for them to carry out these missions.

Allison and Halperin’s bureaucratic politics model relies upon researchers discovering the answers to three distinct questions—Who plays? What determines each player’s stand? How are the players’ stands aggregated to yield decisions and actions of a government?²⁰ The first question is of tremendous importance in shaping policy outcomes. Individual institutional actors are likely to frame a particular issue in very different terms:

[A] proposal to withdraw American troops from Europe is to the Army a threat to its budget and size; to the Budget Bureau a way to save money; to Treasury a balance of payments gain; to the State Department Bureau of European Affairs a threat to good relations with NATO; to the President’s Congressional adviser an opportunity to remove a major irritant in the President’s relations with the Hill.²¹

Given the many different ways in which issues can be framed, the inclusion or exclusion of particular actors from policy discussions clearly exerts a very significant influence upon the eventual outcomes of these debates. If, during the Cuban missile crisis, President Kennedy had viewed the discovery of Soviet missiles as a purely military problem, and subsequently consulted solely with his service chiefs, the imposition of a naval blockade might never have been presented as an alternative for discussion. Thus, the selection of which actors participate in particular policy discussions is an issue of great importance.

The second question raised by Allison and Halperin is how individual “players” determine their positions on particular issues. They argue that players’ interests may be subdivided into four categories—national security interests, organizational interests, domestic interests, and personal interests. They note that to a considerable degree decision makers tend to conflate several of these categories; “Members of an organization, particularly career officials,

¹⁹ Ibid., 49.
come to believe that the health of their organization is vital to the national interest.”\textsuperscript{22} Allison references this mindset in \textit{Essence of Decision} with the phrase “where you stand depends on where you sit,” and it similarly calls to mind Charles Erwin Wilson’s alleged declaration before a Congressional committee that “What’s good for General Motors is good for America.”\textsuperscript{23} The underlying point, of course, is that government officials tend to view problems from the perspective of their own organization, and to frame potential responses in terms of that organization’s goals and capabilities.

The final question asked by Allison and Halperin is how the positions of individual decisionmakers and institutions are aggregated to produce policy outcomes. They assert that policy outcomes are the result of “decision games” and “action games” in which the relative success of competing players is determined by “bargaining advantages, skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players’ perceptions of the first two ingredients.”\textsuperscript{24} The outcomes are also influenced by whether the item under consideration is regarded as routine or extraordinary. In the case of routine decisions, the policymaking process tends to be dominated by organizational standard operating procedures. In more unique or high profile cases, senior players, such as cabinet secretaries, senior military leaders, or presidents tend to be far more assertive. Allison and Halperin then conclude their outline of the bureaucratic politics paradigm by offering several conclusions about the ways in which action games are resolved. Those most relevant to the case of War Plan Orange are as follows:

- Presidential decisions will be faithfully implemented when: \textbf{his involvement [and] his words are unambiguous}…

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 48.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 48.  
\textsuperscript{23} Wilson’s actual statement was, of course, somewhat more innocuous (“for years I thought that what was good for the country was good for General Motors and vice versa.”).  
\textsuperscript{24} Allison and Halperin, “Bureaucratic Politics,” 50.
Ambassadors and field commanders feel less obliged to faithfully implement decisions because they typically have not been involved in the decision game. Where a decision leaves leeway for the organization that is implementing it, that organization will act so as to maximize its organizational interest within constraints.25

The central thrust of these conclusions is that, as suggested above, individuals and organizations will attempt to act in a manner that corresponds as closely as possible to own particular preferences. Presidents have the power to reduce the “wiggle room” such actors have in the development and implementation of government policy. However, in order to exercise this authority, presidents must make their own intentions and preferences clear. If this is not done, or if presidents themselves are struggling to define their ultimate policy goals, than the likelihood that the policymaking process will be dominated by institutional politics, bargaining, and competition becomes much greater.

In the decades following the publication of Allison and Halperin’s works, many scholars have sought to expand upon their analytical framework. Of particular interest is Barry Posen’s 1984 monograph *The Sources of Military Doctrine*. In this work, Posen examines the development of the operational doctrines of the British, French, and German militaries during the interwar period. However, he also puts forward a number of hypotheses that he believes to be applicable to most military organizations. Posen’s first contention is that, other factors being equal, military leaders prefer to develop doctrines emphasizing offense rather than defense. Posen cites two key reasons for this preference—the quest for resources and the reduction of uncertainty:

> Military organizations will prefer offensive doctrines because they help increase organizational size and wealth. Size and wealth help reduce internal uncertainty by increasing the rewards that the organization can distribute to its members. Size and wealth help

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25 Ibid., 54.
reduce external uncertainty by providing a buffer against unforeseen events such as huge losses or partial defeats.²⁶

Despite the general preference of military organizations for offensive doctrines, Posen does believe that in certain circumstances a defensive orientation can predominate. One such situation may arise when a military organization finds itself in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis a potential enemy, and is seeking allies with which to form a counterbalancing coalition—Posen cites interwar France as an example.²⁷ Certain states might also choose to adopt defensive doctrines if they are in a position to take advantage of favorable geography, “At the level of grand strategy… both Britain and the United States have exploited the defensive advantage bestowed by ocean barriers.”²⁸ British and American defensive orientation, however, was not unconditional—Posen notes that the navies of both nations frequently expressed a preference for offensive doctrine aimed at the establishment of “command of the sea.”²⁹ Thus, even in situations where states have the luxury of relative safety from imminent attack, military leaders often push for the adoption of doctrines that privilege offense over defense.

Ideally, Posen notes, a state’s military doctrine should be developed in concert with an understanding of the state’s policy goals and objectives. Unfortunately, it can be very difficult for leaders to produce such synchronized civil-military policy:

²⁷ Posen argues that the French army recognized its inferiority to the Wehrmacht, and realized it could not defeat Germany without the support of allies, Great Britain in particular. France’s development of a highly defensive military doctrine (physically embodied in the Maginot Line), was, he argues, an effort not only to defend France itself, but also to convince the British of France’s lack of aggressive intent. In a similar vein, the oft-criticized failure of the French to extend the Maginot Line to cover the Belgian border was, Posen argues, a deliberate decision intended to ensure that a German attack upon France would be launched through the Low Countries, whose neutrality the British were sworn to uphold. See Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine, 105-40.
²⁸ Ibid., 50.
Functional specialization between soldiers and statesmen, and the tendency of soldiers to seek as much independence from civilian interference as possible, combine to make political-military integration an uncertain prospect. If lapses in communication occur, the result can be what Posen terms “disintegration”—a policy-making environment in which civilian and military leaders in effect operate independently of one another. When the preferred policies (or doctrines) of military leaders conflict with the objectives of civilian policymakers, the consequences can be severe: “In the case of the European militaries prior to World War I, the single-minded pursuit of battlefield advantage closed off diplomatic options for statesmen.” In other words, the preferences of military organizations can effectively eliminate alternatives being considered by civilian diplomats. In the worst-case scenario that played out prior to World War I, Posen charges that this produced a rush to war on the part of several of the continental powers. Other consequences may occur, as well. In a disintegrated policymaking climate, deeply held preferences of military leaders can impede ongoing diplomatic endeavors. For example, while the Roosevelt administration was engaged in negotiations with the British over the terms of the Lend-Lease agreement, it had to overcome objections to the policy from within the U.S. military establishment:

Even the navy’s eagerness to begin Atlantic convoys in the spring of 1941 and the subsequent Army Air Corps strategy of reinforcing the Philippines with B-17s were aimed in part at deploying ships and planes that FDR might otherwise have given to the British and Russians.

Even when the divide between civilian and military policymakers is not quite so wide, opportunities for miscommunication abound. Because military planning is frequently regarded as a highly specialized activity, civilian officials, particularly in the absence of an impending

31 Ibid., 53.  
crisis, may be tempted to “leave such planning to the professionals,” an attitude that Posen notes the military vigorously encourages as a means of maintaining its independence. The result of such distancing can be military and civilian organizations that are pursuing diverging or even contradictory policy priorities.

When observers of the policymaking process take into consideration the issues raised by Allison, Halperin, and Posen, it becomes much easier to understand how states adopt foreign policies that are so strongly at odds with the expectations of the unitary, rational actor model. The actions that states undertake are not the products of a cold-hearted, consensus-based calculation of the national interest, but instead result from a process of compromise between competing institutions. Such institutions can view a particular problem in very different ways, and will often propose radically different solutions.

Let us return briefly to the examples offered at the beginning of this section regarding the national security policies of Japan before and during World War II. As noted above, the rational actor approach struggles to explain a number of the Japanese government’s actions during this period. These include the decision to widen Japan’s ongoing war with China to include Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States, and also its failure to establish a centralized program to wring maximum benefit from the country’s scientific and technical communities.

Scholars who have examined these questions from the perspective of institutional politics offer a great deal of insight into why and how these decisions were made. In his 1987 *Japan Prepares for Total War*, Michael Barnhart examined the internal politics of the Japanese government in the interwar period. He argues that Japan’s policies toward China, and later toward the United States and Britain, were largely shaped by internal conflicts between factions

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within the Japanese military. Members of the somewhat ironically-named “Total War” faction of the Army actually sought to avoid becoming embroiled in hostilities until after Japan had secured access to sources of vital raw materials and built up its industrial capacity to the extent necessary to support a prolonged war. Their radical counterparts within the Kwantung Army, by contrast, urged the immediate destruction of the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-Shek, and provoked a series of military skirmishes with the Chinese that ultimately led to open warfare. Naval leaders, fearful that a prolonged land war on the continent would render their fleet largely superfluous, vigorously advocated a “Southward Advance” strategy, targeting the resources of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies—a strategy that virtually guaranteed war with the United States. Barnhart asserts that the foreign policy ultimately adopted by Japan reflected a compromise worked out among the leaders of the competing military services, who by the late 1930s possessed near-total dominance within the Japanese government.

Barnhart’s description of policy formulation within Japan offers an answer to one of the most glaring questions confronting students of the Second World War: why did the Japanese government decide to launch an attack upon a nation whose military and industrial capabilities greatly exceeded it own? The rational actor model cannot adequately address this question. In Barnhart’s view, however, the explanation for this seemingly bizarre decision is rather simple: the consequences of a prolonged war between the United States and Japan were to some degree recognized, but forthright discussion of these consequences was pushed aside by factional leaders within the Army and Navy who were more focused upon advancing the objectives of their respective services.

In a similar vein, Walter Grunden’s 2005 Secret Weapons & World War II explores the reasons why Japan was unable to match the wartime scientific and technological breakthroughs
that occurred in the United States, Great Britain and Nazi Germany. To some extent Japan’s limited scientific achievements are understandable, as it had far fewer trained scientists and professional educators at its disposal than did the other major combatants. But in addition to simple quantitative shortfalls, Grunden also argues that Japan’s military research was

[Plagued] by organizational difficulties at every level. Because of sectionalism in the government…the Technology Agency was stripped of its power and proved incapable of uniting or coordinating the scientific resources among the government, military, industrial and academic sectors. The army and navy refused to cooperate with one another on any significant scale until late in the war…Research was commonly impeded by a rigid and often unnecessary policy of compartmentalization.33

Once again, the rational actor model cannot offer a compelling explanation for why Japan, in the midst of what many Japanese viewed as a struggle for their country’s survival, made such inefficient use of the scientific and technical resources at its disposal. By exploring the interactions between the army, navy, and various civilian institutions, and by pointing out the hostility and secretiveness that characterized these relationships, Grunden is able to suggest a reason why the contributions of Japan’s scientific community to the war effort were even less significant than its small size and chronic resource shortages would suggest.

It is my contention that the failure on the part of key U.S. policymakers to address the internal inconsistencies within War Plan Orange can best be understood by drawing upon the insights of scholars such as Allison, Halperin and Posen. Throughout the interwar period, U.S. foreign policy was characterized by repeated breakdowns in communication between military and civilian leaders. As a result, to borrow Posen’s terminology, the process of crafting national security policy became “disintegrated.”

In one key respect, however, the story of War Plan Orange diverges from the predictions offered in The Sources of Military Doctrine. Posen argues that more often than not, it is the
military that is principally responsible for the emergence of a disintegrated policymaking environment. He believes that several factors are responsible for this, all of them stemming from the military’s inherent desire for independence from civilian control:

1. As a rule, soldiers are not going to go out of their way to reconcile the means they employ with the ends of state policy…
2. This cause of disintegration is often exacerbated because military organizations are unwilling to provide civilian authorities with information that relates to doctrinal questions…

In addition to what he believes to be reluctance on the part of the military to offer its civilian counterparts insights into its unique “tools of the trade,” Posen notes that competition between military services can also contribute to the emergence of disintegration. In order to minimize conflict over scarce resources, services will frequently negotiate “shares” of the available defense budget. Such agreements are often aimed more at preserving harmony between the services than at providing for the precise security needs of the nation at that time. Because such bargaining is not intended to address pressing security issues, but rather to ensure each service receives its share of the available resources, in the absence of civilian oversight “a group of services cannot make a military doctrine that will be well integrated with the political aspects of the state’s grand strategy.”

The history of the interwar period, however, appears to run contrary to Posen’s expectations. It appears that civilian, rather than military leaders, were principally responsible for the disintegrated state of U.S. Asian policy. As we shall see, on a number of occasions during the 1920s and 1930s uniformed officers explicitly requested clarification of the objectives of U.S. foreign policy from their civilian colleagues, in the State Department and elsewhere. With only

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34 Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine, 53.
35 Ibid., 54.
a few exceptions, no such clarification was forthcoming. On several occasions, the military was actively excluded from involvement in the policymaking process. This exclusion occurred primarily because some of the government’s civilian leaders held deep reservations about the value of military involvement in the policymaking process. On other occasions, communications from the military were simply filed away without receiving any response whatsoever. I will argue that the inability of the military to receive the requested clarifications reflected a genuine confusion among civilian leaders regarding the diplomatic objectives of the United States in East Asia.

Allison and Halperin contend that presidential decisiveness in defining objectives is a key factor in determining whether policies will be faithfully understood and carried out. In this particular instance, confusion about the preferences of the Roosevelt administration left military leaders without guidance. In this environment, they crafted policies and doctrines that reflected their own unique institutional preferences (as predicted by Allison and Halperin). The Army, constrained by a severe lack of resources and concerned about the exposure of the Philippine garrison, favored a defensive doctrine that placed the greatest emphasis on the protection of the “strategic triangle” of Alaska, Hawaii, and Panama. The navy, by contrast, favored an offensive doctrine intended to permit it to carry the war to Japan at the earliest possible opportunity. Given the offensive orientation of its doctrine, the navy was less willing to accede to the abandonment or demilitarization of the Philippines, as any offensive into the western Pacific would require a forward base. At the same time, the navy evidently was not much concerned with problem of defense of the islands, perhaps because this issue was viewed as a problem for the army.

The inattention of their civilian superiors permitted this deep division between army and navy priorities to linger. The previous chapter mentioned that the authors of the final versions of
the Orange Plans had implicitly accepted the impossibility of holding the Philippines until a relief expedition from the U.S. could arrive. Indeed, the navy had shelved plans to mount the expedition altogether. Yet nowhere were these implicit understandings made explicit. While war planners’ understanding of the situation in the Pacific had changed, the objectives laid out for the military had not. Moreover, actions undertaken by the War Department in the years leading up to World War II, such as the rapid expansion of the Philippine Army and the last-minute attempt to reinforce Douglas MacArthur’s command suggest that even within the army the thorny problem of the defense of the Philippines had never been completely resolved.
CHAPTER 3: HISTORY, POLITICS, AND THE “EVOLUTION” OF WAR PLAN ORANGE

The political, geographic, and technological realities that confronted U.S. civilian and military leaders on the eve of American entry into the Second World War were very different from those that had characterized the early 1900s, the years in which the development of the Orange Plans had begun. Critics of American interwar strategic planning, such as Louis Morton and Brian McAllister Linn, have argued that the fundamental shortcoming of the Orange Plans was that despite multiple revisions, they never fully came to terms with several key changes in the strategic environment in the Pacific. This failure to adequately adapt to changing circumstances led to confusion about the objectives the armed forces would be expected to fulfill in the event of a conflict with Japan. Nowhere was this confusion more prevalent than in the Orange Plans’ provisions for the defense of the Philippines, where the garrison was ordered to carry out a mission (to defend the entrances to Manila Bay until the arrival of American reinforcements) that was widely recognized as unachievable as early as the 1920s. While army and navy leaders debated the value of the Philippines and the wisdom of attempting to defend them against a Japanese attack, their civilian counterparts in several presidential administrations struggled with the task of defining the objectives of U.S. East Asian policy. For most of the 1920s and 1930s, these two debates were conducted almost completely apart from one another. Not until early in Franklin Roosevelt’s second term in office did any U.S. president attempt to coordinate military and civilian policymaking efforts. Moreover, even Roosevelt’s endeavors to recalibrate U.S. diplomatic and military strategy cannot be regarded as a complete success. The inter-agency competition, civil-military disintegration, and miscommunication that had characterized previous administrations continued to occur. This ongoing diplomatic and strategic disharmony meant that even at the time of the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor,
The Joint Army-Navy Board and the First War Plan Orange

The earliest version of War Plan Orange was the creation of an organization known as the Joint Army-Navy Board. A forerunner of the modern Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Board was established to serve as a mechanism for coordination between the army and the navy. Created in 1903, the Board at first concerned itself only with general discussions of how the military could support the national interests and foreign policy goals of the United States. Following Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War, however, the Board turned itself to the preparation of war plans:

The impetus was provided by Lt. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee, Army Chief of Staff, who proposed in April 1904 that the Joint Board prepare a series of plans for joint action in an emergency requiring the co-operation of the services. These plans, he suggested, should be based upon studies developed by the Army General Staff and the General Board of the Navy.¹

The documents created as a result of Chaffee’s request were collectively known as the “color plans,” and they laid out the strategic aims that would be pursued by the United States in the
event of confrontations with particular foreign powers. Each potential adversary was designated by a unique color, while the U.S. itself was always referred to as “blue.” As noted in Chapter One, the majority of the color plans never existed as anything more than the sketchiest of frameworks. However, a few of the plans—those dealing with what the military viewed as the most likely or dangerous of potential opponents—were much more thoroughly developed, and were subjected to constant review. These included War Plan Orange, discussing U.S. plans in the event of a war with Japan, War Plan Red, which laid out plans in the event of war with Great Britain, and War Plan Red-Orange, a worst-case scenario in which the U.S. would find itself confronted by an Anglo-Japanese alliance.  

The first version of War Plan Orange was completed in 1911. This initial document offered a rather grim prognosis for American colonial possessions in the western Pacific, despite the fact that the U.S. navy was judged to be considerably more powerful than that of Japan:

> Orange possessed important advantages: a powerful army, a more consolidated geographic position, and an efficient merchant marine. In the War College’s estimate, Orange, with capacity to move 100,000 men simultaneously, could capture Blue’s overseas possessions in the Pacific as well as attack Blue’s Pacific Coast during the three months required by Blue to bring its fleet from the Atlantic to the eastern Pacific.

This version of the plan conceded that in the early stages of a U.S.-Japanese war, both the Philippines and Guam would be taken by the Japanese, and placed the utmost importance upon the retention of the Hawaiian Islands, whose loss was termed “‘an irretrievable disaster.’”

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2. The notion of a war between the U.S. and an Anglo-Japanese coalition did not appear nearly as far-fetched to early twentieth century American military planners as it seems nearly a century later. Japan and Britain had concluded a treaty of alliance in 1902, and had signed a 10-year renewal of the treaty in 1911. Both governments consistently and vehemently denied that this alliance was ever directed against the United States, but many Americans remained unconvinced, and the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was one of the major goals of U.S. negotiators at the 1922 Washington Conference. For an examination of the politics of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, see Thomas H. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 26-32.
4. Ibid., 33.
This rather gloomy assessment about the likely early course of a U.S.-Japanese war was a reflection of both geography and U.S. fleet deployments. When the 1911 plan was written, the bulk of the United States navy, including its entire modern battleship fleet, was concentrated at bases along the Atlantic coast. American naval strength in the Pacific was quite limited:

The backbone of the so-called Pacific Fleet was eight armored cruisers, ships that were beautiful for display, sufficiently fast to escape from the battleships of their day, but wholly unable to face the fire of a first-class battle fleet. In the Far East, the Navy stationed cruisers, destroyers, and gunboats suitable for showing the flag in China and for patrolling in the Philippines.\(^5\)

Should the U.S. find itself at war with Japan, the best that could be realistically expected from the Pacific fleet would be the protection of the West Coast. Major operations against Japan could not be conducted before the arrival of the battle fleet from the Atlantic. Because the Panama Canal remained unfinished in 1911, this relocation would require an extended voyage to the Pacific, either around Cape Horn at the tip of South America or by way of the Suez Canal. The length of time required to complete the fleet’s transfer, in the eyes of U.S. planners, necessitated a purely defensive approach in the early stages of a conflict with Japan.

This line of thinking underwent a radical reassessment following the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914. This event greatly reduced the transit time required for the U.S. fleet to reach the projected theater of conflict in the Pacific, cutting approximately 8,000 miles off the sailing distance between the East Coast and the Philippines. The shorted sailing distance reduced the projected time required for the U.S. fleet to reach the Philippines by nearly two months.\(^6\) As a result of this event, the 1911 Orange Plan was subjected to a thorough reappraisal. The

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\(^5\) Ibid., 25.
\(^6\) Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1895-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 89. Miller cites a document prepared by the General Board of the U.S. Navy in 1910 that lists the distance from the U.S. East Coast to the Philippines by way of the Straits of Magellan as 19,725 miles. The planners estimated that upon completion of the Panama Canal, this distance would be reduced to 11,772 miles. The same document estimated that the voyage from the East Coast to the Philippines would require 111 days for vessels travelling by way of the Straits of Magellan, but only 65 days for vessels making use of the Panama Canal.
strategy outlined in the 1914 Orange Plan was much more aggressive, and has been derisively labeled by Edward S. Miller as the “Through Ticket to Manila.” The major proponents of the Through Ticket strategy were a group of naval leaders Miller refers to as “thrusters.” These individuals stressed the importance of carrying the war to Japan at the earliest possible opportunity, both to reduce the risk of attack on U.S. territory (particularly in the Eastern Pacific) and to ensure that the war could be brought to a quick and decisive conclusion. This strategic outlook had existed within the navy for some time. As early as 1906, “the General Board recommended advancing the fleet to the Philippines ‘at as early a date as possible’ for the sensible reasons of curtailing the enemy’s time for conquests and its ability to brace for battle.”

The Orange Plan of 1911 had shelved this notion, but only because it was believed that the time required for the fleet to voyage to the Far East by way of the Straits of Magellan precluded it. The completion of the Canal offered navy planners the opportunity to return to this favored strategy:

Abandoning the War College’s proposed southern route [via the Straits of Magellan, per the 1911 plan], the General Board decided that the fleet should move to the Philippines via Guam…With its fleet securely based in the western Pacific, Blue would attempt to destroy the Orange fleet, the prime objective of the entire campaign. The General Board, like the War College, apparently assumed that Orange would surrender once its maritime power was broken. Blue’s army would attempt no more than to secure the positions from which its fleet would advance to ultimate victory.

The 1914 plan (written by the General Board of the navy, not by the Joint Board) discarded its predecessor’s assumptions that in the initial stage of a war with Japan the U.S. must stand on the defensive. Instead it urged that immediately following the war’s outbreak—or at least as soon after it as possible—the American fleet should launch itself across the Pacific at its enemies.

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7 Ibid., 87
8 Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 149.
Among scholars of the Orange Plans, there is a general consensus that the 1914 incarnation paid relatively scant attention to the logistical difficulties involved in carrying out such a massive movement of ships and men. Yet even the naval planners of 1914 recognized the necessity of American possession of a major base in the Western Pacific, from which the fleet would conduct its campaign to destroy the Japanese navy. While earlier in the century many within the navy had argued for Guam as the ideal location for this base, the site ultimately selected was Manila Bay, which possessed “only minor naval facilities but [unlike Guam] an Army garrison capable of holding…for a limited time.”\(^9\) Shortly after the completion of 1914 Orange Plan, the War and Navy Departments prepared orders for the commanding officers of the U.S. Philippine Department and the U.S. Asiatic Fleet:

> The President directs that in the case of war in the Far East, the joint mission of the military and naval forces remaining in the Philippines shall be, quote, To defend Manila and Manila Bay.\(^10\)

Noteworthy about these orders is the absence of any expectation that the entirety of the Philippines was to be defended. The coastlines of the islands comprising the archipelago offered a potential invader a smorgasbord of potential landing sites, and in any event the forces of the army’s Philippine Department were far too small to put up substantial resistance even on the island of Luzon. The 1914 planners, however, believed that a defense of the entire archipelago would be unnecessary if the enemy could be denied access to Manila Bay. Sea approaches to the bay were to be defended by powerful artillery batteries that were already being emplaced upon several small islands located within the bay’s mouth:

\(^9\) Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 227. Morton notes that as late as 1920, Guam’s entire garrison consisted of 172 marines.

\(^10\) Memorandum, H.L. Scott, Army Chief of Staff to Commanding General, Philippine Department, 9 October 1916, Memorandum, Secretary of War to Secretary of the Navy, 10 October 1916, “Joint Mission of the military and naval forces in the Philippines,” National Archives (hereinafter NA), RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 39.
By 1916, Fort Mills [on Corregidor], Fort Hughes on Caballo Island, and Fort Frank on Carabao Island together boasted a devastating complement of twelve-inch and ten-inch cannon, twelve-inch mortars, and lighter rapid fire artillery…the showpiece was Fort Drum, a small island in the bay that was leveled in an enormous explosion. Upon the flattened surface emerged what one officer termed a ‘stupendous piece of work—staggering,’ a ‘concrete battleship’ with four fourteen-inch guns mounted in two turrets.\[11\]

As powerful as these defenses were, however, they were vulnerable to land-based attack, particularly from the Bataan Peninsula. Enemy artillery mounted on the Peninsula would allow the island fortifications to be subjected to an attack against which they would be incapable of responding.\[12\] It was therefore determined that “To protect Corregidor it is necessary to securely hold the Bataan peninsula.”\[13\] The ultimate objectives of the defenders would be:

[To] hold out during a period that will enable our fleet to arrive in Pacific waters prepared to cooperate effectively. Allowing a margin of safety in time, it is believed that this period should be not less than six months, estimated from the opening of hostilities.\[14\]

When the U.S. fleet arrived from the eastern Pacific, it would establish command of the seas surrounding the Philippines, which would either force the withdrawal of enemy land forces or compel their surrender by cutting off their supply lines. The navy would then be free to carry out its campaign against the Japanese fleet, utilizing the facilities at Manila Bay for repairs and resupply as necessary. At the same time, the now-liberated Philippines would serve as a marshalling point for the army, where any troops needed for subsequent invasion operations (which, as Braisted notes, were viewed by many of the General Board’s planners as unlikely) could be assembled. The mission of the Philippine defenders established in the 1914 Orange Plan would not be substantially altered in any subsequent plan prior to the U.S. entry into World War II.

12 Ibid., 93.
13 Memorandum, George Dewey to Secretary of War, “Joint mission of the military and naval forces in the Philippines after the declaration of war,” 11 November 1916, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 39.
14 Ibid.
Factors Undermining the 1914 Orange Plan

The 1914 version of the Orange Plan has been the subject of considerable criticism from scholars. Edward Miller (who, as noted in Chapter 1, holds a very favorable view of the later versions of War Plan Orange) is openly dismissive of the “Through Ticket to Manila” approach outlined in the 1914 plan. He argues that the plan suffered from several difficulties, the first being the navy’s relative lack of auxiliary vessels, such as colliers, that would be required to replenish the battle fleet as it crossed the Pacific:

En route to the Orient the fleet would consume 197,000 to 480,000 tons of coal, depending upon its size, speed, and path... Early twentieth-century colliers could haul 3,000 to 5,000 tons. The navy had only six, decrepit relics purchased in 1898... The U.S. mercantile marine had another thirty-seven, which were needed to serve railroads and industries. The NWC [Naval War College] calculated that a hundred foreign bottoms would have to be purchased or chartered by agents fanning out ahead of the fleet.  

The shortage of colliers, along with the relative lack of suitable U.S. possessions in the mid-Pacific where coaling operations could be conducted, called into question the ability of the fleet to make the voyage to the Philippines in time to relieve the garrison before it could be overwhelmed.

Additionally, the leadership at the War Department was raising questions as to whether the Philippine garrison was sufficiently strong to carry out even the limited responsibilities expected of it. The same document that argued that the arrival of the fleet in the Philippines should not be expected until a minimum of six months after the outbreak of hostilities observed:

Studies prepared at the War College... agree that our present peace garrison could not guarantee to hold out longer than from six to ten weeks (depending upon the invader’s direction of advance) and that for an active defense of six months a mobile force of approximately 55,000 men of all arms and branches will be required.  

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15 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 90.
16 Dewey to Secretary of War, 11 November 1916.
The Philippine garrison in 1914 comprised only 9,500 American troops and 5,278 Philippine Scouts, far fewer than the 55,000 deemed essential for a “mobile defense” by the War College.

The problems identified with the 1914 plan were unquestionably significant, but by themselves they did not fatally undermine it. Technological and geopolitical changes would in coming years significantly reduce the logistical obstacles confronting the navy. The transition from coal to oil propulsion greatly increased the range ships could cruise before requiring replenishment; "With turbines displacing relatively inefficient reciprocating engines, cruising ranges increased 40 to 50 percent." In addition, in 1919 the U.S. for the first time established a permanent battle fleet in the Pacific, operating from bases in California. This development had been made possible by Germany’s defeat in World War I (and the subsequent scuttling of most of its fleet at Scapa Flow):

> With the disappearance of the German menace, [Chief of Naval Operations William S.] Benson obliged the secretary [Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels] by drawing up a plan for two battleship fleets, each composed of sixteen battleships organized into two squadrons. The first and fourth squadrons, composed of eight new oil burners and the eight oldest predreadnaughts, were placed in the Pacific…

The permanent basing of major fleet vessels on the West Coast once again reduced the distance U.S. ships would have to sail to reach the Philippines, this time by approximately 4,000 miles. Additionally, the tremendous growth of the U.S. merchant marine during the First World War eased potential logistical burdens by providing a greatly increased number of hulls that could, if necessary, be called into service to meet the needs of the military.

Likewise, the weakness of the peace garrison of the Philippines was a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the 1914 plan, but not an insoluble one. While the U.S. army

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itself lacked the manpower to meet the requirements laid out by the War College, it did have access to a large pool of potential recruits in the population of the islands themselves. Given adequate time and training, Filipino units could have provided the bulk of the defense forces required to resist a foreign invasion. Indeed, it was precisely this strategy that Douglas MacArthur attempted to implement—albeit unsuccessfully—when he was sent to the Philippines in 1935 to serve as a military advisor to the government of President Manuel Quezon.

But if potential solutions existed for some of the problems besetting the 1914 plan, a series of political developments in the aftermath of the First World War cast its future viability into serious doubt. It is to an examination of these developments that we must now direct our attention.

I. Japan’s Postwar Acquisition of the Mandates

On August 23, 1914, Japan entered World War I as a member of the Allied Powers, invoking its obligations under the terms of its 1911 treaty with Great Britain. Over the course of the next several months, Japanese troops seized a number of German colonial possessions, including the Pacific islands of the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall groups. When the war came to an end following the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, the complex process of negotiating a peace agreement began. During the Paris Peace Conference, negotiations were conducted regarding the disposition of the islands that had formerly belonged to Germany. These negotiations were viewed as a matter of great interest by a number of nations, among them both the United States and Japan.

Even before the conflict had come to an end, the United States had reason to believe that Japan desired to make its acquisition of the captured islands a permanent fact. In September 1917 Secretary of State Robert Lansing held a conversation with Kikujiro Ishii, Special

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20 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 98.
Ambassador of the Japanese government. During this conversation, Ishii brought up the topic of Japanese retention of the Pacific islands after the conclusion of hostilities:

He said he told Sir Edward Grey it was the intention of his Government to return Kaio Chau [Qingdao] to China, but that no Government in Japan could stand if they did not retain some of the South Sea Islands as “souvenirs” of the war…He then went on to say that Sir Edward Grey had practically consented in the readjustment of territory after the war; that the German Islands north of the equator should be retained by Japan, while those south of the equator should go to Great Britain.  

The Japanese claim drew a strong reaction from the United States for a number of reasons. From the date of American entry into the war, it had been a central principle of the Wilson administration that the United States was not seeking to profit from the conflict, either financially or through the acquisition of territory. He also held a deep aversion to secret negotiations—indeed, the first of Wilson’s Fourteen Points stressed the need for “open covenants, openly arrived at.” Yet in the months and years leading up to the Paris Peace Conference, many of the participants, including Japan, had continued to engage in the back-room dealing that had characterized the prewar period:

Japan…had acquired secret promises from Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy in the early months of 1917 to the effect that each would support her…in demanding from Germany the cession of the German islands north of the equator in the Pacific…The British in assenting on February 16 asked Japan to support their claim to the German islands south of the equator, and this request was granted by Tokyo on February 21.

The gradual revelation of these clandestine arrangements to American officials was a cause of considerable concern for a number of reasons. The first was Wilson’s stated desire “to prevent the appearance of a division of spoils accompanying the peace treaty.” But the U.S. delegation was clearly also motivated by strategic considerations. In a December 1918 memorandum, U.S.

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23 Ibid., 477-8.
diplomat Breckenridge Long outlined some of the potential consequences that might arise if the Japanese acquired permanent control over the Carolines, Marshalls and Marianas:

[Guam’s] utility to the United States as a cable station is jeopardized by the fact that it is practically surrounded by islands under foreign jurisdiction and control. In time of war the cable could be very easily cut by ships operating from any of the islands lying north, south, southeast, or southwest of Guam. If the cable were cut at that point, our communications with the Philippines would be not only interrupted, but prevented.  

Long suggested that the U.S. negotiators should urge the return of the three island groups to Germany, which by virtue of its recent defeat would be completely incapable of presenting any sort of threat to U.S. interests in the Pacific. He then went a step further, suggesting that after the peace negotiations had concluded, the U.S. could “come to some arrangement with Germany which would transfer the Marianas, the Carolines, and the Samoan Group to the sovereignty of the United States.”

Wilson chose not to attempt to implement Long’s recommendations, evidently realizing that the opinion of the other nations negotiating at Paris would be unanimously opposed to any effort to return sovereignty over the islands to Germany. Japan’s representative, Baron Makino, laid out the case for continued Japanese ownership. He argued that military necessity had prompted Japan to invade the islands, and that outright independence for them was out of the question, as the inhabitants “being on the whole still in a primitive state…[were] not in a position to organize themselves politically, economically, or socially, in the modern sense.” Although Wilson publicly “expressed annoyance at the secret promises already made between the Allies relative to the Pacific islands,” he gave his consent to the establishment of a Japanese mandate over the former German islands north of the equator. A dispute briefly arose over the status of

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25 Ibid., 514.
Yap; a small island located approximately 500 miles west-southwest of Guam. It had previously served as a German cable station, and in an April 30, 1919 discussion Robert Lansing had inquired “whether in the interests of cable communication it would not be desirable that the Island of Yap be internationalized, and administered by an international commission in control of cable lines.”

This proposal met with vehement resistance from Baron Makino, and the status of the island would continue to be a source of annoyance in U.S.-Japanese relations until a final settlement was reached in 1922.

Japan’s acquisition of the mandates appeared to pose a serious threat to the strategy envisioned by the 1914 version of War Plan Orange. The Carolines, Marshalls, and Marianas lay directly across the most direct route between the West Coast (and Hawaii) and the Philippines. Any Japanese military installations situated upon these islands could threaten an advancing U.S. fleet. This was recognized by American diplomats even before the beginning of the Paris Peace Conference; in his memorandum of December 14, 1918, Breckenridge Long noted:

> Any boat going to the Philippines, unless it passes through Japanese waters, must pass either through or close to the islands on the north or south of Guam (now under Japanese occupation). It would be impossible to send any military forces to the Philippines with any safety, if the convoy were directed through the usual channels. Also, they would be a constant menace to naval ships moving through the Pacific and between the Philippines and the United States.

The fear that a Japanese presence in the mandates might threaten U.S. forces moving between the West Coast and the Philippines would be fueled during the interwar period by persistent suspicions that the Japanese were secretly constructing military bases on the islands. Assistant Secretary Long referenced rumors that “the Japanese have fortified to a considerable extent a few

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28 Lansing, 30 April 1919, Department of State, FRUS: The Paris Peace Conference, IV, 653.
29 Under the terms of the agreement, Yap was recognized as part of the Japanese mandate, and the two nations worked out a separate agreement regarding cable rights. For correspondence relating to the final resolution of the Yap dispute, see Department of State, FRUS, 1921 (Washington: GPO, 1936), 263-312.
of [the islands],” although he made it clear that he could not confirm the truth about these allegations.\textsuperscript{31} Under the terms negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference, where Japan was awarded a League of Nations mandate over the islands, the establishment of military bases was expressly prohibited. However, allegations of improper military construction continued to surface. In February 1932, an article published in the \textit{Journal de Genève} asserted that, “Violant tous les traités internationaux, les Japonais ont installé des bases sous-marines dans les îles sur lesquelles ils exerçent un mandat de la Société des nations.”\textsuperscript{32} Although Japan’s representative on the Mandates Commission explicitly denied these rumors, asserting that his nation had no desire to violate its treaties, the issue continued to arise. In 1934 the commission again inquired into the status of the islands:

\begin{quote}
[In] a manner which clearly indicated that considerable credence was given to the frequently repeated rumor that Japan was violating the mandate. It appeared that the expansion of harbor facilities [which Japan’s representative had asserted was undertaken purely for the purposes of facilitating commercial shipping] had proceeded beyond all trade necessities, and that two airdromes had been constructed.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

Although debate on this matter largely ceased following Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933, the inquiries conducted by the Mandates Commission illustrate the degree of suspicion directed toward Japan, a suspicion held with equal, if not greater, fervor by many U.S. officials.

These suspicions were fueled to a great degree by the actions of the Japanese government. Shortly after its occupation of the islands in 1914, a policy of secrecy verging upon paranoia was instituted. Foreign trade with the Carolines, Marshalls and Marianas was almost completely shut off, and foreign vessels, civilian and naval alike, were denied permission to dock

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Ibid., 514.
\item[33] Ibid., 484.
\end{footnotes}
This policy fueled beliefs among many U.S. officers that the Japanese were seeking to hide illicit construction of military bases, and stimulated efforts by the U.S. Navy to conduct espionage activities to determine the true status of the mandates. In 1923 the newly-commissioned light cruiser USS *Milwaukee* conducted a shakedown cruise during which the vessel entered the waters surrounding the Marshalls and its crew conducted visual inspections of several of the group’s islands.\(^{35}\) A more clandestine (and almost comically inept) effort by Marine lieutenant colonel Earl Ellis in the same year—in which Ellis “boarded a Japanese steamer under false identity and toured the Marshalls and Carolines”\(^ {36}\) came to naught when Ellis unexpectedly died during a subsequent stopover in the Palau islands. In 1929 the State Department sought permission for the gunboat USS *Asheville* to call upon “closed” mandate ports during a voyage from the Philippines to the United States, and simultaneously attempted to arrange a visit to other closed ports by a U.S. destroyer squadron. These requests encountered determined Japanese resistance, and the American chargé, Edwin Neville, informed his superiors that “the South Seas bureau cannot see their way to granting permission to vessels to visit un-opened ports.”\(^ {37}\) Ironically, as a consequence of the 1929 request, the Japanese agreed to provide the United States with hydrographic data, and the Navy Department overrode the South Seas Bureau and granted permission for the American squadron to visit closed islands in the Mandates. None of these American efforts appear to have disclosed evidence of clandestine Japanese base construction; rather, as the Japanese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs (apparently with a degree of embarrassment) confessed to Neville:

\(^{34}\) Long, 14 December 1918, Department of State, *FRUS: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, II, 513. A handful of ports within the mandates were left “open” (i.e., accessible to foreign vessels), among them Saipan, Angaur, Truk and Jaluit.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., 174.

The Bureau concerned does not like to have foreign ships come to the out-of-the-way islands, largely because they are afraid that such visitors might carry away unfavorable impressions of conditions and publish or report them.\textsuperscript{38}

The available evidence suggests that the Japanese were not, in fact, engaged in an illicit campaign to fortify the islands of the Mandate in violation of League of Nations rules, or at most that any violations that may have occurred were quite minor in nature. However, many U.S. military leaders remained deeply convinced of Japanese perfidy throughout the interwar period, despite the absence of conclusive evidence to support their beliefs. The possibility that Japanese military forces might be based in the Mandates created a serious obstacle for advocates of the Through Ticket to Manila strategy. Any relief expedition bound for the Philippines would be endangered by surface raiders, submarines, or (later) aircraft based in the Carolines, Marshalls or Marianas. Even if the fleet movement envisioned by the authors of the 1914 plan could be carried out without serious losses, Japanese forces in the Mandates would continue to threaten its line of supply. Increasingly, military planners began to believe that before any Philippine relief effort could be carried out, the islands of the mandate would have to be seized, or at a minimum rendered impotent. Yet doing so would increase the length of time required for U.S. forces to relieve the besieged Philippine garrison. As U.S. planners struggled to adjust to the changing political geography of the Pacific, they were confronted with a second major complication.

II. \textit{The Washington Naval Treaty}

Between November 12, 1921 and February 6, 1922, Washington D.C. served as the setting for the first international diplomatic conference ever hosted in the United States. The goal of the Washington Conference was to craft an agreement on the limitation of naval armaments among the five leading naval powers of the world—Great Britain, the United States,
Japan, France, and Italy. In the months leading up to the conference, the Harding administration, and particularly Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, had worked tirelessly to bring the foreign delegations to the negotiating table. But Hughes had kept the scope of his ambitions regarding naval limitation hidden from the delegates during the conference’s preparation. They were not to be kept in the dark for long, however. In a lengthy opening speech on November 12, 1921, Hughes laid out an ambitious agenda for the limitation on naval armament based upon four specific principles:

(A) The elimination of all capital ship building programs, either actual or projected.
(B) Further reduction through the scrapping of certain of the older ships.
(C) That regard should be had to the existing naval strength of the conferring Powers.
(D) The use of a capital ship tonnage as the measurement of strength for navies and a proportional allowance of auxiliary combatant craft prescribed.  

Hughes went even further in his remarks, specifying particular vessels that he proposed be scrapped (or, in the case on ongoing construction, ships to be left uncompleted) by the navies of the U.S., Britain, and Japan. The figures proposed were staggering; under Hughes’ plan, the United States would scrap 845,740 tons of capital ships, Great Britain 583,375 tons, and Japan 448,928. This proclamation was received by the foreign delegations with barely disguised shock, as it vastly exceeded in both scope and specificity anything they had been led to expect. And yet less than four months later the delegates put their names to a treaty that in many respects closely resembled the proposal laid out by Hughes in his November 12 address. The following pages will first offer a brief outline of the reasoning that underlined the reasons behind U.S., British, and Japanese acceptance of the treaty, and then turn to an examination of the key provisions of the Washington Naval Treaty and its impact upon U.S. Pacific strategy.

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39 Charles Evans Hughes, 12 November 1921, Department of State, FRUS: 1922 (Washington: GPO, 1938), I, 53.
40 Ibid., 54-5.
Given the state of relations between the three nations, it at first seems curious that they were able to conclude any naval limitation treaty at all. U.S.-Japanese relations had been strained throughout the early twentieth century. War scares had arisen in 1907 and 1913, and as noted above the two countries had clashed again during the Paris Peace Conference over Japan’s acquisition of the mandates. In Great Britain, the subject of naval limitations was inevitably a touchy subject, given the importance many British politicians (and a large segment of the British public) attached to the Royal Navy’s status as the most powerful force afloat. First Lord of the Admiralty Walter Long expressed this sentiment in 1919 when outlining his support for previously unprecedented levels of peacetime naval spending:

Long justified this expense in axiomatic terms: there was no specific enemy, and the possibility of Anglo-American differences over Ireland’s provoking hostilities was remote; yet the fleet must, as always, show the flag and protect commerce. In short, Long felt that the Royal Navy must preserve its preeminence because it had always been preeminent.41

Relations between the British and Americans had also soured somewhat in the postwar period, fueled by the persistence of the Anglo-Japanese naval alliance, which continued to be viewed as a grave threat by the more Anglophobic members of the U.S. naval officer corps.

Yet if tensions existed between the three major participants in the Washington Conference, each in its own way did have reasons to support the notion of naval arms limitation. In the case of Great Britain, a major motivating factor was the age of its capital ship fleet. In 1906 the launch of HMS *Dreadnought*, the world’s first “all-big gun” battleship, had ushered in a revolution in capital ship construction. The design of every capital ship laid down by a major naval power in the post-*Dreadnought* years had been heavily influenced by the legendary British vessel. At the time of the Washington Conference, Britain retained the largest fleet of modern

battleships of any navy in the world. However, precisely because other nations had lagged behind Britain in launching dreadnought battleships, their own fleets were newer, and incorporated design advances that had been introduced in the years since *Dreadnought*’s launch.

This point was made by British Rear Admiral A. E. Chatfield in 1920:

> [Chatfield] insisted that H.M.S. *Hood*, as had *Dreadnought*, created a new standard of naval strength. While Britain had only one such ship, America and Japan would have twenty-three and fourteen, respectively.\(^{42}\)

Chatfield, it should be noted, made this argument in an effort to justify a massive expansion of the British fleet. A number of British politicians, however, drew precisely the opposite conclusion from the sort of reasoning employed by Chatfield—that a massive building race with the United States or Japan would *erode*, rather than maintain, British naval supremacy. H. P. Willmott outlined the British dilemma in his 1982 *Empires in the Balance*:

> Britain was handicapped by the reality of obsolescence in design. She had been first into the dreadnought race in strength. As a result, in 1918-19 she had a long tail of 12-inch-gun capital ships of low fighting value…Her margin of superiority was in weak ships that had to be replaced.\(^{43}\)

Because they had been built at a later date than their British counterparts, the American and Japanese dreadnought fleets were not yet nearing the end of their useful service lives. Therefore, every new vessel built by those nations represented an absolute increase in the strength of their fleets. Newer British vessels, by contrast, would merely be replacing older dreadnoughts destined for the scrapyards. As Willmott succinctly notes, “the British, if they built, were merely holding their position.”\(^{44}\) When the respective age of the American, British, and Japanese fleets is taken into account, it becomes less difficult to understand why the notion of a freeze on new capital ship construction might have held a certain appeal, even within the Admiralty.

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\(^{42}\) Ibid., 113.

For the Japanese government, the question of naval arms limitation was also a thorny one. Many officers within the Imperial navy were absolutely committed to the notion that Japan must become a first-class naval power in order to successfully defend its interests in Asia and the Pacific. As early as 1907 a group of Japanese admirals were advocating the construction of an “eight-eight” fleet of modern capital ships (eight battleships, eight battle cruisers). Frequent diplomatic clashes with the U.S. contributed to a sense of tension, as did the U.S. navy’s massive 1916 program of naval construction. However, in the early 1920s Japanese political and military leaders were able to resist pressures to launch an immediate, large-scale building program. Two factors contributed to this success. The first was a serious economic crisis that struck Japan near the end of the First World War, culminating (at least publicly) with widespread rice riots in September 1918. The economic crisis, coupled with an ongoing and large-scale army operation then being conducted in Siberia, limited the resources that the Japanese government could afford to direct toward naval construction. Perhaps more important, however, was a realization of the physical limitations that confronted Japanese naval expansion:

Japanese strategists admitted that the terms of modern warfare had turned against them. As early as 1916, Read Admiral Akiyama Saneyuki had pointed to the need for economic self-sufficiency as the key to victory in a protracted war...National defense could not be termed adequate if measured in naval hardware alone. Industrial capacity was critical. So, too, was the ability to mobilize and maintain the support of the mass of the people. Even staunch advocates of a strong national defense such as Admiral Katō Tomosaburō recognized Japan’s relative weakness in terms of industrial capacity, particularly in comparison to Great Britain and the United States. Japanese participation in an arms limitation agreement

44 Ibid., 34.
45 Dingman, Power in the Pacific, 15.
46 Ibid., 60-1.
47 Ibid., 125. Michael Barnhart makes a similar observation, citing reports from observers sent by the Japanese military to observe the First World War that concluded that future conflicts “‘[were] sure to last more than a year. . . .belligerents who were not self-reliant were lost.” Michael A. Barnhart, Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 23.
might offer an opportunity to postpone a naval arms race for several years, which would provide a chance for Japan to close the gap with its rivals in terms of resources and production capacity.

The United States may have emerged from the First World War as the nation most capable of sustaining a significant postwar naval construction program. Indeed, many American naval officers, supported by allies in the U.S. Senate, argued that the 1916 program should be carried to completion, and that it should be an American priority to possess “a navy second to none.” Throughout 1919 and 1920, Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels “frequently told congressmen a large navy would be necessary if the Senate rejected American membership in the League.”

Daniels reasoned that in the absence of a collective security agreement, the defense of American interests would fall entirely upon the armed forces, requiring the maintenance of a far larger fleet than had existed previously. However, these lobbying efforts triggered a backlash against “navalism” within the U.S. Senate. Leading this response was Idaho Republican William Borah. While not an advocate of unilateral U.S. disarmament, Borah did believe “that competition in armaments not economic differences generated warfare,” and his leadership of Senate opposition to naval expansion is regarded as having been a key factor in the substantial budget cuts imposed by Congress in the early 1920s. Borah was also among the first Senators to call openly for an international arms limitation conference. This effort was enthusiastically supported by the incoming administration of Warren Harding, particularly by his Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. Hughes saw such an event as an opportunity not only to secure naval limitations, but also to bring an end to the nettlesome Anglo-Japanese alliance.

It was in this climate, then, that the American, British and Japanese delegations convened in Washington, D.C. in November 1921 for the purpose of hammering out “A Treaty on the

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Limitation of Naval Armament.” The ensuing negotiations were frequently quite contentious, and on several occasions the Conference appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Yet in the end the delegates were able to produce one of the most comprehensive arms limitation treaties in human history, one that, in its final version, bore a reasonably close resemblance to the grandiose scheme outlined by Hughes in his opening remarks.

The American delegates were successful in securing treaty provisions that fulfilled many of their major objectives. One example was the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which was superceded by the relatively toothless Four-Power Pact. As noted, the Anglo-Japanese alliance had long been a source of concern for many U.S. officials. In 1921, as the treaty’s renewal date approached, the State Department had sent expressions of concern to both the British and Japanese governments. This overture provoked a diplomatic protest conveyed to Hughes by Ambassador Kijuro Shidehara of Japan, who charged that:

A campaign seems to be actively at work misrepresenting the possible effect of the Alliance upon the United States. By no stretch of the imagination can it be honestly stated that the Alliance was ever designed or remotely intended as an instrument of hostility or even defense against the United States.  

Shidehara’s view was shared for the most part by British leaders, who had never seriously considered the United States as a potential target of the alliance. However, Hughes and his State Department colleagues had raised the question of the alliance at a time when an increasing number of Britons were coming to believe that it had outlived its usefulness. In 1920, State Department Far Eastern Division Chief John V. A. MacMurray had suggested to his superiors that neither signatory retained a deep commitment to the pact:

To MacMurray, it seemed clear that Britain and Japan were held together chiefly by their fears of each other. Japan would not endanger her vital maritime communications by

49 Ibid., 47.
lightly discarding Britain, “the strongest naval power in the world.” Conversely, Mac-Murray doubted if Britain would risk offending Japan by abruptly terminating the alliance.\textsuperscript{51}

Discreet negotiations between American and British diplomats determined that what was needed was a way to terminate the alliance while simultaneously providing a substitute arrangement that would avoid the appearance that the British were “casting Japan aside now that the alliance was no longer needed.”\textsuperscript{52} The solution to this dilemma was the Four-Power Pact. Concluded on December 21, 1921 between representatives of the U.S., Britain, Japan and France, the Four-Power Pact stated that its signatories:

[Agree] between themselves to respect their rights in respect to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the region of the Pacific Ocean. If there should develop between any of the High Contracting Parties a controversy arising out of any Pacific question and involving their said rights which is not satisfactorily settled by diplomacy...they shall invite the other High Contracting Parties to a joint conference to which the whole subject will be referred for consideration and adjustment.\textsuperscript{53}

While the treaty required disputes between the contracting parties to be submitted for adjudication, it did not contain any provisions committing them to the use of military force in support of the aggrieved party. This wording was deemed necessary in order to obtain Senate ratification of the Pact, as a major factor in that body’s rejection of the Treaty of Versailles was fear that membership in the League of Nations would erode U.S. sovereignty, particularly with regard to decisions on the use of military force.

Another instance in which the American delegation was able to fulfill the aims with which it had begun the conference was the establishment of the “10:10:6 ratio” and the provision of a cap on the total capital ship and aircraft carrier tonnage that could be retained by each nation. For capital ships, the U.S. and Britain were each permitted to retain 525,000 tons, while

\textsuperscript{51} Braisted, \textit{The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922}, 555.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 561.
\textsuperscript{53} Four Power Treaty, 13 December 1921, \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 35.
the Japanese were allotted 315,000 tons.\textsuperscript{54} The U.S. and Britain were permitted 135,000 tons of aircraft carriers, while the limit for Japanese carrier tonnage was 81,000.\textsuperscript{55} Other provisions of the treaty imposed limits upon the maximum permissible size and gun caliber for capital ships.

The inclusion of the 10:10:6 ratio in capital ship tonnage was not achieved without dispute. Baron Katô Tomasaburô, then serving as naval minister and the head of the Japanese delegation, issued a press statement on November 16, 1921, in which he claimed that acceptance of a 10:10:6 ratio endangered Japan’s security. This announcement prompted a flurry of activity on the part of the American delegation. Secretary of State Hughes fired off a cable to Charles Warren, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, in which he advised him to “in your discretion, do the utmost to influence the Japanese government not to insist upon an alteration of the proposed ratio…which this Government regards as essential.”\textsuperscript{56} Hughes noted that at the time of the conference, the respective ratios between the U.S. and Japanese fleets were closer to 10:5 than to 10:6, but that “we suggested 10-6 to be very liberal.”\textsuperscript{57} He also immediately launched an effort to confirm Britain’s commitment to the 10:10:6 ratio. This effort was successful, and in a follow-up cable to Ambassador Warren on November 27, Hughes declared, “Britain and the United States agree on all major points.”\textsuperscript{58} Given British support, as well as Warren’s assertion that the Japanese government would not allow the conference to founder solely on the basis of a rejection of the 10:10:7 ratio proposed by Katô, the delegates began to cast about for a way to resolve the dispute.

\textsuperscript{54} Washington Naval Treaty, Article IV, \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 250. The Treaty later listed the capital ships that could be retained (or, in the case of ships under construction, completed) by each of its signatories. According to this provision, the U.S. was to retain 525,850 tons, Great Britain 558,950, and Japan 301,320. The slightly larger total tonnage reserved for Great Britain was a concession to the generally advanced age and small size of the Royal Navy’s battleships. See \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 253-5.


\textsuperscript{56} Hughes, 19 November 1921, Department of State, \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 64.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 65.

\textsuperscript{58} Hughes, 27 November 1921, Department of State, \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 67.
Baron Katō himself proposed the solution that was eventually adopted. During the course of discussions over the proposal to amend the 10:10:6 ratio, internal disputes within the Japanese government, military, and public gradually came to light. Japan was in the midst of a political crisis following the November 4 assassination of Prime Minister Hara Kei. The Japanese delegation, moreover, was itself internally conflicted, and was under significant pressure from its own Navy Ministry:

From the Navy Ministry came the demand that Japan retain twelve capital ships instead of the ten Hughes proposed...Meanwhile, Japanese journalists at Washington split on the ratio question, and rifts developed within the delegation itself. Katō Kanji [an IJN officer serving as one of the Japanese delegation’s naval experts] insisted on the 10-10-7 ratio one evening, only to have Prince Tokugawa imply the next day that the ratio was not the official Japanese position.59

The Japanese government, in turn, was under considerable public pressure to avoid a concession to the U.S. and Britain on the ratio question. This was reflected in a November 22 communiqué from the Foreign Affairs Advisory Council to the Japanese delegation insisting that there be no compromise on the demand for a 10:10:7 ratio. Roger Dingman speculates that this directive may have been prompted by public opinion, as “many newspapers had championed the 10-10-7 ratio, and members of the cabinet were well aware of the outbursts of public anger that had followed the Shantung compromise of 1919 and...the end of the Russo-Japanese and Sino-Japanese wars.”60 Baron Katō was thus in the difficult position of attempting to negotiate an arms limitation treaty that, in principle, enjoyed the support of his government, but doing so in a manner which did not endanger Japan’s security or provoke public backlash.

In an attempt to resolve this quandary, the leaders of the delegations convened a meeting at the State Department on December 2. In a candid conversation with Hughes and Arthur Balfour, head of the British delegation, Katō stressed his support for an arms limitation treaty,

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59 Dingman, Power in the Pacific, 201.
but also expressed his agreement with the views of the naval advisors among his own delegation that the treaty ratio should be set at 10:7. He then offered a potential solution to the impasse:

[Katō] had noted that whenever news was received in Japan of the erection of fortifications in the American islands in the Pacific it had caused a feeling of alarm and apprehension. It would therefore be of assistance if an agreement could be reached to maintain the status quo in the Pacific in regard to the fortification and the creation of naval bases. What would help him if the United States of America could agree not to increase the fortifications or the naval bases at Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Hawaii…Even if this were granted, however, Baron Kato said he would have considerable difficulty in accepting the 60 per cent.61

This feeler from Katō set in motion the process that would eventually produce Article XIX of the Washington Treaty, the so-called “nonfortification clause.” Under the terms of Article XIX, the U.S., Britain, and Japan agreed that “the status quo…with regard to fortifications and naval bases, shall be maintained in their respective territories and possessions specified hereunder.”62

Considerable haggling took place between the delegations on the question of precisely which territories would be subject to Article XIX, but in the end the U.S. accepted limitations placed upon the Philippines, Guam, and the Aleutian Islands. Great Britain agreed to freeze improvements upon its base at Hong Kong, while Japan agreed to include the Kurile and Bonin Islands, along with Amami Oshima, Formosa and the Pescadores.63 In exchange for the inclusion of Article XIX in the final version of the Washington Treaty, the Japanese government dropped its demand for a 10:10:7 ratio, accepting instead the 10:10:6 formula first proposed by Hughes.

President Harding hailed the Washington Conference as a triumph of American diplomacy, a series of agreements that would promote peace without threatening American security. On February 10, 1922, he appeared before the Senate to deliver his formal report on the

60 Ibid., 202.
63 Ibid, 253.
treaties concluded during the preceding four months and to request their prompt ratification. In his remarks, he asserted that ratification would:

[Stabilize] a peace for the breaking of which there is not a shadow of reason or real excuse. We shall not have less than before. No one of us shall have less than before. There is no narrowed liberty, no hampered independence, no shattered sovereignty, no added obligation. We will have new assurances, new freedom from anxiety, and new manifestations of the sincerity of our own intentions; a new demonstration of that honesty which proclaims a righteous and powerful republic.64

The president took pains to emphasize his prior experience in the Senate, and his understanding of the reservations about American membership that had doomed ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. This is evidenced by his declaration that the treaties concluded at the Washington Conference did not undermine American sovereignty, and conveyed “no added obligation.” The general tenor of the president’s remarks suggested that in his view, and that of the U.S. delegation, the treaties offered a significant increase in American national security at a bare minimum of cost. Despite some reservations, the majority of the Senate apparently found Harding and Hughes’ arguments persuasive, as all of the treaties were ratified by March 30, 1922, less than two months after the conclusion of the Washington Conference.

If Harding and Hughes considered the final version of the Washington Naval Treaty to have represented a triumph for American interests, many naval officers were considerably less convinced of its value. They were deeply dissatisfied about a number of the treaty’s provisions, arguing that they worked to the benefit of Japan far more than the United States. There was also a sense among many that the navy’s strategic concerns had not been taken seriously by the senior members of the American delegation.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that this last concern was a valid one. Throughout his tenure as Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes exhibited a strong aversion to

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64 Warren G. Harding, Address to Congress, 10 February 1922, FRUS: 1922, I, 304.
giving the military a role in the foreign policy process. This aversion was reflected in the composition of the American delegation, particularly when compared to the senior negotiators representing Japan and Great Britain. As noted above, Katō Tomasaburō, who served (in fact, if not in title) as the head of the Japanese delegation, was not only an active-duty IJN admiral, but also his country’s Navy Minister. The British delegation included Lord Lee of Fareham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, as well as Sir David Beatty, who in addition to being a former commander of the British Grand Fleet had also served near the end of World War I as First Sea Lord. The four principal U.S. negotiators at the conference were Hughes, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Senate Minority Leader Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama, and former Senator Elihu Root. While each of these men played key roles either in the negotiation or ratification of the treaty, historian Thomas Buckley points out a curious irony; “the Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby, was not appointed as delegate to a conference that was to discuss naval limitations.” Moreover, once the conference had gotten underway, Hughes actively rejected a more active role for the military in the negotiating process.

In December, during a critical time of the conference, the Joint Board…proposed policy discussions with a “responsible official” of the State Department. Rejecting the request, Hughes commented: “This appears to me to be in substance a suggestion that at least provisionally matters of foreign policy be submitted to the Joint Board. I question the advisability of this.”

While the American delegation did include Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt Jr. and a number of mid-ranking naval officers, the consensus among scholars of the Washington Treaty is that Hughes made little effort to consult with them on any but the most technical of matters.

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The near total exclusion of senior American naval officers from the negotiation of the Washington Treaty helped to create a post-conference backlash from naval observers both in and out of uniform. Some of the criticism was directed at the 10:10:6 formula, with the argument made that despite the greater overall tonnage retained by the United States, the necessity of dividing the navy between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would concede local superiority in the Western Pacific to the Japanese navy. The vast majority of the navy’s ire, however, was reserved for Article XIX. In the months and years following the ratification of the Washington Naval Treaty, a series of books and articles began to appear attacking the Treaty. Many of these were the work of retired officers (who possessed a greater ability to speak freely than their active-duty colleagues); others, however, were the work of “such unofficial naval agencies as the Naval Institute, the Navy League, and the Army and Navy Journal.” Among the most famous of these was retired Captain Dudley Knox’s 1922 polemic The Eclipse of American Sea Power. In expressing his dissatisfaction with the nonfortification clause, Knox declared:

Of even greater importance than the loss to us in tonnage strength is the sacrifice we have made respecting Western Pacific bases….Both Great Britain and Japan are assured of ample base facilities in the Orient while we are denied them, and in consequence we no longer possess the power to defend the Philippines or to support any other American Far East Policy.

The perception that the Japanese, not the Americans, had been the principal beneficiaries of the Washington Treaty was not limited to U.S. naval officers. In a February 1923 article in The Atlantic Monthly, British naval scholar Hector C. Bywater charged the Japanese with violating the spirit of the treaty by shifting massive resources into the construction of auxiliary combatant

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67 Gerald E. Wheeler, “The United States Navy and the Japanese ‘Enemy’: 1919-1931,” Military Affairs 21 (1957), 69. Wheeler adds that similar articles also began to appear in the Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute. This is significant, he notes, because “Articles printed in the Proceedings go through a screening board consisting of six or so naval officers. The policy for publication is informal but the general rule is that no article will appear that the Department of the Navy does not approve.” Ibid., 70, fn. That these articles were published can be reasonably interpreted as an indication of the degree of the navy’s displeasure with Article XIX.
vessels such as cruisers and submarines. Such vessels were exempt from the 10:10:6 ratio because they were not considered capital ships. Bywater argued that the Japanese were continuing the naval buildup in which they had been engaged prior to the Washington Conference:

It is patent to everyone that Japan is at present building more combatant tonnage than any other power; but what is not so generally appreciated is the fact that she is actually building more tonnage of this description than all the other powers combined. 69

Bywater also accused Baron Katō of duplicity in proposing the nonfortification agreement. He charged that the Japanese government had, in secret, hurriedly completed the fortification of several of the islands that would eventually be covered under Article XIX. This, according to Bywater, explained the willingness of the Japanese to view the nonfortification clause as compensation for accepting the 10:10:6 capital ship ratio. Japan, “having been secretly engaged in fortifying her island bases for many months previously, had just completed the work, whereas scarcely any progress had been made in the development of the American stations at Cavite and Guam.” 70

Bywater’s accusations are reminiscent of the constant suspicions of illicit Japanese activity in the Mandates that had been so prevalent among U.S. leaders just a few years earlier. Louis Morton notes that the United States was quite scrupulous in adhering to the Article XIX, going so far as to suspend very minor improvements in Philippine defenses that had already begun prior to the signing of the Washington Treaty:

Even the fourteen 3-inch antiaircraft guns and other matériel en route to the Philippines in February 1922 were diverted to Hawaii. “The maintenance of the Status quo,” one officer advised the Army Chief of Staff, “…implies that no new fortifications or naval bases shall be established in the territories and possessions specified; that no measures shall be taken to increase the existing facilities…; and that no increase shall be made in

69 Hector C. Bywater, “Japan: A Sequel to the Washington Conference,” The Atlantic Monthly 131 (1923), 243. This article was reprinted in the Naval Institute’s Proceedings in May, 1923.
70 Ibid., 245.
the coast defenses.” Only such repair and replacement of weapons and equipment as were customary in time of peace were to be permitted.71

Given the seriousness that the War Department attached to strict adherence to the provisions of the Treaty, public allegations of Japanese duplicity likely rankled army and navy leaders.

As the authors of the articles appearing in the *Army & Navy Journal* and the Naval Institute’s *Proceedings* were quick to realize, the ratification of the Washington Treaty had significant consequences for the 1914 Orange Plan. The 1914 plan was based upon the notion that the Philippine garrison could successfully hold the entrances to Manila Bay (thus denying it to the Japanese) until the arrival of the Pacific Fleet. After the fleet’s arrival, Manila Bay would then serve as the forward operating base for a campaign intended to strangle Japan’s commerce and eventually compel its surrender. The plan depended upon the garrison being able to hold out the six months it was estimated would elapse before the arrival of the relief expedition. The adoption of the nonfortification clause gave rise to new doubts about the Philippine garrison’s ability to fulfill its assigned mission. A successful defense would be absolutely dependent upon strong fortifications that would allow the garrison to stand off an attacking force possessing great numerical superiority. The *status quo* provision imposed upon Philippine fortifications by Article XIX made a successful resistance less likely. Moreover, as Article XIX also prohibited improvements in existing base facilities, and because the Manila Bay facilities fell far short of what would be required to support a major fleet, the navy would not have the advantage of the fully-developed forward base envisioned by the 1914 plan. Indeed, Article XIX was in no small part responsible for the navy’s decision to commit the bulk of its Pacific construction funds to the development of Pearl Harbor, since the Hawaiian islands were not subject to the *status quo* requirement.

The Washington Naval Treaty sparked a debate within both military services regarding the desirability of maintaining any military presence in the Philippine Islands. This issue gained additional traction as successive presidential administrations and congresses began to study with increasing seriousness the possibility of granting the Philippines their independence from the United States.

III. The Philippine Independence Movement

The American possession of the Philippine Islands had been a subject of debate almost from the time of the Spanish-American War. Supporters of the islands’ retention argued that they offered significant commercial opportunities and provided a foothold in the Western Pacific necessary for the advancement of U.S. foreign policy objectives such as the maintenance of the Open Door in China. Critics constantly fretted about the danger of rebellion against U.S. control, and argued that possession of the islands represented a strategic liability rather than an asset, as they placed an American garrison too small to effectively defend the islands in a position that openly invited attack.

The debate over Philippine independence played out across the first four decades of the twentieth century. The first significant step in the direction of decolonization was the passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916, more commonly known as the Jones Act. The Jones Act offered the Filipinos a degree of self-governance, providing for the establishment of an elected upper house in the Philippine legislature. Efforts to introduce the “Clark Amendment,” which would have guaranteed the complete independence of the Philippines within five years following the passage of the Autonomy Act were rejected by the U.S. Senate. However, “the preamble of the [Jones] act still promised the islanders their independence ‘as soon as stable government’ was
established.” There appears to have been some disagreement within the U.S. government about what the passage of the Jones Act implied with regard to Pacific foreign policy and strategy, particularly vis-à-vis Japan. William R. Braisted argues that the Wilson administration believed that the Jones Act was a first step toward a general disengagement in the Far East. This was reflected in a gradual loss of support for the construction of elaborate fortifications on Guam, which had been depicted as necessary in order to help secure the route to the Philippines:

    When it appeared that American political and military responsibilities in the Philippines might be liquidated, the elaborate plans for Guam also lost their urgency if not their validity. In the Far East, aside from the Philippines, only American interests in China might require naval protection, and the Wilson administration had no more thought than its Republican predecessors of defending Americans in China against any but impotent Chinese.  

The U.S. Army’s Philippine Department, however, held a very different view. Many of its officers, including the Department’s commanding officer, Brigadier General Hunter Liggett, had harbored doubts about the usefulness of the 1914 Orange Plan. Liggett was convinced “that both the mission of guarding Manila Bay and the plan for immediate retreat to Bataan were mistaken…[believing] that meeting the enemy on the beaches would be more effective.”

Successful implementation of a forward-defense strategy would, of course, require a far larger defensive force than was available in 1916. For Liggett, the passage of the Jones Act represented a possible solution to this dilemma, as it “would allow the United States to secure sufficient Filipino manpower to defend all of Luzon.” Such thinking implied that the United States would retain a military presence in the Philippines even after the islands had been formally granted their independence. Braisted makes the point that this does not appear to have been an opinion shared by President Wilson.

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73 Ibid., 253-4.
This evident confusion about the U.S.’s intentions and obligations in the Philippines would continue to characterize American foreign policy, and had not been completely resolved even by the time of the Japanese attack upon the islands in December 1941. The question of exactly when further steps should be taken toward the eventual independence promised in the Jones Act lingered without resolution throughout the 1920s. In 1924, in response to an inquiry from Manuel Roxas, Chairman of the Philippine Mission to the U.S., President Calvin Coolidge flatly stated that he believed the Philippines unready for independence:

If the time comes when it is apparent that independence would be better for the people of the Philippines from the points of view of both their domestic concerns and their status in the world, and if when that time comes the Filipino people desire complete independence, it is not possible to doubt that the American government and people will gladly accord it…Frankly, it is not felt that that time has come.  

It was not until 1932 that Congress finally sought to address the issue with the introduction of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, a bill strongly opposed by President Herbert Hoover. The Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act sought to establish a clear timeline for the independence of the Philippines, proposing “a ten-year period preliminary to complete independence.” During this period, Filipinos would assume increased sovereignty over the Commonwealth’s internal affairs, but the United States would retain responsibility for Philippine defense and foreign policy. The Act was passed by Congress over the veto of President Herbert Hoover on January 17, 1933. However, the Act encountered staunch opposition within the Philippines, led by the president of the Filipino Senate, Manuel Quezon. At the heart of Quezon’s objection was a provision of the Act “requiring an independent Philippine government to provide the United States with land for
Under Quezon’s leadership, the Philippine Senate rejected the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, which forced the U.S. Congress, and the incoming administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, to return to the issue in 1934.

The product of these new deliberations was the Tydings-McDuffie Act, passed by Congress on March 24, 1934. The Tydings-McDuffie Act bore a strong resemblance to its recently rejected predecessor. It authorized the Philippine legislature “to formulate and draft a constitution for the government of the Commonwealth of the Philippine Islands…” This provision was nearly identical to that put forward in the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, and authorized the government of the Commonwealth to exercise jurisdiction over domestic Filipino affairs. The Tydings-McDuffie Act also established a timeline for the complete withdrawal of the United States from the Philippines:

Sec. 10. (a) On the 4th, [sic] day of July immediately following the expiration of a period of ten years from the date of the inauguration of the new government under the constitution provided for in this Act the President of the United States shall by proclamation withdraw and surrender all right of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, or sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States in and over the territory and people of the Philippine Islands, including all military and other reservations of the Government of the United States in the Philippines (except such naval reservations and fueling stations as are reserved under section 5), and, on behalf of the United States, shall recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands as a separate and self-governing nation and acknowledge the authority and control over the same of the government instituted by the people thereof, under the constitution then in force.

Section 10 of the Act also contained the principal distinction between Tydings-McDuffie and Hare-Hawes-Cutting. The Tydings-McDuffie Act included no provision for the retention of military bases by the U.S. after the transition to complete independence. This change removed the primary objection to ratification that had been held by Quezon and his supporters, and the

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80 Ibid.
Philippine legislature promptly voted its approval of Tydings-McDuffie. The date for complete independence of the Philippines was eventually set as July 4, 1946.\textsuperscript{81} As Brian McAllister Linn notes, the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act forced U.S. military leaders to revisit a debate that had been raging for some time about the role of the army and the navy in the Philippines: “Should they plan for the future withdrawal from the western Pacific, or should they continue to plan for the nation’s current commitment to protecting the Philippines?”\textsuperscript{82} The outcome of this decision-making process would have serious consequences for War Plan Orange, as well as for the garrison troops who would be responsible for fulfilling its objectives. Shortly after the passage of Tydings-McDuffie, the question was called into even sharper relief by the impending lapse of the Washington Naval Treaty. In September 1932, the Japanese government had informed the State Department of its intention to abrogate the Washington Treaty.\textsuperscript{83} This event fueled fears of an impending conflict with Japan, but also offered an opportunity to improve the position of the Philippine garrison. As previously noted, the garrison’s small size meant that modern, well-prepared fortifications would be absolutely essential to the ability of American troops to hold out until the arrival of reinforcements. Construction of such fortifications, or even improvements to those already completed, had been expressly prohibited under the terms of Article XIX. With the treaty set to expire at the end of 1936, these restrictions would no longer be in effect.

Two factors, however, made it extremely unlikely that the impending lapse of the Washington Treaty would lead to the approval of additional funds for Philippine defense. First,\textsuperscript{81} The establishment of 1946 as the year of Philippine independence appears at first glance to conflict with the ten-year timeline established by Section 10 of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. This seeming discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that nearly two years elapsed between the passage of Tydings-McDuffie and the establishment of the Commonwealth government. Only once the commonwealth government was seated did the ten-year clock toward Philippine independence begin to run.\textsuperscript{82} Linn, Guardians of Empire, 177.
the U.S. Congress had been extremely parsimonious with funds for the U.S. army throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The demobilization of the army following the end of the First World War was little short of shocking:

Actual [army] strengths were fixed by appropriations at 118,750 for 1924-1926, but fell even lower than that, hitting 109,356 in 1926 and 110,940 in 1927 before being raised to 118,000 in 1928…In fact, the Secretary of War told the Chief of Staff in 1927 not to seek an increase, for Congress felt it had been generous in raising existing strengths from their depressed levels to 118,000. And it was to be a full decade before the army approached a strength of 165,000.84

Funding levels for equipment were no better than those for manpower, and in the mid-1930s, with Congress still preoccupied with the Great Depression, the allocation of scarce financial resources for fixed defenses in a far-flung colony likely did not command strong legislative support. Secondly, what little willingness might have existed for such expenditures was further undermined by the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. Under the terms of the 1934 legislation, American military installations in the Philippines would be turned over to the Filipino government at the time of independence. Given the strong reluctance Congress demonstrated against any significant increases in military expenditures in the 1920s and early 1930s, war planners were probably justified in doubting “that the American people would willingly spend the huge sums required to strengthen the Philippines.”85

The 1920s: The Orange Plan Revised

The strategic situation in the Pacific Ocean in the mid-1920s was radically different from that which had existed when the 1911 and 1914 versions of War Plan Orange were written.

83 Joseph Grew, telegraph to Cordell Hull, 18 September 1934, Department of State, FRUS: Japan 1931-41, I, 253-4.
Japan’s acquisition of the Mandate had given that country possession of several groups of islands directly astride the sealanes connecting the Philippines with Hawaii and the West Coast. The Washington Treaty had imposed limits upon the maximum size of the U.S. fleet such that it would not enjoy decisive superiority over Japan in the early stages of a war in the Western Pacific. Article XIX of the same treaty forbade any further improvements in the archipelago’s fortifications, or even in existing base facilities. Moreover, the movement for Philippine independence, first articulated in the 1916 Jones Act, raised the question of how long the United States military would retain responsibility for the defense of the islands.

Observing these changes, many senior officers and planners within both the army and the navy began to argue that the 1914 Orange Plan had become dated and unusable, and was in desperate need of revision. As early as 1919, a member of the Joint Board’s Joint Plan Commission, writing in response to Japan’s acquisition of the islands of the Mandates, suggested that the 1914 Orange Plan would be unlikely to guide U.S. actions in the event of war with Japan:

“At one time,” wrote Capt. H. E. Yarnell (USN), “it was the plan of the Navy Department to send a fleet to the Philippines on the outbreak of war. I am sure that this would not be done at the present time…it seems certain that in the course of time the Philippines and whatever forces we may have there will be captured.”

This belief resonated among many navy leaders, individuals collectively referred to as “cautionaries” by Edward Miller. Such men argued that the 1914 Orange plan was unnecessarily risky, and that the “Through Ticket” strategy would result in the U.S. fleet being methodically worn down by attrition as it steamed rapidly toward the Philippines. Even if the fleet arrived before the fall of the Philippine garrison, its strength would have been sufficiently reduced during its voyage that it would not be guaranteed to prevail in the ensuing showdown with the
IJN. Critics of the 1914 Plan argued that success in a war with Japan would require a more
deliberate, step-by-step campaign:

Blue control of the central Pacific…would assure it of a “free foot” because there an
offensive could proceed in jumps of moderate length and at a flexible pace consistent
with logistical means.  

In the eyes of such officers, Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates under the terms of the Treaty of
Versailles represented not a mortal threat to U.S. war planning, but rather an unexpected and
most welcome opportunity. It was taken as a given that any campaign against Japan would
require forward bases from which the navy could operate. However, as a result of the awarding
of the Mandate and Article XIX of the Washington Treaty it was the opinion of many that “the
Philippines and Guam could not be held, and the latter was physically unsuitable.” If this was
the case, the navy would have to find another site for its forward base, and the Mandates offered
a logical alternative. If the Carolines, Marshalls and Marianas had remained German property,
siting a U.S. base there would have been impossible, since War Plan Orange assumed that
Germany would remain neutral in the event of a U.S.-Japanese war. However, once control of
the islands had been transferred to Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, they became
legitimate targets. Moreover, since the terms of the Mandate awarded by the League of Nations
prohibited both the fortification of the islands and the establishment of naval base facilities
(though, as noted, Japan was widely suspected of violating these prohibitions), the Mandates
were viewed as soft targets which could be seized at relatively little cost. Edward Miller lauds
the thinking of officers such as chief of naval operations William Benson, who “had the wisdom

86 Harry E. Yarnell, Letter to Col. John McA. Palmer, 25 April 1919, NA, JB 325, Ser. 28C. Quoted in Morton,
“War Plan Orange,” 224.
87 Miller, War Plan Orange, 116.
88 Ibid., 116.
to see a demilitarized Mandate as a highway for a cautionary offensive rather than a barrier to an impossible direct thrust across the Pacific.”

This “cautionary” strategy of a step-by-step advance through the Mandate is generally accepted to have been a far wiser approach to U.S. war planning than the “thrusting” Through Ticket to Manila. However, it had important (and largely negative) implications for the defenders of the Philippines. The time required to seize the Mandate islands, construct base facilities, and muster the forces necessary for the next stage of the advance threatened to significantly increase the length of time that would elapse before U.S. forces could relieve the archipelago’s defenders. Indeed, doubts about the defensibility of the islands had gradually been spreading throughout the military even before Japan’s acquisition of the Mandate and Article XIX introduced additional complications. As early as August of 1916, Admiral A. G. Winterhalter, Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, had cabled his superiors at the Navy Department:

Believe successful defense all Philippines or any part impracticable, prohibitive cost needless sacrifice. Command of sea only proper security. Naval bases undefended useless.

This cable reveals Admiral Winterhalter’s concern that the Philippine garrison was incapable of providing security for the naval facilities at Manila Bay. He went on to urge the “appraisal for sale [of] all buildings and material not needed in opinion of Army and Navy Joint Board for defense of Manila Bay.” This recommendation reflected a growing consensus, at least among naval leaders, “that the Japanese could, if they wished, take both the Philippines and Guam before the U.S. Fleet could reach the Western Pacific.”

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89 Ibid., 113.
90 A. G. Winterhalter to Navy Department (Operations), 10 August 1916, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 49.
91 Ibid.
92 Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 228. This position was outlined in a 1921 “Estimate of the Situation Blue-Orange.”
This notion that the Philippines were indefensible provoked a strong backlash from Leonard Wood, then serving as the islands’ governor-general. Wood launched an immediate, tireless, and ultimately successful effort to demonstrate the value of the Philippines to the United States, and to push for their prompt relief in the event of war. In a letter to the Secretary of War in February of 1923, Wood attacked the cautionary argument, declaring that “Such a policy of abandonment spells, as I see it, in the last analysis national dishonor and the beginning of a retrogression which God alone can see the end of.”93 Realizing that the principal obstacle to the prompt relief of the Philippines revolved around the logistical problems inherent in crossing the Pacific, Wood argued that these issues could be resolved if American planners dedicated themselves to the task:

I have no doubt that the General Staffs of the Army and Navy have come to this gloomy point of view when stared in the face by seeming impracticable problems in logistics. It may seem to some an impossible problem to bring a preponderate American fleet across the Pacific to the Philippines and to supply them and base them here when they do arrive; but the American people have shown that impossible problems can be solved in war time, and the General Staffs should be directed to keep alive that problem and work it out to show just what could be done to make it possible.94

Wood’s campaign prompted his superiors in Washington to order the Joint Board to undertake a reevaluation of the U.S. position on Philippine defense. The Governor General’s hand can clearly be seen in the conclusions drawn by these reviews. In July, 1923, Army Chief of Staff John J. Pershing drafted a letter to Secretary of War John W. Weeks that differed dramatically in tone from the pessimistic conclusions offered by the navy in 1921. Citing the findings of the Joint Board review, the letter states that “the Philippine Islands constitute a potential commercial center upon the development of which the success of future American trade relations with the

93 Leonard Wood to Secretary of War, 5 February 1923, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 7, F 209.
94 Ibid.
Asiatic continent depends to a very large extent.” The letter acknowledged that the relative isolation of the islands would make them quite vulnerable to a Japanese attack, and argued that the loss of the islands would represent a severe blow to American prestige and would have a deeply negative effect upon public morale. The letter goes on to claim that “the scope of military and naval effort involved in successfully defending the Philippines would be incomparably less than the military and naval effort involved from recapturing the Philippines from Japan.” Most significantly, Pershing’s letter outlines tentative plans for the prompt dispatch of a relief expedition from the West Coast by way of Hawaii. Under the terms of this plan, the army was to concentrate “at least 50,000 troops in the Hawaiian Islands by D plus 10 days,” (i.e., no later than ten days after the start of hostilities). The navy would assemble sufficient transports to move the entire army contingent, as well as “a force of active units at least 25 per cent superior to the total Japanese naval strength.” The entire expedition was to be capable of sailing from Hawaii no later than two weeks after the outbreak of war.

This vision of U.S. strategy for a war with Japan would become an integral part of the 1924 Joint Army-Navy Basic War Plan Orange. The 1924 Orange Plan was significant insofar as it was the first such plan to be officially approved by the civilian chiefs of both the War and Navy Departments. However, in its effort to accommodate Wood’s stated objective of preventing the fall of the Philippines, the Joint Board had produced a plan with a number of serious shortcomings. Louis Morton has termed the 1924 Orange Plan “more of a statement of hopes than a realistic appraisal of what could be done.” It largely ignored the political

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95 John J. Pershing to Secretary of War, 7 July 1923, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 7, F 208. This particular conclusion is worth noting because it represents virtually the only instance I have uncovered in which an attempt was made to link the role of the army to the fulfillment of non-military U.S. policy objectives.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
developments that had occurred in the decade since the drafting of the 1914 version of WPO. Specifically, it disregarded the views of many naval planners that islands within the Mandate should be seized and developed as advance bases before the departure of any relief expedition to the Western Pacific. Under the 1924 plan, the fleet would depart Hawaii two weeks after hostilities had begun and would sail directly for Manila, passing north of Wake Island, south of Iwo Jima, past the northern tip of Luzon, and then down Luzon’s west coast to Manila Bay. There were several problems with this concept. First, the proposed sailing route did not specify exactly how refueling operations would be conducted while the fleet was en route to the Philippines, despite the fact that the voyage from Hawaii to Manila was beyond the maximum steaming range of all but the largest vessels. Secondly, while the proposed route would have allowed the fleet to steer well to the north of the Mandate islands, thereby steering clear of any light forces the Japanese might have stationed there, in the process the fleet would steam within a thousand miles of the Japanese home islands. This maneuver would have risked triggering a full-scale clash with the Japanese fleet. In such a clash, the U.S. fleet would have been at a serious disadvantage, as it would have had to deal with the problem of effectively screening a large number of slow, virtually defenseless auxiliary vessels (supply ships, transports, oilers, etc.) as well as engaging Japanese warships.

In *War Plan Orange*, Edward Miller argues that the 1924 Orange Plan symbolized “the reductio ad absurdum of imposing an impossible political goal onto a military campaign strategy.” He argues that army planners used the occasion to remind their naval counterparts that they, too, had a role to play in the war planning process, a lesson they wished to drive home given the degree to which army opinion had been ignored in the preparation of the 1914 plan.

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100 See Miller, *War Plan Orange*, p. 129. Miller’s book contains a map of the route envisaged in the 1924 plan.
101 Ibid., 131.
He also charges that the timelines laid out for the departure of the relief expedition from Hawaii were ridiculously optimistic, and flew in the face of much more pessimistic estimates from the navy’s War Plans Division:

OP-12 protested that not every ship could be manned and ready in ten days…The fleet might have to split itself and go over in echelons. Coontz [Robert E. Coontz, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet, the senior officer responsible for preparing the navy’s operational orders for carrying out Plan Orange] shrugged off the problem with an assumption he had championed as CNO, that a clairvoyant government would assure ample time for docking and stock ing by ordering mobilization forty days in advance of the war.\(^{102}\)

This optimism may have represented Coontz’s effort to comply with a 1923 navy directive that stressed the need to “establish at the earliest date American sea power in the Western Pacific in strength superior to Japan.”\(^{103}\) If this was in fact his goal, it was an unattainable one. Miller sums up the U.S. dilemma in the Pacific, “The United States could advance to the war zone either quickly or in superior strength. It could not do both.”\(^{104}\) The inability to successfully resolve this conundrum, along with the reassignment or retirement of several of its key authors, may explain why barely two years after its approval, the 1924 Orange Plan began to undergo a series of major alterations.

The revisions undertaken in 1926 did not constitute an entirely new Orange Plan. Rather, they represented, in the words of Louis Morton, an attempt “to correct ambiguities in the original plan and to clear up confusion in regard to timing and forces.”\(^ {105}\) The revised objectives outlined in the 1926 revision, however, demonstrate that a significant shift in thinking had taken place among those responsible for drafting it. In fact, the 1926 revision discarded the notion of a direct voyage of the U.S. fleet from Hawaii to Manila. Rather, the Joint Army-Navy Plan Commission

\(^{102}\) Ibid., 126.


\(^{104}\) Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 131.
(the organ of the Joint Board responsible for the drafting of war plans) “determined that henceforth war plans should be ‘based upon the probable necessity to seize a main outlying base for the fleet other than Manila Bay.’” The site for this “main outlying base” would, presumably, lie somewhere within the islands of the Mandate. The adoption of the 1926 revision to War Plan Orange represented, for all practical purposes, the Plans’ final abandonment of any notion of a direct thrust to the Philippines at the beginning of a U.S.-Japanese War.

The 1926 revisions were themselves short-lived, as in January 1928 the Joint Board ordered the drafting of a completely new Orange Plan. The 1928 version of War Plan Orange advocated a much more conservative strategy than the 1924 plan it replaced, but it still emphasized the desirability of the U.S. assuming the offensive in the early stages of a war. The plan envisaged the creation of a “trans-Pacific expeditionary force” to carry the war to the Japanese. However, the operational orders drafted by subordinate departments make clear that the first priority of the 1928 plan was ensuring the security of the Hawaiian Islands, rather than U.S. possessions in the Western Pacific:

[The] War Department undertakes to provide, at the earliest practicable date, adequate defense for the Hawaiian Islands, so as to hold these Islands for use as a main outlying naval base…First priority in assignment of recruits before M day [Mobilization Day] will be to units destined to service in the Hawaiian Islands. Only after Hawaii was deemed secure would the military turn its attention to the dispatch of the trans-Pacific expedition, which would depart “westward of the Hawaiian Islands only upon authorization of the President of the United States.” This provision represents a marked deviation from earlier versions of the Orange Plan, under which the military was expected to

106 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 173.
107 Hawaiian Department War Plan Orange, 1929 Revision, 22 November 1929, NA, RG 467, E 365, Box 68, AG # 222.
108 Ibid. (emphasis added)
reflexively launch itself at its foes at the earliest possible opportunity. Nevertheless, the general tenor of the 1928 plan was still clearly offensive rather than defensive. It was anticipated that within no more than 90 days of the issuance of mobilization orders (which, the plan recognized, might or might not correspond with the outbreak of war) no less than 40,000 Army troops and 10,000 Marines would be prepared to depart from Hawaii for targets in the Pacific.\(^{109}\) However, in the wake of the 1926 revisions to War Plan Orange, the understanding was that these troops would not take part in a relief expedition to the Philippines, but would rather be destined for Japanese possessions in the Mandate.

The adoption of the 1928 Orange Plan clearly had ominous implications for the American garrison in the Philippines. The growing pessimism about the ability to hold the islands was reflected in a 1929 admission by Joint Board officers that “we must plan on conditions as they are in reality and not as we would wish them to be.”\(^{110}\) The stated objectives of the Philippine garrison remained essentially unchanged from earlier versions—the holding of Manila and Manila Bay to preserve the facilities pending the eventual arrival of the U.S. fleet. However, the 1928 plan dramatically downgraded the priority assigned to the launch of a naval offensive in the Western Pacific. Under the highly aggressive 1924 plan, this offensive had been the top priority, reflecting the success achieved by Leonard Wood in advocating tirelessly for the relief of the Philippines. Just four years later, however, the Western Pacific offensive “was now ranked fourteenth” on the military’s list of objectives.\(^{111}\) The length of time required to secure the Hawaiian Islands, muster forces for the trans-Pacific expeditionary force, and seize and develop bases on Japanese islands in the Mandate—all of which would have to precede any attempt to relieve the Philippines—meant that in reality it was likely that the defenders would be overrun.

\(^{109}\) Ibid.
\(^{110}\) Linn, Guardians of Empire, 174.
before the arrival of a relief expedition. This conclusion would eventually lead a number of military officers to advocate a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Philippines. However, as Brian McAllister Linn notes, such arguments were never quite able to overcome resistance from optimists who clung to the hope that:

[Should] the garrison hold out, Manila Bay could provide a staging point for a campaign on Japan’s lines of communications; its naval facilities were the best available in the Far East; and it had excellent coast defenses.\(^{112}\)

The degree to which a number of prominent officers were willing to cling to hope about the possibility of a successful defense, against the clear implications of their own services’ intelligence estimates, reflects the schizophrenic attitude toward the Philippines that characterized American military thinking throughout the interwar period. It is to this curious phenomenon that we must now direct our attention.

The U.S. Military and the Philippine Question

The fact that the U.S. military, through the Joint Board, approved several versions of War Plan Orange during the interwar period implies that each iteration of the plan represented a general consensus among military leaders at that time. Upon closer examination, however, this does not appear to have been the case. What is obscured by the relatively straightforward strategies of the Orange Plans (regardless of their relative wisdom) is the environment of intense and often bitter disagreement within which they were developed. Many of these disputes stemmed either from rivalry between the army and the navy, or from differing perceptions held by the two services regarding the objectives of the U.S. military in the Pacific. However, significant disagreements periodically flared up within individual services. The army, in

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\(^{111}\) Ibid., 174.  
\(^{112}\) Ibid., 174.
particular, whipsawed back and forth repeatedly on the question of whether or not the Philippines could be successfully defended. A product of these conflicts was a willingness on the part of many military officers to disregard provisions of the Orange Plans with which they personally disagreed, often with highly negative consequences.

The first major dispute between the services—Leonard Wood’s revolt against assertions by navy officers such as A. G. Winterhalter that the Philippines were inherently indefensible, and that U.S. war plans should not be based upon the assumption that the islands could be held—has already been discussed. The product of Wood’s appeal to Army Chief of Staff Pershing was a public declaration of the military and commercial value of the islands, and an equally public commitment to their immediate relief in the form of the 1924 Orange Plan. If this resolution satisfied Wood, however, it was viewed very unfavorably by naval officers of the cautionary school, who regarded the 1924 plan as both foolhardy and reckless. These individuals were, as noted, successful in securing approval of the 1926 revisions which stripped the “Through Ticket to Manila” from War Plan Orange.

The debates that would continue to divide the military for the remainder of the interwar period may be divided into two broad categories, although it should be noted that on several occasions there was considerable overlap between the two. The first of these dealt with the potential impact of Philippine independence upon the role of the U.S. military in the islands, and the second related to the feasibility of carrying out the mission assigned to the Philippine garrison by War Plan Orange.

While the U.S. government took no official steps toward granting independence to the Philippines between the passage of the Jones Act in 1916 and the introduction of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act in 1932, the Joint Board took up the issue of the impact of independence
upon the U.S. military posture in the Far East on a number of occasions. The question first arose in March of 1924, when Secretary of War John Weeks presented the Joint Board with a request:

I desire that the question of our relations with the Philippine Islands from the military and naval viewpoints and the retention of military and naval bases in case independence is granted the Filipinos to be studied and reported on by the Joint Board at the earliest practicable date.¹¹³

Weeks added that he was seeking the Joint Board’s opinion because he believed he might soon be called to testify before a congressional committee considering the question of Philippine independence. The Joint Board, in turn, referred the question to the Joint Planning Committee. The reports produced by the JPC show the beginning of a conflict that would grow considerably more pronounced over the next fourteen years. The conclusions of the initial JPC report appear to indicate a consensus between the services. In its summary of conclusions, the report states that the army and navy agreed that:

1. The Philippine Islands should remain in the status quo.
2. In case independence is granted to the Philippine Islands, we should withdraw entirely; we should not retain military and naval bases; nor should we assume any obligation to guarantee the sovereignty of the Philippine Islands.¹¹⁴

However, when the Joint Board submitted its own conclusions to Secretary Weeks, a small but highly significant change in the position of the navy had been made. The report restated that it was the position of both services that ideally the Philippine Islands should remain “in the status quo” (i.e., under U.S. governance). In the event that independence was granted, however, the opinions of the two services diverged:

From the Military Viewpoint
3. In case independence is granted to the Philippine Islands, the Army should withdraw entirely. It should not retain military bases nor should we assume any obligation as to the Philippine Islands.…

From the Naval Viewpoint

¹¹³ John W. Weeks to Joint Board, 7 March, 1924, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 227.
¹¹⁴ Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, “Relations with the Philippine Islands, and Military and Naval Bases in Case Independence is Granted,” 12 March 1924, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 229.
In case independence is granted, the United States must retain a naval station in the Philippines. This station should include the Cavite naval reservation with all present Naval activities, with the addition of those transported from Olongapo, as a supply and repair station for the fleet.  

No explanation is offered as to why the position of the navy changed between the submission of the JPC’s report to the Joint Board on March 12 and the Board’s letter to Secretary Weeks on April 5. However, it is worth noting that this position on Philippine bases had been articulated by Rear Admirals Hilary P. Jones and Frank H. Schofield even before Secretary Weeks’ inquiry to the Joint Board. Testifying before Congress on March 1, 1924, Rear Admiral Jones declared a continued naval presence in the Philippines to be vital to the advancement of the country’s diplomatic objectives in the Far East:

> Our government has announced to the world as one of its major policies the Open Door in China. I am convinced that at some point and at some time such a policy will conflict to a more or less degree [sic] with the policies of other powers…The Navy considers that we must possess bases in the Philippines. They are vital to our operations in the western Pacific. So vital that I consider their abandonment tantamount to abandonment of our ability to protect our interests in the Far East.

Rear Admiral Schofield then elaborated upon Jones’ arguments. In his prepared statement, he was careful to stress that “Naval interest in the Philippines cannot be disassociated from national interest in the Philippines…The mission of the navy is to support national interest.” Schofield also stated that under certain circumstances it might be in the best interest of the United States to give up its military bases in the Philippines, but he appears to have done so in a way carefully calculated to convince his audience of their indispensability:

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115 Joint Board to Secretary of War, “Retention of Military and Naval Bases in the Philippine Islands,” 5 April 1924, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 229.
116 Rear Admiral Hilary P. Jones, testimony to Congress, 1 March 1924, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 227.
117 Rear Admiral Frank H. Schofield, testimony to Congress, 1 March 1924, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 227. This statement is worth noting because, in the years immediately following the signing of the Washington Treaty, Congress had enacted sweeping cuts in proposed naval construction, cuts that went far deeper than those to which the U.S. was committed by the naval limitation accords. An oft-cited reason for these cuts was a deep suspicion of “navalism” among many Congressmen, fears that appeared to be confirmed when naval officers sought to justify higher budget allocations by urging the building of a navy “second to none.” Schofield’s emphasis on the navy as
If it is the policy of the government to lessen [the U.S.’s Far East] influence, to retire from the Far East, to abandon commercial markets, to our rivals, and if this policy is to be a continuing one, reaching into the distant future, then there is no reason for the maintenance of naval bases in the Western Pacific.\textsuperscript{118}

The implication that the future of U.S. commercial and diplomatic policies hinged upon the possession of a Philippine naval base would present a strong justification for their retention. Schofield also recapitulated a talking point from John Pershing’s 1923 letter to Secretary Weeks, arguing that the cost of defending a Philippine base would be far less than that involved in recapturing the islands in the aftermath of a successful attack. His Congressional testimony also stressed what would become another consistent theme in the navy’s view of the Philippines—namely, that the physical defense of the bases was primarily a matter for the army:

As a peace arrangement [retention of Manila Bay and Corregidor] would be very desirable. As a war time arrangement, it would be rather futile, unless it carried with it the power to defend the position…by always having present strong military forces capable of delaying any aggression until such time as reinforcements might arrive from the United States.\textsuperscript{119}

These “strong military forces,” of course, were not present in the Philippines in 1924. Schofield’s testimony clearly indicates that the navy did not believe it possessed the ability to defend facilities it nonetheless declared to be highly beneficial. This statement appears to indicate a reversal in the position put forth by Asiatic Fleet commander A. G. Winterhalter in 1916 that the only means by which the Philippines could be adequately secured was by control of the waters surrounding the archipelago.

The pessimistic outlook on the prospects of the weak Philippine garrison mounting successful resistance against an invading army, was, as noted above, a key (if tacit) assumption of the 1928 Orange Plan. The authors of the 1928 plan, however, had not reckoned on the rise to

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
power of Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur was named Chief of Staff of the Army in 1930, and he would remain in the position until 1935. Much like Leonard Wood a decade before, MacArthur had a strong personal connection to the Philippine Islands. His father, Arthur MacArthur, had fought in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, and had later served as the Philippines’ military governor. The younger MacArthur had spent considerable time in the islands during his life, and his assignment immediately prior to assuming the post of Chief of Staff had been as the commanding general of the Philippine Department.

Once again following in the footsteps of Leonard Wood, MacArthur was “a man to whom the defense of the Philippines and the nation’s military policy in the Pacific were virtually identical.”

Given his well-documented familiarity with and affection for the islands, it comes as no surprise that he did not look favorably upon the 1928 Orange Plan, which postponed the relief of the Philippines until after a foothold in the Mandates had been secured. So deep was MacArthur’s disgust with the 1928 Orange Plan that, through the General Staff of the Army, he set about drafting an Army Strategical Plan that openly defied the provisions of War Plan Orange.

He began by ordering the Army’s War Plans Division to prepare a report on U.S. policy toward the Philippines based on the premises:

that the Philippines were the best available base in the western Pacific; that they were a potential center for U.S. trade with the Far East; that any radical change in their status would disrupt the Asian balance of power; that their loss would detract from American prestige and hamper national efforts to defend its Far Eastern interests; that the military effort to defend them was less than the effort to recapture them…

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119 Ibid.
120 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 174.
121 Following the adoption of each successive Orange Plan (or major revision to an existing plan), both services were expected to prepare “Strategical Plans.” These documents outlined the specific steps each service planned to carry out in order to fulfill the overall strategic concept of the Orange Plans.
122 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 175-6. Note that the list of premises upon which MacArthur ordered the Army War Plans Division to base its report is virtually identical to the arguments made in the early 1920s regarding the Philippine Islands’ importance to the United States.
Since the army planners were ordered to base their analysis upon a set of premises clearly intended to lead them to a particular conclusion, it is not surprising that the WPD’s report declared that the Philippines were an indispensable asset to the United States that must be protected. His arguments now supported by the conclusions of the WPD report, MacArthur then convinced the Army General Staff to alter its Strategical Plan Orange to include “a commitment of two infantry divisions, some 63,000 men, to the Philippines by way of the Suez Canal.”

These troops were to sail as soon as possible following a presidential mobilization order (which itself might or might not precede actual hostilities).

While MacArthur was successful in inserting the relief expedition into the 1933 Army Strategical Plan Orange, it is doubtful that any such mission could actually have been carried out in the event of war. The proposed revisions completely disregarded the enormous manpower shortages confronting the army during the mid-1930s. American military leaders had long held the understanding that in the event the country was thrust into war, the size of the army would be immediately and dramatically expanded through the enactment of a national draft. But if such a measure was to yield a large and effective fighting force, the majority of the regular army would be needed to train the masses of raw recruits flooding into the service. Simply put, the army would not have available the six divisions that MacArthur’s revised ASPO proposed to dispatch abroad. Even more seriously, “two of these divisions would be sent across thousands of miles of open ocean without protection to a destination that would, in all probability, be blockaded by an enemy fleet and under attack, if not actually occupied, by an invading army.”

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123 Ibid., 176. The plan also included orders for the simultaneous dispatch of two divisions each to the Panama Canal Zone and the Hawaiian Islands.
124 Ibid., 177.
only response to this criticism was a belief “that the Japanese would not seek to capture the Philippines as long as the U.S. fleet in the Pacific was stronger.”¹²⁵

MacArthur’s optimism about the prospects for a successful defense of the Philippines was clearly not shared by those who would be responsible for conducting that defense. In early 1934, the Joint Board was confronted by a near rebellion by the army and navy commanders in the Philippines. In March of that year, Admiral F. B. Upham, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, and Frank Parker, the Commanding General of the Philippine Department, co-authored a letter to their respective service chiefs. In the letter, the commanders protested that their respective assignments under the 1928 Orange Plan were unachievable given the scarce resources at their disposal:

The reduction of military and naval forces in the Philippine area has proceeded to such an extent that the carrying out of the missions at present assigned the Army and Navy in the event of an Orange War is impossible of accomplishment…The introduction of aerial warfare, gas, doubling the speed and power of surface ships, and other factors have combined to make the defense of Manila Bay and Corregidor futile with the forces available.¹²⁶

In their letter, Upham and Parker urgently requested reinforcements to both army and naval forces in the islands (a request they likely knew was almost certain to be rejected), and urged the denunciation of the Washington Treaty, an action that would have permitted improvements in Philippine fortifications and base facilities. In the event these requests could not be met, they requested that their respective orders under the 1928 Orange Plan be amended. The army, rather than seeking to hold the Bataan Peninsula and the entrance to Manila Bay, would instead fight a brief delaying action followed by an immediate retreat to Corregidor Island. The revised mission for the Asiatic Fleet was to be even less aggressive:

¹²⁵ Ibid., 176.
¹²⁶ F. B. Upham and Frank Parker, letter to Chief of Naval Operations and Army Chief of Staff, 1 March 1934, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 16, F 533.
Upon the earliest indication of an Orange War, dispatch to the eastward the cruiser AUGUSTA and Destroyer Squadron FIVE.\textsuperscript{127}

These ships represented the bulk of the Asiatic Fleet’s surface strength. The request that they be permitted to depart from Philippine waters at the outbreak of war meant that only the Fleet’s submarines and a handful of minor surface vessels would be retained to assist in the defense of the islands.

The changes that Upham and Parker suggested were unceremoniously rejected by the Joint Board. Douglas MacArthur, as the Board’s senior member, summarized its thinking in a June 20 letter to Secretary of War George Dern. The Board’s recommendation to the Secretary of War was:

That the “Army” and “Navy” decisions contained in the joint letter of the Commander-in-Chief and the Commanding General be disapproved as they conflict wholly or in part with the decisions and missions of Basic War Plan – Orange.\textsuperscript{128}

The Board argued that the missions assigned to the Philippine defenders under the 1928 Orange Plan were “sound and should not be changed.”\textsuperscript{129} In a separate document, Admiral Upham’s request that the Asiatic Fleet’s surface combatants be withdrawn was more emphatically slapped down. The authors of the appendix recommended that the Asiatic Fleet’s orders under Plan Orange be rewritten, but the rewritten section, rather than authorizing withdrawal, was to serve “the purpose of clarification and to inject into them the offensive spirit…”\textsuperscript{130} The implied rebuke of the Asiatic Fleet commander seems unlikely to have gone unnoticed.

At the same time the Joint Board does appear to have accepted its commanders’ complaint that the forces at their disposal were inadequate for a successful defense. The Joint

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} Douglas MacArthur to Secretary of War, 29 June 1934, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 16, F 533.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Lieut. Colonel Leroy P. Collins, USA, and Captain G. J. Meyers, USN, “Estimate of the Situation-The relation of defense of the Philippine Area to Joint Army and Navy Basic War plan – ORANGE,” Undated, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 16, F 533.
Planning Committee, in a May 9 memorandum to the Joint Board, recommended that the Philippine garrison be reinforced:

The following Philippine peace time forces should be augmented:
(1) Army mobile troop strength…
(2) Army harbor defense strength;
(3) Army antiaircraft defense strength;
(4) Army air force to 155 planes;
(5) U.S. Asiatic Fleet submarines to a total of 24;
(6) U.S. Asiatic Fleet patrol planes to 15 planes and one plane tender;
(7) Sixteenth Naval District Minecraft to one AM [Auxiliary Minelayer] and two DM [Destroyer Minelayers].

General MacArthur’s letter to Secretary Dern on June 29 stated that the Joint Board endorsed the reinforcement plan proposed by the JPC. However, with the exception of the proposed augmentation of the army’s mobile troop strength (which was to be accomplished by relocating the Army’s 15th Infantry Regiment to the Philippines from Tientsin, China), its was highly unlikely that the dispatch of additional reinforcements would be authorized by the government. It thus appears that in its recommendation, the Joint Board “was writing for the record, advocating policies that had little chance of approval.”

This episode may well represent the crowning absurdity of U.S. war planning during the interwar period. The Joint Board had restated its support for the strategic principles underlying the 1928 Orange Plan, declaring both these principles and the mission assigned to the Philippine garrison to be “sound.” At the same time, the Board admitted that the army and naval forces currently stationed in the Philippines were of insufficient strength to carry out the missions assigned to them by the plan. The Board’s proposed solution to this problem was the “augmentation” of the peacetime garrison of the Philippines. However, when the Board made this

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131 Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, 9 May 1934, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 16, F 533.
132 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 230.
recommendation, it did so with the full knowledge that the reinforcements it recommended would in all likelihood never be dispatched.

Perhaps in reaction to this atmosphere of unreality, by the mid-1930s a number of prominent army officers began to publicly declare that the American position in the Philippines was untenable, with some going so far as to advocate a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from the islands. Colonel Walter Krueger articulated this position in October of 1935. In a memorandum written for the Army War Plans Division, Krueger challenged the notion, championed for the past decade by individuals such as Leonard Wood and Douglas MacArthur, that the U.S. benefited from involvement in the Philippines. Krueger characterized the U.S. acquisition of the Philippines as “an accident, one fraught with grave consequences for us.”

He went on to argue that given the islands’ impending independence (resulting from the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act the previous year), and the weakness of the Philippine garrison, it was not advisable for the U.S. to maintain naval bases in the islands:

> For the foregoing reasons, it seems to be the height of folly for us to retain naval bases in the Philippines. Unfortified, they would be valueless; and any attempt to fortify them after December 31, 1936, when the denunciation of the Washington Treaty of 1922 becomes effective, would undoubtedly be provocative of war. At any rate, it is certain that we would not be permitted to complete such fortifications.

This declaration is indicative of a schism between the army and the navy over the value of bases in the Philippines, a gap that would grow wider in subsequent years. Krueger would expand on these arguments in a later memorandum to the Joint Board. Writing on behalf of the Army Section of the Joint Planning Committee, he outlined the fundamental weakness of the U.S. position in the western Pacific:

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…the cumulative effects of successive developments during the past two decades have so weakened our military position, vis-à-vis Japan, that today our position in the Far East is one that may result not only in our being forced into war, but into a war that would have to be fought under conditions that might preclude its successful prosecution.\(^{135}\)

Krueger admitted that because the U.S. would continue to exercise sovereignty over the islands until July 4, 1946, the retention of an American military presence for territorial defense and the maintenance of internal order would be necessary for the duration of the Commonwealth’s existence. However, he stressed that throughout that period, the islands represented “a military liability,”\(^{136}\) and argued forcefully that as soon as independence was granted, the United States should abandon any efforts to maintain a military presence in the Philippine archipelago.

Krueger’s sentiments echoed those of his superior at the Army War Plans Division, General Stanley D. Embick. Like MacArthur, who appointed him as head of the War Plans Division in early 1935, Embick had extensive knowledge of the Philippines, having served as the commander of the Corregidor Island fortifications in the early 1930s. Unlike the Chief of Staff, however, Embick viewed any attempt to hold the Philippines as an exercise in futility. Like his subordinate Krueger, Embick “was sure the Philippines could not be held and regarded American bases there as a liability.”\(^{137}\) During the mid-1930s, Embick would become the single most outspoken critic of both the American military presence in the Philippines and War Plan Orange. Reprising Krueger’s argument about the erosion of the U.S. military posture in the Western Pacific, Embick declared that “In the event of an Orange war under existing conditions, the early

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\(^{134}\) Ibid. The meaning of Krueger’s final sentence is unclear. It may indicate that he believed that beginning the process of improving the Philippine fortifications would trigger a Japanese attack, or it might simply represent a belief that the construction of additional fortifications would not be approved by the U.S. government.

\(^{135}\) Walter Krueger to the Joint Board, “Re-examination of our Military (including naval) Position in the Far East,” undated, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 17, File 573. This memorandum is particularly noteworthy because it contains a brief statement of concurrence from Stanley K. Hornbeck, the State Department’s Far East Bureau chief. This is one of only a handful of instances in which statements of policy during this period included input from both military and civilian leaders.

\(^{136}\) Ibid.

dispatch of our fleet to Philippine waters would be literally an act of madness." He was also in total agreement with his subordinate in his adamant opposition to the retention of military bases in the islands after 1946. In his 1935 memorandum, Embick argued that such an action would:

a. Continue us in an isolated and advanced military position vis-à-vis Japan that would be hazardous in the extreme…
b. Imply that the United States assumes responsibility for the defense of the Philippines…
c. In the event our military establishments should be threatened or seized by Japan, we would be obligated to dispatch huge expeditionary forces to the Philippines to support or to regain these establishments…

Embick urged that, in keeping with one of the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, the U.S. should immediately begin negotiations with foreign powers on a treaty that would neutralize the Philippines in perpetuity. Embick offered several reasons for the immediate commencement of negotiations, among them the fact that such action would be a clear signal to foreign governments of future U.S. intentions, and would allow time to examine their responses to this overture.

Like many senior U.S. planners of his era, Embick believed that Japan was the country with which the U.S. was most likely to find itself at war in the foreseeable future. However, as his writings clearly demonstrate, he did not believe it advantageous for the United States to engage Japan in the western Pacific in the early stages of a war. Instead, he recommended that the U.S. should concentrate on the establishment of “the line [from] Alaska-Oahu-Panama as our strategic peace-time frontier in the Pacific.” He argued that this course of action would be highly advantageous for the United States. The withdrawal of American forces from the western Pacific would lessen the likelihood of a clash with Japan, and would place the U.S. in a far more

139 Ibid.
advantageous position if such a conflict did occur. His paper concluded with yet another strongly worded warning:

The policy of our Government is definitely committed to the maintenance of peace…Our military commitments in the Philippine Islands are the gravest menace to the success of that policy. The provisions of the Independence Act obligate us to face that menace during the life of the Commonwealth Government, but there are no legal, moral, economic, political, or strategical reasons that would justify the assumption of a similar obligation after complete independence has been granted.

This statement clearly reflected the difference of opinion between the services that had first surfaced in the Joint Board’s response to Secretary Weeks’ 1924 inquiry.

Predictably, Embick’s broadside provoked a prompt response from the navy. On December 19, the Navy’s OP-12B (counterpart to the Army’s War Plans Division) presented its own evaluation of the situation. In a memorandum written for the Joint Planning Committee on December 19, OP-12 openly challenged the view advocated by Embick and the army, arguing that a pullout from the Philippines would endanger American national interest. The authors of the report declared that U.S. withdrawal and disengagement in the Far East would mean the abandonment of China (as well as the Philippines), and would “Leave to Great Britain the playing of a lone political hand against the rising ambition of the Japanese.”

A change in U.S. policy toward the islands:

[Would] make it impracticable to afford safety and protection in the Philippines and would automatically give up any control we may have or hope to have in connection with bases in the Philippine Islands, or of according some protection to the Philippines in their defense against absorption by some other national.

Ibid.

Embick boldly declared that if the U.S. adopted the Alaska-Oahu-Panama frontier, “Our vital interests will be invulnerable.” Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid. These are points with which army officers such as Embick would undoubtedly have been in full agreement. However, unlike their naval colleagues, they did not view the security of an independent Philippines as a matter of vital national interest for the United States. Thus, they supported a U.S. withdrawal from the islands in
The report concluded with a recommendation that no changes be made to the U.S. military posture in the Far East, as the program of naval rearmament launched early in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt meant that the balance of power in the Pacific was shifting in favor of the U.S. The implication of the report was that, given time, the balance would shift to the point that the Japanese would be unwilling to risk provoking war with the United States, but that they might be emboldened if the U.S. chose to withdraw completely from the Philippines and, by extension, the entire western Pacific.

The debate over the value of an American military presence in the Philippines would continue to divide the services for the remainder of the interwar period. In fact, by the following year, the argument had become sufficiently heated that word of was leaked to the general public. In late 1936, the *New York Times* ran a pair of stories that described, with a high degree of accuracy, the fault lines dividing the army and navy. The language used in the stories clearly demonstrates that the *Times*’ correspondents were being fed information from within the upper echelons of both services. The first article, which ran on October 9, describes the army’s position in language lifted almost *verbatim* from that used by General Embick:

> Army strategists, as far as their war plans can be divined by chance discussions, believe that the United States would be invulnerable on its Pacific approach if its line of defense were drawn from Alaska through Hawaii and Panama. Any outposts west of that line would be only costly liabilities in time of war, in their opinion.  

The same piece declared that the navy “is by no means convinced that [a Philippine base], well defended, might not be an integral and indispensable part of the national defense.” Both of

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146 Ibid.
these statements clearly reflect the arguments put forward by the services in the classified documents prepared for the consideration of the Joint Board.

A second story on the subject appeared two months later. This piece offered slightly more detail than the article that had run in October, and was more openly sympathetic to the position of the army. It clearly articulated the weakness of the army presence in the Philippines, and its evaluation of the position of the navy reads as through it could have been written by Walter Krueger or Stanley Embick:

Our fleet has now so lost strength relative to Japan’s, the argument continues, that it is doubtful it could go into action on equal terms in the western Pacific.147 The article also stressed the relative isolation of the Philippines as opposed to, for example, the British stronghold at Singapore, which possessed “supporting bases in its immediate rear.”148 The article’s tone clearly reflected the view that a successful defense of the Philippines would present a difficult, if not impossible task for the United States, a view clearly more in keeping with the position of the army than with that of the navy.

Whatever degree of public sympathy they may have garnered, Embick and his colleagues were ultimately unsuccessful in securing either the neutralization of the Philippines or a withdrawal of the American forces stationed there. They were, however, able to surreptitiously sabotage some of the more questionable strategic planning that had been conducted at General MacArthur’s behest:

One of Embick’s first efforts after he assumed the directorship of the WPD was to negotiate an agreement with the navy that vitiated MacArthur’s plan for the immediate relief of the Philippines.149

Under the agreement worked out by Embick, the notion of the dispatch of troops via the Suez Canal was abandoned, and the notion of the step-by-step campaign across the Pacific by way of

148 Ibid.
the Mandate was reinstated. The final obstacle, of course, was that the proposed changes still needed the approval of the Chief of Staff. For reasons that are not entirely clear, MacArthur approved the recommendations without exception, terming them “minor revisions” to the Orange Plan. Brian Linn notes that this curious decision on the Chief of Staff’s part indicated “either a complete lack of strategic consistency or total misunderstanding…”\textsuperscript{150} It appears that Embick may have been less than completely candid with his superior regarding the nature of his revisions. When presenting them for MacArthur’s signature, he claimed:

\[\text{[That] the fleet merely wished to perfect its line of communication before setting sail for the western Pacific, that the army should support it, and that the amendments altered only the \textit{initial} goal of the offensive. The Orange Plan “had not been changed materially,” he added disingenuously.}\textsuperscript{151}\]

In discussing MacArthur’s decision, on its face so inconsistent with his longtime attachment to the Philippines and commitment to their defense, Edward Miller declares that “An irony of history (missed by his biographers) was that in 1935 MacArthur signed the death warrant of Bataan and Corregidor.”\textsuperscript{152} This claim is more than a bit hyperbolic. Long before 1935 a significant body of military opinion had arrived at the belief that the Philippine garrison’s death warrant had already been signed, and that all that remained was the scheduling of its execution—this reasoning was the foundation on which the army WPD’s advocacy of a complete U.S. withdrawal from the islands had been built.

The task of Embick and his fellows became much easier in the middle of 1935, when Douglas MacArthur resigned from the Army and was dispatched to the Philippines to serve as a military advisor to Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon. MacArthur’s successor as Chief of Staff, Malin Craig, was highly sympathetic to the army’s “cautionaries.” As relations between

\textsuperscript{149} Linn, \textit{Guardians of Empire}, 179.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 179.
\textsuperscript{151} Miller, \textit{War Plan Orange}, 183.
the U.S. and Japan began to erode in the late 1930s, Craig instructed the War Plans Division to undertake a formal review of War Plan Orange (a revision of the 1928 plan that had been approved in 1935). The review’s conclusions reflected the opinion of the majority of the WPD’s membership that the first strategic priority of the U.S. in the Pacific should be the security of the “strategic triangle” of Alaska-Oahu-Panama. Craig endorsed the WPD’s assertion that the existing Orange Plan was “in the light of its possible application under the international conditions now existing...unsound in general and specifically…wholly inapplicable to the present conditions.” He then encouraged the Joint Planning Committee to draft a new Orange Plan based upon:

The assumption initially by both services, of a position in readiness covering the Pacific Coast of the Continental United States and that sector of the Eastern Pacific extending westward to include the general line – Alaska – Oahu – Panama.

The memorandum also encouraged the preparation of a number of “exploratory studies” of options that might be available to the services after the assumption of the “position of readiness,” but stressed that these plans would “be tentative only.”

The process that would eventually produce the last of the Orange Plans would not be a smooth one, however. The Joint Planning Committee soon found itself deadlocked between competing army and navy positions. The Army’s representatives on the committee, “interpreting their instructions literally…drew up a plan, defensive in nature, that would provide for the security of the continental United States and the Pacific Ocean as far west as Hawaii.”

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152 Ibid., 183.
153 The 1935 revisions had not significantly altered the provisions of the 1928 Orange Plan. They were conducted primarily to bring it into accord with changes in the army’s mobilization plans. See Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 240.
154 Stanley D. Embick to A.C. of S., War Plans Division, 5 November 1937, NA, RG 165, E 365, Box 68, AG # 225.
155 Malin Craig to Joint Planning Committee, 10 November 1937, NA, RG 165, E 365, Box 68, AG # 225.
156 Ibid.
navy members of the planning committee asserted “that American strategy could not be limited to a purely defensive position in readiness, but should aim at the defeat of the enemy.” On two successive occasions, the JPC was unable to arrive at a compromise between these two positions, choosing instead to submit split reports to the Joint Board. Frustrated at the JPC’s inability to achieve consensus, the Board assigned the process of working out a compromise to General Embick and Admiral James O. Richardson, the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations. The proposal they produced in February of 1938 “embodied the essential point of view of both services, with the result that its provisions were less than clear.” The 1938 Orange Plan was the first such document to be significantly influenced by the notion that the United States might confront other threats at the same time that it was involved in a conflict with Japan. It accepted that the first priority of the armed forces was the security of the Western Hemisphere and the continental United States, and as a result declared that in the early stages of a U.S.-Japanese conflict the armed forces would adopt a generally defensive stance within Embick’s “strategic triangle.” As a concession to the navy, Army Chief of Staff Craig:

[Offered] to cooperate in writing several contingent plans that would be flexible, feasible, and relevant to vital interests and that would suggest loosely what might be done with means at hand without projecting actions beyond initial steps or prescribing them in detail…Specifically, the army would draw up a Strategic Concentration Plan for the position in readiness while the navy prepared a Strategic Operations Plan setting forth clear choices for joint offensives west of the triangle.

In the event that the U.S. did not find itself confronted with a significant threat to its territory in the early stages of a war, “the Navy could then proceed to take the offensive against Japan…”

The plan’s projected campaign once more took the form of a step-by-step advance across the Pacific, with initial operations being directed against the Mandates, and then gradually

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158 Ibid., 245.
159 Ibid., 247.
160 Miller, War Plan Orange, 225.
progressing westward. No significant change was made in the mission of the Philippine garrison, which was still ordered to hold the entrances to Manila Bay for as long as possible. However, the 1938 Plan, more than any of its predecessors, implied that the Philippines would eventually be lost, for the navy “avoided commitment on the time required for [the progressive advance]—an essential point in any plan for the defense of the Philippines.”

Edward Miller argues that the “compromise” worked out between the services in fact represented a triumph for the navy’s strategic vision over that of its army counterparts. He declares that the Fleet War Plans Officer, Charles M. “Savvy” Cooke, “had outfoxed the colonels,” because, as the officer most responsible for the Strategic Operations Plan:

Every hypothetical situation climaxed with a joint attack against Japan. No matter that the army considered Pacific objectives “in no wise commensurate with the time, effort, and cost involved,” or that the campaign might fritter away the heavy bombers of the GHQ Air Force…Hitler might delay the naval attack of Plan Orange, but he could not stop it.

This assertion appears to offer an incorrect interpretation of the army’s attitude toward a conflict with Japan. While throughout the 1930s officers such as Krueger and Embick had argued that American withdrawal from the western Pacific would greatly reduce the likelihood of war with Japan, they were fully prepared to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure victory if such a conflict did occur. They realized, however, their own service’s utter inability to commit large reserves of manpower and equipment to the early stages of a campaign against Japan, for the simple reason that the army did not possess them. Confronted by the harsh reality of limited resources, the army urged that first priority be given to hemispheric defense until such time as the armed forces “[were] built up…to a strength commensurate with our national potential

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162 Ibid., 248.
capabilities...” Once this buildup had occurred, Army planners were quite willing to make whatever contributions were necessary to ensure final victory over Japan.

On paper, at least, the 1938 Orange Plan appears to lay out a reasonably coherent and sound strategy. Completely absent was any notion of the much-criticized “Through Ticket to Manila” thrust. The Japanese possessions that were to be the initial targets of Plan Orange were lightly defended outposts in the Mandates, not hardened fortresses guarded by massive garrisons and supported by the Japanese Combined Fleet. Yet despite this basic soundness, the authors of the 1938 Orange Plan still refused to fully grapple with the thorny issue of the Philippines. Despite implicit assumptions that they could not be held, nowhere was the hopelessness of the American garrison’s position plainly laid out. As subsequent events would demonstrate, the country might have been better served if this particular loophole had been firmly closed.

The emerging international environment of the late 1930s eventually prompted the permanent retirement of the Orange Plans. Each of them had been laid out strategies for a war between the United States and Japan in which those two nations would be the sole participants. By the late 1930s U.S. planners could no longer make this assumption. The rapid growth of the power of the Nazi regime in Germany, and the rapid deterioration in relations between Germany and the democracies of Western Europe forced army and navy leaders to consider various scenarios in which the United States found itself engaged in a European conflict. It was this logic that, in the fall of 1938, led president Roosevelt to order the preparation of new war plans based upon his own strategic thinking. The assumptions that would serve as the foundations of the new “Rainbow” plans included:

1) expected friction and possible war with Germany and Italy; 2) cooperation with Britain and France; 3) unity among nations of the Western Hemisphere; and 4) increased diplomatic pressure to avert war with Japan.165

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Between 1939 and 1941, five distinct Rainbow Plans were developed. Some, such as Rainbow One and Rainbow Four, focused exclusively upon hemispheric defense. Others envisioned the United States as one of a coalition of allied nations fighting against a collection of powers including Germany, Italy, and potentially Japan. Rainbow Five, the last of the series, would ultimately be the plan under whose direction the U.S. military would go to war.

Rainbow Five was drafted by the Joint Board following talks with a British naval delegation in Washington, D.C. in January 1941. The plan’s most noteworthy departure from the Orange Plans that had preceded it was its endorsement of the “Germany first” strategy. This, of necessity, relegated the Pacific Theater to the status of a secondary consideration:

War with Japan would be delayed or avoided. If Japan should attack, the United States Fleet would undertake defensive operations in the Pacific. Any offensive action by America would be to weaken Japan’s economy or support the defenses of Singapore.\[166\]

In its prescriptions for the conduct of a war with Japan, however, Rainbow Five was clearly a direct lineal descendant of the 1938 Orange Plan. The missions assigned to American forces in the Pacific were essentially identical to those outlined in 1938. It is thus fair to say that the revolt that arose against the provisions of Rainbow Five in mid-1941 was, in a very real sense, also a revolt against the last of the Orange Plans.

The instigator of this revolt was, once again, Douglas MacArthur. Following the end of his tenure as Army Chief of Staff, MacArthur had resigned from active-duty service. He was subsequently dispatched to the Philippines to serve as a military advisor to Philippine President Manuel Quezon. In this role, MacArthur’s chief responsibility had been the development,

\[166\] Ibid., 117.
recruitment, training, and equipping of the nascent Philippine Army.\textsuperscript{167} In April 1941, as
relations between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, he had drafted a letter to
Stephen Early, president Roosevelt’s secretary, “asking him to approach the President with the
idea of recalling him to active duty as commander of a unified Army command in the Far
East.”\textsuperscript{168} At the time, Roosevelt took no action, but on July 26 he approved a suggestion from
Army Chief of Staff George Marshall calling the Philippine Army into U.S. service. On the
same day, “the War Department established the new Far Eastern command and appointed Mac-
Arthur, with the rank of major general, as commander.”\textsuperscript{169}

As MacArthur settled in to his new command, he began the process of evaluating the war
plans that would guide the defense of the Philippines if war came. What he found disturbed him
greatly:

When MacArthur received the new war plan, Rainbow-5, in October, he was surprised to
learn that it contemplated a defense area limited to the entrances to Manila and Subic
Bays and by forces already in the islands, with no reinforcements to be expected and the
loss of the Philippines implicitly accepted.\textsuperscript{170}

MacArthur was not alone in his distaste for the existing plans for the defense of the islands. The
man he had replaced as the senior American commander in the Philippines, George Grunert, had
been equally unhappy with his assigned mission. In July 1940 Grunert had paid a visit to
MacArthur during which he proposed a significant modification of the plans guiding the islands’
defense:

\textsuperscript{167} For an account of MacArthur’s efforts to establish the Philippine Army, see D. Clayton James, \textit{The Years of
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 548.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, 590. Note that the army MacArthur was appointed to command (United States Army Forces Far East, or
USAFFE) in effect replaced the U.S. army’s Philippine Department. The Department’s commander, Major General
George Grunert, was ordered back to the United States in late October. A personality conflict between Grunert and
MacArthur is generally believed to have been the reason for the former’s dismissal.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 595. Note that the mission assigned to the Philippine garrison by Rainbow Five is for all practical
purposes identical to that outlined in the 1924, 1928, and 1938 Orange Plans.
He had found the existing plan “inadequate,” General Grunert said, largely as a result of the failure to make use of Philippine Army troops. Grunert summarized the new basic plan for General MacArthur: The regular [i.e., U.S.] army would conduct beach defense operations while the Philippine Army mobilized; Philippine Army soldiers would then relieve United States Army troops which would be “employed in expelling landed enemy forces…[or] in open land warfare.”

MacArthur heartily endorsed Grunert’s plan, with the result being that the Philippine Department commander authored a new set of orders for the defense of the islands, one that significantly altered the garrison’s mission. The 1938 revision to the Army and Navy’s Joint Defense Plan for the Philippines had outlined a defense plan virtually identical to that proposed in the Joint Board’s 1938 Orange Plan:

4. JOINT MISSION. To hold the entrance to MANILA BAY, in order to deny MANILA BAY to the enemy naval forces.

5. DISCUSSION OF JOINT MISSION. This mission will involve the holding of the Harbor Defenses of MANILA BAY and the heights of MARIVELES to the last extremity.

Grunert, however, proposed a much more active defense, one that would seek to disrupt enemy landing operations, the point at which invading troops would be at their most vulnerable. The change in the army’s mission can be seen in a 1940 G-3 Annex to the Philippine Department’s Orange Plan:

(4) Operations under Missions:
   (a) By Army Forces:
       (1) To prevent enemy landings at SUBIC BAY and elsewhere.
       (2) Failing in this, to eject the enemy at the beaches.
       (3) Failing in this, to delay to the utmost the advance of the enemy.
       (4) To withdraw as a last resort the mobile forces to the BATAAN PENINSULA and defend the entrance to MANILA BAY.

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172 Army and Navy Joint Defense Plan for Philippine Island Coastal Frontier (1938 Revision), NA, RG 407, E 365, Box 89, F 238.
173 G-3 Annex to Philippine Department Plan – Orange (1940 Revision), NA, RG 407, E 365, Box 89, F 326. It may seem odd that the Philippine Department’s commander drafted operational plans that differed sharply from the mission assigned to the garrison by the Joint Board. However, Richard Meixsel makes the argument that both Grunert and, later, MacArthur, were completely within their rights to draft plans which they felt offered the best opportunity of conducting a successful defense. He notes that “In practical terms…the wording of Washington-
Grunert believed that his “WPO-3” was far superior to previous plans that called for an immediate withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula. WPO-3’s advantages included “the ability to gather more supplies; to make use of all of the air facilities on Luzon (rather than consigning them immediately to the enemy)…[and] to make ‘extensive use of the armed forces of the Philippine Commonwealth.’” Following his appointment as head of USAFFE, General MacArthur’s plans for the defense of the archipelago would in fact conform far more closely to the 1940 revisions prepared by Grunert than to the provisions of the 1938 Orange Plan.

In addition to adopting Grunert’s WPO-3 as the guiding strategy for the defense of the Philippines, MacArthur began peppering his superiors in Washington with requests for additional equipment. In a surprising reversal of standing policy, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall acceded to MacArthur’s wishes, and the War Department launched an eleventh hour effort to move men and materiel to the Philippines:

The first sign of this change came on 31 July when General Marshall approved a proposal by the War Plans Division to reinforce the Islands’ defense “in view of the possibility of attack.” The next day MacArthur was informed that he would receive substantial reinforcements and Marshall told his immediate staff, “It was the policy of the United States to defend the Philippines.”

In the four months that remained before the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor, the forces at MacArthur’s disposal were substantially augmented. Army reinforcements consisting of a coastal artillery regiment and two tank battalions reached the Philippines in September. The War Department also approved a request from MacArthur to redefine his responsibilities to include the defense of the entire Philippine archipelago (previous defense plans had concentrated designated missions for the army in the Philippines was essentially meaningless…if defending likely invasion points elsewhere on Luzon was the best way of safeguarding the Bay, the local commander was free to pursue that option.”

almost exclusively on the defense of Luzon). Word of the Department’s approval was carried to the Philippines by Major General Lewis Brereton, who had been dispatched to the Philippines to serve as MacArthur’s air commander:

After reading Marshall’s note, MacArthur, in Brereton’s words, “acted like a small boy who had been told that he is going to get a holiday from school.” He jumped up from his desk, threw his arms around Brereton, and exclaimed, “Lewis, you are just as welcome as the flowers in May.” Turning to his chief of staff, General Sutherland, he said, “Dick, they are going to give us everything we have asked for.”

Brereton’s assignment as air commander resulted from a massive increase in the size of the Far East Air Force. As late as July 1941 the U.S. air complement in the Philippines had been no more than “a token force.” Starting in October, however, a steady stream of reinforcements had begun to arrive. Among the new arrivals in the Philippines were substantial numbers of P-40E interceptors, then the army’s most advanced fighter, and 35 B-17 heavy bombers.

These new arrivals represented only a portion of the total reinforcements MacArthur was slated to receive, “By March 1942 the War Department planned to have 165 heavy bombers in the Philippines.” The Japanese attack upon the United States on December 7/8, however, prevented the dispatch of additional aircraft to the F.E.A.F.

The question of why, precisely, the War Department chose to reverse its longstanding policy with regard to the reinforcement of the Philippines has been the subject of considerable debate. Scholars of the period have put forward a number of theories that seek to explain the decision. One of the more frequently cited arguments is that George Marshall and his War

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176 Ibid., 33.
177 Ibid., 67. The enthusiasm with which MacArthur greeted Brereton’s arrival stands in stark contrast to the bitter recriminations that would be exchanged between the two men following the destruction of the bulk of the U.S. Far East Air Force by the Japanese on the opening day of the war.
178 Ibid., 37.
179 Ibid., 38-43. By December 1st, Morton notes, the F.E.A.F. had at its disposal 277 aircraft of all types, including 35 B-17s and 107 P-40Es. This represented the greatest concentration of modern U.S. Army aircraft anywhere outside the continental United States. Hawaii, by contrast, was home to 231 Army aircraft, including just 12 B-17s and 39 P-40Es.
180 Ibid., 38.
Department colleagues became caught up in Douglas MacArthur’s fervent contention that the Philippines could be successfully held if only he were provided with the necessary resources. During his stint as military advisor to President Quezon, MacArthur had declared as his goal:

[To] create a defensive force of such strength as to make an invasion so costly…that “no Chancellory in the World, if it accepts the opinions of the military and naval staffs, will ever willingly make an attempt to willfully attack the Philippines.”\(^1\)

In MacArthur’s view, the principal instrument of this defense would be the Philippine Army. In the words of one of his biographers, MacArthur exhibited “overconfidence and unjustified optimism as to the abilities of himself, his staff and the untried Filipino soldiers.”\(^2\) In the period leading up to the war, it has been argued, this confidence, conveyed in highly optimistic reports to Washington, eventually spread to the Chief of Staff. From thousands of miles away, the Philippine army may have appeared to be a very formidable force. At the time of the Japanese attack, it possessed a single regular army division of approximately 4,000 men, as well as ten reserve divisions totaling approximately 76,000 men.\(^3\) Unfortunately, these raw numbers masked the fact that in the fall of 1941, the Philippine army existed primarily on paper. It was woefully under equipped, many of its units had not yet been fully mobilized at the time of the Japanese invasion, and a large percentage of its men were virtually untrained:

The men of the 31st Infantry were more fortunate than those in the other regiments, many of whom never even fired a rifle before entering combat…The field artillery units received even less training than the infantry…the signal company was commanded by a Filipino who had received inadequate training at Fort McKinley. This man, who was to be division signal officer, was unable to establish radio communication with units a mile away in the same camp.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Ibid., 11.
\(^2\) James, The Years of MacArthur, I, 609.
\(^3\) Ibid., 594.
\(^4\) Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 29-30.
However, because MacArthur was responsible for communications with Washington, the fact that the Philippine Army was far from the force he claimed it to be may have eluded the War Department’s attention.

A second component of the argument that Marshall and his General Staff colleagues had become convinced of the U.S.’s ability to hold the Philippines stems from advances in aviation technology before the war, specifically the development of the legendary Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. Possessing a much greater range and a heavier bomb load than any aircraft then in the U.S. arsenal, the B-17 appeared to hopeful planners to represent an opportunity to keep the Japanese at arm’s length from the island. In late 1940, the War Plans Division of the Army enthusiastically “proposed that henceforth ‘principal reliance would be placed on air power, not only to deter an attack on Luzon, but to defeat one if made.’” The planners expressed the hope that in sufficient numbers, B-17s could destroy an invasion fleet before it reached Philippine shores, or perhaps even launch raids on the Japanese home islands.

Other scholars have offered a less charitable explanation for Marshall’s decision to dispatch front-line equipment to the Philippines. This theory argues that Marshall’s decision stemmed from opposition within the military to President Roosevelt’s policy of providing military aid to Great Britain and, later, the Soviet Union:

It is not very well appreciated today that many members of the Roosevelt administration, during the late spring of 1940, were violently opposed to the policy of draining America of military hardware for the purpose of supplying Britain and (before she fell out of the

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186 Ibid, 182. This last proposal was one of the War Department’s greatest flights of fantasy. Under this theory, B-17s would launch from Philippine bases, conduct raids over Japan, and then fly on to bases in the Soviet Union, where they would rearm and then return to the Philippines by way of Japan. This proposal neglected to explain how and why the Soviets might be convinced to abrogate their neutrality agreement with Japan. The notion of using B-17s to destroy a hostile invasion fleet proved equally forlorn. Despite extraordinary claims about the accuracy of the Flying Fortress’ Norden bombsight, wartime experience was to demonstrate that hitting a moving ship with bombs dropped from high altitude was a virtual impossibility.
war in June) France. No top official in Washington was more convinced of the un-wisdom of sending increased aid across the Pacific than the Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall. 187

Marshall’s objection to the dispatch of military aid overseas was based on a pair of arguments. The first of these was a belief that the fall of France had doomed Britain to a similar fate. If a British surrender was, in fact, inevitable, than any aid sent from the United States would ultimately be wasted—or, worse, captured by a victorious Germany and turned against the U.S.

The second problem, from the Chief of Staff’s view, was that the U.S. armed forces were in the midst of a program of massive expansion. The country’s industries had not yet been fully reconfigured for war production, and as a result the armed forces in general, and the army in particular, were suffering from severe equipment shortages. With the U.S. unable to fully equip its own armed forces, the transfer of vital equipment to the forces of a foreign government seemed incomprehensible to Marshall. He made his case in a conversation with Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau in May 1940, shortly after Winston Churchill had requested that the U.S. transfer to Britain a large number of World War I-era destroyers:

‘We have got to weigh the hazards in this hemisphere of one thing or another.’ Meeting the British request would only amount to ‘a drop in the bucket on the other side, and it is a very vital necessity on this side and that is that. Tragic as it is, that is that.’ 188

While Marshall was by no stretch of the imagination an Anglophobe, he viewed the task of equipping and training the U.S. army as his overriding responsibility, and anything that threatened to divert scarce resources overseas represented a threat to the success of his mission. Viewed in this light, some scholars have maintained that “the subsequent Army Air Corps

188 Ibid., 748.
strategy of reinforcing the Philippines with B-17s [was] aimed in part at deploying…planes that
FDR might otherwise have given to the British and Russians.”^{189}

A final explanation for the War Department’s behavior suggests that its leaders,
confronted with a crisis of increasing magnitude that they lacked the resources to successfully
address, simply succumbed to wishful thinking. The most forceful proponent of this theory is
Russell Weigley. Commenting on the decision to reverse the provisions of the 1938 Orange
Plan, Weigley writes:

> Even MacArthur’s hypnotic talents…probably could not have reversed the Orange Plans
> had the army and the government not desperately wanted to escape their pessimistic con-
> clusions about the Philippines.^{190}

This desperate search for a way out of what officers such as Embick and Krueger had declared to
be an inescapable trap led the War Department leadership to grasp at whatever straws offered
themselves. The notion of the Philippine Army successfully repelling an invasion was one such
chimera, the possibility of B-17s smashing an invasion force at sea was another. The thinness of
the army’s veneer of optimism, Weigley argues, can be seen in the fact that “determinedly
optimistic pronouncements alternated with army warnings that the United States should do all it
could to avoid fighting Japan, because unpreparedness persisted…”^{191}

Whatever the reason for the War Department’s decision to reinforce the Philippines, in
hindsight it clearly demonstrated questionable judgment. In addition to the deficiencies in its
training noted above, the Philippine Army was desperately short of equipment, a fact the War
Department should have been perfectly well aware of.^{192}  Furthermore, no matter how many

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^{190} Weigley, “The Role of the War Department and the Army,” 182.
^{191} Ibid., 185.
^{192} The Philippine Army was equipped almost exclusively with surplus materials from the U.S. army, most of them
obsolete. Had the War Department bothered to consult its own records, it would have been a relatively simple
process to determine exactly how much (or, rather, how little) materiel had been provided to the Filipinos. A similar
examination of the requests submitted by Douglas MacArthur during his stint as President Quezon’s advisor might
reinforcements were funneled into the Philippines, or how many supplies were stockpiled there, the garrison’s survival (MacArthur’s optimistic pronouncements notwithstanding) would still be dependent upon the arrival of a relief expedition. Yet the prospects for such relief were slim, to say the least:

Informed naval opinion estimated that it would require at least two years for the Pacific Fleet to fight its way across the Pacific. There was no plan to concentrate men and supplies on the west coast and no schedule for their movement to the Philippines. Even with the reinforcements promised to MacArthur, the position of the Philippine garrison was grim. The provisions of Rainbow Five would confine the operations of the American fleet to the eastern Pacific in the early stages of a war. The skeletal U.S. Asiatic Fleet could not seriously contest Japanese control of the waters surrounding the Philippines. Even if the Philippine Army was somehow miraculously able to repulse an invasion, Japanese control of the sea would sever the defenders’ supply lines, and gradually erode their ability to resist effectively. Even had the War Department been allowed to complete its projected reinforcement plan, it is highly doubtful that the defenders would have been able to maintain control of the Philippines until the arrival of the Pacific Fleet. In this respect, it might be argued that the U.S. was fortunate that many of the units slated for the Philippines had not yet arrived at the time of the Japanese attack, as this permitted their deployment elsewhere, rather than trapping them on the islands along with the men who had preceded them.

Civil-Military Relations and the Philippine Question

It has been argued by a number of scholars, most prominently Louis Morton, that one of the greatest problems confronting the U.S. military during the interwar period was its inability to

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also have shown the extent to which the amount of equipment actually provided to the Philippine Army fell short of what he deemed necessary to equip the men of his command.
clearly define its own mission in the Philippines. This failure, it is argued, contributed to the emergence of disagreements within the military, both between the army and the navy and within the army itself. In *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, Barry Posen asserts that one of the most common problems nations encounter in the conduct of their foreign relations is “disintegration,” a condition where civilian and military leaders develop foreign policy priorities independently of one another. As noted in Chapter 2, Posen argues that disintegration can result from “Functional specialization between soldiers and statesmen, and the tendency of soldiers to seek as much independence from civilian interference as possible…” The conduct of U.S. foreign policy in the interwar period is very useful case study for Posen’s theory, because there can be no dispute that a state of disintegration existed. However, upon closer examination, what becomes evident is that civilian leaders bear at least as much of the responsibility for the disintegrated state of U.S. foreign policy as their military counterparts. On a number of occasions, military officers sought a clear definition of the objectives of U.S. Asian policy in general, and U.S. policy toward the Philippines in particular. These inquiries, for the most part, went unanswered.

One of the first attempts by the military to determine the objectives of U.S. Far East policy was undertaken in 1919. In October of that year, the Joint Planning Committee was seeking to conduct a review of existing war plans. Any attempt to construct such a plan, the committee noted, must be based upon national policy. The memorandum made specific reference to issues of concern to Pacific planners as an example of the importance of identifying national policy:

> From a consideration of our national interests in the Pacific…our own national safety… and commercial rights, do such interests require that in case of war with Japan, the war should be carried to the western Pacific, and Japan decisively defeated? This, of course,
means an unlimited war with the correspondingly great expenditure. Or, if this cost is too
great, is it to our interest not to carry the war farther to the westward than Hawaii, and to
accept the loss of the Philippines, and our trade and prestige in Asia?  

The authors of the memorandum noted that “These questions are not for the War and Navy
Departments to answer, but for the State Department.” They then asked the Joint Board to put
their questions before the State Department, and recommended that the Joint Board itself add a
permanent representative from the State Department. The Joint Board duly forwarded the JPC’s
inquiry, but no response was received. Louis Morton notes that a likely reason that for this was
that “uncertainty about national policy with regard to the Pacific islands was not confined to
military and naval planners.” The civilian leadership of the United States was divided on a
number of questions, among them the issue of Philippine independence and the role of the U.S.
military in the islands. This lack of consensus within the government made it impossible to
formulate an answer to the question put forward by the Joint Planning Committee.

Efforts on the part of the military to integrate itself into the nation’s foreign policy
decision making circles were unambiguously rebuffed during Charles Evans Hughes’ tenure as
Secretary of State. His attitude toward consultation with the military was best encapsulated in
his response to the Joint Board’s proposal for talks with a senior State Department official during
the Washington Conference; “This appears to me in substance a suggestion that…matters of
foreign policy be submitted to the Joint Board. I question the advisability of this.”  

The Navy
had sought an audience with the State Department because it believed that the treaty provisions
that were under negotiation might have an adverse impact upon its ability to support U.S.
diplomatic objectives in the western Pacific:

196 Ibid.
The Navy War Plans Division contended that the United States could not guarantee equal trading rights and China’s territorial integrity unless America possessed Western Pacific naval bases as well as an offensive battleship fleet capable of action against Japan’s home islands.\(^{199}\)

The Washington Treaty, of course, placed strong limitations on the navy’s ability to fulfill both of these objectives by capping the size of the U.S. capital ship fleet and forbidding the improvement of base facilities in the western Pacific. It has been argued that Hughes exhibited an almost naïve faith in the ability of diplomacy to resolve any dispute between sovereign nations. This blind spot kept him from considering that the military had a role to play in foreign affairs, even if only as the steel fist inside the velvet glove of diplomacy. This attitude permeated many of the country’s foreign policy making circles, with the result that “Foreign loans, debts, and investments; the open door in China and elsewhere; or issues of economic interdependence…were matters which diplomats divorced from army and navy problems.”\(^{200}\)

The difficulty military officers encountered in obtaining concrete statements of national policy would surface again in the wake of the 1934 letter drafted by Admiral Upham and General Parker, the American commanders in the Philippines. As previously noted, Upham and Parker wished to bring to the attention of their service chiefs what they viewed as the inadequate resources at their disposal to carry out the provisions of the 1928 Orange Plan, and to request a change in their assigned missions under the plan. Upham and Parker had one more purpose in drafting the letter, however. They requested that their superiors provide them with a clarification on a number of national policy issues:

(a) Is it the National Policy to defend the Philippine Islands, whether or not they be given independence?

\(^{199}\) Ibid., 57.
\(^{200}\) Ibid., 58.
(b) Is it the National Policy to withdraw our defensive forces and voluntarily relinquish our control and responsibility for defense of the Philippine Islands?\(^{201}\)

In the event that the U.S. did intend to defend the Philippines, the commanders urged that they be provided with resources adequate to the task. If the Philippines were not to be defended, they advocated that the U.S. publicly announce its intentions and that the U.S. military presence in the islands be reduced to “the minimum required to maintain internal peace in the Philippine Islands during the transitional period.”\(^{202}\) The request received no response. As Louis Morton notes, “Clarification of national policy was outside the province of the Washington planners.”\(^{203}\) The determination of national policy toward the Philippines was viewed as a matter for the civilian government, and no clear indication of what that policy might be was forthcoming.

It is worth noting that on the rare occasions when State Department did attempt to brief military leaders on the nation’s foreign policy goals, its counsel was largely ignored. In early 1938 State Department East Asian specialists Stanley Hornbeck and Maxwell Hamilton presented a series of lectures on U.S. foreign policy priorities to audiences of U.S. officers. In these meetings, Hornbeck and Hamilton stressed that the United States was seeking to avoid a military confrontation with Japan in Asia. In remarks to members of the Joint Planning Committee regarding the role of the American military presence in China, Hornbeck stated “We are in a condition of advocating ‘peace at any price’ and the avoidance of war by every means.”\(^{204}\) Hamilton and Hornbeck both emphasized that their advocacy of such a passive stance stemmed from the fact that the U.S. possessed “no interests in China which worth fighting for against Japan.”\(^{205}\) The remarks of the two State Department specialists were widely

\(^{201}\) Upham and Parker, letter to C.N.O. and C.O.S., 1 March 1934.
\(^{202}\) Ibid.
\(^{203}\) Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 239.
\(^{204}\) Stanley Hornbeck, Remarks to Joint Planning Committee, 13 January 1938, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 23.
circulated among army and navy officers in the Washington area, but there is little evidence that they exerted a significant impact upon the outlook of senior planners. Despite their assertion that the United States did not possess any interests in China (and, by extension, the entire Asia-Pacific region), the Joint Board pressed ahead with the preparation of the 1938 Orange Plan. A bizarre situation thus existed in which the sole war plan that the U.S. military continued to update outlined strategies for a conflict against a nation with whom the State Department intensely desired to avoid hostilities.

The lack of productive exchanges on the subject of U.S. foreign policy has also been attributed by a number of scholars to a curious tendency among some military leaders to deliberately recuse themselves from the policymaking process. This attitude was typified by Army Lieutenant Colonel L. T. Gerow’s response to a conversation with Stanley Hornbeck:

Responding to the army’s evident desire to remove its forces from the Far East, the State Department representative inquired why it did not seek to have America’s policy in the region changed. This, Hornbeck added, was more logical than requesting the removal of the military forces supporting that policy. Gerow reported, “I told him that the War Department was not the State policy making agency, that being a State Department responsibility.”

The proper concern of the military, in Gerow’s view, was the execution of policy as determined by the relevant civilian authorities. This attitude was far from unique among military officers. It has been argued that the origins of this belief can be traced all the way back to the writing of the Constitution, which sought “carefully to subordinate the military to the civil government and to assure the isolation of the military from national policymaking except within its own distinctive sphere.”

Russell Weigley notes that this tradition of deference to civilian authority had become so deeply ingrained among some officers during the interwar period that they viewed themselves merely as passive bystanders to the policy process, responsible for executing the

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policies of the nation without regard to whether they were actually capable of doing so. In Weigley’s view, this refusal to participate in the policy process constituted dereliction of duty. He argues that despite the prevailing belief among military leaders that in the event of war with Japan the Philippines could not be defended, those leaders did not “categorically warn the President” of this fact as Roosevelt was contemplating a complete embargo of petroleum exports that would likely lead to war.  

Weigley notes that the key issue:

[W]as not one of questioning the President’s policy but of making him unquestionably aware of an important result of his policy, so that he could proceed with full knowledge of its implications. So complete was the military conception of the principle of civilian control by 1941, however, that the military leaders evidently regarded even such a warning as an unacceptable break of principle, so…the military continued to blur the truth about the fate of the Philippines.  

It bears noting that this attitude was far more prevalent within the army. Naval planners were far less reluctant to suggest ways in which a naval presence could help achieve the objectives of national policy. Rear Admiral Hilary Jones, during his 1924 Congressional testimony, and the planners of OP-12 in their 1935 rebuttal to Embick’s Philippine memo depicted a continued naval presence in the Philippines as vital to the fulfillment of foreign policy objectives such as the Open Door. The navy’s greater willingness to inject itself into policy discussions is understandable. Simple geography dictated that should the U.S. find itself at war, it would be “the navy’s duty to meet any attack, while the army mobilized its full strength behind this shield.” Only a small percentage of the army was actually deployed outside the Western Hemisphere (in this respect the Philippine garrison was very much an anomaly), and as a result senior officers could afford to adopt a detached attitude with regard to U.S. foreign policy. The difference in outlook between the two services was recognized at the time by some officers. In

207 Weigley, “The Role of the War Department and the Army,” 166.  
209 Ibid., 43.
1937, Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig commented that “‘since the Navy is practically ready for instant action at all times it looks far afield,’ whereas the army was ‘far from ready for a venture of any magnitude’ and had to look to the defense of American territory.”

All of these factors—the inability of the army and navy to obtain a clear declaration of national policy from civilian policymakers, the tendency to disregard such advice on the rare occasions when it was offered, and the outright refusal of some officers to involve themselves in the policymaking process—contributed to the American failure to develop a clear policy with regard to the defense of the Philippines. But such communication breakdowns, whether civil-military in nature or occurring within the armed forces, do not provide a complete explanation for the confused state of America’s Asian policy in the interwar period.

U.S. Asian Policy in the Early Twentieth Century

The task that U.S. military planners confronted throughout the interwar period was greatly complicated by their inability to obtain a clear statement of U.S. foreign policy objectives from the government’s civilian leaders. As has been noted, on a number of occasions army and navy officers attempted to obtain such guidance, but their requests went unanswered. As a consequence, formulating military policies that complemented U.S. diplomacy proved extremely difficult. This frustration is evident in a 1939 lament written by the Joint Planning Committee:

Frequently in joint planning tasks, the Joint Planning Committee has had to work in the dark with respect to what national policy is with respect to a specific problem, or what it may be expected to be. The Joint Planning Committee had not always been in a position to seek authoritative expressions of fact or opinion from representatives of other Executive Departments, in particular the State Department.212

211 Miller, War Plan Orange, 224.
The frustration of the members of the Joint Planning Committee is certainly understandable. There were numerous occasions when the military was excluded from key discussions of foreign policy, most notably when Charles Evans Hughes rejected the Joint Board’s request for consultations with the State Department during the negotiation of the Washington Treaty. In a number of instances, however, the inability of civilian officials to provide the military with concise policy statements resulted from disagreements within the civilian bureaucracy itself. At times these disagreements were every bit as deep and pronounced as any of the interservice disputes had been.

A detailed study of U.S. foreign policy during the interwar period is beyond the scope of this inquiry. However, a brief examination of U.S. relations with the Philippines and Japan between 1916 and 1941 will provide a few examples of the policy reversals, evasions, and bureaucratic infighting that occurred within the ranks of America’s civilian decision makers.

Because of their status as a colonial possession of the United States, relations with the Philippines were not the responsibility of the State Department, but rather of the War Department, through its Bureau of Insular Affairs. U.S. Philippine policies tended to strongly reflect presidential preferences, with the result that changes in administration could lead to sudden reversals in the government’s attitude toward, and handling of, the islands. Nowhere were these shifts more pronounced than with regard to the question of Filipino independence. Woodrow Wilson’s tenure in office saw the passage of the Jones Act, with its promise of “independence ‘as soon as stable government’ was established.” There appears little doubt that Wilson himself was a strong proponent of Philippine independence. Soon after his election

\[213\] In the period before the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Governor General of the Philippines reported to the War Department’s Bureau of Insular Affairs. See Gerald Wheeler, “Republican Philippine Policy, 1921-1933,” The Pacific Historical Review 28 (1959), 380.

to the presidency in 1912, he stated “the Philippine Islands are at present our frontier, but I hope
we are to presently deprive ourselves of that frontier.” Francis Burton Harrison, Wilson’s
Governor General, adopted a hands-off approach in his dealings with the newly established
Philippine Senate, believing that progress toward the independence of the Philippines could best
be achieved by offering the legislature the greatest possible degree of autonomy in the conduct of
the islands’ affairs.

These policies were abruptly reversed following the election of Warren Harding in 1920. Soon after his election, Harding dispatched W. Cameron Forbes and Leonard Wood to the
Philippines to evaluate their capacity for self-government. Both men were staunch opponents of
independence, and there seems little doubt that this belief exerted a strong influence upon their
conclusions. In a 1959 article in *The Pacific Historical Review*, Gerald Wheeler dryly observed
that “The Wood-Forbes Commission…became a fact-finding trip—finding facts to support
preconceptions.” Wood’s subsequent tenure as Governor General also clearly demonstrated
his belief that the people of the Philippines were incapable of self-rule. His relationship with the
Philippine Senate was quite contentious, and he made regular use of his power to veto actions of
the Philippine legislature, a practice that Francis Harrison had studiously avoided.

Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover shared the Harding administration’s views on
Philippine independence. Both men asserted that the Filipino people benefited from U.S.
stewardship, and warned that the islands risked descent into a state of anarchy if the American
presence were to be withdrawn. Coolidge articulated this belief in his 1924 letter to Manuel
Roxas:

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216 Ibid., 379.
The Filipino people would do well to consider most carefully the value of their intimate association with the American people. Although they have made wonderful advances in the last quarter century, the Filipino people are by no means equipped, either in wealth or experience, to undertake the heavy burden which would be imposed upon them with political independence.\textsuperscript{217}

Such racially tinged thinking also appears to have characterized Herbert Hoover’s attitude toward the Philippines. Moreover, Hoover appears to have been concerned about the consequences that Philippine independence might have upon the populations of the British and Dutch colonies in Asia:

Indian, Burman, Malay, and Indonesian nationalism was already stirring, and independence for the Filipinos would have undoubtedly caused repercussions in other Asian colonial areas. Republican leaders in the Coolidge and Hoover administrations often used the argument of “bad example,” noting that independence would upset the balance in the Far East.\textsuperscript{218}

This attitude may have contributed to President Hoover’s decision to veto the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act of 1932. As noted previously, Congress overrode Hoover’s veto, but the Act was ultimately rejected by the Philippine legislature, principally due to its provision allowing the U.S. to retain military bases in the islands after independence.\textsuperscript{219}

Another common argument put forward during the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations was that the Philippines benefited from their colonial status because under this arrangement the United States assumed the financial burden of guaranteeing the defense of the islands. Calvin Coolidge had made precisely this point in his letter to Roxas, arguing that in the absence of U.S. protection the Philippines would be confronted by an “unrestricted temptation to

\textsuperscript{217} Calvin Coolidge to Manuel Roxas, 21 February 1924.
\textsuperscript{218} Wheeler, “Republican Philippine Policy, 1921-1933,” 387.
\textsuperscript{219} It should be noted that the Democratic congressional majorities behind the passage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act were motivated not by a sense of altruism toward the Filipino people, but rather by domestic economic concerns. With the country in the throes of the Great Depression, there was a widespread belief that Philippine labor and agricultural production harmed U.S. producers. If the Philippines were granted independence, they would then be outside the tariff walls that successive administrations had built up during the interwar period. Ibid., 390.
maintain…an ineffective but costly military and naval service.” Yet the policies enacted between 1921 and 1933 ensured that it would be all but impossible for the U.S. to fulfill its obligations if the Philippines were actually attacked. Article XIX of the Washington Treaty prohibited any improvement of the islands’ fortifications and base facilities, while the 10:10:6 ratio for capital ships meant that it would be difficult for the U.S. Navy to match the IJN’s strength in the western Pacific in the early stages of a war.

Additionally, the 1920s saw massive reductions in the size and funding of both the army and the navy. The U.S. navy was maintained at much less than the maximum strength authorized for it by the Washington Treaty. Only after Franklin Roosevelt became president were efforts undertaken to increase the strength of the navy to the maximum permitted levels. In fact, the Japanese cited the initiation of this construction program as a principal factor underlying their 1934 decision to abrogate the treaty. Ambassador Joseph Grew summarized this sentiment in a cable to the State Department:

Until recently, as the Japanese Navy approached the American Navy in effective tonnage, many leaders had high hopes of achieving parity or near parity with America…This hope is now vanishing, as America begins to build toward the Treaty limits…the Japanese navy leaders are bitterly disappointed.

The navy had not been alone in experiencing severe budget cuts during the 1920s. The reduction in the army’s manpower has already been discussed, but bears repeating; by 1926, the maximum strength for the army authorized by Congress dropped below 120,000 men. The army’s manpower in the Philippines had been reduced accordingly. In the final year of Woodrow Wilson’s administration, the U.S. maintained a Philippine garrison of 20,282 men. By 1928, the
garrison had been reduced to less than 11,000 men, a number that would be virtually unchanged until the War Department’s desperate 1941 reinforcement effort.223

The election of Franklin Roosevelt and the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act less than two years later finally committed the United States to an irrevocable timeline for Philippine independence. The subsequent dispatch of Douglas MacArthur to Manila inaugurated the effort to organize the Philippine Army, although parsimonious funding and a persistent shortage of instructors prevented that organization from becoming the efficient instrument of national defense that the general envisioned. As the 1930s progressed, however, it became clear that the future independence of the Philippines would depend far less on its relations with the United States than with the relationship between the United States and Japan.

Throughout the interwar period, it had been the assumption of the Joint Board that if the U.S. was to become involved in a war in the foreseeable future, Japan represented the most likely opponent. This is evidenced by the fact that War Plan Orange was the only one of the color plans to be continuously updated from its origins in 1911 until its final replacement by the Rainbow Plans in 1940. This opinion, however, was not generally shared by civilian policymakers. While relations between the two countries had always been characterized by a degree of misunderstanding and mistrust, the 1920s were a period of relative calm. Many observers believed the arms limitations imposed by the Washington Treaty had eliminated the possibility of war by guaranteeing the ability of each nation to guarantee the security of its vital territories. A series of incidents in the 1930s would soon shatter this illusion. As relations between the two countries deteriorated, deep divisions within the U.S. government would produce a halting and inconsistent foreign policy that, in the end, contributed little to efforts to preserve peace.

223 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 253-4.
The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 initially received a muted response from the U.S. Secretary of State Henry Stimson “refused to send an American member along with a proposed League of Nations fact-finding mission unless the Japanese agreed. It was not until around October 19…that he fully came to terms with the dangerous realities of the crisis.” By the end of the year Stimson’s stance had hardened considerably, and he viewed the invasion as an act of aggression that must be opposed. On January 7, 1932, with President Hoover’s approval, Stimson issued an official communiqué to the governments of China and Japan. Stimson wrote:

The American government deems it to be its duty to notify…the Imperial Japanese Government…that it does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris of August 17, 1928…

This declaration established the so-called “Stimson Doctrine,” a policy of strict non-recognition of the legitimacy of Japan’s seizure of Chinese territory by force, or of the puppet governments established by the Japanese to govern these territories. As a first step in a program of pressure intended to force the Japanese to reconsider their actions, the Stimson Doctrine might have had some effect. In reality, however, the issuance of the proclamation was as far as the United States was prepared to go. Norman Graebner has remarked that President Hoover, “in facing the Manchurian crisis, reflected the concerns of a thoroughly satisfied nation which had long regarded war as a useless endeavor and a historical anachronism.” The prevalence within the American public of beliefs similar to Hoover’s prevented the offering of anything more than a symbolic complaint against Japan’s actions.

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The Stimson Doctrine’s policy of nonrecognition would continue to serve as the official policy of the State Department through the first term of the Roosevelt administration. Department officials continued to rely upon formal diplomatic protests to register U.S. displeasure with Japanese actions, but steadfastly opposed stronger measures. Major proponents of this approach included Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Joseph Grew, the American ambassador in Tokyo. Hull and Grew opposed the imposition of harsher sanctions because they believed that doing so would strengthen the hand of radicals within the Japanese military and undermine moderates within the Japanese government. However, this stance was subjected to a vigorous critique by Howard Jablon in his 1983 *Crossroads of Decision*. Jablon argues that during the early years of Roosevelt’s presidency, State Department officials failed to recognize the distinction between diplomacy and foreign policy, citing the continuance of the Stimson Doctrine as a prime example:

> Extending or withholding recognition of another government…is a diplomatic technique to achieve some larger purpose…Nonrecognition in the Far East served no useful purpose. Denying the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo existed did not alter events there in any way.  

Jablon characterizes that the State Department’s practice of insisting that Japan respect U.S. prerogatives in China, but refusing to endorse any stronger form of sanction than diplomatic protests, as “resist[ing] from a position of weakness…”

In the opinion of Jablon and other critics, the views held by Hull and Grew represented a particular strain of American diplomatic thinking that traced its roots to the early 1920s. This tradition reflected “some variety of liberal internationalism described by President Wilson,” and

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228 Ibid., 138.
“sought to inspire other nations to adopt peaceful, moral attitudes as the means for securing international stability.” It was characterized by a dogged faith in the ability of treaties and international law to prevent the rise of conflict between nations. Perhaps the most prominent manifestation of this tradition can be found in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. Signatories of the Pact, which included all of the signatories of the Washington Treaty of 1922, “renounced force as an instrument of national policy.” Comments offered about Cordell Hull and Joseph Grew suggest that both men subscribed to the idealistic vision which the authors of the Kellogg-Briand Pact sought establish as an international norm. James C. Thompson Jr. quotes an assessment of Cordell Hull first put forward by Dorothy Borg:

“The essence of the matter was that the Secretary believed, with a conviction too profound to be influenced by any external factors, that most of the basic problems of international relations could be solved by moral education.” It was a laudable if illusory faith.

Stanley K. Hornbeck, the head of the State Department’s Far East Bureau throughout the 1930s, offered a similar assessment of Joseph Grew. Hornbeck once declared that Grew “was a diplomat’s diplomat. Mr. Grew was a firm believer in the efficacy of diplomacy. He believed that negotiation could resolve any problem in international relations.”

The criticism leveled against State Department officials such as Hull and Grew is that their unshakable faith in diplomacy produced something of a blind spot. Specifically, it prevented them from considering the ways in which other methods, such as the imposition of economic sanctions or the threat of military force, might be used to support their own diplomatic

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230 Ibid., 58.
232 Jablon, Crossroads of Decision, 137.
endeavors. Thus, during a crucial period in U.S. history, the individuals in charge of shaping the country’s foreign policy were not making use of all of the tools at their disposal.

The stagnation that had characterized U.S. Asian policy during the first term of the Roosevelt administration largely vanished during his second term. What replaced it, however, was a climate of bureaucratic infighting between advocates of diametrically opposed policies that often became so bitter that it can hardly be judged an improvement upon its predecessor. By this time the president appears to have developed at least a general idea of what he wished his administration’s foreign policy to achieve. While he was concerned with the growth of Japanese power in the western Pacific, his primary concern was the impending conflict between the German and Italian dictatorships and the European democracies. He believed that in the event of a European war, the United States would eventually be forced into the conflict alongside Britain and France. Believing this to be the greatest threat confronting the United States:

Roosevelt was more cautious about direct opposition to Japan…Though sympathetic to strong action, Roosevelt and Hull saw the consequences as too risky; it could weaken Japan’s moderates, produce new aggressions, and precipitate a war in which the United States would be unable to respond effectively to the more serious threat from Berlin. While Roosevelt and many of his closest advisors believed that at some point the U.S. would find itself at war with Japan, he wished to postpone the outbreak of that conflict for as long as possible.

During his second term, Roosevelt undertook a number of initiatives that were intended to promote greater coordination between senior civilian and military policymakers. In late 1937, Roosevelt issued orders for the military to begin work on what would eventually become the Rainbow Plans. Viewing the Orange Plans as “unsatisfactory,” Roosevelt specifically requested “plans based on a Western Hemispheric defense and a two-ocean war against the Axis powers
with Great Britain as an ally.” In July of 1939 he ordered the Joint Board moved to his own executive office, bypassing the War and Navy secretaries and giving the uniformed service chiefs an unprecedented degree of access to the Oval Office. He also ordered the establishment of a Standing Liaison Committee that included both of the service chiefs and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles.

All of these measures were badly needed, but if Roosevelt’s goal in ordering them was to establish a foreign policy consensus among the nation’s senior policymakers, than the effort clearly failed. Much of the culpability for this must be laid at the feet of the president himself. Roosevelt encouraged open competition between his subordinates, and was legendarily cagey about revealing his own thoughts on a particular issue. A biographer of Henry Stimson, whom Roosevelt persuaded to accept the post of Secretary of War in 1940, writes:

[Stimson] disliked, almost distrusted, FDR’s deviousness, his ability to present one side of his thinking to one interlocutor and a different face of it to another, though never descending to outright lying. And he was infuriated by Roosevelt’s caution and by his ability to give the impression, over and over again, that he had been persuaded by argument and his mind was made up, only to slip away and wait until he had weighed new evidence or until events had helped to take his decision another way.

Stimson was far from the only official to express frustration at the president’s management style. In many instances, it undoubtedly served the president well, allowing him to conceal his true objectives from his political rivals and keeping his subordinates on their toes. In the summer of 1940, however, Roosevelt’s failure to clearly articulate his foreign policy objectives likely exacerbated a bitter feud being waged within the government bureaucracy, and may have brought the country to the brink of war with Japan.

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236 Ibid., 230-1.
The non-confrontational, accommodationist policy toward Japan that had been pursued by the State Department under the direction of men such as Cordell Hull and Joseph Grew may actually have complemented Roosevelt’s desire to postpone the outbreak of war in the Pacific. However, by the middle of the president’s second term, this policy was being openly challenged by officials who wished to see the United States take a stronger stance against Japanese behavior in Asia. These “hardliners” included Stimson, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Navy Secretary Frank Knox, Petroleum Coordinator for National Defense Harold Ickes, and the State Department’s own Far East Bureau Chief Stanley Hornbeck. These individuals argued that the prevailing U.S. foreign policy encouraged aggressive behavior on the part of Japan, because previous acts of aggression had been met with nothing more substantial than words. Morgenthau, in particular, was convinced that a comprehensive program of economic sanctions could force the Japanese to change their behavior. In 1937, he openly championed such a course of action in the aftermath of the sinking of the U.S.S. Panay in China by Japanese aircraft:

If the United States, Great Britain, and France refused to buy foreign exchange or gold from Japan, he declared, “overnight those people can’t buy their raw materials. It is effective at once. At once! And we can do it! We’ve got the power, we’ve got the instruments, we’ve got the agreement to do it...What the hell is Japan going to do?" The Panay incident was eventually resolved when the Japanese government tendered a formal apology to the United States and agreed to pay an indemnity, but Morgenthau and his fellow hardliners continued to argue that Japan could be brought to heel through a concerted application of economic sanctions.

237 State Department official Jay Pierrepont Moffat once observed of Hornbeck, only half in jest, that he viewed Japan “as the sun, around which her satellites, Germany and Italy, were revolving.” Julius W. Pratt, The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, Vol. XIII, Cordell Hull, 1933-44 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1964), 473.
The conflict between the two camps came to a head during the summer of 1940. The cause of this explosion was a seemingly innocuous occurrence—the July 2 enactment of the National Defense Act. Undertaken as one component of the military’s ongoing rearmament efforts, the Act “gave the president authority to declare certain items vital to the national defense and thus eligible for export only under license.”\textsuperscript{239} The measure was intended to ensure that the U.S. military was given the first claim on stocks of vital raw materials. The Act was to be administered by the National Defense Advisory Committee (NDAC), a board which Roosevelt staffed with a number of prominent national industrial leaders. In the process of conducting an inventory of the natural resources at the country’s disposal, an NDAC staffer named Robert Wilson uncovered a potential problem with the nation’s supply of aviation gasoline:

> While there was more than enough aviation gasoline being produced in order to fuel the existent meager air force, to fuel…the planes Roosevelt intended to build required a ten-fold increase in production. Further studies revealed that American refineries could produce enough aviation gasoline if what they produced could be stored. But stockpiling would be impossible as long as Japan continued buying such large amounts of aviation gasoline.\textsuperscript{240}

Wilson’s proposed solution was that the United States immediately impose an embargo upon all exports of 100-octane gasoline.

> This proposal by itself would have generated little controversy. However, Morgenthau saw in Wilson’s proposal an opportunity to put his theories of economic warfare to the test. Taking advantage of the fact that Secretary of State Hull was out of the country, Morgenthau proposed that the United States, in cooperation with Great Britain, impose an embargo on all petroleum exports to the Axis powers.\textsuperscript{241} This proposal was received with abject horror by Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles. In the summer of 1940, Japan was dependent upon the

\textsuperscript{239} Jonathan G. Utley, \textit{Going to War With Japan 1937-1941} (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 95.

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., 96.
United States for the majority of its petroleum, and Welles feared that Morgenthau’s proposal “could very easily lead to war.” After hearing out both men, Roosevelt sided with Welles, and requested that only 100-octane aviation gasoline be placed under embargo.

At this point, however, Morgenthau engaged in a bit of subterfuge. Contacting Colonel Russell Maxwell, the head of the NDAC’s Export Control Office, Morgenthau:

Told him to change the wording of the draft proclamation State had prepared on Monday, June 22, replacing references to aviation motor fuel with “petroleum products.” For good measure, Morgenthau added scrap iron and steel to the list.

It was this amended proposal that was sent to President Roosevelt, who apparently did not notice what Morgenthau had done. On July 26, Roosevelt signed Proclamation No. 2417, which declared that:

On or after August 1, 1940, the additional materials hereinafter listed shall not be exported from the United States except when authorized... by a license...
1. Petroleum products
2. Tetraethyl lead
3. Iron and scrap steel

The proclamation was then forwarded to Welles for his countersignature. Reviewing the document, he discovered Morgenthau’s revisions, and immediately “raised a storm of protest.”

Chastened, Roosevelt quickly backtracked, issuing a clarification narrowing the definition of “petroleum products” to include only aviation gasoline of 87 octane or higher and aviation lubricating oil.

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241 Ibid., 97.
242 Ibid., 97.
243 This imposition of such an embargo would have had no significant impact on Japan, because Japanese aircraft, unlike their American counterparts, could run on gasoline of less than 100-octane. Ibid., 100
244 Ibid., 98.
246 Utley, Going to War With Japan, 99.
This episode, perhaps more than any other, demonstrates the level of disagreement that existed among the Roosevelt administration’s senior civilian policymakers. It also illustrates the degree to which complications can arise within an administration when key leaders (in this case, the President himself) fail to make their preferences known. As the 1930s came to a close, Franklin Roosevelt found his country facing a multitude of threats. In his opinion, however, the greatest danger to the United States was posed by Hitler’s Germany. Japan, while certainly capable of serving as a major irritant, did not possess the capability to threaten America’s vital interests. As a result, Roosevelt sought if at all possible to avoid a conflict with Japan which he feared could divert needed resources from the more urgent task of defeating Germany. At no point, however, does he appear to have outlined his reasoning to the members of his cabinet. In the absence of such guidance, advocates of a confrontational stance toward Japan, led by Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, sought the approval of a far-reaching package of economic sanctions. Given Japan’s extreme dependence upon imports of petroleum products from the United States, such an action would likely have been regarded as an act of economic warfare. It is unclear precisely how the Japanese government would have chosen to respond, but there is a distinct possibility that its reaction would have been to begin hostilities in the Pacific in July 1940. If this had occurred, then the ultimate result of the actions undertaken by Morgenthau would have been to provoke the war that his own Commander-in-Chief was so fervently seeking to avoid.
CONCLUSION -- BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS AND WAR PLAN ORANGE

The environment in which the foreign and military policy of the United States was formulated during the interwar period clearly can be characterized as “disintegrated.” Civilian and military planners pursued their own priorities as though barely even aware of one another’s existence. This climate began to emerge during the last years of Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, became entrenched during the administrations of Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover, and persisted into the second term of the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. Only during FDR’s second term were efforts undertaken to bring military and political policymaking into harmony. Fundamental changes in the way organizations conduct their operations, however, require time, and the processes that had become entrenched during the preceding three decades could not be completely reformed in the time that remained before the American entry into the Second World War. The government’s inability to resolve these issues before the outbreak of war would have dire consequences for those charged with executing the country’s fragmented policies.

The model of bureaucratic politics formulated by Allison and Halperin contends that observers can gain an understanding of the way policy is formed if a few key questions are answered. Two such questions are “Who plays?” and “What determines each player’s stand?”

This theory views the policy formulation process as a game. During this game, government actors with interest in or expertise relating to a particular issue will seek to shape the outcome of the policy process. The status of individual players, and their relative advantages (unique expertise, access to the president, players’ respective positions within the government) exert an influence upon the policy outcome produced by this game.

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What Allison and Halperin leave unexplored, at least in their initial inquiry, is what happens when key institutional actors are locked out of the policy formation game. In the United States during the interwar period, military leaders were frequently excluded from discussions about the country’s foreign policy goals and objectives. This trend manifested itself on a number of occasions: the failure of the State Department to answer the Joint Planning Committee’s 1919 inquiry concerning U.S. interests in the western Pacific; Charles Evans Hughes’ refusal to grant the navy a significant role in the negotiation of the Washington Treaty; and the inability of the War and Navy Departments to obtain a clear statement on U.S. policy toward the Philippines in response to Admiral Upham and General’s Parker’s 1934 letter. Left to their own devices, the War and Navy Departments, acting through the Joint Board, appear to have simply organized a second game, one in which they developed war plans with minimal input from civilian leaders. Among the outcomes of this second game were the Orange Plans.

The next question that must be answered, according to Allison and Halperin, is how individual players within the policy formulation game determine their preferences. They believe that the preferences of actors “stem both from…individual characteristics…and from [their] position.”2 When such actors participate in such games, they seek to shape policy outcomes in a way that reflects these preferences. Faced with a confrontation with a foreign government, a State Department official might stress the value of negotiation and diplomacy, an economic advisor might advocate sanctions, a military officer might recommend a redeployment of troops. The particular option recommended by an advisor, it is argued, often reflects the institutional preferences of the organization to which he or she belongs. The parallel games that dominated U.S. foreign policy during the interwar period offer numerous examples of such behavior.

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2 Ibid., 48.
For the majority of the interwar period, the professional diplomats of the State Department dominated the “civilian” foreign policy game. Their hand clearly shows in the international agreements to which the United States became a signatory. Motivated by Charles Evans Hughes’ vision of an international system in which states settled their disagreements by negotiation and mediation rather than force, the United States sponsored the Washington Conference, whose products included the greatest arms-control agreement the world had yet seen. A similar faith inspired the U.S. acceptance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1928. Observers of the service of Cordell Hull and Joseph Grew see in their careers a set of shared ideals with their State Department predecessors. Critics such as Howard Jablon, however, have charged that for such men the practice of diplomacy became such an article of faith that they neglected to consider how other techniques (such as economic sanctions or the threat—or use—of military force) could complement traditional diplomacy in the achievement of the country’s foreign policy goals. They also, it is charged, never contemplated the problems that might arise when “statesmen who avoided the utilization of force would, sooner or later…[be confronted by] challenges from aggressor nations” who would not be moved merely by words of protest.3

A similar process appears to have been taking place simultaneously within the American military, as it sought to craft policies that would ensure the nation’s security against its likely enemies. In this parallel policy game, the expressed preferences of each service generally conformed to its unique doctrinal outlook. The interwar U.S. navy conforms fairly closely to the predictions put forward by Barry Posen in *The Sources of Military Doctrine*. Naval leaders clearly expressed a preference for offensive rather than defensive doctrine, a preference reflected in the provisions of the early Orange Plans for the immediate dispatch of the fleet to the western

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Pacific in the event of war with Japan. In the navy’s internal planning, the countries most frequently identified as posing the greatest threat to U.S. security happened to be the two other preeminent naval powers in the world. War gaming exercises conducted by the navy focused almost without exception on hypothetical confrontations between one (or both) of these countries, and the only members of the “color plan” family to become anything more than vague outlines were those dealing with Britain and Japan. To support its offensive orientation, the navy continuously lobbied Congress for larger budget allocations, steadfastly maintaining—often in the face of considerable Congressional opposition—that the security of the nation required the building and maintenance of a navy “second to none.” The navy was also insistent that the fulfillment of its mission required the retention of facilities overseas, most notably in the Philippines, which could serve as forward operating bases for its vessels in times of war.

The army’s outlook was quite different from that of its sister service. Unlike the armies of the European continental powers, the United States was not even remotely threatened by the presence of powerful and hostile neighbors. Barry Posen argues that one of the reasons military organizations tend to prefer offensive doctrines to defensive ones is that the former reduces the uncertainty that inevitably accompanies war:

Offensive doctrines…appear to guarantee the side on the offense its standard scenario …[and] they also deny the enemy his standard scenario. A military organization prefers to fight its own war and prevent its adversary from doing so. Taking the offensive, exercising the initiative, is a way of structuring the battle…An organization fighting the war that it planned is likely to do better than one that is not.  

However, for the U.S. army in the interwar period, this particular mode of thinking was simply not an option. Its relatively small size and paucity of resources virtually compelled the adoption

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of a defensive doctrine by the army, for in the era of 20th century industrial warfare, any offensive action by the military would have to wait until after its ranks had been filled out by conscription. For this reason, in the 1920s and 1930s army planners tended to devote their efforts to ensuring the security of the Western Hemisphere, including the Panama Canal Zone, and urging that offensive action be undertaken only after the security of these areas had been assured. It was this line of thinking that led officers such as Stanley Embick, Walter Krueger and Malin Craig to view the maintenance of a Philippine garrison as a nuisance and a unique vulnerability, and prompted them to advocate the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the islands.

But if the army’s basic doctrine was, in fact, defensive in orientation, how can one explain the service’s repeated flip-flops on the question of Philippine defense? The answer, it will be argued, lies in Allison and Halperin’s contention that policy outcomes are shaped not only by institutional preferences, but also by the personal preferences of key decision makers. The two key champions of Philippine defense within the army were Leonard Wood and Douglas MacArthur. During their respective military careers, both men had spent significant amounts of time in the Philippines and had developed a deep sense of attachment to the islands. Brian McAllister Linn notes that MacArthur was a man “to whom the defense of the Philippines and the nation’s military policy in the Pacific were virtually identical.” The same could just as easily have been said of Leonard Wood. Both Wood and MacArthur were men of almost

6 It has even been argued that this line of thinking contributed, albeit in a very indirect way, to the devastation inflicted by the Japanese attacks upon Pearl Harbor and the Philippines on December 7, 1941. Because the army placed the highest priority on defense of the western hemisphere, and because of its critical strategic location, units defending the Panama Canal were placed at the top of the priority list for the army’s first radar systems. Similar systems were not sent to the Philippines and Hawaii until much later, with the result that their crews had had little time to become familiar with their equipment before war broke out. It is worth noting that prior to the attacks upon both Hawaii and the Philippines, radar crews detected the incoming Japanese air strikes, but the significance of what they were reporting was not understood. See Karl G. Larew, “December 7, 1941: The Day No One Bombed Panama,” The Historian 66 (2004), 278-99.

7 Brian McAllister Linn, Guardians of Empire: The U.S. Army and the Pacific, 1902-1940 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 174
legendary stature within the army, and both were possessed of tremendous powers of persuasion. In their minds, the protection of the Philippines was a matter vital to the national interest, and they as a result they utilized the power of their positions—quite successfully—to lobby for the islands’ inclusion within the nation’s defense perimeter. What they sought, in effect, was not a reversal of the defensive orientation of the army’s doctrine, but rather a re-evaluation of vital interests that placed the Philippines into the category of interests that the U.S. must defend at all costs.

The Joint Board’s attempt to reconcile the navy’s offensive doctrine with the army’s defensive doctrine in the form of the Orange Plans was not a resounding success. Early versions of the plan tasked the island’s garrison with holding the Bataan Peninsula and the entrances to Manila Bay, with the intention of denying the bay’s naval base facilities to the enemy. The ultimate relief of the garrison was to be accomplished by the navy, which would hurl itself across the Pacific as soon as it could be fully mobilized (and, in the case of the very early versions, as soon as it could be transferred from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific). Following its arrival in the Philippines and the relief of the garrison, the fleet would utilize Manila Bay as a staging base from which to launch attacks upon the Japanese fleet, and to strangle Japan’s commerce.

The wisdom underlying these plans was highly debatable, however. There were major doubts as to whether the navy could even assemble the logistical support necessary to carry out the relief expedition (see Chapter 3). Additionally, this strategy, which Edward Miller has termed the “Through Ticket to Manila,” ignored the great production advantages the U.S. would enjoy over Japan in a protracted conflict, and instead threatened to hazard the war’s outcome on a single massive clash in waters far nearer to Japan than to the United States.
Later versions of the Orange Plans retreated from this “Through Ticket” approach, but were equally problematic in their own ways. Both the 1928 and 1938 Orange Plans attempted to compensate for changes in the strategic situation in the Pacific, among them Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates, and the prohibition on Pacific fortifications imposed by Article XIX of the Washington Treaty. They replaced the immediate cross-Pacific drive with a step-by-step campaign across the Pacific, beginning with attacks upon the islands of the Mandate. During this campaign the navy would build bases as it went, with each successive base serving as a staging area for the next step westward.

In theory, this represented a much sounder strategy, but the later Orange Plans never fully came to terms with the obvious implications for the Philippine garrison of the step-by-step approach. This is evident in the fact that in each subsequent Orange Plan (and eventually even in Rainbow Five) the garrison’s mission was not changed, despite the fact that it was no longer anticipated that reinforcements would arrive before the islands were overrun. Regardless of such widely held beliefs, nowhere in the plans was it made clear that the islands would almost certainly be lost. It was precisely this ambiguity that Douglas MacArthur was able to take advantage of when in the summer of 1941 he convinced George Marshall that with sufficient stocks of equipment and aircraft, a successful defense of the Philippines was possible.

As has been noted previously, the lack of communication between the civilian and military planners on questions relating to Pacific affairs had produced a state of “disintegration” in U.S. policymaking. This situation is captured by Lester Brune, who observes that for much of the interwar period “The State Department sought order and security in Europe; the Joint Board planned war in the Far East.”

Franklin Roosevelt’s second term in office saw the initiation of several efforts to bring the policy of the country’s civilian and military leaders back into
alignment. In some respects these efforts succeeded. The president’s role in prompting the military to draft the Rainbow Plans was a crucial step, as it forced uniformed planners to begin thinking in terms of a global conflict, rather than the bilateral war between the U.S. and Japan envisioned by the Orange Plans. The creation of a Standing Liaison Committee whose members included the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Undersecretary of State was also a long overdue measure, if for no other reason than it provided a forum for the exchange of views between civilian and military leaders.

Despite these efforts, however, problems persisted. As relations with Japan worsened in the late 1930s, more and more actors began to interject themselves into the debate about U.S. policy toward Japan. Many of these newer actors, best exemplified by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, were strongly opposed to what they viewed as the accommodationist policies of the State Department. The president thus found himself confronting a severe dilemma:

Roosevelt…had to resist pressures within the government from those who wanted to go to war with Japan. At the same time he did not want to so demoralize them that they would resign or reduce their efforts to prepare for the war with Germany which he believed was necessary.  

The bureaucratic politics approach suggests that “Presidential decisions will be faithfully implemented when…a President’s involvement is unambiguous, his words are unambiguous, [and] his order is widely publicized…” Yet such an unambiguous statement of his priorities was simply not consistent with Roosevelt’s management style. Moreover, had he offered such a clarification, he risked undermining the morale of hardliners such as Morgenthau, men whose support he felt he needed. As a result, Roosevelt never explicitly laid out his reasoning for seeking to delay conflict with Japan to his advisors. In the absence of such a clarification on the

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10 Ibid., 54.
president’s position, Morgenthau sought to utilize the July 1940 embargo on exports of aviation gasoline as an experiment in economic warfare. Had it not been for Sumner Welles’ vigilance, Morgenthau’s actions might have triggered the very conflict his president was attempting to postpone.

Similar misunderstandings persisted within U.S. military policy as well. Rainbow Five, the last of the war plans created by the Joint Board and the plan under which the U.S. military would go to war on December 8, 1941, had as its foremost strategic objective the defeat of Nazi Germany. Yet during the summer of 1941, with the military in the midst of a frantic program of mobilization and rearmament, the army’s senior officers ordered a massive reinforcement of the U.S. garrison in the Philippines. The decision to dispatch significant amounts of scarce equipment—especially front-line combat aircraft, which were in desperately short supply—flew in the face of a very significant body of opinion within the army, which viewed the Philippines as a lost cause. The diversion of resources to the Western Pacific was also in direct conflict with the stated priority of Rainbow Five. It is true that the War Department was confronted with an insistent Douglas MacArthur, who confidently assured his superiors that he could defend the islands if only he were provided with the necessary tools. However, as Russell Weigley has argued, even someone as persuasive as MacArthur is unlikely to have been able to lead the War Department in a direction it did not, at least on some level, wish to go. Weigley also comments that Marshall and the army leadership do not appear to have conveyed to the President the widespread doubt within the army about the Philippine garrison’s ability to hold. He is highly critical of this decision, writing that this “failure to give the President candid warning might well be judged an evasion of responsibility as well as of reality.”

The story of War Plan Orange, and more broadly of the conduct of U.S. Asian policy during the interwar period, serves as a powerful cautionary tale. The fate that befall the U.S. garrison in the Philippines had been a quarter-century in the making. Among the many actors who played a part in the policy formulation process, nearly all bear a share of responsibility for what occurred. Many State Department officials, represented most clearly by Charles Evans Hughes, failed to recognize the need for consultation with military leaders on the development of American foreign policy. They also failed, even when asked directly, to provide their uniformed counterparts with a clear statement of the objectives of U.S. Far East policy. The military itself is by no means exempt from criticism. For three decades, the Joint Board struggled to develop war plans that struck a balance between the often-competing preferences of the army and navy. On a number of occasions, this balance was achieved only by finessing the answers to very troubling questions. While several prominent military officers, most notably Stanley Embick, clearly anticipated the consequences for the Philippine garrison in the event of a U.S.-Japanese war, and may even have convinced many of the legitimacy of their concerns, no action was taken to reduce the garrison’s vulnerability.

Finally, the men who occupied the White House between the World Wars were also responsible for the degree to which U.S. foreign and military policy were permitted to drift apart. The president’s position within the U.S. government is unique. Only he possesses the ability to clearly establish priorities for the federal bureaucracy. To effectively utilize this power, however, presidents must be willing to immerse themselves in the details of the policies that are being crafted, and to ask difficult questions of those responsible for their preparation. For much of the interwar period, the gap between the policy objectives of the State Department and the war plans crafted by the Joint Board was permitted to grow without challenge. Franklin Roosevelt
began to redress this situation during his second term, but his characteristic reluctance to clearly
define his preferences and priorities permitted the development of situations such as the
bureaucratic showdown between Henry Morgenthau and Sumner Welles in the summer of 1940,
and George Marshall’s inexplicable authorization of reinforcements for the Philippines the
following year. Such episodes reflected a lingering confusion within certain elements of the
government over the central objectives of U.S. policy, confusion that a country on the verge of
entry into the largest conflict in human history could ill afford.
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