INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS AND THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT’S “PHILIPPINE PROBLEM”

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ABSTRACT

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The defeat of the U.S. military garrison in the Philippine Islands at the hands of the Japanese in 1941-42 is one of the greatest military disasters in the nation’s history, yet also one that has received comparatively little attention from scholars of the Second World War. This dissertation seeks to identify the factors responsible for the defeat. It argues that the loss of the Philippines is best understood not as a military failure, but rather as a failure of the interwar U.S. foreign policymaking process. This failure stemmed most directly from the emergence in the interwar United States of a climate of “disintegration” between key civilian and military leaders, leading to a fragmented and often incoherent foreign policy. This development resulted primarily from the refusal of senior State Department officials to recognize the military as a legitimate participant in the foreign policymaking process, leading to the exclusion of the U.S. Army and Navy from this process for much of the 1920s and 1930s. Other factors also played contributing roles, among them a series of international political developments that substantially altered the strategic balance of power in the western Pacific, the emergence of a vigorous Filipino independence movement, and a failure on the part of U.S. war planners to clarify expectations regarding the fate of the Philippines in the event of war with Japan. This dissertation asserts that the story of the U.S. defeat can best be told by means of an interdisciplinary approach that draws heavily upon the work of Graham Allison, Morton Halperin, and other scholars in the field of bureaucratic politics. It also incorporates the concept of civil-military “disintegration” proposed by Barry R. Posen in his 1984 monograph The Sources of Military Doctrine.
To Kristi: Thank you for your support, encouragement, and love.
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--Steven J. Pedler
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Introduction

Shortly after noon, local time, on December 8, 1941, approximately ten hours after the raid upon Pearl Harbor, American military forces in the Philippine Islands came under heavy attack from Japanese aircraft flying from bases in Formosa. These initial air strikes inflicted crippling losses on the men and machines of the U.S. Far East Air Force (FEAF), and effectively eliminated the ability of American air power to contest Japanese landings on the islands, which began two days later. Over the course of the next six months, the islands’ American and Filipino defenders were steadily pushed back into a number of isolated enclaves scattered throughout the archipelago, the most famous of these being the Bataan Peninsula and tiny Corregidor Island at the entrance to Manila Bay. By May of 1942, the surviving defenders on the island of Luzon, with their supplies nearly exhausted and cut off from any hope of reinforcement, were forced to surrender. Outlying commands in the southern Philippine islands surrendered over the next several weeks, bringing an end to a campaign that had witnessed the total defeat of an American and Filipino army of nearly 140,000 men.

The American defeat in the Philippines must be regarded as one of the most significant military disasters in the nation’s history. Yet despite its scope, the loss of the Philippines remained relatively unexamined in the years that immediately followed. While other major defeats, most notably Pearl Harbor, were the subject of extensive inquiries from both the military and Congress, no such investigation was ever conducted regarding the Philippine campaign. Louis Morton, author of the U.S. Army’s official history of the Philippine campaign of 1941-42, lamented 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.”¹ The debates that did occur regarding the loss of the islands tended to focus narrowly upon the period immediately preceding and following the Japanese invasion. An extremely acrimonious dispute emerged between General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the U.S. Army Forces, Far East (USAFFE), and his air commander, General Lewis Brereton, regarding who bore principal responsibility for the destruction of the bulk of the Far East Air Force on the opening day of the war. MacArthur was also the target of considerable criticism for attempting to use the undertrained and under-equipped Philippine Army to conduct a forward defense on the island of Luzon, rather than conducting the immediate withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula suggested in a number of prewar strategic plans.

It is the contention of this dissertation, however, that such narrow analysis misses the point. While mistakes on the part of American military officers in the Philippines may have exacerbated the problems confronting the islands’ defenders, they did not create them. The extraordinarily thorny strategic position in which the U.S. military found itself in 1941 was the product of a number of factors, many of which had been decades in the making. A fuller examination of these factors provides a more complete and satisfying explanation for the misfortune that befell the U.S. military in the Philippines during the opening months of the Pacific War.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the U.S. foreign policymaking process was characterized by chronic miscommunication, and, at times, complete non-communication, between senior civilian and military leaders. This condition, which Barry Posen has termed “disintegration,” meant that it was very difficult for interwar U.S. leaders to craft a national

foreign policy whose objectives (ends) were commensurate with the capabilities (means) on hand to attain them. The available evidence suggests that responsibility for the emergence of this climate of disintegration must be shared by both civilian and military leaders. In the final years before American entry into World War II, some efforts were launched in an effort to bridge the civil-military divide, but these endeavors were both too little and too late.

International developments during the interwar decades also weakened the U.S. strategic position in the western Pacific. The first of these developments was Japan’s acquisition of a League of Nations Mandate over three key Central Pacific island groups—the Carolines, Marianas, and Marshalls. Japanese control over these islands greatly complicated efforts to plan for the reinforcement of American forces in the western Pacific, as they lay directly astride the shortest route to the Philippines from Hawaii or the West Coast. Of even greater significance were the numerous arms limitation conferences held during the 1920s and 1930s, most significantly the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22. The provisions of these treaties guaranteed that Japan would possess local superiority in the western Pacific vis-à-vis the U.S. Navy, at least during the early stages of a conflict. Additionally, Article XIX of the Washington Treaty (the so-called “nonfortification clause”) prohibited any improvements to the fixed defenses of the Philippines, which further reduced the likelihood that the islands could be held for a prolonged period of time in the event of a Japanese invasion.

Ambiguities within interwar U.S. strategic planning further contributed to the creation of an untenable situation in the Philippines. To at least some extent, these problems were likely a consequence of the climate of civil-military disintegration noted above. The inability of military planners to obtain a clear declaration of the objectives of U.S. foreign policy led to a resultant uncertainty regarding the role of the Philippines within the country’s military strategy. However,
this uncertainty was further exacerbated by inter-service squabbling between the Army and the Navy, particularly during the 1930s. Rather than being conclusively resolved, these inter-service disputes were papered over in a series of compromises that appear to have led to further confusion.

The confusion and uncertainty that characterized American civil-military relations and strategic planning during the interwar period mirrored the American attitude toward the Philippines themselves. Even in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American War, American opinion was deeply divided on the question of what should be done with the Philippines. The initial debate saw the imperialists prevail, and the U.S. purchased the islands from Spain as part of the postwar peace settlement, touching off a bitter three-year war against a vigorous Filipino independence movement. The insurgents’ eventual defeat did nothing to end the debate within the United States on the merits of maintaining an overseas empire. Indeed, the Filipino independence movement would continue to gain in strength during the early decades of the twentieth century, as a new generation of Filipino leaders sought to use the tools of democracy to advocate for the sovereignty of their people. This campaign won its greatest victory in 1934, when Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act, establishing a formal timetable for Philippine independence. For the military personnel tasked with the defense of the islands, this same legislation represented yet another complication, as the parsimonious legislators of the interwar Congresses were unwilling to spend money on military facilities that would no longer be under U.S. control once the Philippines became an independent country.

These developments, far more than any mistakes on the part of American military commanders in the Philippines in 1941, laid the foundation for the disaster that befell the islands’ defenders at the hands of the Japanese. This dissertation traces the events of the early twentieth
century, and highlights how each of the factors described above contributed to the steady
deterioration of the U.S.’s strategic position in the western Pacific. Chapter One reviews the
existing body of literature relating to the events of the interwar period. Chapter Two outlines the
analytical model that will be utilized throughout this study—the “institutional politics” approach
popularized in the work of scholars such as Graham Allison, Morton Halperin, and Philip
Zelikow. The following chapters provide an in-depth examination of the major issues that
affected U.S. Philippine defense strategy. Chapter Three, “The United States and the
Philippines: From Colony to Commonwealth” briefly examines both the late nineteenth century
debates within the United States regarding whether or not the Philippines should be colonized
and the ensuing Philippine War. It then turns to a discussion of the growth of the Filipino
independence movement in the early twentieth century, and the respective attitudes toward the
movement of the various interwar presidential administrations. The chapter concludes with an
exploration of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, and the Act’s significance in the minds of the
members of the military responsible for the defense of the islands. Chapter Four, “Interwar
International Political Developments: The Paris Peace Conference and the Naval Disarmament
Movement,” highlights several major occurrences in international affairs that had the effect of
weakening the military position of the United States in the western Pacific. These included both
the de facto recognition of Japan’s World War I territorial gains at the Paris Peace Conference
and the succession of interwar arms limitation agreements, beginning with the Washington Naval
Treaty of 1922. These political developments were highly significant not only because of their
impact upon the U.S. strategic position, but also because they served to highlight an emerging
chasm between the outlooks of American civilian and military leaders. The development of this
civil-military disconnect is the topic of Chapter Five, “U.S. Civil-Military Relations: ‘Disinte-
This chapter argues that U.S. policymaking throughout much of the interwar period was characterized by breakdowns in communications between senior civilian officials (primarily within the State Department) and their uniformed counterparts in the Army and Navy. It seeks to identify the reasons why many civilian leaders throughout the 1920s and early 1930s regarded military input into the national policymaking process as illegitimate, and also to explain why some military officers—mostly within the Army—concurred in this belief. The chapter concludes with an examination of some of the efforts undertaken during the late 1930s and early 1940s to address this civil-military divide, and why these efforts proved to be largely unsuccessful. Chapter Six, “Interwar U.S. Strategic Planning and its Limitations,” focuses on the evolution of U.S. war planning between 1919 and 1941. This chapter examines the impact on both services of severe interwar budget cuts, and explains how these cuts helped to shape the institutional outlooks of the Army and Navy. It addresses the sharp divergence in planning priorities that developed between the two services by the middle of the 1930s, with the Army focusing increasingly on the defense of the Western Hemisphere while the Navy refined campaign plans for war with Japan. It also devotes considerable attention to how the services’ respective priorities shaped the evolution of the interwar Orange Plans, and how the failure to resolve longstanding and well-known ambiguities within the plans contributed to a sense of confusion regarding the defense of the Philippine Islands.

The Epilogue focuses upon one of the thorniest questions regarding U.S. defense policy in the Philippines—the War Department’s 1941 effort to reinforce the American garrison in the Philippines, particularly its air complement. This decision is particularly difficult to understand because it flew in the face of what was by 1941 a widely held consensus within the U.S. military that a successful defense of the islands against Japan was impossible. The epilogue examines a
number of the theories that have been put forward to explain the War Department’s actions, noting why many of these explanations do not appear credible on the basis of the information available to senior officials at the time. It concludes with the suggestion that the decision was to a considerable extent a logical consequence of decades of confusion produced by the developments explored in the preceding chapters.
Chapter 1 – Historians and American Strategic Policy in the Pacific Between the World Wars

The foreign and military policy of the United States of America during the decades of the interwar period has been the subject of a comparatively small but very rich body of literature. The foundational works on the subject were produced by the first generation of post-World War II scholars, with many of the key works reviewed here having been published roughly between 1955 and 1975. However, recent years have seen a significant (and most welcome) revival of interest in the political and military history of the interwar years. These works, in many cases based upon archival materials that were not yet available to scholars of earlier generations, have provided fresh insight into the history of the era, and have in several cases forced a reevaluation of the conclusions of the earlier scholarship. The following pages offer a survey of the major works chronicling the various events and developments that contributed to the decline of the U.S. strategic position in the western Pacific and sealed the fate of the Philippine garrison.

As noted in the introduction, this dissertation asserts that the most serious problem confronting U.S. policymakers during the interwar decades was the existence of a state of civil-military “disintegration.” This condition not only hampered efforts to formulate a national foreign policy whose ends were in harmony with the means available to enforce them, but produced a number of spillover effects as well. In the absence of meaningful guidance from either the State Department or the White House, military planners were left in the dark with regard to the objectives of national policy. At least some of the confusion that characterized the war plans drawn up during the 1920s and 1930s can be traced to the information deficiencies that confronted their authors. Likewise, many of the provisions of the international arms limitation treaties of the interwar years, particularly the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, appear to have been negotiated without a firm appreciation of their consequences for the American strategic
position in the Pacific. While senior naval officers from the other major signatories of these treaties, Great Britain and Japan, were granted prominent roles within their respective countries’ delegations, U.S. naval officers were largely marginalized, and consultations with them were limited to technical matters where their specialized knowledge was seen as useful. Their input on matters of national strategy and policy, however, was quite minimal, a fact that produced a great deal of resentment among the Navy’s senior officers.

The development of this civil-military divide is one of the most thoroughly documented chapters in the history of U.S. foreign policy during the interwar decades. One of the earliest pieces of scholarship on the topic was a 1955 essay in *Political Science Quarterly* by the late Harvard University historian Ernest May. In the essay, May noted that very few Americans in the post-World War II era would question the value of close and frequent communication between civilian and military leaders on matters of national policy:

> [Military] forces are the rooks and bishops behind the knights and pawns of diplomacy; although the rooks and bishops move less frequently, their rôle in the game is no less decisive. Before the executors of foreign policy can decide what the nation ought to do, they must learn from political and military experts what the nation is able to do.¹

While this view came to be increasingly accepted in the U.S. after World War II, May argued this was clearly not the case in the decades before the war. With most of the country’s attention focused upon continental expansion and economic development, the conduct of foreign affairs received scant attention from the U.S. government during the nineteenth century.² A consequence of this neglect was the complete lack of any formal mechanism for coordination between civilian diplomats and representatives of the military. Even in the aftermath of the First

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¹ Ernest R. May, “The Development of Political-Military Consultation in the United States,” *Political Science Quarterly* 70, No. 2 (June, 1955), 162.
² A major exception to this occurred at the time of the Civil War, when ensuring that the European powers would neither recognize the legitimacy of the Confederacy nor intervene in the conflict on its behalf was a matter of great importance to the Union government.
World War, a conflict that had seen a previously unprecedented appearance on the global stage for the U.S., “consultation among the State, War, and Navy Departments took the antique form of correspondence among the three secretaries.”\textsuperscript{3} In the post-World War I years, a number of initiatives for promoting closer coordination between the three cabinet agencies were proposed by representatives of the War and Navy Departments, but these proposals were either ignored or rejected by the State Department. The actions of successive Secretaries of State in rejecting these initiatives do not appear to have been the product of political partisanship, as their behavior remained consistent through administrations of both parties.\textsuperscript{4} It was not until early in the second term of Franklin Roosevelt’s presidency that some efforts were undertaken to bridge the communications gulf that had emerged between the country’s senior diplomatic and military officials. While May clearly regarded these efforts as a step in the right direction, he suggested that they were both too small in scale and undertaken far too late to undo the preceding decades of neglect before the United States found itself thrust into World War II.

May’s argument that a pronounced disconnect developed between American civilian and military leaders during the interwar period has gained wide acceptance among subsequent generations of scholars. While it is not the exclusive focus of any of the works reviewed for this project, references to both the existence of this problem and its consequences upon the American foreign policymaking process permeate the relevant literature.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{3} May, “The Development of Political-Military Consultation,” 163.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 167-71.
The majority of works that address this phenomenon echo May’s contention that it was
the State Department which was principally responsible. But why did State Department
officials, with alarming frequency, fail to consult with their military counterparts regarding the
objectives of American foreign policy? At the most basic level, this behavior could be under-
stood simply as bureaucratic “turf fighting”—efforts by the State Department to ensure that its
own views predominated in discussions of national policy by excluding rival agencies who might
present conflicting views. To some extent, this explanation is probably correct—to highlight one
equivalent that will be discussed at length in future chapters, much of the correspondence between
Charles Evans Hughes and his counterparts in the War and Navy Departments (John W. Weeks
and Edwin Denby, respectively) does seem to be a clear attempt by the Secretary of State to put
his colleagues in their place. But to ascribe the civil-military divide’s emergence entirely to
bureaucratic infighting appears to be a bit of an oversimplification. In Allies and Adversaries, a
study of the development of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff system during World War II, Mark
Stoler suggests that another key factor was a fundamental difference in outlook between civilian
diplomats and military officers regarding the causes of war:

[ Military planners] perceived war to be a standard “phase of international politics” result-
ing from conflicting national policies, with force and diplomacy as interrelated tools to be
used as appropriate for the defense and fulfillment of national policies…Most State
Department officials held very different views. With a few exceptions, they maintained
the traditional American beliefs that war was an aberration rather than a normal phase of
international relations and that force constituted a separate category and last resort to be
used only if diplomacy failed.6

As a result of this outlook (which can be loosely labeled “liberal internationalism”), the interwar
Secretaries of State devoted the majority of their energy and attention to the establishment of

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6  Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 2.
institutional arrangements that would promote international cooperation, and, as a consequence, eliminate conflict among nations. This outlook among senior U.S. diplomats has been commented upon by a number of historians. In her 1966 monograph Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence, Betty Glad examined how this abiding conviction in the ability of international agreements to shape international relations influenced the behavior of her subject, one of the most influential individuals ever to hold the post of Secretary of State. In The Globalizing of America, his contribution to the Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations series, Akira Iriye offers a more comprehensive history of U.S. internationalism during the interwar period.

The liberal internationalist outlook of the interwar State Department manifested itself in a number of ways, most prominently the efforts undertaken in the 1920s to promote disarmament. The post-World War I years witnessed a unique confluence of circumstances that made the conclusion of international arms limitation agreements possible. Iriye notes that the proposals advanced by Charles Evans Hughes at the Washington Conference of 1921-22 dovetailed nicely with the goals of American isolationists such as Idaho Senator William Borah. Borah and his supporters viewed the mere existence of armaments as an existential threat to world peace. According to Iriye, “they ardently believed that the world would never be spared another conflagration until the major military powers, including the United States, undertook arms reductions.” Moreover, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, the U.S.-led initiative to convene an international naval limitation conference was launched at a time when each of the world’s major naval powers was, at least temporarily, disposed to view such an agreement as advantageous. The resulting naval treaties signed at Washington in 1922 and at London in 1930

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were truly groundbreaking. However, their authors failed to realize that the willingness of the signatories to abide by the treaties’ provisions would wane if their governments became convinced that compliance no longer served their respective national interests.

The liberal internationalist outlook of the interwar Secretaries of State was also evident in their efforts to establish legal frameworks for international cooperation. In his introduction to *How the Peace Was Lost*, Arthur Waldron portrays this development as a reaction to the First World War: “The lesson of World War I, at least so it seemed to many professional diplomats, was that national self-assertion could lead only to disaster; firm multinational systems, by contrast, could secure the peace.”\(^8\) During the 1920s, State Department officials played a key role in the formulation of a number of agreements aimed at preventing international conflict. Two such agreements were concluded at the Washington Conference of 1921-22. Under the terms of the Four-Power Pact, the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan pledged to submit any disputes among them over the status of territories in the Pacific to international arbitration. The Nine-Power Pact, which also included China, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal, was intended to ensure the territorial integrity of China, and to preserve equal access to Chinese markets.\(^9\) The ultimate expression of liberal internationalist idealism was the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. The Pact’s signatories renounced the use of military force as an instrument of national policy.\(^10\)

The proliferation of treaties and agreements during the 1920s appeared at the time to validate the wisdom of the liberal internationalist approach to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

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\(^9\) See Chapter 4.

Critics of the interwar State Department, however, have argued that these accords were made possible only by a fleeting combination of circumstances, and that as a result they were unsustainable in the long run. In the aftermath of the First World War, the world’s great powers found themselves in a situation where each, for its own reasons, viewed the maintenance of the international status quo as beneficial. While the United States had emerged from the conflict relatively unscathed, the American public was in no mood to support an aggressive foreign policy, for reasons that are explored at greater length in Chapter 4. The war had left both Great Britain and France gravely weakened and burdened by massive debt, and both desperately desired to avoid another conflict. Germany had been forcibly disarmed by the Treaty of Versailles and was mired in the economic doldrums that bedeviled the Weimar Republic throughout its existence. In Japan, the 1920s were the era of “Taisho democracy,” with civilian authorities enjoying far more political power within the government than would be the case in the 1930s. As a consequence, this decade featured a period of relative tranquility in Japan’s relationship with the United States, with the mutual suspicions that had long divided the two nations temporarily set aside.

Within only a few years, however, this transient period of harmony among the world’s leading powers had largely come to an end. By the early 1930s a combination of factors, many prompted by the onset of the Great Depression, had induced a number of states (initially Japan, and later Italy and Germany) to challenge the institutions of cooperation that had been established in the 1920s. The first these challenges was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in

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11 Somewhat ironically, the ascendance of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy within Japanese politics was in no small measure a reaction to the naval limitation accords signed in 1922 and 1930. IJN and IJA leaders contended that these agreements violated what they termed the “Right of Supreme Command” which declared that the determination of the size of Japan’s military forces solely the responsibility of the military and the Emperor. See Sidney Devere Brown, “Shidehara Kijūrō: The Diplomacy of the Yen,” in Diplomats in Crisis: United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941, edited by Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1974), 215-9.
1931, and its subsequent establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo. The significance of
the “Manchurian Incident” went far beyond its implications for relations between Japan, China,
and the United States. It exposed a key weakness of the international agreements negotiated in
the 1920s, namely the total absence of enforcement mechanisms to sanction those who violated
their provisions. A frequent criticism leveled against interwar U.S. diplomats is that their
overweening faith in the liberal internationalist ideology had led them to believe that such
provisions were unnecessary, and that as a result they were not psychologically prepared to
respond to states whose behavior failed to conform to their expectations. In her biography of
Charles Evans Hughes, Betty Glad asserts that he failed to anticipate that states will eagerly
violate their own promises “when they can secure goals they consider important with a relatively
cheap expenditure of…resources.”

Nor was Hughes unique in this respect. In *Crossroads of Decision*, historian Howard Jablon levels a similar criticism against the State Department of the
1930s. He argues that U.S. diplomats were unable to formulate an effective response to Japanese
behavior in China, both in the wake of the invasion of Manchuria and in the ensuing years.
Japanese attacks upon China or infringements upon U.S. treaty rights were met with a steady
stream of formal diplomatic protests. At no point, however, were these protests supplemented by
efforts to impose stronger sanctions. Jablon contends that this approach made both the State
Department and the United States appear weak and ineffectual to the Japanese, and charged that
Secretary of State Cordell Hull and his subordinates were guilty of viewing diplomacy as an end
in itself, rather than as a means for the achievement of a clearly defined policy objective.

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13 See Howard Jablon, *Crossroads of Decision: The State Department and Foreign Policy, 1933-1937* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 136. In Jablon’s view, the failure of Hull, and by extension the Roosevelt administration, lay in its inability to decide whether or not U.S. interests in China were of sufficient importance to risk further alienation between the U.S. and Japan. If the answer was in the affirmative, then the U.S. should have confronted the Japanese far more aggressively. Otherwise, the U.S. would have been better served by
A related consequence of this outlook which has been commented upon by a number of historians was the tendency of interwar U.S. diplomats to exhibit something of a blind spot with regard to the role of the military in the conduct of foreign affairs. As noted above, one of the fundamental convictions of the interwar liberal internationalists was that war had become an anachronism. One result of this was a tendency on the part of many State Department officials to ignore ways in which the U.S. military might be utilized to support the pursuit of the country’s foreign policy objectives. This outlook also manifested itself in the repeated (and largely successful) efforts on the part of the State Department to exclude military leaders from discussions of U.S. foreign policy, a development chronicled by Ernest May, Mark Stoler, and others.

While the State Department has been subjected to a great deal of criticism for the dismissive manner in which many of its officials handled treated their military counterparts, other scholars have noted that U.S. military leaders also bear some the responsibility for the lack of civil-military coordination. One of the first pieces of scholarship to raise this point was a 1961 essay in *The American Historical Review* by Fred Greene. Greene argued that the overwhelming majority of pre-World War II military officers accepted the idea that the formulation of national policy should be the exclusive responsibility of civilians:

> In considering the relationship between national and military policy in the grim atmosphere of 1939, a joint [Army-Navy] planning paper observed that the military’s task did not include the responsibility to establish or amend national policy. Instead the overriding requirement was for army and navy actions so planned as to make effective the national policy as defined by the executive and Congress.\(^\text{14}\)

Greene suggested that the U.S. military viewed its responsibilities entirely in terms of supporting policy objectives established by civilian leaders, chiefly the personnel of the State Department, and that as a result military leaders deliberately distanced themselves from the policy formulation process. As a result, the recommendations produced by the interwar Army and Navy planning boards were largely the products of guesswork, as their authors sought to discern the true objectives of the country’s civilian policymakers on the basis of the few clues available to them.

Subsequent scholarship, most prominently that of the late Russell Weigley, Jr., suggested that the degree to which military officers voluntarily excluded themselves from the policy formulation process had profoundly negative consequences, both for the military itself and for the nation as a whole. Weigley traced the roots of many officers’ distaste for involvement in policy discussions to the longstanding American tradition of civilian control of the military, a tradition with its roots in the Republic’s earliest days. The prevalence of this attitude peaked during the late 1930s, when “the respect of the American military for civil supremacy…[reached] a degree of self-denial that even ardent champions of the principle might regard as excessive.”15 Indeed, many Army officers of the interwar period were so determined to avoid even the appearance of military influence on the policies of the nation that they refused to vote.16

16 Forrest Pogue, author of a multi-volume biography of George C. Marshall, wrote of his subject “Reared in a family half Republican, half Democratic, and educated in an Army that for more than a generation had avoided participation in politics, Marshall refrained from voting all his life.” Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 24. In a 2010 article in *The Journal of Military History*, historian Kerry Irish notes that one of the factors that contributed to the deterioration of the personal relationship between Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur was the latter’s willingness to openly and publicly inject himself into political debates, behavior which Eisenhower and many of his contemporaries viewed as “contrary to the cherished ideals of the U.S. Army.” See Kerry Irish, “Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines: There Must be a Day of Reckoning,” *The Journal of Military History* 74 (2010), 469.
To some degree, deference on the part of military leaders toward civilian authority is both laudable and highly desirable, particularly in democratic societies. But Weigley believed that during the 1930s this practice was carried to such dangerous extremes that senior officers, including Army Chief of Staff George Marshall and Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark, refused even to inform Roosevelt administration officials, including the president, of the implications of their decisions for fear of overstepping what they regarded as their proper roles. This attitude, Weigley believed, had fateful consequences for the Philippines, as the Roosevelt administration declared that it was the official position of the United States that the islands were to be defended against invasion, despite a longstanding consensus within the military that a successful defense was impossible. There is no evidence of any effort to bring this consensus to the President’s attention, a lapse that Weigley viewed as tantamount to dereliction of duty:

The issue was 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 the implications. So absolute 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 breach of the principle...

Though Weigley noted that the pattern of excessive military deference to civilian authority disappeared following the American entry into World War II, by that time the damage had been done.

While Weigley asserted that this deeply-ingrained respect for norms of civilian control characterized the military as a whole, it appears to have been far more prevalent in the Army. A series of works dating to as early as the 1920s demonstrate that naval officers were far more

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17 Indeed, one of the points Weigley sought to make in his 1993 JMH article was that at the time of its writing, in his view the pendulum had swung much too far in the opposite direction. He cited the open opposition of General Colin Powell, then serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to efforts by President Bill Clinton to permit homosexuals to serve openly in the military as an example of excessive involvement by a military figure in matters of national policy. See Weigley, “The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control,” 30-1.

18 Ibid., 42.
willing to inject themselves into discussions of national policy than were their Army counterparts. Naval officers were also willing to engage in efforts to surreptitiously subvert actions taken by civilian diplomats that they regarded as inimical to the best interests of the United States (or of their own service).

An early example of the Navy’s vociferousness was retired Captain Dudley W. Knox’s 1922 polemic *The Eclipse of American Sea Power*.19 Published scant weeks after the end of the Washington Naval Conference, Knox’s short book was a recitation of the litany of complaints raised by U.S. Navy officers with respect to the Washington Treaty and the manner in which it had been negotiated. It declared that the Washington Naval Treaty had required the United States to make sacrifices far greater than those imposed upon Great Britain and Japan, the treaty’s other chief signatories. These sacrifices, Knox argued, made it impossible for the United States to enforce its treaty rights in China, because Article XIX of the treaty, the so-called “nonfortification clause” prohibited the construction of a first-class fleet base in the Philippine Islands.20 He also correctly anticipated that the treaty’s conclusion would reduce the strength of the United States Navy relative to that of Japan. Knox argued that U.S. leaders, particularly in Congress, would see the conclusion of the treaty as an opportunity to reduce the country’s military expenditures. The Japanese government, however, would not reduce its expenditures on naval construction, but would simply shift its construction budget into classes of ships which were not subject to limitation under the treaty.21

In at least some instances naval leadership was willing to go even further than open disagreement with the decisions of civilian policymakers. John T. Kuehn’s 2008 monograph

21 Ibid. See especially Chapter VIII, “Partial Limitation of Naval Armaments Not Effective in Eliminating Naval Competition,” 97-104.
Agents of Innovation highlights a number of ways in which the U.S. Navy’s General Board plotted to circumvent provisions of the interwar arms limitation treaties concluded by civilian diplomats. In some of these cases it could plausibly be argued that the Board was simply engaged in a bit of modest “stretching” of rights granted under the terms of the Washington Treaty, as in the case of a number of proposals to modernize the Navy’s battleships during the 1920s and 1930s.22 In other instances, however, the Board’s efforts were clearly in violation of the spirit of the treaty. The best illustration of this was the abortive attempt to develop the “flying deck cruiser.” The flying deck cruiser was, in effect, little more than a thinly-disguised light aircraft carrier. However, because the proposed design mounted a main battery of guns identical in caliber to those of the Navy’s light cruisers, members of the General Board argued that it could be legally classified as a cruiser—and would thus be exempt from the limitation on aircraft carrier tonnage imposed upon the Navy by the Washington Treaty.23 That the members of the Board could make this suggestion with a straight face is a considerable testament to their poker skills. It seems extremely unlikely that representatives of the British and Japanese navies would have viewed the Board’s explanations as anything other than what they clearly were—an attempt to build aircraft carriers in greater numbers than would otherwise have been permitted. In the end, the flying deck cruiser concept was never advanced beyond the blueprint state, although Kuehn notes that it was “only by the ‘slimmest of circumstance’ that the prototypes… were not built.”24 What this episode clearly illustrates, however, is the lengths to which naval planners were willing to go in the effort to advance their own agenda, even when this agenda contradicted international agreements to which the United States was a signatory.

24 Ibid., 108.
What explains the Navy’s greater willingness to challenge the decisions of civilian policymakers? To some extent this was simply a matter of necessity. As will be shown in Chapter 6, both the Army and Navy were targeted for severe budget cuts by the parsimonious Congresses of the interwar decades. These cuts were an irritant for the Navy, but they were absolutely crippling for the Army, which was reduced to little more than a skeleton force by the early 1920s. The withered state of the Army was well known to both services, and naval leaders realized that should the country find itself at war, it would be their responsibility to carry the burden of fighting until the Army had swelled its ranks through conscription. It is thus unsurprising that naval personnel were far more active in debates on matters of national policy, for the consequences of these debates threatened to fall far more heavily upon their service than upon the Army.

William Reynolds Braisted suggests another factor that may have been at play as well in his 2009 *Diplomats in Blue*. This work focuses on the history and experiences of the men of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet in China during the interwar period. Clearly shaped by its author’s personal experiences (Braisted’s father was an officer in the U.S. Navy, and much of his childhood was spent in China during his father’s service with the Asiatic Fleet), the book blends a comprehensive overview of major developments in China during the 1920s and early 1930s with accounts of the experiences of individual officers. One of the central themes of Braisted’s work, as suggested by the title, is that throughout this period naval personnel frequently found themselves serving as *de facto* representatives of the government of the United States. As a result of their experiences in China, a number of junior U.S. Navy officers appear not to have internalized
the norms against intervention in matters of policy that developed within the interwar U.S. Army.25

The existence of a climate of “disintegration” between civilian and military leaders during the interwar period may have been the most important factor in the disaster that befell the military in the Philippines in 1941-42, but it was not the only one. Some of the blame for the disaster must also be attached to ambiguities that were allowed to linger within war plans drawn up by the military during the interwar decades. In the planners’ defense, it should be noted that their task was greatly complicated by the military’s persistent inability to obtain clarification from civilian officials on the objectives of national policy, a matter discussed at great length in Chapter Five. However, a number of scholars have openly questioned the extent to which the documents produced by the Joint Planning Committee (the body responsible for the creation of war plans) adequately accounted for the substantial changes in the strategic situation in the Pacific that occurred during the interwar years.

The state of the two armed services has been covered in significant depth by a number of historians. The history of the interwar U.S. Army and its relationship with America’s Pacific colonies and territories has been chronicled in a number of works by Brian McAllister Linn.26

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25 This pattern of behavior appears to have continued as officers who had spent their early careers in China worked their way upward through the Navy’s ranks. Braisted highlights the case of James O. Richardson. In 1922, then-Commander Richardson found himself as the senior American officer in Canton during a standoff over customs revenue between Sun Yat-Sen and representatives of several Western nations. Richardson’s adroit handling of the situation, both in coordinating with officers representing other nations and in avoiding provocative behavior toward the Chinese, earned him considerable praise from the civilian diplomats in the aftermath of the crisis. See William R. Braisted, *Diplomats in Blue: U.S. Naval Officers in China, 1922-1933* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2009), 23-9. Richardson, who would be one of the chief architects of the 1938 version of War Plan Orange, eventually rose to the rank of Rear Admiral, and in 1940 was named commander of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet, a position he held until early 1941 when he was replaced following a bitter dispute with President Roosevelt over the latter’s insistence that the fleet remain stationed at Pearl Harbor. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942*, Vol. 3, of *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1948), 46-7.

26 For an account of the army’s campaign against the Philippine independence movement, see Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000). For an account of the changes undergone by the army as an institution in the early decades of the twentieth century, see Linn, “The Long
Several highly-regarded biographies focus upon the lives of key service leaders, such as Douglas MacArthur and George C. Marshall. The definitive work on the former is D. Clayton James’ 3-volume *The Years of MacArthur*. The first volume covers MacArthur’s early life, his experiences during the First World War, and his service with the interwar Army including his five-year stint as Chief of Staff (1930-35) and his subsequent work as military advisor to Manuel Quezon, the President of the Philippine Commonwealth. James’ second volume follows MacArthur throughout the Second World War, beginning with the Japanese attack on the Philippines and concluding with Japan’s formal surrender in September, 1945. Forrest C. Pogue offers a similar multivolume treatment of the life of George C. Marshall, who served as Army Chief of Staff throughout World War II. Of particular interest to this study are the first two volumes, entitled *Education of a General, 1880-1939* and *Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942*. The former volume covers Marshall’s life and military career up to the time of his assumption of the position of Army Chief of Staff on September 1, 1939. The second volume addresses the desperate struggle waged by Marshall to prepare the undermanned, undertrained, and under-equipped service he inherited for the looming conflict ahead.

A common theme throughout all of these works is the extent to which the U.S. Army was completely unprepared for modern war throughout the interwar decades. Though its strength had risen to well over two million men during World War I, rapid postwar demobilization had reduced the Army to a fraction of that number by the early 1920s. The need to maintain garrisons in the U.S.’s far-flung colonies produced a severe strain on the Army’s limited manpower, and made it nearly impossible for units to incorporate and internalize the lessons of 1917-1918:

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As in the nineteenth century, the demands of the frontier in the early twentieth century drained manpower into primitive, unhealthy, and isolated outposts. The Pacific commitment hampered military efforts to concentrate forces, it prevented large unit training, and it perpetuated an army of small, undermanned companies.  

This situation was exacerbated by the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. When Douglas MacArthur ascended to the position of Chief of Staff in June of 1930, he found himself confronted by a Congress determined to achieve economies wherever possible. Probably realizing that pressing for increased allocations in this political environment would be futile, MacArthur was willing to accept cuts to the Army’s annual budget proposals. This agreement, however, forced him to make difficult choices regarding the distribution of the scant financial assets available. James notes that one casualty of these compromises was the modernization of the Army’s rapidly-aging inventory, for “MacArthur…was more concerned about protecting the personnel of the military establishment—numbers of officers and enlisted men, their pay, allowances, and other benefits…” The Chief of Staff’s determination that the brunt of the budget cuts would not fall upon the men under his command is commendable, but James concedes that much had to be sacrificed in order to achieve even this modest objective. The elimination of an experimental mechanized unit under the command of Adna R. Chaffee, “according to most later authorities, retarded [the Army’s] development of modern tanks, and caused the American Army to fall far behind the major European military powers in the development of armored warfare tactics.” The development of the Army’s fledgling air corps was also significantly retarded by the decisions forced upon MacArthur during the early 1930s.

As Forrest Pogue notes, the state of the Army had improved very little when George Marshall was named Chief of Staff in 1939. Much like his flamboyant predecessor, Marshall

27 Linn, “The Long Twilight of the Frontier Army,” 166.
29 Ibid., 358.
faced a Congress reluctant to allocate large sums for national defense. The outbreak of World War II, and particularly the fall of France in the spring of 1940, proved a sufficient shock to loosen the national purse strings. But this by itself was not enough to instantly revitalize an Army suffering from decades of neglect. Growing U.S. determination to support Great Britain’s war effort, most notably through the Lend-Lease program, meant that the Army occupied only a single chair at what Winston Churchill referred to as “the hungry table,” competing for scarce materiel with the members of what would become the Allied coalition. As late as the summer of 1941 Marshall informed Secretary of War Henry Stimson that “The Army was now so short of weapons…that he would have to use dummy pieces in maneuvers scheduled for the summer.”

In sum, the best description of the interwar Army was Marshall’s lament that prior to World War II, his service had time but no money, and after the outbreak of the conflict, it had money but no time. As will be shown in Chapter 6, the extent to which the Army’s strength had been eroded during the 1920s and 1930s exerted a strong influence on its outlook with respect to war planning.

The story of the interwar U.S. Navy, particularly as told in more recent historical works, is significantly different. In the decades immediately following World War II, a stereotypical image of the Navy emerged, one that depicted its leaders as stubborn, hidebound, and generally unwilling to alter their thinking in order to incorporate newer technological developments into their service’s doctrine. A growing body of recent literature, however, vigorously challenges this view. Two exemplars of this work are John Kuehn’s *Agents of Innovation*, discussed at some length above, and Craig C. Felker’s 2007 *Testing American Sea Power*. Felker’s book is a study of the Navy’s Fleet Problems, training exercises conducted annually in Caribbean or eastern

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31 Ibid., 138.
Pacific waters throughout the interwar years. He argues that the design of these Fleet Problems reveals a service far more open to tactical and doctrinal innovations than previously believed. While noting that the exercises of the 1920s did tend to emphasize the dominant role of the battleship as the decisive arm of the fleet (the Navy’s carrier force still being in its infancy during this period), “Independent carrier task forces became common fixtures in subsequent exercises, and admirals proved increasingly willing to use airpower against capital ships.”

Indeed, as early as Fleet Problem 9, held in March of 1930, Admiral Louis Nulton was roundly criticized by Admiral William Veazie Pratt, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet (CINCUS) for his “conservative and defensive employment of airpower,” which in its “emphasis on air cover for the battleships [had] made any offensive use impossible.” Other Fleet Problems addressed the challenges posed by advancements in submarine technology—including studies of the best means to employ submarines in an offensive role, and efforts to test techniques for antisubmarine warfare. While Felker concedes the Fleet Problems were not universally successful in preparing the Navy for the challenges it experienced during World War II (he singles out amphibious warfare operations as one area that received at best perfunctory attention), he argues that the variety and complexity of the problems suggests a far more open-minded and progressive approach on the part of the exercises’ planners than was previously realized.

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33 Ibid., 54. As commander of the Black Fleet in the exercise, Nulton had kept his carriers in close proximity to his battleships, and had held back the carriers’ planes in defensive positions over his fleet rather than using them for scouting purposes or attempting to attack the enemy. His opponent, Vice Admiral W.C. Cole, handled his lone carrier much more aggressively, and launched an attack that eluded the Black Fleet’s air patrols. Referees judged that the Black Fleet’s carriers had been put out of action and moderate damage inflicted upon its battleships. Nulton’s failure to use his planes to locate the enemy fleet earned him considerable criticism in post-exercise reviews.
John Kuehn’s *Agents of Innovation* paints a similar picture of the Navy’s General Board. The Board’s members, he asserts, realized that the arms limitation treaties of the interwar years had significant consequences for their service, consequences that necessitated considerable adaptability in their approach to strategy. In the ensuing years, Kuehn writes:

[The Board’s] members influenced navy policies and programs in a way that was meant to wring every advantage possible allowed under the Washington Naval Treaty and later the London Naval Treaty of 1930...They saw themselves as a group of subject matter experts on the clauses of the naval treaties...Technically, the Board’s statutory role was merely advisory. However, its actual influence was much greater, especially during the interwar period.35

The innovation fostered by the General Board took a number of forms. The Board’s effort to develop the “flying-deck cruiser” as a means of supplementing the fleet’s aviation component has been discussed above. But the flying-deck cruiser was just one of a number of examples cited by Kuehn. When the establishment of a first-class fortified fleet base in the western Pacific was rendered impossible by Article XIX of the Washington Treaty, the Board sought to compensate for this loss by proposing new vessels whose fuel capacity was much greater than previous designs. Similarly, efforts to modernize the Navy’s battleship fleet, including the addition of anti-torpedo blisters and enhanced antiaircraft batteries, anticipated and sought to counteract the attrition warfare that the Japanese intended to wage in order to erode the American fleet’s numerical advantage in battleships.36 Kuehn concludes that the Navy’s successful performance against Japan during the Pacific War “was not the result of having the precise Navy needed to win [the war] with the opening of hostilities, but because the kind of

36 As will be shown later in this chapter, the U.S. Navy’s estimation of the strategies that the Japanese intended to adopt in the event of war with the United States proved highly accurate.
Navy needed had already been discussed and thought about extensively during the hearings of the General Board…”37

If recent works of scholarship have been more favorable in their estimation of the interwar Navy’s flexibility, they are in complete agreement with earlier works on one key point—the extent to which opinion within the Navy was nearly unanimous that its most likely future adversary would be Japan. Ever since the U.S. conquest of the Philippines, the likelihood that the colony’s proximity to Japan would lead to friction between the two nations had been very much at the forefront of military planners’ thinking, and this fear was intensified by a succession of “war scares” in the early twentieth century, generally stemming from Japanese anger over U.S. laws that discriminated against Japanese and Japanese-Americans.38 The Navy’s suspicion of Japan manifested itself in a number of ways. In some incidents, given the benefit of hindsight, American suspicion of Japanese behavior appears laughably overwrought. William Reynolds Braisted chronicles several such episodes in The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922. He notes that many Americans, both in and out of uniform, constantly suspected that the Imperial Japanese Navy was seeking access to bases in the Western Hemisphere, citing a 1911 accusation that a Japanese steamship company was seeking to acquire land on Mexico’s Magdalena Bay, as well as a rumored 1916 naval alliance between Japan and Chile.39 But while in these cases American mistrust of Japan may have been unfounded, the fact remained that there were legitimate issues of contention between the two Pacific powers,

37 Kuehn, Agents of Innovation, 178. Emphasis in original.
38 For a brief account of the U.S. military’s reaction to one such crisis, see Louis Morton, “Military and Naval Preparations for the Defense of the Philippines During the War Scare of 1907,” Military Affairs 13 (1949), 95-104.
39 On the former allegation, see William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1971), 51-7. Braisted concludes that this particular rumor was likely started by an American company who hoped to scare the U.S. government into purchasing the land in question. He confidently asserts that at no point was there any evidence of serious Japanese interest in naval facilities in the Western Hemisphere. On the latter allegation, see ibid., 540-2. This rumor proved just as spurious as that about Japanese activity at Magdalena Bay.
and tensions relating to these issues grew steadily throughout the interwar period. American naval officers feared that Japanese territorial ambitions in China threatened the Open Door, which had been the focal point of U.S. East Asian policy since the late nineteenth century, and the “Manchurian Incident” of 1931 convinced those same officers that their suspicions had been correct.40 While many of the Fleet Problems outlined in Craig Felker’s *Testing American Sea Power* were conducted in Caribbean waters, the majority of these exercises were focused upon problems that the Navy expected to encounter in a conflict with Japan. In a similar vein, John Kuehn notes that most of the adaptations made by the General Board in the aftermath of the Washington Conference, such as the demand for greatly improved endurance in new warship designs and the emphasis on increasing the fleet’s aviation component, were clearly made with a view to operations is the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. As a final bit of proof, it has been widely noted that of all the interwar strategic plans drawn up by the U.S. military, only the Orange Plans were subjected to continuous reviews and updates during the 1920s and 1930s.

The Orange Plans were part of what is broadly referred to as the “Color Plan” family. Created by the Joint Planning Committee of the Joint Army-Navy Board, the Color Plans outlined strategies to be pursued in the event of war with a particular foreign power. Each potential foe was assigned a unique color—Great Britain was “Red,” Germany “Black,” Mexico “Green,” and Japan “Orange”—with the U.S. being referred to as “Blue” throughout the plan series. The body of literature on interwar U.S. strategic planning is quite small, and the first works to emerge in the post-World War II years were quite critical in their evaluation of the Orange Plans. Most of these works accepted the interpretation of the plans put forward by Louis Morton, one of the historians who participated in producing the U.S. Army’s official history of

World War II (the so-called “Green Books”). Morton outlined his view of the Orange Plans’ shortcomings in a 1959 *World Politics* article. He charged that the early incarnations of the plan were simply unrealistic, particularly the 1924 War Plan Orange, which envisioned the U.S. Navy launching a cross-Pacific offensive at the outset of war with Japan.\(^{41}\) Subsequent revisions to War Plan Orange substituted a more cautious, step-by-step advance through the islands of the Mandates. Because the revised plan necessitated a much longer delay before the arrival of U.S. reinforcements in the Philippines, these later plans tacitly conceded the loss of the islands, but Morton took the planners to task for not making this conclusion explicitly clear. Lastly he argued that later versions of War Plan Orange were undermined by their failure to resolve fundamental disagreements in the strategic outlooks of the two services. After a drawn-out stalemate between an Army advocating a withdrawal from the western Pacific and the adoption of a defense stance to the East and a Navy advocating an offensive campaign against Japan, the 1938 version of War Plan Orange “embodied the essential point of each of the services, with the result that its provisions were less than clear.”\(^{42}\) Morton clearly viewed the 1938 Orange Plan as a largely hollow compromise that did nothing to resolve the underlying disagreement between the two U.S. armed services regarding the conduct of a war against Japan.

Morton’s critical view of the Orange Plans appears to have influenced the writings of a number of other prominent scholars. Noted British naval historian H. P. Willmott referred to War Plan Orange as “a curious combination of the sound and the bizarre.”\(^{43}\) In an essay

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 247.
\(^{43}\) H. P. Willmott, *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 194. Willmott actually refers to “WPO-3” in this sentence, but the context of the surrounding text makes it clear that he is actually referring to the latest versions of War Plan Orange. WPO-3 was a document prepared for the commanding officers of the U.S. Army Forces, Far East (USAFFE). Essentially, it was a statement of how the defenders of the Philippines proposed to fulfill the objectives assigned to them under the Orange Plan. Willmott’s confusion likely originated with Morton’s writing. Morton’s narratives on the interwar plans do not clearly distinguish between WPO-3 (which, again, was prepared for the Army theater commanders in the
prepared for a conference held at Lake Kawaguchi, Japan, in 1969, Russell Weigley also
criticized the plans as unrealistic. In particular, he charged that despite the pessimistic view that
had emerged within the Army regarding the defensibility of the Philippine Islands during the
1930s, some planners continued to hold out hope that a successful defense could be conducted,
and that the Philippines could serve as the advanced base in the western Pacific that would be
necessary to carry the war to Japan. Weigley was highly critical of this temporizing, noting
“That a base which cannot be held against a prospective enemy is indispensable in war against
that enemy is a proposition difficult to sustain under even the most Fabian theories of strategy.”

Brian McAllister Linn also made reference to this remarkably resilient strain of optimism among
military planners in his 1997 *Guardians of Empire*:

>[The 1928 Army Orange Plan] was based on the same premise as that outlined by the
authors of the 1929 Joint Army-Navy Orange Plan: “we must plan on conditions as
they are in reality and not as we would wish them to be.” But even this realism could
not still the hope that somehow the garrison would hold out and allow the fleet to use
Manila Bay.

The common thread throughout all of these works is the element of unreality which historians
believed characterized the Orange Plans. While many of the Orange Plans’ authors *implicitly*
believed that the Philippines would certainly be conquered in the event of war with Japan, a
sufficient degree of ambiguity was allowed to linger within their pages to obscure this fact from
civilian leaders, particularly Franklin Roosevelt. This ambiguity, scholars have charged, served
the interests of neither the United States nor of its military personnel. It is largely for this reason
that “orthodox” studies of the Orange Plans view them in a generally negative light.

Philippines) and the broader Orange Plan (which governed *overall* strategies, but left specifics of how these
strategies were to be achieved to the discretion of local commanders). This confusion subsequently colored the
work of many later authors, likely because they were relying heavily upon Morton’s accounts. See below,
especially the commentary on Edward S. Miller’s *War Plan Orange*.

44 Russell F. Weigley, “The Role of the War Department and the Army,” in *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-
American Relations 1931-1941*, edited by Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (New York: Columbia University

More recent scholarship offers a much more favorable interpretation of the interwar strategic planning process in general and of the Orange Plans in particular. The foundational work of this literature is Edward S. Miller’s 1991 monograph *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945*. Miller boldly opened his book by asserting that “War Plan Orange…was in my opinion history’s most successful war plan.”

He charged that earlier assessments of the Orange Plans had not paid sufficient attention to their evolution over time, and argued that the strategies pursued by the United States during World War II aligned closely with those outlined in the final versions of War Plan Orange. Working primarily from the perspective of naval planners (since, in his view, the Navy’s voice predominated in the drafting of the Orange Plans), Miller traced the evolution of War Plan Orange through a number of iterations. He divides naval planners into two competing camps. Those he terms “thrusters” advocated a highly aggressive strategy for war with Japan, generally featuring a cross-Pacific offensive launched at the earliest moment possible. Opposing the thrusters were the “cautionaries,” officers who believed that in a prolonged conflict with Japan the vastly superior industrial and productive capabilities of the United States would yield an insurmountable advantage. “Cautionaries” advocated a gradual, step-by-step advance across the Pacific Ocean, seizing and developing a succession of island bases, each of which would serve as a staging point for the next step in the fleet’s advance toward Japan. In this debate, Miller’s sympathies clearly lie with the “cautionaries.” He argues that the “thruster” ideology, which dominated earlier versions of the plan, paid insufficient attention to the logistical difficulties involved in conducting a campaign in the vastness of the Pacific, and agrees with “cautionary” officers who charged that an immediate naval advance on Japan in effect wagered the outcome of the war on a

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single throw of the dice. The later versions of War Plan Orange in which the “cautionary” viewpoint dominated are depicted as far more realistic, and while by the time of American entry into World War II the Orange Plans had been supplanted by the plans of the Rainbow series, Miller argues that when senior U.S. officials sought to identify a strategy to guide the conduct of the Pacific campaign, “the design [they] chose was a clone of Plan Orange.”

The reaction to the release of Miller’s book was mixed. The thoroughness of Miller’s research, and the unparalleled depth of his treatment of the evolution of the Orange Plans earned the book a great deal of praise. Miller’s book was also instrumental in revealing and correcting some of the misunderstandings about the Orange Plans that had arisen in earlier scholarship. Miller notes that previous researchers had not had access to all of the relevant documentation, as “many of the planning papers remained classified ‘secret’ until the 1960s or 1970s.” Miller asserted that much of the earlier criticism of the Orange Plans stemmed from the misconception that “the plan was designed to save the Philippines,” an assumption that is clearly incorrect, at least with respect to the final version of the plan. Perhaps the most intriguing argument advanced by Miller in War Plan Orange is the contention that in the summer of 1941 U.S. Pacific Fleet commanders, most notably Admiral Husband Kimmel, were planning to provoke a major fleet action in the Eastern Pacific should the United States find itself at war with Japan. No previous scholar had ever advanced this theory, and Miller himself admitted that it could not be completely substantiated on the basis of written records. Nevertheless, he musters an

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47 Ibid., 334.
48 Ibid., 333.
impressive body of circumstantial evidence to support his contention, and this argument has subsequently gained some traction among military historians.  

But while Miller’s work has drawn considerable praise, it has also been subjected to criticism. Reviewers have not, in general, argued that Miller’s basic conclusions regarding the Orange Plans are incorrect, but rather that they were exaggerated. Reviewer Stephen Pelz declared “Miller’s argument that World War II planners followed the Orange Plan to victory seems particularly strained,” arguing that after the initial months of the Pacific War “fleet planners worked ad hoc to arrange carrier operations and amphibious landings.” The basic thrust of Pelz’s critique is that the parallels Miller sought to establish between the operations outlined in the Orange Plans and the events of the Pacific War are vastly overdrawn.

Miller’s selective approach to his evaluation of War Plan Orange is also problematic. When evaluating the Plans’ effectiveness with respect to the course of the Pacific War, he is simultaneously broad and exclusive in choosing which materials 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, 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.

But this definition is troublesome, for as this project will seek to demonstrate, a number of these “failed strategies” continued to exert influence upon later versions of the Orange Plans. Excising these “failed strategies” from the history of War Plan Orange is not the simple task Miller makes it out to be. A final problem stems from the fact that War Plan Orange approaches the interwar

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50 For Miller’s explanation of his theory, see War Plan Orange, Chapter 25, “Fleet Battle in the Central Pacific, 1941,” 286-312. For an example of subsequent scholarship that embraces Miller’s theory, see Trent Hone, “The Evolution of Fleet Tactical Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922-1941,” The Journal of Military History 67 (2003), 1107-48. Discussion of Admiral Kimmel’s proposed “Pacific Jutland” can be found on pp. 1143-6.


52 Miller, War Plan Orange, 329.
planning process almost exclusively from the perspective of the Navy. The sophistication with which the concerns of the interwar Navy’s planners are addressed is not mirrored in his treatment of the Army. The result is a tendency to trivialize concerns expressed by Army planners when those opinions conflicted with the objectives being pursued by the Navy, and to downplay the very significant role that the Army would be expected to fulfill (and, indeed, did fulfill) in the event of war with Japan.

*War Plan Orange* belongs to the “second generation” of postwar scholarship. Scholars whose work was published in the years immediately following World War II confined their analysis of the U.S. war planning to the official plans prepared by the Joint Planning Committee. After roughly 1980, however, access to newly declassified materials revealed that both the Army and the Navy had other tools at their disposal for exposing officers to the concepts of strategic planning. Throughout the interwar period the leadership of the Army and Navy in effect subcontracted much of the responsibility for drafting strategic plans to the students and faculty of their respective war colleges. Two works that have helped highlight the role of these institutions in the U.S. planning process are Michael Vlahos’ 1980 *The Blue Sword* and Henry G. Gole’s 2003 *The Road to Rainbow*.

Vlahos’ book focuses on the work of the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, between the two World Wars. *The Blue Sword* offers insight into the experiences of students at Newport, focusing most intently upon the war game exercises, both tactical and strategic, to which students were exposed.53 It appears that the evaluation of likely foes put forward by the staff of the Naval War College mirrored that of the Joint Board, as exercises

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53 For a breakdown of the number of daily game sessions devoted to particular issues (search problems, tactical problems, etc.) see Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980), 134.
focusing upon war between Japan and the United States dominated the interwar years, particularly with respect the strategic games conducted at the college:

Of 136 strategic games, or chart maneuvers, extant, 127 made [the destruction of Japanese seapower] the mission. ORANGE was the enemy in 127 imagined marches; 127 times the fleet crossed the Pacific, to free the Philippines, and to do battle with the Japanese fleet.\(^{54}\)

*The Blue Sword* includes a complete list of the war games conducted at Newport between 1919 and 1941, and while occasional “Blue-Red” (U.S.-Britain) or “Blue-Black” (U.S.-Germany) games appear, they represent brief respites in a long succession of “Blue-Orange” games.\(^{55}\)

One of the criticisms frequently leveled against the Color Plans is that they envisioned strictly bilateral conflicts between the United States and individual foreign powers, rather than the coalition struggle that the country entered in 1941. In *The Road to Rainbow*, Henry Gole asserted that the United States Army had realized for quite some time prior to World War II that the United States might find itself embroiled in a coalition war—but that the Army’s planning for coalition warfare was conducted not by the Army members of the Joint Planning Committee, but rather by the staff and students of the Army War College (AWC). Gole traces the origin of this planning to Major General George Simonds’ tenure as commandant of the AWC, an appointment first made in 1932:

In 1934, Simonds introduced “Participation with Allies” to AWC war planning, an innovation that resulted in friendly-coalition-versus-enemy-coalition and two-theatre thinking at the college...[Simonds’] successor as AWC commandant, Malin Craig, continued “Participation with Allies” at the college until he succeeded MacArthur as chief of staff of the army. Both Simonds and Craig continued to task the college from their lofty positions at the top of the army. The college was tightly wired to the General Staff and did plans and projects of special interest to the staff, including the chief of staff.\(^{56}\)

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., 143.

\(^{55}\) Ibid. See Appendix III, 166-78.

\(^{56}\) Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), xix-xx. The 1934 date is significant, because it predates by several years the official retirement of the Orange Plans and their replacement with the Rainbow Plan series, which had been previously regarded as the first serious effort on the part of U.S. military leaders to begin planning for American involvement in a coalition war.
While the planning studies conducted at the AWC included coalition warfare scenarios, the recommendations of the plans clearly reflected the limitations that interwar demobilization and budget cuts had imposed upon the Army. Throughout much of the 1930s, the plans developed by AWC students sought to minimize the commitment their service would be required to make to a conflict on the European mainland, instead emphasizing the defense of the western hemisphere while providing limited, indirect support to America’s European allies. As the political situation in Europe continued to deteriorate, and as German power vis-à-vis Britain and France continued to grow, the AWC’s students expanded their estimates of the commitment that would be necessary to secure victory in Europe, but there was a realization that if the country found itself facing a two-front war in Europe and the Pacific, this commitment would sharply limit the resources that could be brought to bear against Japan. This foreshadowed the harsh realities that Army leaders would be forced to confront in the years before American entry into World War II, as will be shown in Chapter Six.

To this point, the works discussed have focused exclusively upon the interwar United States, whether with respect to civil-military relations or military planning. Much can be learned from this literature with respect to the disaster that befell the Philippine garrison in 1941. However, a complete understanding of the events of the interwar period is impossible without a study of the actions of the world’s two other principal naval powers, Japan and Great Britain, because interwar U.S. foreign policy and military planning was to a great degree influenced by Japanese and British behavior. Moreover, a study of the political debates that took place within

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57 One of the plans frequently revisited by AWC students during the 1930s was “Purple,” which anticipated the deployment of U.S. troops to Brazil to support the Brazilian government against an uprising fostered by Italian and Germany support of anti-government rebels. For the 1939 version of this project, see Gole, The Road to Rainbow, 101-3.

58 Ibid., 120.
those nations reveals that the difficulties that beset interwar planners in the United States (the struggle for scarce resources, bureaucratic competition between various actors within the government) were by no means uniquely American problems. A comprehensive study of the literature dealing with interwar foreign and military policymaking in Japan and Great Britain is beyond the scope of this project, but a few representative works will be briefly examined.

One of the most remarkable diplomatic achievements of the interwar period was the signing of the interwar arms limitation treaties, particularly the Washington Treaty, which served as a basis for the additional agreements that followed later. An intriguing overview of the unique set of circumstances that made this groundbreaking agreement possible may be found in Roger Dingman’s 1976 monograph *Power in the Pacific*. Based upon work in American, British, and Japanese archives, Dingman’s work explores the very different motivations that led government leaders in the three countries to conclude, independently of one another, that a treaty limiting naval armaments was in their best interests. While the precise calculations involved varied from capital to capital, Dingman argued that most important factor driving leaders in all three nations to the negotiating table at Washington was domestic politics. In the United States, Dingman argues that President Warren G. Harding, seen largely as an anonymous placeholder even in the aftermath of his victory in the election of 1920, sought an issue on which decisive political leadership would set him apart from Republican congressional leaders who had previously overshadowed him. He argues that British Prime Minister David Lloyd George had relatively

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59 Dingman depicts Harding as the driving force behind the U.S. delegation at Washington, portraying the president as driven by “very mundane concerns—the desire to succeed where his predecessor had failed, the need to prove others’ low estimates of his capacity wrong…” See Roger Dingman, *Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914-1922* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 159. This interpretation has been criticized by other scholars. In *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era*, Robert Gordon Kaufman charges that “Dingman…gives President Harding too much credit…From what little I found in the Harding Papers—precious little—the President did nothing more that ratify [Secretary of State Charles Evans] Hughes’ plans.” See Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era: The United States and Naval Limitation Between the Two World Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 219, fn. 1. Kaufman’s view, which sees Charles
scant interest in naval limitation. However, a combination of economic concerns and other pressing political matters (the status of Ireland among them) brought him to the conclusion that some degree of naval limitation was necessary, and the fortuitous timing of the American invitation to Washington offered the Prime Minister an opportunity to place the blame for the Royal Navy’s “diminution…on the Americans.”  Dingman also asserts that Japanese acquiescence in the negotiations at Washington was driven by an alliance between Prime Minister Hara Kei and Navy Minister Admiral Katō Tomasaburō. Hara was motivated by a desire to “enhance civilian control over the military,” while Admiral Katō “saw in limitation the chance to render credible a defensive strategy which helped preserve harmony within the navy…and, above all, to conclude an alliance with Hara that would reduce the generals’ power.” Some reviewers of Dingman’s work have charged that his intense focus upon the role of domestic politics as a factor leading to the conclusion of the Washington Naval Treaty minimized other motivating factors, particularly the economic constraints confronting Britain and Japan in the early 1920s. However, there can be no denying that domestic political considerations played a substantial role in the evolution of attitudes toward arms limitation throughout the interwar period, particularly in the case of Japan.

Japanese politics was characterized by vicious political infighting throughout the interwar decades, much of it taking place within the ranks of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy. Two works that seek to chronicle these intra-service battles are Asada Sadao’s *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor* and Michael Barnhart’s *Japan Prepares for Total War*. Asada’s *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor*
Harbor is a study of the evolution of attitudes within the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN), with an emphasis on the conflict between the IJN’s “treaty” and “fleet” factions. As its name suggests, the treaty faction, under the leadership of Katō Tomasaburō, believed that Japan’s national security interests were best served by engagement in the interwar arms limitation process. In Katō’s view, a naval race with Great Britain or, especially, the United States, would be a disaster. He believed that Japan’s security interests would be best served by using the current naval building program (known as the “eight-eight fleet”) as a bargaining chip, for as Katō himself admitted, “Even if we should try to compete with the United States, it is a foregone conclusion that we are simply not up to it.”63 The officers of the treaty faction did not view the United States as a nation with whom Japan was fated to go to war. Taking their cue from the writings of American naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, IJN leaders of the early twentieth century “conceived of a hypothetical enemy not in terms of its intention or probability of war but in terms of its capability.”64 In other words, the United States Navy was viewed by the IJN as a measuring stick against which to compare itself, but the rivalry between the two fleets did not stem from political disagreements between the American and Japanese governments. This attitude, however, underwent a radical change following Katō Tomasaburō’s death from cancer in 1923. Many of the admiral’s subordinates, particularly his deputy Katō Kanji, had vigorously disagreed with what they viewed as Katō Tomasaburō’s needlessly conciliatory attitude toward the West. With the elder Katō dead, the “fleet faction,” whose members demanded that Japan be granted parity with the British and American fleets, took firm control of the IJN’s senior leadership positions. The fleet faction’s ascendancy also signaled a change in attitude toward the United States. This is evident in Asada’s description of Katō Kanji’s deputy Ishikawa Shingo,

63 Quoted in Asada Sadao, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the United States (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 57.
64 Ibid., 35-6. Emphasis in original.
“Katō’s disciple…combined his anti-Western ultranationalist spiritualism with revulsion against the Washington and London system.”65 The fleet faction’s leadership believed that Western attempts to deny Japan its sought-after “special relationship” with China made war with the United States inevitable, and bent all of their energies to preparing their service for the conflict that broke out in 1941.

Michael Barnhart’s *Japan Prepares for Total War* relates a very similar tale of factional infighting, this time within the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA). Barnhart’s thesis is that the First World War made an enormous impression upon Japanese Army leaders, convincing them that future conflicts between industrialized nations “would be fought…with the entire resources of nations …Without these requisites of economic security, the mightiest army would be paralyzed.”66 This lesson was taken to heart by the leaders of the IJA’s “Total War” faction.67 During the 1920s and 1930s, they worked with civilian officials to expand the government’s control over the Japanese economy, as they believed that this expanded control would make it easier to dictate production in the event of conflict. After the Manchurian Incident of 1931, they also sought to develop mines and industry in the puppet state of Manchukuo in order to promote economic self-sufficiency, or autarky, for Japan. While they reluctantly embraced the “Manchurian Incident” after the fact, they did not wish to see further aggression against Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist regime, believing that fighting in China would detract from the more important task of preparing for the total war with one or more of the Western powers that they feared was coming. Their efforts were frustrated, however, by the actions of more radical junior

65 Ibid., 179.
67 The term “Total War faction” is somewhat misleading. While officers of the Total War faction believed that Japanese involvement in a future conflict was very likely, they also realized that Japan’s limited natural resources and inferior industrial base would place the country at a considerable disadvantage in the event of war with a Western power. They therefore wished to postpone involvement in hostilities until after the process of mobilizing every aspect of Japanese society in support of the national war effort had been completed.
officers within the IJA’s ranks, often referred to as the “Imperial Way” faction. By the late 1930s, the Imperial Way faction had asserted control within the Japanese government through a program of murder and coercion. General Nagata Tetsuzan, one of the Total War faction’s most high profile leaders, was assassinated by a fellow officer in August of 1935. The IJA’s radicals completed their triumph with the so-called “Planning Board Incident” of April, 1941, when members of the Cabinet Planning Board sympathetic to the Total War faction were purged, “arrested on charges of communist activity.”68 The Planning Board Incident effectively ended any opposition within the government to the fighting that had been raging in China since 1937, and paved the way for the conflict that the Total War faction’s officers had long dreaded, and whose outbreak they had long sought to delay.

The infighting that took place within the interwar governments of Great Britain was far less violent than that which Japan experienced. However, the pressures of attempting to satisfy a number of competing and frequently contradictory pressures nevertheless proved extremely vexing to the country’s civilian and military leaders. A deep divide emerged between the British Treasury, which was determined to enforce economies in government spending in the aftermath of World War I, and the Royal Navy (RN), equally determined to maintain its place as the world’s most powerful maritime fighting force.

The encounters between the Treasury and the Royal Navy have been recounted many times, but one of the most highly regarded treatments is Stephen Roskill’s two-volume Naval Policy Between the Wars. Even in victory, Great Britain found itself badly crippled in the aftermath of World War I. The tremendous expense involved in fighting the war had left the country heavily indebted to American financiers, and British cabinets in the postwar years were determined to reduce annual expenditures in an effort to strengthen the nation’s financial

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68 Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War*, 200.
situation. In this austere fiscal climate, the cabinet was in no mood to accommodate the Royal Navy’s desire to maintain the fleet at wartime strength. This harsh reality was made abundantly clear to the RN’s leadership when it submitted its proposed budget estimate for the 1919-1920 fiscal year. The Cabinet reacted extremely negatively to the Admiralty’s proposed budget of £171 million, and on July 16, 1919, First Lord Walter Long informed his colleagues that in the ensuing years “the Board would…be required to effect ‘most drastic’ reductions in expenditure.” \(^{69}\) In subsequent fiscal years, the attitude of both the Cabinet and Parliament would harden even further with respect to naval appropriations. \(^{70}\) The ultimate expression of the government’s commitment to lowered military expenditure was the adoption of what became known as the “Ten Year Rule.” First utilized during the 1920-21 fiscal year, the Ten Year Rule “directed that service departments should revise their estimates…‘on the assumption that the British Empire would not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years.” \(^{71}\) Renewed annually by the British government throughout the mid-1920s, the Ten Year Rule became further entrenched during Winston Churchill’s tenure as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post he assumed in 1924:

Churchill strengthened the Treasury’s position in 1928 by securing a decision that the rule would apply at any given date until it was formally cancelled, thereby closing one of the most important loopholes available to the service departments, and ensuring the rule’s extension beyond the life of the Baldwin government. \(^{72}\)

The Treasury’s success in establishing and maintaining the Ten Year Rule forced a series of difficult realizations upon the Royal Navy (RN). Probably the most galling of these was that the

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\(^{70}\) For a recent study of the attitude of members of Parliament toward postwar naval budgets, see Raymond W. Westfall, Jr., “Postwar Planning: Parliamentary Politics and the Royal Navy, 1919-1922,” *The Journal of Military History* 74 (2010), 145-71. Westfall reviewed records of parliamentary debates on the Admiralty’s “Sketch Estimates,” and concluded that the overwhelming majority of MPs, regardless of party affiliation, expressed strong support for deep cuts in annual naval appropriations.


fiscal climate prevailing in Britain after the war made it impossible for the RN to maintain its cherished status as the world’s largest fleet. Senior officers reluctantly accepted the idea of parity with the U.S. Navy, and this concession was formally codified in the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922.

While the passing of Britain’s status as the world’s foremost naval power was the occasion for some mourning, the placid international environment of the 1920s meant that few Britons regarded this development as truly threatening. The coming of the turbulent 1930s, however, prompted a growing sense of unease. The Ten Year Rule was formally repealed in 1932 as a precursor to efforts to rebuild Britain’s armed forces, a story documented in G. C. Peden’s *British Rearmament and the Treasury: 1932-1939*. Peden offers a mixed review of the actions of the Treasury and its impact upon the British rearmament effort. He concedes that to a considerable extent the existence of the Ten Year Rule undermined rearmament in the 1930s, because years of lean funding for national defense had greatly eroded Britain’s arms production industries. As a result, even after the recognition of a deteriorating political situation in Europe loosened the government’s purse strings, “defence departments found it difficult to spend even their voted funds.”73 At the same time, however, Peden argues that by retaining Britain’s armed forces at a reduced level during the life span of the Ten Year Rule, defense planners had more options at their disposal when the time came to make decisions about rearmament:

[Reduction] of the services from their 1918 peak had...created new possibilities for re- shaping defence policy. Had Britain maintained a higher degree of preparedness it might have proved harder to alter the proportions of finance allocated to the Army and Air Force.74

74 Ibid., 107.
In other words, because British defense planners of the early 1930s were starting with a relatively clean slate, they possessed a great degree of flexibility in deciding which elements of the nation’s armed forces to expand. The air defense network that saved Britain in the summer of 1940, Peden suggests, might not have been deployed (or might have been developed on a smaller scale) if the Army had been maintained at greater strength, and its claim on annual defense appropriations become more thoroughly institutionalized.

The combination of interwar fiscal stringency and the deteriorating political climate in Europe also greatly complicated the task faced by British military planners with regard to the defense of their country’s global empire, particularly the highly exposed Pacific Dominions of Australia and New Zealand. Much like their American counterparts, British planners had long assumed that conflict in the Pacific might break out as a result of Japanese ambitions in China. Prior to the 1930s, British plans called for dispatching a substantial portion of the Home Fleet to the great Pacific base at Singapore in the event of a crisis. From this forward position, the Navy could serve as a deterrent to further reckless behavior by Japan. This strategy, however, was premised upon the notion of a peaceful Europe. By the mid-1930s, this assumption no longer held, and senior British admirals began to admit, at least privately, that the dispatch of the fleet to Asia in the event of a crisis was no longer feasible.75

These developments produced a great deal of anxiety among the populations of the Pacific Dominions, and were the source of considerable resentment on the part of citizens of Australia and New Zealand who felt that the British government was reneging on guarantees of

75 This situation became even more pronounced after the outbreak of World War II, and particularly after the fall of France in 1940. H. P. Willmott notes that the events of 1940 “made it perfectly obvious that...there could be no possibility of sending significant forces to the Far East. This revelation, of course, came just at the time when the promises of two decades were being presented for honoring by Britain because the Japanese...were now prepared to show their hand.” Willmott, Empires in the Balance, 102.
In an effort to escape from what appeared to be an insoluble dilemma, the British government found a potential answer in strengthened ties with the United States. During the 1930s, a number of informal meetings took place between representatives of the American and British military establishments. Of these, perhaps the most important was a visit to the British Admiralty by U.S. Navy Captain Royal Ingersoll in January 1938. Ingersoll’s visit came on the heels of the sinking of the gunboat USS *Panay* by Japanese aircraft, and tensions between the United States and Japan were running high. In this environment, the British government saw a solution to the naval dilemma in the Pacific. While the demands upon the Royal Navy limited the number of ships that could be dispatched to Singapore to serve as a deterrent against Japan, if those vessels could be supplanted by part or all of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, then it might be possible to achieve the sought-after deterrent effect.

The prospect of the American fleet relieving the Royal Navy of its responsibilities in East Asia would continue to tempt British leaders even after the outbreak of World War II—shortly after assuming the post of Prime Minister Winston Churchill again raised the question with Franklin Roosevelt, this time going so far as to recommend that the bulk of the Pacific Fleet be moved to Singapore. These efforts ultimately came to naught, as U.S. civilian and military leadership

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76 The extent to which this feeling of resentment was justified is a source of debate among historians. H. P. Willmott is highly critical of British policies both before and during the early years of World War II. Willmott’s sympathies are clearly with those Australians who refer to British actions as “The Great Betrayal.” Australian historian Augustine Meaher vigorously disputes this interpretation. Meaher asserts that the lamentable state of Australia’s defenses “was not due to British perfidy but due to the actions and inactions of Australia’s elites who failed to appreciate the Singapore strategy was but a component of Imperial defense and that it did not negate Australia’s local defence obligations.” Augustine Meaher, “Unarmed and Unready: Australian Elites and Interwar Foreign and Defence Policies,” paper delivered at the Society for Military History 2008 Annual Meeting, Ogden, Utah, 28.

77 This visit is touched upon briefly in Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, Vol. II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament, 1930-1939* (London: Collins, 1976), 366-8. Despite his relatively junior rank, Ingersoll was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable planners in the U.S. Navy, and had been instrumental in the development of later versions of the Orange Plans. For more detail on Ingersoll’s role in the interwar planning process, see Miller, *War Plan Orange*.

expressed little interest in making the U.S. Navy a guarantor of the security of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{79} The Anglo-American conversations of the 1930s were far from useless, however, as they served to build relationships and trust between the two nations’ officers corps. Additionally, the two countries began sharing intelligence assessments of their potential foes, a series of exchanges that laid the groundwork for the much closer collaboration that would take place during the war years.\textsuperscript{80}

A final factor that exerted a substantial influence upon the formulation of U.S. Pacific policy throughout the interwar decades was the constantly changing colonial relationship with the Philippines. The decision on the part of the United States government to purchase the Philippines from Spain as a provision of the peace settlement following the Spanish-American war undoubtedly came as a great surprise to many Americans. It had been events in Cuba, not the Pacific, that had led to the American declaration of war upon Spain, and the irony involved in the decision to acquire a major overseas colony in the aftermath of a conflict ostensibly undertaken to free Cuba from Spanish domination was evident even at the time. The ensuing colonial relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines was somewhat unusual for its era, due to the manner in which it came about, the rapidity with which many Americans began to reconsider the wisdom of acquiring the islands, and because by 1934 the United States government had taken the then-unprecedented step of announcing its intention to grant its colonial subjects their independence. Much has been written regarding the motivations that drove the United States to become an imperialist power in 1898, and about the ways in which this decision and the events of the next four decades shaped both the U.S. and the Philippines.

\textsuperscript{79} See Stoler, \textit{Allies and Adversaries}, 37-9.
This literature is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3. The most important point which must be borne in mind, however, is that throughout the interwar decades, and particularly after the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, the status of the Philippines exerted a disproportionately significant impact upon U.S. strategic planning.

The story of the American defeat in the Philippines is a very complex one, driven by a number of distinct factors. These ranged from the evolving nature of the U.S. colonial relationship with the Philippines, to the major international political developments of the interwar decades, to the nature of the U.S. foreign policymaking process during the early twentieth century and its consequent impact upon both civil-military relations and U.S. military planning. Each of these elements individually would have had significant consequences with respect to the U.S. strategic position in the western Pacific. But none of them, in isolation, could have produced a dilemma of the magnitude of that which confronted U.S. civilian and military leaders by the summer of 1941.

As the preceding pages have shown, each of these factors has received substantial attention from historians. What has been absent, to this point, is an effort to weave these various threads together to demonstrate how the interactions among them contributed to the disaster that befell the defenders of the Philippines in 1941 and 1942. While it is impossible to state with certainty why this has been the case, one possible explanation suggests itself. As noted above, one of the most prominent characteristics of the U.S. foreign policymaking process during the interwar period was the existence of a climate of “disintegration” between civilian officials (primarily, though not exclusively, representatives of the State Department) and senior military leaders. Throughout the 1920s, and for much of the 1930s, only minimal interaction between the two camps took place, and those conversations that did occur were confined to a tightly circum-
scribed range of topics. Much of the postwar scholarship examined in this chapter tends to reflect this divide. Early accounts of the defeat, such as the volumes U.S. Army’s “green book” series by Louis Morton, Maurice Matloff and Edwin Snell focused almost exclusively upon the details of the military campaign itself, paying relatively scant attention to the political developments of the preceding decades that had set the stage for later events. Studies focusing upon the interwar Secretaries of State or the State Department tend to devote rather scant attention to the military, reflecting the prevailing ideology among U.S. diplomats that the military did not and should not have a role to play in the conduct of foreign affairs. Similarly, scholarly accounts on the history of the interwar U.S. military have tended to focus either on key individuals or upon the concerns and actions of individual services. The formulation of national policy does not figure prominently in the majority of these works, as the U.S. military was provided with very little opportunity to weigh in on such issues. It seems possible that one consequence of the bifurcated nature of U.S. civil-military relations during the interwar period was that it has led to the production of an equally bifurcated historical record, with diplomatic and military historians pursuing their inquiries (many of which, as noted above, are of extremely high quality) largely in isolation from one another.

It is the contention of this dissertation, however, that these divided lines of inquiry are insufficient when it comes to explaining the loss of the Philippines. The story of the garrison’s defeat incorporates elements from a variety of different historical traditions, ranging from studies of U.S. imperialism, to diplomatic and military history, to U.S. civil-military relations. The principle objective of this study is to construct a more holistic analysis of the factors that produced one of the greatest—and least examined—disasters in U.S. history.
Chapter 2 – The Framework: Theory and Policy

Analyzing the policy decisions made by national governments can be a very daunting task. The passage of time makes the development of a complete understanding of the concerns and motivations of key decision makers difficult, particularly when decades or even centuries separate the historian from the events being studied. Available documentary evidence is often incomplete. Access to the pertinent archival collections is limited by the time, financial resources, and linguistic skills of individual historians. A constant lament raised by critics of the historical discipline is that few studies of U.S. foreign affairs avail themselves of non-U.S. sources. Other sources of information are equally problematic. The memoirs and reminiscences of leaders can be unreliable for a variety of reasons, ranging from the fading of memories over time to individuals’ desire to depict their own actions, decisions, or influence in the most favorable possible light. One of the greatest challenges confronting historians is to explain why the policy decisions made by national governments often appear irrational. The policies adopted by the U.S. government throughout the 1920s and 1930s with respect to the defense of the Philippines certainly seem to fall into this category.

Almost immediately after the United States acquired control over the Philippines a consensus emerged among U.S. civilian and military leaders that Japan was, by a wide margin, the greatest threat to U.S. foreign policy interests in the western Pacific, and the nation with which the United States was most likely to go to war. Among military leaders, the extent to which the Japanese threat was taken seriously can be seen in the many updates and revisions made to War Plan Orange, particularly with respect to its “color plan” brethren. In the early versions of War Plan Orange, the Philippines were regarded as a highly valuable asset, albeit also a highly vulnerable one. A consistent objective in the language of the Orange Plans (one
that would persist even in the far more conservative iterations produced during the 1930s) was for the U.S. Navy to “establish at the earliest possible date American sea power in the western Pacific in strength superior to that of Japan.” The establishment of superior fleet strength was seen as a necessary precursor to a move against the Japanese home islands. However, supporting the fleet in western Pacific waters would require a first-class naval base. U.S. planners of the early twentieth century saw Manila Bay as the most likely candidate to fulfill this role, and thus the objective of the Philippine garrison in the early incarnations of the Orange Plan was to hold Manila Bay until such time as relief could arrive from the United States. Once the U.S. position in the Philippines was secured, then Manila Bay would serve as the staging base for the subsequent offensive against Japan, an offensive that would culminate in Japan’s surrender.

The political developments of the interwar years, however, made it increasingly unlikely that the strategy outlined in the early Orange Plans could be carried out successfully. The arms limitations imposed upon the U.S. Navy by the Washington Treaty of 1922 and the London Treaty of 1930 meant that Japan, not the United States, would possess local superiority in the western Pacific, at least in the early stages of a conflict.\footnote{The provisions of the various interwar arms limitation treaties are discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this study.} Moreover, Article XIX of the Washington Treaty prohibited any improvements to the American military facilities in the Philippines, which meant that Manila Bay could not be developed into the first-class naval base envisaged by the authors of the Orange Plans. Lastly, the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 established a definite timeline for the complete independence of the Philippines, and it was unclear whether the United States would be permitted to retain a military presence in the islands once they were granted their sovereignty in July of 1946.

Given these realities, by the early 1930s many military leaders, particularly within the U.S. Army, began to believe that a successful defense of the islands was impossible. The logical

\footnote{The provisions of the various interwar arms limitation treaties are discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this study.}
consequence of this change in belief should have been a corresponding change in U.S. defense policy with respect to the Philippines. If retention of the islands was seen as a matter of great strategic importance, then the American military presence in the Philippines could have been augmented to bring its capabilities more nearly in line with its assigned mission. If, on the other hand, the loss of the islands was viewed as inevitable, then the size of the garrison could have been reduced to a mere token force, thus lessening the exposure and vulnerability of the U.S. armed forces in the opening days of a conflict with Japan. But neither of these courses was pursued by the U.S. government. The mission of the Philippine garrison was never substantially revised, even during the late 1930s, when it was widely believed by even the most optimistic of U.S. planners that a successful defense of even a single strategic location was impossible. For many years, civilian officials equivocated with respect to official U.S. policy toward the islands, refusing to clarify whether or not the islands were to be defended in the event of war. Only in the final months before the outbreak of World War II did the Roosevelt administration announce that it was the policy of the U.S. government that the Philippines were to be defended. This announcement touched off a last-minute effort on the part of the War Department to augment the strength of the Philippine garrison, particularly its air component. However, this effort was undertaken far too late to make any appreciable difference in the prospects for a successful defense, and may in fact have bought the War Department the worst of both worlds. The reinforcement of the Philippine garrison elevated its strength to the point where it could no

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2 For much of the interwar period, such reinforcement would likely have been prohibited under the terms of Article XIX of the Washington Treaty. However, at the insistence of the Japanese government, the Treaty was allowed to lapse at the end of 1936, fully five years before the outbreak of the Pacific War. Thus the U.S. military had a nearly five-year-long “window” in which augmentation of the Philippine garrison could, at least theoretically, have been conducted. A variety of other considerations, however, made the likelihood of any such reinforcement minuscule at best. See Chapter 6.
longer be safely ignored by the Japanese, yet fell far short of what would have been required to successfully repulse a Japanese attack.

The persistence of the confusion that characterized U.S. policy toward the Philippines Islands prior to 1941 is difficult to comprehend. All of the individuals responsible for these policies, from the military planners charged with drafting war plans to their service superiors, as well as the civilian officials of the Navy, War, and State Departments shared a commitment to crafting a foreign policy that worked to advance the interests of the United States. Yet despite this shared objective, they failed to produce satisfactory answers to the quandaries confronting the United States in the western Pacific during the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, many pressing questions were allowed to linger unanswered despite widespread and in some cases long-held knowledge of their existence. In the process, U.S. decision makers inadvertently laid the foundation for the embarrassing and costly defeat suffered in the Philippines in 1941-42. To understand exactly how this chain of events occurred, it is necessary to delve more deeply into the processes by which policies are created.

One of the most common analytical models utilized by historians and political scientists to evaluate the policy decisions of nations is to treat such nations as unitary, rational actors. In their 1999 revision of Graham Allison’s classic *Essence of Decision*, Allison and Philip Zelikow note:

> In spite of significant differences in interest and focus, most analysts and ordinary citizens attempt to understand happenings in foreign affairs as the more or less purposive acts of unified national governments. Laymen personify actors and speak of their aims and choices. Theorists of international relations focus on problems between nations in accounting for the choices of unitary rational actors.3

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3 Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 4. Many of the arguments presented in this chapter were originally set out by Allison in the first edition of *Essence of Decision*, published in 1971. This study makes use of the 1999 second edition of the book, which features expanded theoretical chapters for each of the three analytical “cuts” included in the original work. These extended chapters incorporate additions to the body of scholarly literature that have appeared in the
The attraction of the unitary rational actor model stems from its relative simplicity. Educated laymen, to say nothing of experts in the study of policy formulation, realize that the decision making processes of national governments are often very complex, and that a wide array of organizations, individuals, and interests influence the choices that are made. The rational actor approach, however, applies a series of assumptions that allow its proponents to greatly reduce the level of complexity confronted by the observer. Morton Halperin elaborates:

In trying to explain foreign policy decisions, 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 and actions of the government.4

The assumption that a nation’s decisionmakers possess “a single set of national security images and foreign policy goals” lies at the core of the rational actor model. If senior leaders share a common outlook with regard to the objectives of national policy, and if they view the challenges confronting their nation in the same way, then it can be expected that they will reach consensus on the proper response in any given situation.

The rational actor model also assumes that leaders analyze the costs and benefits of each potential course of action, and that they will choose the response that maximizes gains or minimizes losses (and is thus the most “rational” response). The rational actor model provides the foundation for a number of theoretical approaches to the study of foreign relations, most prominently Realism and its many offshoots within the discipline of political science. 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. Starting with the assumptions that states are the principal actors within the international system, and that they behave in a rational manner, Realists further assume that “the international environment is a ‘jungle,’ as Thomas Hobbes explained, in which aggressive behavior by one beast towards others is normal in the absence of any overarching authority, making order or justice exceptions, not the rule.” Given the savage, Darwinian nature of the international system, states that wish to survive and endure must assume full responsibility for their own security. Therefore states focus above all else on the relative power and capabilities of their neighbors. If a state believes itself threatened by an imbalance in power, it will act to redress this imbalance, either through unilateral action (such as a military buildup), or multilaterally through actions such as “balancing” or “bandwagoning.” The theory assumes that the individual decisions made by state actors are driven by rational considerations. States, whatever the nature of their governments, or the way in which their policy-making

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7 “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 themselves with a more powerful aggressor in the hope of reaping benefits from its conquests. Italy’s alliance with Nazi Germany is often pointed out as an example of bandwagoning. Japan’s decision to become a member of the Tripartite Pact in 1940 can be viewed in a similar light.
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.

Historians have raised the argument, however, that in any number of cases the decisions taken by national governments can be described as “rational” only if one applies an extremely tortured definition of rationality. Allison and Zelikow note that a number of variants to the classical realist theory have been developed in recent decades. These variants attempt to explain situations where the actions undertaken by states defy the expectations of the unitary rational actor model favored by classical realists. One such approach is what is termed “balance of threat” realism, first proposed by Steven Walt in *The Origins of Alliances*, his 1987 study of the formulation of security policy by states in the Middle East. Walt’s balance of threat theory refined the classical realist model by incorporating the notion of *intent*—i.e., he argues that the balancing behavior that states engage in is driven not strictly by an appraisal of the capabilities of other states, but rather by an appraisal of the threats confronted by the state. States define potential threats “in terms not only of objective military power, geographic proximity, and offensive or defensive orientation, but also by states’ intentions and behavior.”\(^8\) The balance of threat model has both advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis the classical realist approach. On the one hand, it seems to offer a more plausible model of the concerns driving national security planning, as examples abound of instances in which raw capabilities do not appear to have been the driving factor in the security calculations performed by national governments. On the other hand, Allison and Zelikow note that the use of “intent” as a factor in security planning introduces an element of subjectivity into the analytical process. Moreover, constructing an accurate representation of the security concerns of a particular state requires a much greater familiarity with the specific historical, geographical, and military crises experienced by that state.

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\(^8\) Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 33.
Other scholars, most prominently Columbia University political scientist Robert Jervis, point out that states frequently fall victim to their own perceptions and assumptions when attempting to evaluate the international system in general, and the threats they face in particular. Allison and Zelikow summarize many of Jervis’ arguments:

States tend to see what they expect to see as they assimilate new information in previously established images; concentrate only on information that is relevant to immediate concerns; misapply the “lessons of history”; imagine that other states’ behavior is unrealistically centralized, planned, and coordinated; overestimate their own importance; and be unduly influenced by wishful thinking.9

One of Jervis’ greatest contributions to the international relations literature is his explanation of the “security dilemma” and its consequences. Simply stated, the security dilemma suggests that actions taken by one state in an effort to increase its own security can inadvertently produce conflict, because the increase in that state’s security simultaneously reduces the security of other states. In his contribution to The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Warren I. Cohen suggests that the early years of the Cold War offer a strong example of the security dilemma in action.10 A frequent consequence of the security dilemma is what Jervis terms the “spiral model” of conflict. The spiral model illustrates how conflict can result even in situations where neither of the nations involved harbors aggressive intent toward the other. The problem, Jervis notes, is that “arms procured to defend can usually be used to attack.” As a consequence, it is quite easy for states to mistake efforts undertaken in an effort to provide greater defensive capability as evidence of aggressive intent:

When states seek the ability to defend themselves, they get too much and too little—too much because they gain the ability to carry out aggression; too little because others, being menaced, will increase their own arms and so reduce the first state’s security…others


cannot infer from its military forces and preparations whether the state is aggressive. ...since both sides obey the same imperatives, attempts to increase one’s security by standing firm and accumulating more arms will be self-defeating.\textsuperscript{11}

Similarly, the formation of security alliances among groups of states can also appear threatening to states outside the alliance. Jervis offers as an example a transcript of a conversation between Senator Thomas Connelly and Secretary of State Dean Acheson regarding the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Throughout the conversation, both Connelly and Acheson repeatedly insisted that the intentions behind the signing of the treaty were purely defensive, and that the existence of NATO should not be a cause for anxiety to any non-NATO state.\textsuperscript{12} Jervis suggests, however, that from the perspective of the Soviet Union, the establishment of NATO could very easily have been interpreted as evidence of malign intent, a notion that failed to occur to either Connelly or Acheson. The work of Jervis and other scholars who have explored the concept of the “security dilemma” offers a valuable addition to the body of scholarship on national security decision making, and, like Walt’s work, offers a useful reminder that these decisions are frequently shaped by the way in which nations perceive one another’s intentions, and that the process of determining the intentions of a foreign power is far more complex than might be believed.

But while these attempts to expand the explanatory power of the unitary rational actor model have been highly beneficial for scholars of international relations, they nevertheless suffer from the same fundamental shortcoming. Throughout history there has been a wide range of situations in which the decisions of national governments cannot be adequately explained if those governments are treated as singular actors. One of the most interesting examples of this

\textsuperscript{11} Jervis, \textit{Perception and Misperception}, 64-5.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 71-2. Jervis quotes Acheson as stating “what I had in mind was, when a State or Nation passes a criminal act, for instance, against burglary, nobody but those who are burglars or getting ready to be burglars need have any fear of the Burglary Act.”
problem is the behavior of Japan both before and during the Pacific War. In *Japan Prepares for Total War*, Michael Barnhart chronicles the dilemma which the Japanese government confronted in the late 1930s. Japan found itself bogged down in a protracted conflict against Chiang Kai-Shek’s Guomindang regime in China, a war that was regarded as an impediment to the effort to prepare the nation for the “total war” that key military leaders feared was coming. After much debate and considerable political infighting, it was ultimately decided that in order to bring the conflict in China to a successful conclusion, it was necessary to launch an additional war against the United States and Great Britain, two of the most powerful nations in the world. The unitary rational actor model is hard-pressed to explain this decision. Why would a state already embroiled in a war deliberately provoke a wider conflict with foes whose combined capabilities vastly exceeded its own? Barnhart seeks to explain this anomaly by depicting the Japanese policy formulation process not as a unified whole, but rather as the product of a series of compromises between factions within the Japanese military. From the perspective of each individual faction, the goals being pursued appeared completely rational. However, the interactions between these factions resulted in the adoption of national policies that in hindsight appear not only irrational, but completely self-destructive.

This situation continued to persist within Japan even after the outbreak of war with the United States and Britain, a point illustrated by Walter Grunden’s *Secret Weapons and World War II*. Japan faced many severe material disadvantages during the conflict. In terms of both access to vital strategic resources and raw industrial capacity it lagged far behind its Western foes. In the realm of science and technology, Japan proved still more vulnerable. During World War II, the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and even Japan’s ally Nazi Germany saw a number of scientific and technological breakthroughs that greatly enhanced their military
capabilities. Japan largely failed to match these developments. To some extent, this is unsurprising, given the relatively small size of Japan’s scientific community, and the scant resources at its disposal. Grunden argues, however, that even when these limitations are taken into account, Japan’s wartime scientific endeavors produced less than they should have. He believes that the chief culprit responsible for these shortcomings was organizational:

Because of sectionalism in the government and conflict with the military, 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 during the war. University scientists remained grossly underutilized...Research was commonly impeded by a rigid and often unnecessary process of compartmentalization.13

Such behavior, as noted above, is nearly impossible to explain under the assumptions of the unitary rational actor model. Confronted by foes whose scientific and technological assets vastly outstripped its own, Japan could only have hoped to remain competitive by ruthlessly wringing the maximum possible productivity from its own scientific community. In practice, however, the opposite occurred. Various research agencies failed to cooperate with one another, scarce resources were squandered, and the wartime output of Japan’s scientific community was, if anything, less than the sum of its parts. By exploring the interactions between the army, the navy, and various civilian organizations, Grunden is able to suggest a reason why this was the case.

It is my contention that American policy with regard to the Philippines during the interwar decades, and indeed much of the U.S. policymaking process in general, cannot be adequately explained by the unitary rational actor model. Throughout the interwar period, the outlook among military professionals with respect to the defense of the Philippines became increasingly gloomy. A combination of international political developments, greatly reduced

peacetime budgets for national defense, and the impending independence of the islands meant that many military leaders believed the U.S. position in the western Pacific to be unsustainable. But while this pessimistic outlook was frequently voiced, often in very public forums, it was never explicitly incorporated into U.S. war plans, and the resulting ambiguity was to have very severe consequences in 1941-42. Moreover, throughout the interwar period, communication between U.S. civilian and military leaders was very poor (indeed, often nonexistent). As a result, diplomats and military men were often effectively working at cross purposes, pursuing objectives that were fundamentally incompatible. The “single set of national security images and foreign policy goals” suggested by Halperin was nowhere in evidence. The outcome of this ad hoc, haphazard approach to the formulation of national security policy was sub-optimal, to say the least. In order to understand how this occurred, it is necessary to abandon theoretical models that treat a nation’s government as a single, unified entity, and instead adopt an approach that opens up the “black box” of government in order to examine its inner workings.

As the preceding paragraphs suggest, the body of scholarship on the topic of institutional politics, popularized by individuals such as Allison, Zelikow, Halperin, and J. Garry Clifford, seems to offer the best method of grappling with instances (such as U.S. interwar strategic policy toward the Philippines) where the unitary rational actor model proves unsatisfying. Broadly speaking, the institutional politics approach attempts to explain policy outcomes through an examination of the inner workings of both governments and the various organizations that comprise them. Proponents of the institutional politics approach believe that adding this deeper level of analysis to the study of national policymaking produces a much more accurate picture than analyses that treat governments as singular, unified entities. Explanatory models first proposed by Graham Allison in his 1971 *Essence of Decision*, and subsequently expanded upon
by Allison, Halperin, Zelikow and others will form the basis for this project. The analysis also incorporates the concept of civil-military “disintegration” proposed by Barry Posen in his 1984 monograph *The Sources of Military Doctrine*.

In the original edition of *Essence of Decision*, Allison suggested two different methods by which governmental actions could be examined—what he termed “Organizational Process” (Model II) and “Governmental Politics” (Model III). Model II regards policy outcomes as the products of the actions of sub-governmental actors—specifically, the myriad of bureaucracies responsible for actually implementing the orders issued by political leaders. Model III regards these same outcomes as the products of a process of negotiation, compromise, and conflict between leaders and organizations within the national government. The following pages examine each of the original models and the revised paradigm put forth by Allison and Halperin in greater detail.

The “second cut” put forward by Allison in an effort to explain the Cuban Missile Crisis was termed Model II, or the “Organizational Process” approach. The starting point for Model II is the realization that governments are highly complex entities responsible for overseeing policies on a vast range of issues, ranging from foreign relations and national defense to domestic infrastructure and the social welfare of their citizens. To cope with this array of issues, a high degree of compartmentalization is required:

To be responsive to a wide spectrum of problems, governments consist of large organizations, among which primary responsibility for particular tasks is divided. Each organization attends to a special set of problems and acts in quasi-independence on these problems.

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14 In the revised edition of *Essence of Decision*, Model II is referred to as “Organizational Behavior,” but the analytical model remains essentially identical to that presented in the original edition.


The sheer volume of actions being undertaken by a government’s various agencies, ministries, and cabinet bureaus has a number of consequences. First, as the quote presented above suggests, it renders close supervision of agency activities by political leaders very difficult. There are simply too many functions being performed by too many organizations for their performance to be closely monitored with any degree of regularity. A second consequence is that in order for agencies to perform their functions effectively much of what they do must be routinized:

To perform complex tasks, the behavior of large numbers of individuals must be coordinated. Coordination requires standard operating procedures: rules according to which things are done. Reliable performance of action that depends upon the behavior of hundreds of persons requires established “programs.”

The establishment of standard operating procedures (SOPs) is both necessary and frequently beneficial for government agencies. Many of their responsibilities consist of performing the same set of tasks over and over again—the bureaucratic equivalent of working on a factory assembly line. By creating a standard set of rules governing how these duties are to be performed, agencies can vastly increase the efficiency of their operations. The existence of SOPs can prove to be a mixed blessing, however, for as Allison makes clear, “existing programs and routines constrain behavior in the next case; namely, they address it already oriented toward what they do.” In other words, if a government agency is asked to undertake a task whose requirements differ from the duties it normally performs, it will use its existing operating procedures as a guide for this mission even in situations where the application of these SOPs will have negative consequences.

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17 Ibid., 143. As an example, Allison and Zelikow note that if a football team is to be successful, each of its eleven players must properly execute his responsibilities for the play being called. In the case of governmental agencies, standard operating procedures, or SOPs, may be thought of as “play calls,” denoting the responsibilities of each of the agency’s personnel in order to fulfill its assigned tasks.

18 Ibid., 145.
A classic example of the negative consequences of the application of standard operating procedures occurred during the Soviet attempt to construct bases for medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba in 1962. The Soviets clearly hoped to complete this task before the U.S. government became aware of it. Yet the manner in which the project was performed offered several unmistakable clues regarding the nature of the facilities being constructed. No effort was made to camouflage the construction sites themselves, or even the readily-identifiable missiles and their support equipment.\(^\text{19}\) Another obvious clue was provided by the layout of the bases themselves:

The SAM, MRBM, and IRBM sites constructed in Cuba were built to look exactly like SAM, MRBM, and IRBM sites in the Soviet Union...Soviet SAM sites were placed in the established Soviet pattern for defense of strategic missile installations.\(^\text{20}\)

Thus, when an American U-2 spy plane photographed the construction sites on October 14, 1962, the film it brought home contained unambiguous evidence of the nature of the Soviet construction activity in Cuba.

An outside observer could be forgiven for concluding that in their handling of the construction of the missile sites in Cuba, the Soviets had committed a series of blunders almost incomprehensible in their scope. Why, given the obvious importance of secrecy to the success of this mission, did the Soviets go about the construction of the facilities in a manner that provided the U.S. government with unmistakable evidence of their purpose? When Soviet actions are evaluated in terms of the organizational process model, however, it becomes much easier to comprehend how these mistakes could have occurred. An analysis of Soviet records revealed that while the decision “to put missiles in Cuba was made in the Presidium...the details of the

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 207.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., 208.
operation…were delegated to appropriate Soviet organizations.”21 The “appropriate Soviet organization” in charge of the base construction consisted primarily of personnel drawn from the Strategic Rocket Forces—men whose experience was limited to duty in the Soviet Union. In the absence of close supervision from Moscow:

[Each] team did what it knew how to do—emplace missiles—literally according to the book. Each MRBM site consisted of four launchers, because [according to the Strategic Rocket Forces’ SOPs] an MRBM site has four launchers. At each IRBM site, the two pairs of launchers were separated by 750 feet, because that is the established distance between IRBM launchers…No attempt was made to harden the missile sites, not because of any intention to launch a first strike, but rather because no Soviet missile site had ever been hardened.22

When viewed in this context, the behavior of the Soviet construction units in Cuba in the fall of 1962 becomes much more understandable. Presented with a set of instructions by the Presidium and largely left to their own devices to carry them out, the units responsible for building the missile facilities in Cuba simply fell back on routines that had been developed for the construction of similar facilities in the U.S.S.R. The notion that the vastly different strategic situation confronting them in Cuba might require a modification of standard operating procedures and routines does not appear to have occurred to them.

A second problem associated with standard operating procedures is the fact that “few important issues fall exclusively within the domain of a single organization.”23 In the field of foreign affairs, this complication is particularly pronounced, as organizations responsible for diplomacy, intelligence, and national defense are all likely to take an interest in any proposed action which has a bearing upon the nation’s security. As a result, determining which agency will perform a particular function often requires a substantial amount of negotiation, and actions that involve multiple agencies will require additional layers of coordination. The Cuban Missile

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21 Ibid., 210-11.
22 Ibid., 212.
23 Ibid., 143.
Crisis again offers an excellent illustration of this dilemma, this time on the American side. As early as mid-September, 1962, U.S. intelligence analysts began to suspect that the Soviet Union was constructing missile bases in Cuba. Yet the U-2 surveillance flight that ultimately identified the bases was not authorized until October 4. Ten more days would pass before the flight actually took place. Why were several weeks allowed to pass between the time when suspicions began to build and the date of the fateful reconnaissance flight?

The organizational process model suggests that the delay was due to a number of factors, each completely understandable in its own terms. First, the pieces of evidence being collected by the various intelligence agencies required considerable time to process, for “Information does not pass from the tentacle to the top of the organization instantaneously. Facts can be in the system without being available to the head of the organization.”\(^{24}\) Raw data must be collected, evaluated, winnowed, and the relevant portions then passed up the organization’s chain of command, a process that can consume days. Determining which government agency will then act on this information can require additional time. The ten-day delay between the authorization of a U-2 observation flight by the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) and the date the flight actually took place is largely attributed to inter-agency bargaining between the CIA, the Air Force, and senior Kennedy administration officials:

On October 4, the COMOR recommended plans for flights directly over Cuba, to cover the suspect area...[It was] decided that if a U-2 plane was shot down it should be a military aircraft, so operational control of the U-2 flights was transferred from the CIA to the Air Force’s Strategic Air Command...After October 9, the weather precluded an overflight until October 14.\(^{25}\)

At first glance, the prolonged delay between the beginning of U.S. suspicions and the launching of the U-2 flight could be viewed as evidence of extreme negligence on the part of the Kennedy

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 223.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 224.
administration. When the operating procedures of the many organizations involved in the U.S. intelligence effort are taken into account, however, the delay seems far less egregious. In the fall of 1962, U.S. intelligence agencies were being inundated by rumors of Soviet activity in Cuba, some of them legitimate, many not. Sifting through this mass of data for the truly vital pieces of information was a laborious, time-consuming, and necessary task. Even after this processing was completed, the question of which agency should assume responsibility for the surveillance flight over Cuba had to be settled, and making this determination required additional delays.

While the organizational process model appears to offer great promise for explaining decisions whose outcomes are inconsistent with the assumptions of the unitary rational actor model, there remain many cases where even Allison’s Model II remains insufficient. To develop a complete understanding of the processes by which governments make decisions requires a “further, more refined level of investigation.” At the heart of what Allison termed the “governmental politics” model (or Model III), is the notion that:

> The leaders who sit atop organizations are no monolith. Rather, each individual in this group is, in his or her 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.26

The policies that a government adopts can best be regarded as the outcomes of this bargaining process. As Allison notes, such bargaining is often highly competitive, and the solutions that various officials advocate in response to a particular situation often differ from one another. The U.S. response to the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba again offers an illustration of this phenomenon. After learning of the construction of Soviet bases, various members of President Kennedy’s ad hoc Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExCom) advocated a variety of responses, ranging from ignoring the missiles entirely to a full scale invasion of Cuba

26 Ibid., 255.
to topple Fidel Castro’s regime. After a series of intense discussions, the collective opinion of
the ExCom gradually coalesced around the imposition of a naval blockade, coupled with the
issuance of an ultimatum to the Soviet government that further action would be taken if the
missiles were not withdrawn. Allison and Zelikow describe the process which led to the
emergence of this consensus:

At the outset of the crisis, the individuals who convened at the president’s discretion as
the ExCom whistled many different tunes. Before the final decision was made, the
majority whistled a single tune: the blockade. That general approach, though, had then
subdivided into at least three distinct options for presidential choice…The process by
which this happened is a story of the most subtle and intricate probing, pulling, and
hauling, leading, guiding, and spurring.27

Throughout the bargaining process, each of the ExCom’s members sought to convince his
colleagues of the advantages of his own preferred response, and the group’s members competed
for the attention of both President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the
president’s closest confidante. Additionally, however, the members of the ExCom appear to
have engaged in a considerable amount of introspection, and to have been open to revising their
opinions in the face of arguments or information they found compelling. Allison and Zelikow
write that the negotiations in which the ExCom engaged produced a “richer, more sophisticated
menu of choices” than the original array of alternatives presented to the president.28 In this case,
at least, the competition and bargaining that accompanied the political game served to produce a
better outcome than might have occurred had the members of the ExCom not struggled so
vigorously with one another. However, as the later chapters in this dissertation will demonstrate,
it is also possible for the intra-governmental infighting that often accompanies the policymaking
process to produce outcomes that, in retrospect, clearly did not serve the best interests of the
nation.

27 Ibid., 346.
28 Ibid.
In their 1972 essay, Allison and Halperin outlined the “bureaucratic politics” model. The bureaucratic politics model essentially amounted to a fusion of the “organizational process” and “governmental politics” models presented in *Essence of Decision*:

What a government does in any particular instance can be understood largely as a result of bargaining among players positioned hierarchically in the government. The bargaining follows regularized circuits. Both the bargaining and the results are importantly affected by a number of constraints, in particular, organizational processes and shared values.  

Under the “organizational process” model, agencies within a government are the principal actors responsible for shaping government actions, while the “governmental politics” model focuses upon the actions of senior leaders within the government (whose outlooks are frequently shaped by the positions they hold). The “bureaucratic politics” framework asserts that both groups of actors exert influence upon policy outcomes, but that they do so in different ways. Decisions on matters of national policy are typically the purview of senior leaders, particularly when the issue in question is seen as a matter of vital national interest. But the ways in which decisions are implemented can be heavily shaped by the outlooks, behaviors, priorities, and procedures of the agencies tasked with carrying them out.

The notion that the decisions made by national governments on matters as vital as national security are often the products of highly competitive intra-governmental infighting may strike many as distasteful, a point Allison and Halperin were quite clearly aware of:

The conception of national security policy as “political” result contradicts both public imagery and academic orthodoxy. 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.  

However, even a cursory examination of history reveals a substantial number of policy decisions in which the actions of the participants appear to have been heavily influenced by the

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30 Ibid., 44.
considerations suggested by the bureaucratic politics model. One such example is presented in Halperin’s *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. In a chapter entitled “Organizational Interests,” he quotes analyst Paul Y. Hammond’s evaluation of the behavior of the U.S. Air Force in the months and years immediately following the Berlin Airlift. The success of the airlift could have been a major public relations coup for the Air Force, yet the service made little effort to capitalize on the operation to enhance its standing. Why did this occur? Hammond argues that the reason lay in the way in which senior Air Force officers regarded the priorities of their service:

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 which had often been voiced in Army circles that the Air Force was neglecting its duty to provide air transport for Army troops.\(^{31}\)

In the eyes of senior Air Force officials, the ability to carry out an effective strategic bombing campaign was the most important priority for their service. The Air Force had only very recently secured its establishment as an independent and co-equal branch of the armed forces under the terms of the National Security Act of 1947. Devoting resources to the performance of non-strategic activities, such as tactical air support or troop transportation threatened to return the Air Force to a position of subservience vis-à-vis the Army. Because it was “the strategic mission that [kept] the Air Force independent,” it is unsurprising that Air Force leaders showed little inclination to seek political payoff from the success of the Berlin Airlift.\(^{32}\)

Intense competition between government agencies can have a number of negative consequences, among them a tendency to compete for scarce resources and a reluctance to abolish established programs or services even when such programs have clearly become

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\(^{32}\) Ibid., 30.
obsolete. As recounted by Stephen Roskill, the story of the development of British naval aviation between the two World Wars is a clear example of the former. When the First World War ended, Britain was clearly at the forefront of global naval aviation—the Royal Navy was the only fleet to actually deploy and use aircraft carriers during the war, albeit on a limited scale. In the ensuing decades, however, British naval aviation became the subject of an intense tug-of-war between the Navy and the emerging Royal Air Force (RAF). A 1917 paper published by a committee under the leadership of General J. C. Smuts recommended the establishment of a unified air service, which would have complete responsibility over all British military aviation. This decision paved the way for the establishment of the RAF. At the same time, however, it spelled disaster for the Navy’s Fleet Air Arm, or FAA, because of the Smuts Committee’s “totally ignoring the specialized needs of naval aviation.” Like most air services of its era, the interwar RAF was dominated by proponents of strategic bombing, men who were scarcely inclined to invest limited resources in the development of specialized maritime aircraft. Thus, when Britain entered World War II, not only had the Royal Navy forfeited its initial advantages in naval aviation technology, the FAA’s capabilities and inventory lagged far behind those of other major naval powers, particularly the United States and Japan.

An example of the reluctance of government organizations to discontinue programs even when they no longer possess a logical reason to exist is presented by Edward L. Katzenbach in “The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century.” In this essay, Katzenbach catalogues the efforts

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34 Ibid., 237.
35 Perhaps the best illustration of this is the Royal Navy’s reliance upon the Fairey Swordfish torpedo bomber as its primary carrier-based attack aircraft throughout the early years of World War II. The Swordfish enjoys a degree of romantic appeal among students of the Second World War, mainly as a result of its role in the attack on the Italian naval base at Taranto and the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck. Nevertheless, the fact that the British were still employing biplanes in an era when the American and Japanese carrier fleets had long since adopted faster and more capable monoplane designs is damning evidence of the neglect to which the Fleet Air Arm had been subjected during the interwar decades.
made by cavalry services in a number of nations to justify their continued existence during the interwar decades. The experiences of World War I (and even of the Boer War several years previously) had, for many, signaled the death knell for mounted cavalry. The increasing prevalence of automatic weapons made the prospect of a cavalry charge daunting to even the most reckless of individuals. Moreover, postwar advances in mechanization suggested that in the near future the reconnaissance functions previously performed by horse-mounted cavalrymen would soon be handled by vehicle-borne infantrymen. Yet proponents of horse cavalry refused to admit that such developments meant that their usefulness had come to an end, introducing a range of creative (to say the least) arguments to validate their continued usefulness:

[Horse cavalrymen] stressed the tanks’ needs for spare parts, without taking into consideration that one of the greatest difficulties of the cavalry was that horses do not have spare parts…Whereas the point was occasionally made that the Lord took care of the resupply of horses—i.e., that while factories could be bombed out, sex could not—no mention was ever made that in wartime as in peace He still took four or five years to produce each animal.36

As this passage’s ironic tone suggests, Katzenbach is largely unsympathetic to the arguments being put forward by advocates of the mounted cavalry. Unable to clearly articulate a role for themselves in the changed battlefield environment of the post-World War I era, cavalrymen in essence argued that their service must continue to exist because it had always existed.

In the effort to untangle the processes that produce government actions, Allison and Halperin’s bureaucratic politics model seeks the answers to three questions—“Who plays? What determines each player’s stand? How are the players’ stands aggregated to yield decisions and actions of a government?”37 The first question is extremely important, because the manner in

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which a particular issue is perceived can vary greatly depending upon the perspective of the observer:

[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.\[38\]

Because of the many ways in which an issue can be framed, identifying which individuals or agencies within the government will be involved in the policy debate is of great importance. The range of responses that are considered when a government confronts a particular situation will be shaped by the voices that take part in the policy conversation. If senior officials are able to exclude potential rivals from these conversations, they enhance both their own influence within the government, and the likelihood that their own preferred policy responses will be adopted. As will be shown in later chapters, throughout the interwar decades, senior State Department officials actively worked to exclude both military officers and civilian leaders of the War and Navy Departments from the U.S. foreign policymaking process. As a consequence, it was the State Department’s voice that dominated that process, while the cautions and objections raised by military personnel went unheard and unheeded.

The second question raised by the bureaucratic politics model is how individual “players” in the political game determine their stances on issues. Allison and Halperin argue that players’ interests may be divided into four categories—national security interests, organizational interests, domestic interests, and personal interests. It is not uncommon for these various interests to become conflated in the minds of senior officials: “Members of an organization, particularly career individuals, come to believe that the health of their organization is vital to the

\[38\] Ibid., 48.
national interest.”39 In *Essence of Decision*, Allison describes this mentality with the phrase “where you stand depends on where you sit.” What this means, fundamentally, is that government leaders tend to approach policy questions from the perspective of the agency to which they belong, and that they will tend to advocate responses that are in line with that agency’s capabilities. The adage that when a person is holding a hammer, everything he sees looks like a nail is a fitting analogy for this type of mentality.

The most important question asked by Allison and Halperin’s model is how the positions and preferences of individual leaders are aggregated to produce policy outcomes. They argue that this is done through a two-stage process comprised of what they term “decision games” (the bargaining and negotiation among leaders that determines the government’s response to a particular situation) and “action games” (the process by which the selected response is implemented). Both types of games can be highly competitive, as leaders seek to frame the issue in ways that will support their preferred responses:

> Decision games…[proceed] according to fixed rules. Typically issues are recognized and determined within an established channel for producing policies or decisions…Because action channels structure the game by pre-selecting the major players…the players maneuver to get the issue into the channel that they believe is most likely to yield the desired result.40

The outcome of decision games is often heavily influenced by the urgency of the issue under consideration. When the matter being considered is routine the decision game is likely to be dominated by the standard operating procedures of the agencies involved, as senior leaders have little incentive to personally involve themselves in the more mundane aspects of their agency’s operations. In the case of urgent matters that must be addressed within a fixed time period, senior officials, including cabinet officers, high-ranking military officers, or presidents, tend to

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39 Ibid., 48.  
40 Ibid., 50.
be far more involved. Once the decision game is completed, action games begin. A key point raised by Allison and Halperin is that action games often have unintended consequences:

In some cases, players responsible for implementing decisions will feel obligated to implement the spirit as well as the letter of the decision. Even in such cases, the action may differ from the action that the senior players thought would result from their decision. This is in part because actions are carried out by large organizations according to existing routines, in part because decisions do not always include an explanation of what the action is intended to accomplish, and in part because when specifying details junior players may distort the action.41

Allison and Halperin complete their explanation of the bureaucratic politics model with a number of conclusions regarding action games, several of which are highly relevant to the story of U.S. strategic policy with respect to the Philippines during the interwar period. The most relevant of these conclusions state:

- Presidential decisions will be faithfully implemented when: [his] involvement is unambiguous, his words are unambiguous, his order is widely publicized...
- Ambassadors and field commanders feel less obligated 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.42

The central thrust of these conclusions is that, as outlined above, both individual leaders and government agencies will attempt to act in a manner that corresponds as closely as possible to their own individual 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 the president himself struggles to define the policy goals that he is seeking, then the likelihood that the policymaking process will be dominated by inter- and intra-agency politics, bargaining, and competition is greatly increased.

41 Ibid., 52-3.
42 Ibid., 54. Emphasis added.
While there is no doubt that many of the seeming inconsistencies in U.S. interwar strategic policy can be attributed to the standard bureaucratic maneuvering expected under the terms of Allison and Halperin’s model, there is one prominent area where this explanation by itself seems insufficient. The bureaucratic politics model expects that there may be a degree of competition between agencies that share an interest in a particular issue area, such as national security. What it does not expect, however, is the complete breakdown in communication between such agencies. In order to understand the situation that occurred in the United States during the interwar decades, it is necessary to introduce another concept, what M.I.T. political scientist Barry R. Posen refers to as “disintegration.”

Posen introduced the concept of “disintegration” in his 1984 monograph *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, a study of the behavior of the German, French, and British armed forces in the period between the two world wars. Most citizens assume that the various organizations responsible for ensuring the national security of their society work in harmony—that the doctrines and strategies advocated by military leaders are carefully calibrated to support the policy objectives established by civilian officials. Posen argues, however, that attaining this type of calibration is often very difficult:

> The separate responsibilities for diplomacy and war of organizations and individuals commanding different skills, information, and materiel generates a structural barrier to political-military integration…The division of functions, and of expertise, is not an insurmountable barrier to political-military integration. It is a real one, however.43

Posen argues that disintegration most often emerges as a result of a tendency among military leaders to seek independence from civilian control. He suggests that military leaders prioritize “narrow technical requirements of preferred operations above the needs of civilian policy,” and that the frequent reluctance of military personnel to “provide civilian authorities with

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information that relates to doctrinal questions” can exacerbate policy disintegration. The same passage claims that only assertive civilian intervention and control over the setting of military priorities will produce an “integrated” policymaking environment.

The interwar United States presents an interesting case study with which to examine Posen’s notions of integration and disintegration. There is abundant evidence that U.S. policymaking during this period suffered from a significant degree of disintegration. An examination of the causes of this disintegration, however, produces a picture very much at odds with Posen’s predictions. Rather than stemming from efforts by military leaders to increase their independence from civilian control, it appears that much of the responsibility for the emergence of this disintegration can be laid at the feet of civilian leaders who actively sought to exclude their military counterparts from discussions about the policy goals of the United States. This disintegration also appears to have been exacerbated by a strain of thought prevalent among many military officers during this era (mostly within the Army) that regarded their exclusion from the policymaking process as legitimate.

The U.S. defeat in the Philippines at the hands of the Japanese in 1941-42 is a case that defies explanation by any analytical model that treats states as unitary, rational actors. The surrender of the Philippine garrison was the end result of decades of policy missteps, indecision, and miscommunication among governmental actors frequently working at cross purposes with one another. Untangling this chain of events requires the more in-depth level of analysis offered by the bureaucratic politics model. As the subsequent chapters will show, the confusion that characterized U.S. strategic policy toward the Philippines throughout the interwar decades was largely a product of the sort of bureaucratic competition predicted by the model. For the

44 Ibid., 53.
45 Ibid., 53.
majority of the interwar years, the State Department nearly monopolized the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Representatives of the War and Navy Departments, both in and out of uniform, were largely marginalized in discussions of foreign affairs to the point where a climate of civil-military disintegration clearly existed. Because the international climate throughout the 1920s and early 1930s was relatively peaceful, the presidents of the interwar years paid little attention to the jumbled nature of the country’s foreign policy making processes. By the mid-1930s, with the international environment clearly entering a period of conflict, Franklin Roosevelt did begin to take a more active role in the establishment of the nation’s foreign policy and security priorities. However, Roosevelt’s secretive managerial style meant that his advisors were frequently left in the dark with respect to his objectives. As a result, the necessary clarification of the country’s policy objectives, both in the western Pacific and elsewhere, was very slow to emerge, and while steps were taken to improve coordination between key civilian and military leaders, they were too little and too late to completely reverse the damage caused by decades of neglect.
Chapter 3 – The United States and the Philippines: From Colony to Commonwealth

The acquisition of the Philippines by the United States in the aftermath of the Spanish-American war was an event that sparked considerable public debate in forums ranging from the halls of Congress to editorial pages across the country. Supporters of the establishment of an overseas empire hailed the move as signifying a coming of age for the country, and trumpeted the obligations the United States had to “uplift” and “civilize” the people of the Philippines. Anti-imperialists variously responded that the acquisition of colonies was not in keeping with the values of the country, and with fears of what close contact with the Filipinos might mean for the United States. While this initial debate saw the imperialists triumph, it was by no means the end of public discussion regarding the American relationship with the Philippines. In the ensuing decades, an increasing number of Americans came to regard their stewardship of the islands as a mixed blessing at best. The official government stance on the question of whether the islands should be granted their independence was reversed several times, chiefly as a function of which political party held the White House, with Republican presidents generally favoring continued U.S. governance of the Philippines and Democratic administrations favoring Filipino sovereignty. Throughout the entire period of U.S. colonial rule, American political leaders also were forced to reckon with a growing Filipino independence movement. This movement, under the leadership of individuals such as Sergio Osmeña, Manuel Roxas, and Manuel Quezon, was quick to take advantage of any opportunities to increase the role played by Filipinos in the administration and governance of the islands, with a view to demonstrating the capacity of their people for complete independence.

One of the principal arguments advanced in support of U.S. acquisition of the Philippines was that the Filipinos lacked the ability to defend themselves against foreign aggression.
Throughout the period of U.S. colonial rule, the responsibility for defending the islands against foreign aggression rested with the soldiers of the U.S. Army’s Philippine Department (in 1941 reorganized as the “U.S. Army Forces, Far East,” or USAFFE), and the sailors of the Navy’s Asiatic Fleet. But the responsibilities that the United States had assumed with respect to the defense of the Philippines were always far greater than the commitment the nation was prepared to make in terms of manpower, money, and equipment. Moreover, the constant vacillation on the part of the U.S. government regarding whether retention of the Philippines was desirable complicated the task of the military officers charged with formulating defense plans, as they could never be certain whether the resources they needed to carry out their assigned role would be available. This chapter explores the history of the U.S. colonial relationship with the Philippines, from the bitter fighting of the Philippine War to the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1934, and then briefly examines the implications of the Philippines’ impending independence for the American garrison.

The road that led to the American acquisition of the Philippines actually originated in a conflict that began on the opposite side of the world—the Spanish-American War, ostensibly undertaken by a U.S. government appalled by atrocities committed against members of the Cuban independence movement by the Spanish colonial administration of General Valeriano Weyler. However, war with Spain also provided a convenient opportunity for individuals within the McKinley administration who sought to expand U.S. influence in Asia and the Pacific, particularly Theodore Roosevelt, who served as Acting Secretary of the Navy in the months leading up to the American declaration of war. On February 25, 1898, exactly two months before Congress formally declared war upon Spain, Roosevelt dispatched a cable to Commodore George Dewey, commanding the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, then stationed in China. The dispatch read,
in part, “In the event of declaration of war [on] Spain, your duty will be to see that the Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic coast, and then offensive operations in the Philippines.”¹

When war came, Dewey was quick to execute his orders, steaming to the Philippines and scoring an almost bloodless victory (at least on the American side) in the Battle of Manila Bay on May 1.

The destruction of all Spanish naval forces in the Philippines dealt the final blow to a colonial administration that was already facing a severe crisis. For years the Spanish had been confronted with an aggressive, if fragmented, Filipino independence movement. Constant fighting with various rebel bands had greatly weakened the Spanish garrison, and Dewey’s victory at Manila Bay meant that the Spanish no longer possessed the ability to move forces by sea among the archipelago’s hundreds of islands. In the aftermath of the Battle of Manila Bay, a full-scale revolution spread throughout the Philippines. The revolt against Spanish rule rapidly spread beyond Luzon, with local revolutionary leaders directing uprisings on the islands of Panay and Mindanao.² Dewey was largely powerless to influence these developments, as he had no ground troops immediately available for deployment on the islands. The U.S. Army’s 8th Corps, under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt, did not arrive off Luzon until June 30, nearly two months after the Battle of Manila Bay.³ The majority of Spanish forces were dispersed throughout the archipelago. With their naval presence in the islands destroyed and Dewey’s vessels commanding Philippine waters it proved impossible for local garrisons to support one another. The areas that remained under Spanish control soon found themselves

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² Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 22. Linn’s comments on the fighting throughout the Philippines are part of an attempt to discredit Emilio Aguinaldo’s claim to leadership over a united Filipino population. It does appear that Aguinaldo’s control over a number of the armed Filipino bands, particularly in the southern islands, was somewhere between tenuous and nonexistent. The larger point, however, is that Spanish control of the Philippines was on the brink of collapse even before the arrival of American ground troops in the islands.
existing under a virtual (and in some cases literal) state of siege. These circumstances, coupled with rapidly growing fears that they would be massacred by the vengeful Filipinos should Manila be overrun by the rebels, meant that the arrival of the 8th Corps was greeted with something close to relief by the Spanish citizens in the Philippines. Indeed, the commanders of the Spanish garrison in Manila proceeded to negotiate an agreement with Dewey and Merritt under which the Americans would be allowed to storm the city against minimal resistance—provided that they would continue to exclude Filipino forces from the capital. Thus, in the aftermath of the Battle of Manila on August 13, the Americans assumed responsibility for the continued safety of their former foes, and provided the first hint to the Filipinos that rather than earning their national liberation, they were instead witnessing one set of colonial masters replacing another.

The orders under which American troops had been dispatched to the Philippines had omitted any discussion of their ultimate responsibilities in the islands. This was largely due to the fact that no consensus existed regarding what those ultimate responsibilities were to be. Were the islands to be returned to Spain when peace was declared? Were they to become an independent country? Or were the islands to be retained by the United States? The postwar status of the Philippines became the subject of a pair of bitter debates, the first within the United States itself, and the second between the Filipino and American leaders.

American imperialists, favoring the acquisition of the Philippines as a colony, advanced a number of arguments to support their position. They hailed the potential commercial advantages that possession of the Philippines would offer to the United States, particularly with regard to

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their proximity to China.\textsuperscript{6} Others, influenced by the writings of historian and naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan, argued that the Philippines could serve as a vital strategic base from which the United States Navy could project its power into surrounding seas. H.W. Brands notes that “Mahan asserted that colonies afforded the surest security to a country with international interests…Securing rights to coaling and repair stations was ‘one of the first duties’ of a responsible federal government.”\textsuperscript{7} Other supporters of imperialism justified American acquisition of the Philippines with the argument that the Filipinos lacked the strength and ability to defend their own sovereignty. If the United States walked away from the islands, they would inevitably be seized by one of the European powers or by Japan.\textsuperscript{8} Since the Filipinos were destined to become imperial subjects under any circumstances, surely they would prefer “benevolent assimilation” (to borrow William McKinley’s term) at the hands of the Americans to the harsher fate that they would encounter at the hands of another colonial power.

Another argument frequently deployed by American imperialists was that the Filipino people lacked the capacity for true self-governance. This argument reflected the prevailing racial attitudes of the era, which regarded with great suspicion the notion that nonwhite peoples were truly capable of governing its own affairs. Imperialists of this school routinely put forward caricatures of Filipinos which depicted them variously as infantile, feminine, or savage. Kristin

\textsuperscript{6} One of the major priorities of the McKinley administration, and particularly Secretary of State John Hay, was the conclusion of an “Open Door” agreement between the major colonial powers of Europe, Japan, Russia, and the United States. The object of the “Open Door” was to ensure that each of these countries would enjoy unfettered access to Chinese markets, and to prevent individual colonial powers from taking advantage of the internal chaos plaguing China in the last decades of the Qing dynasty. Possession of a colony in the western Pacific would, imperialists argued, give the United States a base from which its strategic and commercial interests in China could be defended against both Chinese resistance and the depredations of the Europeans and Japanese.

\textsuperscript{7} H. W. Brands, Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 13.

\textsuperscript{8} As noted in Chapter 1, this argument was not without substance. The German government, in particular, was watching the Philippines (as well as Spain’s other Pacific possessions) with very keen eyes, and dispatched a powerful naval squadron to the islands as “observers” in the weeks following the Battle of Manila Bay. Subsequent days witnessed a number of incidents between German and American naval officers in Philippine waters. See Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, 34-40.
Hoganson notes that portrayals of Filipinos in the late nineteenth century were virtually identical to depictions of African-Americans of the same era:

Descriptions of “savage” Filipino men…paralleled the images of African-American men as bestial rapists that white supremacists were working so hard to disseminate in this period…The stereotype of the childlike Filipino paralleled long-standing images of African Americans as children who were too immature to participate in government and of Native Americans as wards of the state. In all these cases, depicting a people as child-like implied that they lacked the manly character necessary to govern themselves.\(^9\)

This argument could be used not only to denigrate the Filipinos, but to make the case that the United States had a moral obligation to take up the mantle of governance in the Philippines. As Hoganson notes, “These stereotypes…helped justify the power of ‘civilized’ white men, who theoretically would protect the weak and dispense justice.”\(^10\)

But the imperialists quickly discovered that deploying racist depictions of the inhabitants of the Philippines was a double-edged sword, for opponents of annexation seized upon many of these same images to argue that the United States should have nothing to do with the islands.

One of the most prominent anti-annexationist members was Virginia Senator John W. Daniel. In a speech on the Philippine question, Daniel declared:

We are asked to annex to the United States a witch’s caldron [sic]… We are not only asked to annex the caldron and make it a part of our great, broad, Christian, Anglo-Saxon, American land, but we are asked also to annex the contents and take this brew—mixed races, Chinese, Japanese, Malay Negritos—anybody who has come along in three hundred years, in all their concatenations and colors…\(^11\)

Many prominent “anti” Senators, noting that throughout its history territory acquired by the United States had been incorporated into the national body politic, raised the specter that the acquisition of colonial control over the Philippines was but a prelude to eventual statehood for

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\(^10\) Ibid., 135.

the islands. This fear was encapsulated in a speech by Mississippi Senator Hernando De Soto Money. Money argued that U.S. control over the Philippines meant that the islands would eventually be admitted into the Union as states. This in turn would result in the Filipinos becoming U.S. citizens, a development he clearly viewed with great disfavor:

I do not believe there is a man here who dares to say that he would take the Filipinos as citizens of the United States. If so, these islands come in with their representatives in the Senate and House. Does any man in the Senate say that he is willing that the Filipinos shall determine who shall be the next president of the United States? Is he willing that the Filipinos shall determine the foreign and domestic policy of the United States?12

Opponents of the annexation of the Philippines were quick to play upon fears of racial mingling between white Americans and Filipinos, an argument that carried considerable weight in an era when most U.S. states still possessed anti-miscegenation laws.

Not all anti-annexationists framed their opposition to the acquisition of the Philippines in racial terms. Some, most notably Massachusetts Senator George Frisbie Hoar, argued that imperialism over foreign peoples was incompatible with the fundamental principles of both the United States and the Constitution. Hoar drew parallels between the Filipino uprising against Spanish rule and the American Revolution, declaring that “The Filipino nationalists were… fighting for the ‘doctrines of our fathers.’”13 Unlike Senators Daniel and Money, the faction of the anti-imperialist movement for which Hoar served as the standard bearer “never resorted to dehumanizing language in [their] opposition to the annexation of the Philippines.”14 Rather, they based their arguments on legal and moral grounds, asserting either that the Constitution forbade the acquisition of overseas colonies, or the idea that the United States, given its own revolutionary roots, should not impose its rule upon others by force. Hoganson notes that Hoar “believed that the only wars that could test men’s heroic qualities were righteous wars—that

12 Quoted in Halili, *Iconography of the New Empire*, 27.
physical prowess and courage meant nothing if not subordinated to a higher moral purpose.”\textsuperscript{15} In the eyes of Hoar and his supporters, American military action in the Philippines did not meet this criterion.

While both sides in this debate enjoyed support among segments of the American public, the imperialists gradually gained the upper hand. This was the result of several factors. The quick, decisive, and largely bloodless victory over Spain had produced a wave of nationalist fervor in the United States. Hoganson labels this phenomenon “jingoism.” One of the chief beneficiaries of this wave of popular support was President McKinley, who, after some initial hesitancy, had publicly declared his support for the annexation of the islands, declaring “There was nothing left to do…but take them all, and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize them.”\textsuperscript{16} McKinley’s obvious reluctance to go to war with Spain in 1898 had made him the target of widespread and vicious criticism, which had questioned both his fitness to lead the nation and even his masculinity.\textsuperscript{17} These negative portrayals had vanished in the aftermath of the war, and McKinley was likely loathe to incur the jingoes’ wrath a second time by opposing annexation of the Philippines. H. W. Brands notes that the “antis” faced other disadvantages as well:

[The] perils they predicted lay beyond the horizon of the present, a frontier often nearly impenetrable by political argumentation in America. The supporters of annexation, in contrast, could capitalize on the momentum of current events.\textsuperscript{18}

Brands adds that the imperialists “enjoyed the nine-tenths advantage of the status quo,” given the presence of U.S. Army and Navy forces in the Philippines when the war with Spain was

\textsuperscript{15} Hoganson, \textit{Fighting for American Manhood}, 165. Hoganson notes that this line of argument was intended to refute those imperialist Senators who suggested that war was a character-building experience for young men, and that the peace the United States had enjoyed since the end of the Civil War had resulted in a gradual degeneration in the moral and physical character of America’s young men.


\textsuperscript{17} Hoganson, \textit{Fighting for American Manhood}. See especially Chapter 4, “McKinley’s Backbone: The Coercive Power of Gender in Political Debate,” 88-106.

\textsuperscript{18} Brands, \textit{Bound to Empire}, 31.
concluded. Thus, despite vigorous resistance from the “antis,” a majority gradually coalesced that favored the acquisition of the Philippines as a U.S. colony. President McKinley dispatched orders to the American commissioners negotiating the peace treaty with Spain in Paris to offer up to $20 million in exchange for the islands. The Spanish initially rejected the American demand, but conceded the point shortly afterward, realizing that reestablishing their dominion over the islands was no longer possible. Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, concluded on December 10, 1898, control of the Philippines was formally surrendered by Spain to the United States.

To say that the American purchase of the islands came as an unwelcome surprise to the Filipinos would be a profound understatement. Relations between Filipino leaders and the American military commanders in the Philippines had steadily worsened throughout the summer of 1898, and this deterioration accelerated in the aftermath of the Battle of Manila, when U.S. forces continued to deny Filipino troops access to much of the city. The American attitude mystified Filipino leaders, because they had been led to believe that the U.S. supported the establishment of an independent, sovereign Philippine Republic. The Filipinos, and specifically Emilio Aguinaldo, had come to this belief after a conversation with the American consul in Singapore, E. Spencer Pratt. During this conversation, held a few days before the U.S. declaration of war with Spain, “Aguinaldo…claimed Pratt promised the United States ‘would at least recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands, under a naval protectorate.’” The precise contents of this conversation became the subject of considerable controversy.

19 Ibid., 30.
21 Linn, The Philippine War, 20. A similar account of the meeting can be found in Brands, Bound to Empire, 44-5.
22 The account of the conversation presented by Linn and Brands is based upon Aguinaldo’s recollections, recorded in his diary, and corroborated by Englishman H. W. Bray, who introduced Aguinaldo to Pratt and served as an interpreter during the meeting between the two men. Linn notes that Pratt later denied pledging U.S. support for
Subsequent conversations between Aguinaldo and Dewey (held shortly before the Asiatic Fleet departed the China coast for the attack on Manila Bay), would lead to equally contentious recollections. While the complete truth regarding these exchanges will likely never be known, it certainly appears that Aguinaldo and his Filipino colleagues came away with the impression that the United States was at least somewhat receptive to the notion of Philippine independence, and that neither Pratt nor Dewey said anything to disabuse them of this notion.

When it became apparent during the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris (a conference from which Filipino representatives were completely excluded) that the United States did indeed harbor designs on the Philippines, the Filipinos reacted with anger, charging that the United States had not been dealing with them in good faith. Writing in 1916, Filipino scholar Maximo Kalaw articulated the frustrations felt by Filipino nationalists:

> Even admitting that no definite promise to recognize Philippine independence had ever been authorized by the government, the American representatives in the Orient certainly acted, to say the very least, in a way that would certainly assure, and did assure, the Filipinos that the United States had no desire to acquire the Philippines but rather wished to help the people obtain their independence.

This initial optimism began to fade, however, as the months passed with no sign of an American military withdrawal from the islands. The subsequent rebuff of efforts by Filipino representatives to speak with American peace commissioners in Paris contributed to a growing sense of foreboding regarding U.S. intentions. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris made

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Philippine sovereignty, writing that “A charitable interpretation is that Pratt’s use of words such as ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom,’ intended to refer to American traditions of civil and property rights, were mistranslated to indicate United States support for Filipino independence.” See Linn, *The Philippine War*, 20. Brands is less skeptical of the account of the meeting provided by Aguinaldo and Bray, and quotes from a letter written by the Englishman to Senator George Frisbie Hoar in which Bray again corroborated Aguinaldo’s account of Pratt’s promises, and declared his willingness to testify to that effect under oath. See Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 45.

23 In the summer of 1898, Felipe Agoncillo, the elected president of the Philippine Revolutionary Government, traveled to Paris in an effort to meet with both American and Spanish commissioners, “but the peace commissioners refused to see him.” Maximo M. Kalaw, *The Case for the Filipinos* (New York: The Century Co, 1916), 61. Kalaw also noted that several letters sent by Agoncillo to Secretary of State John Hay requesting an audience to discuss the status of the Philippines went unanswered.

24 Ibid., 48-9.
the McKinley administration’s intentions clear, the Filipinos were forced to stake their hopes for independence upon the U.S. Senate, whose ratification of the treaty was required before American control over the Philippines would become official. As discussed above, this ratification was by no means certain, as many Senators held deep reservations about the wisdom of U.S. acquisition of the Philippines. Kalaw argues that two factors contributed to the Senate’s narrow ratification of the Treaty of Paris. The first was an effort on the part of William Jennings Bryan (ironically a committed anti-imperialist) to encourage Democratic Senators to ratify the treaty. Bryan’s argument was that “the treaty committed the United States to no policy and that after the ratification the issue should be brought before the American people for decision.”25 In essence, Bryan was suggesting that the question of whether or not the United States should become an imperial power should be the subject of a popular referendum, or at least a national debate.26 Bryan’s efforts, it is suggested, were instrumental in convincing a handful of recalcitrant Democrats to vote in favor of ratification, much to the chagrin of anti-imperialist Senators such as Hoar. The second factor which, in Kalaw’s view, spurred ratification of the treaty was the outbreak of fighting on the outskirts of Manila between soldiers of the U.S. Army’s 8th Corps and Aguinaldo’s Army Liberation of the Philippines two days prior to the ratification vote. These skirmishes were the first shots in what at the time was referred to as the Philippine Insurrection, and is today more commonly referred to as the Philippine War.

The events of the Philippine War have been recounted in a number of excellent books, among them Stuart Creighton Miller’s *Benevolent Assimilation*, Brian McAllister Linn’s *The Philippine War*, and Robert Ramsey’s *Savage Wars of Peace*, so only a brief summary of the

25 Ibid., 51.
26 Given his ardent anti-imperialism, Bryan was likely acting under the belief that the American public would never condone the holding of overseas colonies. If this was in fact the case, then he had severely misjudged the country’s political climate—neither the first nor the last such miscalculation of Bryan’s political career.
conflict itself will be presented here. The initial fighting outside Manila that began in February of 1899 was followed by a period of approximately nine months in which the Army of Liberation engaged U.S. forces in conventional battles. These encounters, almost without exception, proved disastrous for the Filipinos. Brian Linn places most of the blame for the Filipino defeats on the inadequate training and poor (often virtually nonexistent) leadership provided by the Army of Liberation’s officers, who in many cases had been selected on the basis of their political loyalty to Emilio Aguinaldo rather than their qualifications as professional soldiers. By the spring of 1900, U.S. forces had secured control over Manila and central Luzon, and forced Filipino forces back into the more remote provinces in northern and southern Luzon. With their foes’ lines of communication disrupted and their soldiers demoralized, American military leaders sensed that victory had been achieved. On May 5, 1900, Major General Elwell S. Otis, who had commanded U.S. Army forces in the Philippines for the preceding nine months, declared “I am convinced from observation, investigation, and the expressed opinion of the educated men of the islands that the declared guerilla warfare will cease within months…” Otis’ statement reflected the consensus among American military leaders that what they termed the Filipino “insurgency” had been decisively crushed.

In fact, however, the Philippine War had not ended, but was merely entering its second phase, which would last far longer and prove far more costly in both American and Filipino lives. Realizing that conventional resistance was doomed, “Aguinaldo convened a council of war at Bayambang on 12 November 1899 that led to a major change in strategy by the

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27 For a brief account of this phase of the Philippine War, see Ramsey, Savage Wars of Peace, 14-23. A much more detailed account is provided in Linn, The Philippine War. See “Part I: Conventional Operations, 1899,” 3-181.
29 Quoted in Ramsey, Savage Wars of Peace, 23. Otis made this announcement as he was departing from the islands, ceding command to one of his subordinates, General Arthur MacArthur.
The Army of Liberation was dispersed, and its members returned to their homes throughout the islands, from which they launched a campaign of guerilla warfare aimed less at defeating the U.S. Army than at convincing American leaders that they would never be able to consolidate control over the Philippines. Responsibility for directing the fighting against the U.S. Army devolved from Aguinaldo to the leaders of local or provincial *insurrecto* bands. From the spring of 1900 onward, the Philippine War was characterized not by large-scale clashes between American and Filipino forces, but rather by a seemingly endless succession of maneuvers, skirmishes, ambushes and retreats, while both sides sought to appeal to the “hearts and minds” of the Philippines’ civilian population. This phase of the conflict was also characterized by extreme savagery and widespread atrocities. In an effort to discourage collaboration with the Americans, on March 20, 1900, Brigadier General Manuel Tinio, whose forces operated in the provinces of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur in northwestern Luzon, issued a proclamation declaring a number of actions illegal under penalty of death, among them:

…local presidents and other civil authorities…who do not give immediate information to the camps within their jurisdiction at the moment they have information of the movements, plans, directions, and number of the enemy…

…Those who…reveal to the enemy the camp, stopping places, movement and direction of the revolutionary soldiers…

…Those who voluntarily offer themselves as guides to the enemy unless it is for the purpose of leading them from the true road…

Local leaders who offered support to the U.S. Army or attempted to establish local civic bodies such as police forces were frequently targeted for assassination.

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32 Historians disagree on exactly when the Philippine War ended. Both Linn and Ramsey place the end of the conflict in July of 1902, when President Theodore Roosevelt issued a proclamation declaring the Filipino insurrection crushed. At the time of Roosevelt’s declaration, organized resistance to U.S. rule on Luzon had come to an end following the surrender of a number of Filipino leaders and their men. Other scholars note that in portions of the Philippines, particularly the southern islands inhabited by the Moro people, fighting between natives and American troops continued for several years. For the purposes of this project, I am using the “orthodox” timeline outlined in *The Philippine War*.
The shift from conventional to irregular warfare proved extremely frustrating for the U.S. Army, as initially there was some confusion regarding the best method for responding to the tactics adopted by the Filipinos. The refusal of the Filipinos to engage the Army in direct battle, their reliance upon ambushes and irregular warfare, and the (largely correct) perception that the *insurrectos* enjoyed considerable support from the civilian population, confirmed in the minds of many American soldiers the racial stereotypes of nonwhites as savage or subhuman, a combination that in turn led them to advocate acts of extreme brutality. Stuart Creighton Miller quotes from a series of letters written by Army Private Walter Cutter. Cutter insisted:

…that counterterrorism had to be directed at the entire native population, because “knowing the Malay character” was to understand that any “humane” distinction between “insurrectos” and civilians would be “worthless.”

Miller also includes excerpts from a number of other letters written by American soldiers in the Philippines. The content of these letters demonstrates that the sentiments expressed by Private Cutter were far from unique.

Although the U.S. Army of the early twentieth century had little experience with irregular warfare, a precedent did exist for determining the conduct of both U.S. soldiers and hostile (or potentially hostile) civilians in occupied territory. This was General Orders 100, a document originally written at the behest of President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War to outline martial law as it applied to Confederate territory that had fallen under the control of Union armies. General Orders 100 listed standards of conduct to which American commanders in the field were expected to conform. However, it also established a very strict code of conduct for civilians living under American military control. A large range of activities were specifically proscribed, and civilians who violated the provisions of General Orders 100 could be subjected

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to immediate arrest, imprisonment, or even summary execution. Article 27 laid a legal foundation for harsh reprisals against civilian populations in response to acts of guerilla warfare:

The law of war can no more wholly dispense with retaliation than can the law of nations, of which it is a branch. Yet civilized nations acknowledge retaliation as the sternest feature of war. A reckless enemy often leaves to his opponent no other means of securing himself against the repetition of barbarous outrage.35

Senior American commanders, including both Major General Arthur MacArthur and Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell made sure that General Orders 100 was widely disseminated to their troops, and subordinate commanders applied its articles with great zeal.

It is a matter of no small irony that the counterinsurgency campaign that the U.S. Army utilized in a number of Philippine provinces bore a strong resemblance to the approach that the Spanish government had been attempting to apply in Cuba—the same approach that had been the subject of strident criticism on the part of the U.S. government and public, and had been widely cited as the reason for the American declaration of war. In Philippine provinces where organized resistance occurred, the Army implemented a multi-phased campaign intended to separate the guerillas from their base of support within the civilian population. Efforts were made to protect the lives of local leaders willing to work with the Americans, and amnesty offers were made to Filipino leaders who willingly surrendered themselves and their forces. But the campaign had a harsher side, as well. Towns suspected of harboring insurrectos, or of providing them with support were burned to the ground, their inhabitants forced into “reconcentration camps” where they could be kept under the watchful eye of U.S. troops. Conditions in many of these camps were cramped and unsanitary, and deaths from disease were endemic. During a Congressional hearing investigating the conduct of American forces in the Philippines, anti-imperialist Senator

Augustus Bacon read into the record “a letter from the commander of one of [J. Franklin] Bell’s concentration camps, who called them ‘suburbs of hell.’” The actions of American officers in the field were also the subject of considerable scrutiny, with charges made that U.S. Army personnel or their Filipino auxiliaries engaged in torture of prisoners, most notoriously the application of what was termed “the water cure” (“waterboarding,” in today’s parlance) to suspected guerillas as a means of extracting information.

While the U.S. Army’s actions during its counterinsurgency campaign proved controversial, they succeeded in breaking the back of the Filipino resistance movement. Between the spring of 1900 and the summer of 1902, an increasing number of Filipino provinces were declared “pacified.” Emilio Agunaldo was captured in March of 1901, and after arriving in Manila began issuing public calls for the surrender of other leaders of the Filipino independence movement. As the establishment of camps and vigorous American patrols hampered the ability of Filipino forces to hide themselves among the civilian population, it became more and more difficult to sustain the campaign of resistance to U.S. rule. In May of 1902, the surrender of Filipino leader Miguel Malvar and his men marked the end of organized resistance on Luzon, and a little over a month later Theodore Roosevelt declared hostilities ended, thanking the soldiers of the U.S. Army for “the courage and fortitude, the indomitable spirit and loyal devotion with which they have put down and ended the great insurrection…against the lawful sovereignty and just authority of the United States.”

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37 General Orders No. 66, Headquarters of the Army, 4 July 1902, in Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain and Conditions Growing out of the Same Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commanders of the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico [sic], China, and the Philippine Islands from April 15, 1898 to July 30, 1902 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), II, 1352.
When he made these remarks, Roosevelt may have considered the debate on the question of American rule over the Philippines closed. Even as the Philippine War entered its final days, the anti-imperialists renewed their objection to the continuing American presence in the islands. In a May 1902 speech, George Frisbie Hoar outlined his objections for his countrymen:

> The American people have got this one question to answer. They may answer it now; they can take ten years, or twenty years, or a generation, or a century to think of it. But it will not down. They must answer it in the end: Can you lawfully buy with money, or get by brute force of arms, the right to hold in subjugation an unwilling people, and to impose on them such constitution as you, and not they, think best for them.\(^{38}\)

In the immediate aftermath of the Philippine War, a substantial majority of Americans, both within Congress and the general public, had answered this question—but not in the way the Massachusetts Senator expected. The end of organized resistance to U.S. rule meant an end to the lurid stories of atrocities that had been a staple of the anti-imperialist press. With the unpleasant controversies that had accompanied the war now a thing of the past, most Americans accepted the acquisition of the Philippines as a *fait accompli*. Both Theodore Roosevelt and his successor William Howard Taft were supportive of American rule over the Philippines.

Roosevelt’s role in the U.S. acquisition of the islands has already been discussed. Taft also had a personal connection to the Philippines, having been the first civilian to hold the post of Governor-General in the islands, appointed to the position by William McKinley. It thus appeared that the imperialists had secured a complete triumph.

But Hoar’s insistence that the United States would have second thoughts regarding the Philippines proved prophetic. During the first decade of the twentieth century, several factors contributed to the development of a sense among at least some government leaders that remaining in the islands was a liability for the United States. The lucrative commercial

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relationship with China long dreamed of by the imperialists never fully materialized. Additionally, a 1907 war scare with Japan (prompted by the passage of an ordinance in San Francisco which barred Asian and Asian-American children from attending schools with white students) highlighted a dilemma that would continue to confront U.S. military planners up to the outbreak of the Pacific War—namely, the extreme exposure of both the islands and the U.S. forces garrisoning them. Neither Roosevelt nor Taft regarded these concerns as sufficient reason to advocate a withdrawal from the Philippines. The election of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1912, however, meant that for the first time since the Spanish-American War, the Oval Office was occupied by an anti-imperialist.

Upon assuming the presidency, Wilson made his intentions toward the Philippines clear, declaring “that, ‘the Philippine islands are at present our frontier, but I hope we presently are to deprive ourselves of that frontier.’” Wilson’s tenure in office saw two important actions that were clearly intended to lay the groundwork for an end to American colonial rule in the Philippines. The first was his appointment of Francis Burton Harrison as Governor-General of the islands. The second was the passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916, more commonly referred to as the Jones Act after its principal author, Virginia Representative William Atkinson Jones, chair of the House Committee on Insular Affairs.

Harrison’s actions during his years as Governor-General demonstrated a strong commitment to fulfilling the objectives laid out by President Wilson. At the time of his appointment, the majority of senior administrative positions within the colonial government of the Philippines were filled by Americans. One of the major hallmarks of Harrison’s tenure was a committed

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39 For an overview of both this crisis, and the responses considered by the Roosevelt administration and the U.S. military, see Louis Morton, “Military and Naval Preparations for the Defense of the Philippines During the War Scare of 1907,” *Military Affairs* 13 (1949), 95-104.
effort to “Filipinize” the islands’ senior civil service posts, appointing natives to positions that had previously only been filled by Americans. Harrison’s “Filipinization” campaign provoked wildly divergent responses. American imperialists labeled the process as unfair, and charged that Harrison was responsible for introducing needless inefficiency and corruption into the government of the Philippines. Typical of these criticisms was a report prepared in January of 1921 by W. Cameron Forbes, who had held the post of Philippine Governor-General during the Taft administration and who was one of the most vocal advocates of continued U.S. rule. In his memorandum, Forbes commented at length on the changes made by Harrison in the Philippine civil service, focusing primarily on its impact upon the American members of the bureaucracy:

[Harrison] started a wholesale reduction of the American force… First, by calling for resignations, often in a most inconsiderate manner. In some cases men were fired. This threw the whole service into a panic and there was a scramble to get out… The positions were not generally filled by Americans. Filipinos were substituted.41

Forbes included data noting that the percentage of Filipinos within the Philippine civil service had risen from 69% in 1912 to 88% in 1917. Forbes went on to criticize the growth in the size of the Philippine government, noting “There have been a number of increases in the number of bureaus and offices, and, it seems to me, unnecessary ones.”42 Though Forbes did not explicitly link the increase in governmental expenditures to the expanded role played by Filipinos in their own government, his comments elsewhere in the report make it plain that he did not yet regard the Filipinos as capable of effective self-government, and the overall tone of the report was highly critical of the reforms implemented by Harrison.

If American imperialists were critical of the initiatives undertaken by Governor-General Harrison, Filipino leaders were virtually unanimous in heaping praise upon him. The October,

42 Ibid., 10
1914 edition of *The Filipino People* (a news and opinion journal published in Washington, D.C. by the office of the Resident Commissioner from the Philippines) quoted at length from a cablegram read by Manuel Quezon on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives:

> Over fifty thousand Filipinos from every walk of life and irrespective of political affiliations, marched today to Malacañan Palace to celebrate the first anniversary of the arrival of Governor Harrison. A delegation from the people presented the Governor with an album containing a signed resolution requesting President Wilson to keep Mr. Harrison as Governor General until the Philippine policy of the President…has been carried out, and conveying to Governor Harrison the confidence and faith of the Filipino people in their Governor….43

Filipino leaders aggressively disputed the charges leveled against Harrison by his American critics. From the Filipino perspective, the charges being made against the Governor-General were motivated solely by a desire to prevent any steps toward independence for the islands. In his autobiography, Manuel Quezon wrote that shortly after Harrison began his efforts to “Filipinize” the government, “the so-called American ‘old timers’ raised shouts to heaven and systematically opposed every move of the new administration.”44 Maximo Kalaw dismissed allegations that Harrison’s initiatives victimized the Americans displaced from the civil service during the “Filipinization” process as the discontented grumbling of disappointed imperialists:

> Hardly had the new régime been set in working order in the Islands when reports of its disastrous effects began to flood the entire Union…Governor Harrison was denounced and vilified in the eyes of his own people as the principal source of all these evils, when his only crime was his great zeal and unswerving determination to help the Filipinos realize their dream of independence.45

It is possible that the replacement of American officials with Filipinos less familiar with the duties of individual positions may have resulted in some degree of inefficiency and waste within the Philippine government. The available evidence, however, suggests that the criticisms leveled against Harrison’s governorship were substantially exaggerated. A clue to this can be found in

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W. Cameron Forbes’ 1920 report. Despite his outspoken criticism of Harrison’s “Filipinization” program, Forbes conceded that conditions in the Philippines had continued to improve during the 1910s. The report documented substantial growth in the Philippine economy, reductions in the rate of disease as a result of improved public health initiatives, and a substantial increase in school enrollment. Forbes closed this section of the report by noting “I feel it very important that you [Harding] should have this fact clearly in mind lest some of the criticisms of the Democrats in the Philippines lead you to think that the Islands have been going backward in a way that these figures prove that they have not.”46

An even clearer indicator of the Wilson administration’s determination to place the Philippines on the path to independence was the passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916, also known as the Jones Act. The law substantially increased the role played by Filipinos in the domestic administration of the Philippines, as it established an elected upper chamber in the Philippine legislature. It was a passage within the Act’s preamble, however, that drew the greatest attention:

Whereas it was never the intention of the people of the United States in the incipiency of the War with Spain to make it a war of conquest or for territorial aggrandizement; and Whereas it is, as it has always been, the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence as soon as a stable government can be established therein...47

Thus, for the first time since the acquisition of the Philippines, the United States government had formally declared its intention to eventually grant the islands their independence. The passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act was welcomed by the overwhelming majority of Filipinos, but it

46 Forbes to Harding, 27 January 1921, 9. Forbes nevertheless subtly attempted to undermine the achievements of his successor, noting that while the Manila Railroad Company had seen its income rise dramatically during Harrison’s tenure as governor, “This is in a large measure due to the fact that a considerable amount of new mileage was opened, largely work contracted for during my incumbency.”
was recognized as a partial victory at best. While the preamble of the Jones Act did promise eventual independence for the Philippines, the law failed to establish a definitive timeline for this process. An effort to introduce the “Clarke Amendment,” which would have established such a timeline, was defeated in the Senate. During the debate that preceded the passage of the Jones Act, the editors of *The Filipino People* offered this lukewarm endorsement:

> We recognize no substitute, admit no alternative, concede no reduction of our righteous demand for the absolute independence of the Philippines…We advocated with all our power the passage of the Clarke amendment. That being defeated, we fall back on the Jones Bill knowing that it is a step in the direction of independence, and that that is the only thing we may likely get at this session.48

The unspoken fear suggested in this passage was that despite the promise of independence offered in the preamble to the Jones Act, obstacles would arise that would prevent, or at least substantially delay, the achievement of their cherished goal.

Indeed, many of the concerns felt by Filipino leaders regarding their prospects for independence were fully realized following Woodrow Wilson’s departure from the presidency in 1921, and his replacement by a succession of Republican Presidents (Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover) whose sympathies on the “Philippine question” lay squarely with the imperialists. These administrations seized upon the provision in the Jones Act that independence was only to be granted “as soon as a stable government can be established therein” as a justification for continued American rule. In January of 1921, after his election to the presidency, Warren Harding sought out the opinion of W. Cameron Forbes regarding what should be done with the islands. Forbes responded in a January 20 letter, in which he suggested to the president-elect that “a commission…be sent out to study the situation and make

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recommendations.”49 Shortly thereafter, Forbes also forwarded to Harding the report referenced above, complete with its extensive criticisms of Francis Burton Harrison’s tenure in office as Governor-General. Harding quickly accepted Forbes’ suggestion to dispatch a commission to investigate conditions in the islands. This delegation, however, was packed with individuals possessing strong imperialist sentiments, most prominently Forbes himself and retired Army General Leonard Wood. Historian Gerald Wheeler drily observed that “It can hardly be said that Wood and Forbes went to the Philippines with open minds…The Wood-Forbes Commission, in short, became a fact-finding trip—finding facts to support preconceptions.”50 Given its members’ preconceptions, it should come as little surprise that the report issued by the commissioners advocated continued American rule. Harding quickly accepted the commission’s recommendations, and nominated Wood to succeed Harrison as Governor-General, a post which Wood accepted, although apparently with some reluctance.51

Wood held the post of Philippine Governor-General until his death in 1927, and his relationship with Filipino leaders during his years in office can best be described as strained. Many Filipinos strenuously objected to the manner in which Wood exercised the powers of his office. Under the terms of the Jones Act, the Governor-General possessed very sweeping authority over the Philippine legislature, including a veto power even stronger than that possessed by the President of the United States.52 During his tenure in office, Francis Burton Harrison had largely avoided exercising this power, “preferring to allow the natives to learn through experience.”53 Wood proved to be the polar opposite of his predecessor, exercising his

51 Wheeler suggests that Wood was still smarting from his failure to secure the Republican Party’s Presidential nomination in 1920, and also that the former General had hoped to be appointed Secretary of War. Ibid., 379.
52 Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916. See especially Section 19.
authority to veto acts of the Philippine legislature with great frequency, much to the dismay of Filipino political leaders. In a September, 1923 address, Filipino attorney Jorge Bocobo argued that Wood’s behavior was an affront not only to the Filipinos, but to the political ideals of the United States:

Since General Wood’s installation in office as Governor-General two years ago he has vetoed twenty-two bills passed by the Philippine Legislature which are purely of domestic concern and do not impair American sovereignty. By thus wielding the veto power in the extent of destroying the autonomy of the Filipino people, General Wood has acted contrary to one of the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence…

Bocobo maintained that Wood’s usurpation of the legislature’s powers undermined both the ability of the Filipinos to demonstrate their capacity for self-government and the legitimacy of Wood’s own position. How, Bocobo rhetorically asked, “can there be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people in the Philippines when General Wood assumes practically all the legislative, judicial, and executive prerogatives?”

Filipino frustration with both Wood’s intransigence and the perceived failure of the U.S. government to act upon the commitment to Philippine independence outlined in the Jones Act manifested itself frequently during the 1920s. In 1924, the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Insular Affairs took up the issue, holding a succession of hearings on a proposed independence bill. Manuel Roxas, Speaker of the House in the Philippine legislature, had drafted a lengthy letter to President Calvin Coolidge. In the letter, Roxas urged Coolidge to support the proposed independence law, and again articulated the Filipinos’ lengthy list of grievances against Governor-General Wood. In his response, Coolidge unceremoniously rejected Roxas’ arguments, and in fact attempted to shift the blame for the strained relationship between Wood and Filipino leaders on to the shoulders of the latter. Coolidge expressed his

55 Ibid., 227.
“full confidence in the ability, good intentions, fairness, and sincerity of the present Governor General,” and went on to declare:

Looking at the whole situation fairly and impartially, one can not but feel that if the Filipino people can not cooperate in the support and encouragement of as good an administration as has been afforded under Governor General Wood, their failure will be rather a testimony of unpreparedness for the full obligations of citizenship than an evidence of patriotic eagerness to advance their country.  

Coolidge fell back on a number of themes that had long been utilized by American imperialists to justify extending the period of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines. One such theme was that the Filipinos had not yet demonstrated the capacity to govern themselves responsibly. This lack of capacity was, apparently, manifested in the Filipinos’ failure to be sufficiently appreciative of the privileges and limited self-rule that had already been bestowed upon them:

I am frankly convinced that the very mission [i.e., Roxas’ request for independence] upon which you have addressed me is itself an evidence that something is yet lacking in the development of political consciousness and capability…

The President also revived one of the arguments first raised by William McKinley during the initial debate over the acquisition of the Philippines—the notion that if the islands were to be granted independence, they would lack the ability to defend their own sovereignty. Absent the protection afforded by the U.S. military presence in the Philippines, cautioned Coolidge, “there would be the unrestricted temptation to maintain an extensive and costly diplomatic service, and an ineffective but costly military and naval service.” Roxas’ reaction to this claim is not recorded, but it can be imagined that the pronouncement was greeted with raised eyebrows.

Since the conclusion of the Philippine War, the U.S. garrison in the Philippines had been reduced

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56 Calvin Coolidge to Manuel Roxas, 21 February 1924, National Archives (hereinafter abbreviated NA), RG 165, E 284, Box 8, F 232, 4. Gerald Wheeler notes that Coolidge took the unusual step of making his response to Roxas public, which offered both an unambiguous declaration of support for Wood’s administration in the Philippines and an equally clear rebuke to the Filipino request for independence. See Wheeler, “Republican Philippine Policy,” 381.
57 Coolidge to Roxas, 21 February 1924, 4.
58 Ibid., 2.
to little more than a token presence. In fact, the weakness and vulnerability of the Philippine garrison had been generally recognized within U.S. military circles for some time (see Chapter 6). This concern over the prospects for a successful defense of the Philippines would only grow stronger in subsequent years. However, no such uncertainty manifested itself in Coolidge’s letter. Having, in his view, thoroughly rebutted both Roxas’ charges against Wood and the Filipino case for independence, Coolidge concluded by declaring “If the time comes when it is apparent that independence would be better for the people of the Philippines…it is not possible to doubt that the American Government and people will gladly accord it.”

Coolidge’s assurances notwithstanding, it appears likely that by the middle of the 1920s many Filipino leaders did, in fact, question whether the United States would ever fulfill the promise made in the preamble to the Jones Act.

The U.S. government continued to resist Filipino demands for independence throughout the Harding and Coolidge administrations, and into the early years of Herbert Hoover’s presidency. Reasons cited for the denial of independence generally paralleled the arguments made by Coolidge in his 1924 letter to Roxas—that the Filipinos had not yet demonstrated the capacity for effective self-government, and that an independent Philippines would lack the ability to defend its own sovereignty in the absence of U.S. military protection. Gerald Wheeler notes that pressure from the governments of Great Britain and the Netherlands may also have contributed to American reluctance to consider the question. Both nations maintained extensive colonial empires in Asia, and both countries found themselves confronting increasingly assertive independence movements among their subject peoples. Given the tense political environment confronting the British and Dutch governments, the prospect that the United States might voluntarily grant independence to its largest colony was greeted with alarm:

59 Ibid., 5.
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.\(^{60}\)

Thus, for many within the U.S. government, retention of the Philippines was not solely a matter of domestic politics, nor of completing the *mission civilatrice* undertaken in 1898, but also an issue that had a direct bearing upon U.S. relations with the European colonial powers.

In the early 1930s, however, resistance to Filipino independence was shaken by the onset the Great Depression, an economic crisis of previously unprecedented severity. The Hoover administration’s response was to promote a broadly protectionist economic policy (best exemplified in the passage of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff in June, 1930), whose goal was to prevent U.S. dollars from traveling outside the nation’s borders. In this environment, the continued retention of the Philippines was increasingly criticized as an economic liability; Gerald Wheeler writes:

> “[h]ard times” for American industry, agriculture, and labor led to insistence that the Islands be freed. Some believed that Filipinos competed with California labor and needed to be excluded. Philippine sugar weakened the American beet sugar market; their cigars hurt American tobacco; their coconut oil went into margarine, thereby damaging the dairy industry; and the same oil went into soap, making inroads into American hog lard use.\(^{61}\)

Concerns about the impact of Filipino agricultural products on American markets contributed to an increased willingness to grant the islands their independence, as doing so would have the effect of pushing the Philippines outside the U.S. tariff wall. This, coupled with what Theodore Friend characterizes as a waning in the enthusiasm among Congressional Republicans for

\(^{60}\) Wheeler, “Republican Philippine Policy,” 387.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 390.
retention, created the conditions in which an independence measure could pass. In December 1932, the Philippine Independence Act, more commonly referred to as the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, was passed by majority vote in both houses of Congress and sent to President Hoover to be signed into law. When Hoover vetoed the bill, his veto was quickly overridden in both chambers, and Hare-Hawes-Cutting became law.

The Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act called upon the Philippine legislature to call a constitutional convention. The document produced by this convention would then be subject to approval both by the President of the United States and by a vote of the Filipino people. If both the President and the Filipino people voted in favor of the proposed Constitution, the law provided for the establishment of a Commonwealth government, in which Filipinos would predominate. The Commonwealth government would oversee a ten-year transition period, at the conclusion of which “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…”

The prevailing expectation in the United States was that the Filipino legislature would immediately ratify the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, thereby paving the way for full independence.

62 See Theodore Friend, Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines 1929-1946 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 99. Friend notes that even W. Cameron Forbes worked with Harry Hawes, one of the principal authors of the 1932 independence legislation, although he does note that Forbes’ purpose in doing so was to enhance the authority of the U.S. government’s resident commissioner vis-à-vis the President of the Philippine Commonwealth.
63 The reasons behind Hoover’s decision to veto the bill are not entirely clear. In his formal remarks on the veto, Hoover fell back on arguments that Friend describes as “Churchillian.” This amounted to a repetition of the argument put forward by Coolidge in 1924 that the process of granting the Filipinos their independence should not be rushed. But Friend also notes that Hoover was not nearly as ardent an imperialist as his Republican predecessors Harding and Coolidge, and suggests that Hoover, still smarting from his trouncing in the 1932 presidential election, may simply have wanted to fight “for the sake of a fight.” See Friend, Between Two Empires, 105.
64 Philippine Independence Act (Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act), Public Law No. 311, 17 January 1933, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session.
65 Ibid., Sec. 10.
It came as a considerable surprise, therefore, when Manuel Quezon emerged as the leader of a movement opposing ratification of the Act. Several factors contributed to Quezon’s opposition. Publicly, his most vehement objection was to a provision of the Act which would have allowed the United States to retain control over “such land or other property as has heretofore been designated by the President of the United States for military and other reservations of the Government of the United States…” In his autobiography, Quezon stated:

I did not object to the provision regarding the retention of naval stations so long as this was made dependent upon the consent of the Philippine Republic; but I did strenuously and definitely oppose the retention of military establishments otherwise, for it destroyed the very essence of independent existence for the Philippines.

Under the terms of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, discretionary power over the retention of military bases in the Philippines lay entirely in the hands of the President of the United States. So long as this remained the case, Quezon argued, the Filipinos would remain under the shadow of their former colonial masters. Although he was far less publicly vocal on the subject, a second concern of Quezon’s dealt with the potential fate of the Philippine economy at the expiration of the ten-year Commonwealth period. By the early 1930s, the economic health of the Philippines was almost completely dependent upon trade with the United States. H. W. Brands notes:

American imports came to dominate the Philippine market, rising from less than one-tenth of total imports in 1899 to more than six-tenths in 1929. In the other direction the trend was even more significant…By 1929 Americans bought three-quarters of what the islands sold abroad.

Since a desire to push the Philippines outside the U.S. tariff wall had been at least a contributing factor in the Congressional debate over the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, some Filipino leaders,

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66 Ibid., Sec. 5.
67 Quezon, *The Good Fight*, 149.
68 Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 153.
including Quezon, were worried that an independent Philippines might face economic disaster.\textsuperscript{69}

And indeed, economic concerns would continue to play a factor in Philippine-American relations for several years (see below).

But the most important of the factors driving Quezon’s opposition to the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act appears to have been his desire to solidify his own power base against his chief rivals, Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Roxas. The Filipino mission to Washington, D.C. that had been instrumental in the passage of Hare-Hawes-Cutting had been led by Osmeña and Roxas, and if the measure were approved by the Filipinos, they would stand to gain most of the credit for securing the independence of the Philippines. Both Osmeña and Quezon had their eyes on the Presidency of the Philippine Commonwealth. Quezon enjoyed greater support in the legislature, but should Osmeña manage to secure Filipino ratification of Hare-Hawes-Cutting, he might be able to parlay his resulting popularity into a seat in Malacañan Palace (the executive mansion in Manila). Theodore Friend summarizes the bare-knuckled political brawl in which the rivals engaged throughout the summer and fall of 1933:

Quenzo’s public campaign against the H-H-C Act focused on the indignities and economic difficulties it contained and on the personalities of his opponents. It is even doubtful whether he would have supported a better act, as long as Osmeña and Roxas were its sponsors. And they, sincere enough in believing that the H-H-C Act was a usable compromise of all interests involved, might very well have supported a worse bill, as long as it could have served as a platform for opposing Quezon and possibly beating him.\textsuperscript{70}

As the debate was being conducted, Senator Harry Hawes, one of the independence legislation’s principal authors, urged the Filipinos to ratify the legislation. While he admitted that ending the


\textsuperscript{70} Friend, Between Two Empires, 106.
free tariff relationship between the Philippines and the United States could potentially disrupt the Philippine economy, he argued that the ten-year Commonwealth period (during which quotas and tariffs on Philippine goods were to be gradually phased into effect) would allow for “time...necessary to give Philippine industries and commerce a fair chance to survive.” He also offered a strong caution to Filipino leaders that if they passed up the opportunity for independence, it would confirm the arguments and stereotypes American imperialists had utilized for years as justifications for U.S. rule:

    If the Filipinos reject this tender, they should know that, no matter how imperative their reasons may seem to them, their action will be taken in this country to verify the charge that they have never had a genuine longing for free nationhood, but have been making independence a device of domestic politics.

The unspoken implication in Hawes’ article was that should the Filipinos choose to reject the opportunity placed before them by Congress, it was uncertain whether a similar offer might be made again at any time in the foreseeable future.

    Hawes’ pleadings notwithstanding, this was a gamble that Quezon was prepared to take, and he was able to leverage his political power base into a victory over his rivals. On October 7, 1933, both chambers of the Philippine legislature, by substantial margins, rejected the Hare-Hawes-Cutting legislation. Whether through superior political instincts or blind luck, Quezon judged correctly that he might yet be able to salvage the cause of Philippine independence. In December of 1933 he returned to the United States to pursue an independence bill that addressed what he viewed as the shortcomings of Hare-Hawes-Cutting. These efforts met an uneven reception—Quezon’s attempt to seek improved economic terms from Franklin Roosevelt were flatly rebuffed, with the President telling Quezon that “If you insist upon better economic con-

72 Ibid., 146.
73 For a chart showing the breakdown of the votes in both legislative chambers, see Friend, Between Two Empires, 134.
siderations, you may get your independence in twenty-four hours.”

In a subsequent conversation, Senator Millard Tydings, the new Chairman of the Senate’s Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, largely echoed Roosevelt on economic matters. Tydings did, however, offer Quezon a concession on the question of U.S. military bases in the Philippines:

If Quezon wanted improvement of the military terms, there was some hope, considering the isolationism in Congress...[Tydings] therefore committed himself to striking Army bases from the old act and to making naval bases subject to negotiations at the time of independence.

On the surface, this was a relatively small victory for Quezon. It was an achievement he could legitimately claim as his own, however, and his conversations with numerous U.S. elected officials probably convinced him that the likelihood of securing further concessions was virtually nonexistent. Thus, after considerable vacillation and backtracking, Quezon threw his public support behind the modified legislation proposed by Tydings. On March 24, 1934, this modified legislation, known as the Tydings-McDuffie Act, was passed by Congress. Most of the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act were virtually identical to those of Hare-Hawes-Cutting. It again called for the Philippine legislature to convene a constitutional convention, and the document produced by this convention was to be submitted for approval, first to the President of the United States, and then to the Filipino people. If the constitution was ratified, the Act provided for the establishment of a Philippine Commonwealth, which would govern the internal

74 Quoted in Friend, Between Two Empires, 139. This statement was uncharacteristically frank for Roosevelt. The implication of the President’s remark was that if Quezon continued to press for a favorable post-independence trade relationship with the United States, Congress would simply throw up its hands and pass a measure that granted immediate independence to the Philippines—in which case U.S. tariff rates would be applied immediately to all Philippine goods, thus triggering the economic crisis that Quezon desperately sought to avoid.

75 Ibid., 140. This proposal by Tydings largely conformed to the preferences of the two U.S. armed services in 1934. By the mid-1930s, Army opinion was increasingly in favor of a complete abandonment of the western Pacific, while the Navy still desired to maintain facilities there to support the conduct of U.S. foreign policy in East Asia. These preferences are discussed at length in Chapter 6.

76 Philippine Independence Act of 1934 (Tydings-McDuffie Act), Public Law No. 127, 24 March 1934, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session.

77 Ibid., Sections 3 and 4.
affairs of the islands during a ten-year transition period. During this time, the United States would retain responsibility for (and control over) the islands’ foreign policy. The most noteworthy change introduced in the Tydings-McDuffie Act, as noted above, pertained to the status of U.S. military bases in the islands after the expiration of the ten-year transition period:

[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 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)…

Thus, one of the provisions of Hare-Hawes-Cutting that Quezon had seen as most irksome was revised in a manner that substantially reduced the military presence that the United States would be permitted to retain in the Philippines after full independence was granted. In reality, this was a fairly minor distinction (as will be shown in Chapter 6, the U.S. Army only grudgingly accepted the idea that it would have to maintain a garrison in the Philippines during the Commonwealth period, and wanted nothing whatever to do with an independent Philippines). Quezon’s domestic critics at home could with some justification have accused him of “accept[ing] the OsRox handiwork and present[ing] it in new wrapping.” Despite this, Osmeña and Roxas swallowed their pride and acquiesced in the ratification of Tydings-McDuffie, reasoning that the Filipino people could not “consistent with dignity and love of freedom, decline.” Thus, by the spring of 1934 a definitive timetable for the complete independence of the Philippines had been established, with July 4, 1946 designated as the day on which the U.S. would finally relinquish its sovereignty over the islands.

The passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act appeared to settle the Philippine question once and for all. However, Gerald Wheeler maintains that individuals in both the Philippines and the

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78 Ibid., Sec. 10. Emphasis added.
79 Friend, Between Two Empires, 147.
80 Ibid., 146.
United States continued to have second thoughts about the wisdom of the decision for several years. On the Filipino side, the driving concern by far was the foreboding economic situation that their nation would confront in the aftermath of independence. The free-trade relationship with the United States that the Philippines had experienced during its years as a colony now appeared to be a double-edged sword:

Ideally, American and Filipino leadership should have worked during the years before 1934 to develop new capital forming industries in the islands that would not compete with businesses in the United States. Instead, because of the free trade relationship, the economy in the Philippines remained tied to the United States.81

The economic crisis which Quezon and other Filipino leaders had long dreaded appeared to be on the verge of becoming reality. Throughout the mid-1930s, a range of proposals were floated to forestall the looming disaster, such as the renegotiation of the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act that pertained to the imposition of U.S. tariffs upon Philippine goods. Perhaps the most interesting, however, were suggestions raised in private by some Filipino leaders (including Quezon) that the Philippines, rather than being granted complete independence, should enter into a dominion relationship with the United States, similar to that then existing between Great Britain and Australia. But prompting a reexamination of the Philippine-American relationship after the passage of Tydings-McDuffie proved very difficult for several reasons. Perhaps the most important of these was the fact that Quezon’s frequent public declarations that he sought nothing less than complete independence left him very little room to maneuver, as noted by Gerald Wheeler:

Quezon often said privately, or in official conferences with American officials, that he would be satisfied with dominion status. But when quoted publicly as desiring anything less than complete independence, Quezon would say he was misquoted or misunderstood, or that the reporter was a liar.82

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82 Ibid., 175.
The reality of the situation appears to be that Quezon found himself a prisoner of his own absolutist rhetoric. This dilemma was not unique to Quezon, and it had arisen well before the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. In 1930, Henry L. Stimson, who had succeeded Leonard Wood as Governor-General of the Philippines, “noted in his diary that the Filipino politicians were ‘almost pathetic in their desire to escape [independence], but of course they are tied hand and foot by their previous slogans and they dare not to change for fear of political death in the Islands.’”83 On the American side of the equation, the economic concerns (and the powerful political lobbying organizations that represented them) that had contributed to increased support for ending the colonial relationship with the Philippines lingered on as a powerful obstacle to reconsideration of the issue. Gerald Wheeler argues that Congressional reluctance to reverse itself also played a role, writing that “congressmen were representatives of the man-in-the-street and, in the idiom of genus Americanus, they hated to ‘welch on a deal.’ The Filipinos were free—let them be.”84 Thus, despite a number of back-room discussions and discreet overtures from both Filipino and American officials, efforts to modify or repeal the Tydings-McDuffie Act were likely doomed from the outset.

The debate over the future status of the Philippines during the 1930s introduced a considerable dilemma for American military officers tasked with the defense of the islands. During the period of colonial rule, American imperialists had frequently raised the point that the Filipinos should be grateful for the presence of the U.S. in the islands, as this presence freed them from having to worry about their physical security. Calvin Coolidge’s 1924 letter to Manuel Roxas is one instance in which this argument was deployed. But the resources allocated to the defense of the Philippines had at no point been capable of actually fulfilling the guarantee

84 Ibid., 180-1.
of security implied in Coolidge’s letter. In the early twentieth century, substantial investments had been made in fixed defenses at the entrance to Manila Bay. But by the mid-1930s, advances in military technology had rendered those fortifications largely obsolete. After the conclusion of the Philippine War, the Army and Navy had retained little more than token forces in the islands, and planning studies dating back to the early twentieth century had concluded that the Philippine garrison was completely incapable of resisting a determined invasion.85 As diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan grew increasingly tense during the 1930s, more and more military leaders became concerned about the exposure of the Philippine garrison. This anxiety, however, did not result in the provision of additional manpower or financial resources. With Congressional attention still fixated overwhelmingly on the Great Depression, the allocation of large sums of cash for the defense of a far-flung colony did not command strong legislative support. What little support may have existed was further eroded by the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934. As noted above, one of the key provisions of the Act was that Army facilities in the islands were to be transferred to the Philippine government when independence was granted in 1946. Given the reluctance displayed by Congress to approve any substantial increases in the military budget throughout the 1930s, it was highly unlikely “that the American people would willingly spend the huge sums required to strengthen the Philippines.”86 This realization is reflected in a 1935 memorandum prepared for the Army’s War Plan’s Division by Colonel Walter Krueger. Attempting to build a case for a complete military withdrawal from the Philippines, Krueger argued that unfortified base facilities in the islands were not a strategic asset, but a liability. While he noted that the United States could legally expand its facilities and fortifications after the expiration of the Washington Naval Treaty at the end of 1936, he was

85 See 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.
extremely pessimistic that any such expansion would occur, writing “it is certain that we would not be permitted to complete such fortifications.” The pessimism in Krueger’s report reflected a realization that if the United States had been unwilling to maintain substantial forces in the Philippines when the islands represented the largest and most important of the nation’s overseas colonies, it was even less likely to do so once the islands had been placed on the path to independence.

Krueger’s memorandum also alludes to another factor that greatly complicated the task facing the U.S. military with respect to the defense of the Philippine Islands. Between the end of the First World War and the early 1930s, the United States had been a party to a number of international agreements and treaties. These agreements dealt with a variety of issues, ranging from the adjudication of disputes relating to control of a range of territories in the Pacific to efforts to prevent international arms races. As a consequence of these agreements, the strategic strength of the United States in the western Pacific had been substantially weakened. The following chapter discusses a number of these major developments, and outlines how they contributed to the vulnerability of the Philippines.

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87 Memorandum, Walter Krueger to War Plans Division, “Subject: Our Policy in the Philippines,” 28 October 1935, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 17, F 573. It should be noted that the precise meaning of this sentence is unclear. Krueger argued against the expansion of U.S. fortifications in the Philippines because such action would “undoubtedly be provocative of war” with Japan. It is thus possible that Krueger was implying that any effort undertaken by the United States to improve its Philippine fortifications would trigger a Japanese attack. However, given the great financial constraints under which the interwar Army had labored for decades, and the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act the preceding year, it seems more likely that Krueger simply meant that there was no reasonable expectation that Congress would appropriate the necessary funds.
Chapter 4 – Interwar International Political Developments: The Paris Peace Conference and the Naval Disarmament Movement

The decades of the interwar period are often broadly described as an “age of isolationism” in U.S. foreign policy. An increasingly abundant body of scholarship has shown, however, that the extent to which the United States truly sought to disengage itself from world affairs during the 1920s and 1930s has been substantially exaggerated. In some respects, the behavior of the United States during the interwar decades can be characterized as isolationist. In the aftermath of the First World War a widely-held belief emerged among both governmental policymakers (particularly in Congress) and the American public that the United States had been duped into entering into the war, and that no legitimate national interest had been served by U.S. participation in the conflict. As a consequence, both public and Congressional opinion in the postwar decades exhibited a strong determination to avoid becoming embroiled in another fruitless war. This determination manifested itself in a number of ways, from the Senate’s refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles if ratification meant U.S. membership in the League of Nations, to a great reluctance to appropriate large sums of money for national defense, perhaps driven by the logic that a greatly circumscribed American military would be far less prone to engage in reckless military adventures.

But this strong aversion to military engagement was not accompanied by a corresponding withdrawal from international diplomacy. While the United States never joined the League of Nations, the country was by no means a passive bystander completely aloof to developments in world affairs. American diplomats and Secretaries of State were vital participants in a number of international conferences throughout the interwar decades. To cite one key example, the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22, which resulted in the conclusion of a number of international treaties, most prominently an arms limitation agreement among the world’s leading
naval powers, was both conceived and guided to fruition by senior U.S. officials, most notably Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. The Washington Conference, and the U.S. role in establishing its agenda, is discussed at length later in this chapter.

The negotiations in which American diplomats partook had substantial implications for the U.S. military. The international agreements to which the United States attached its signature substantially altered the strategic balance of power in key regions of the globe. The impact of these treaties was particularly noteworthy in the western Pacific. Throughout the interwar years, many military officials became increasingly concerned about what they regarded as an irreversible erosion of the U.S. military position in the Philippines, an erosion that resulted from the treaties negotiated by civilian diplomats. This chapter will highlight two developments that contributed to the increasingly pessimistic outlook of U.S. defense planners with respect to the Philippine islands—Japan’s post-World War I acquisition of a League of Nations Mandate over a number of central Pacific island chains, and the interwar arms reduction treaties negotiated between the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan. It recounts the negotiations that led to the conclusion of each of these developments, and briefly outlines why these developments were regarded with great concern by many within the U.S. military establishment.

Japan’s acquisition of its central Pacific Mandate stemmed from its participation in the First World War. Shortly after the outbreak of fighting in Europe, the government of Great Britain had appealed to Japan for assistance against Germany in East Asia, invoking a naval alliance treaty that the two nations had signed in 1902 and renewed in 1911. In mid-August, the Japanese government answered the British appeal, declaring war upon Germany. Foreign
Minister Katō Takaaki declared that his country was simply fulfilling its obligations to Britain under the terms of the 1902 treaty:

…inasmuch as we were asked by our ally for assistance at a time when commerce in Eastern Asia, which Japan and Great Britain regard alike as one of their special interests, is subjected to a constant menace, Japan, who regards that alliance as a guiding principle of her foreign policy, could not but comply to the request to do her part.¹

In reality Japanese motivations for entry into the First World War appear to have been somewhat less noble than those implied by Baron Katō. Since the late nineteenth century, Japanese leaders had sought to build a colonial empire in East Asia, and the outbreak of the First World War offered a unique opportunity to acquire German territories in Asia and the Pacific while the bulk of that nation’s military forces were engaged in fighting in Europe. Shortly after its entry into the war, Japanese forces seized control of a number of German colonies, including the German-leased territory of Qingdao (Tsingtao) in mainland China, and the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall Islands in the central Pacific. These conquests were accomplished at a minimal cost to the Japanese, and once they had been carried out the likelihood of German retaliation was practically nonexistent. The German Army had never maintained a significant presence in Asia, and the German Navy’s Asiatic Squadron had fled toward the Atlantic at the war’s outbreak, eventually meeting its fate in December 1914 at the Battle of the Falkland Islands. As a result, the Japanese were able to retain unchallenged control over their acquisitions for the remainder of the war years. The status of these territories in the postwar period became a topic of both discussion and controversy during the Paris Peace Conference.

American officials appear to have realized that the postwar status of Japan’s recent acquisitions would be problematic even before the end of the First World War. Hints emerged during a September 6, 1917 conversation between Secretary of State Robert Lansing and

Japanese Special Ambassador Ishii Kikujiro. During their discussion, Ishii commented that his country desired to retain its control over the central Pacific island chains in the postwar period:

[Ishii] said he told [British Foreign Secretary] 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; that it had been a sacrifice for his Government to enter 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.²

Ishii’s revelation regarding his conversation with Grey almost certainly came as an unwelcome surprise to American officials. From the date of American entry into the war, one of the central principles of Woodrow Wilson’s administration had been that the United States was not seeking to profit from the conflict either financially or through the acquisition of territory. Wilson, in particular, also harbored a deep distaste for clandestine negotiations among nations, the “secret diplomacy” which in the view of many Americans had been largely responsible for leading the nations of Europe to war. This distaste was manifested in a tangible form in the first of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, which included a call for “open covenants, openly arrived at.” Yet in the months that preceded the convening of the Paris Peace Conference, both Japan and the U.S.’s European allies continued to engage in the back-room dealing that had characterized the prewar period. In a 1946 essay in *The American Historical Review*, Russell Fifield noted that:

[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 at the time of peace negotiations 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 French in assenting on March 1 asked Japan to support a complete diplomatic break between China and Germany, and this request was approved by Japan on March 6.³

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As U.S. officials gradually pieced together a more complete picture of these negotiations, a number of concerns arose. One such concern was Wilson’s insistence “that he wanted to prevent the appearance of a division of the spoils accompanying the peace treaty.”

However, in an example of a practice that would become much less common in the years to follow, at least some State Department officials also appear to have had concerns about how a Japanese acquisition of the central Pacific islands would impact the United States from a strategic standpoint. In December of 1918, Third Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long noted that if Japan were allowed to retain its wartime gains, the security of both Guam and the Philippines might be imperiled:

[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 one of the islands lying north, south, southeast, or southwest of Guam. If the cable were cut at that point, our communication with the Philippines would be not only interrupted, but prevented.

Long also observed that Japanese possession of the islands would complicate the task of reinforcing the Philippines in the event of war between the United States and Japan. As the islands lay directly astride the sea lanes connecting the Philippines with Hawaii and the West Coast, Long noted that “It would be impossible to send any military forces to the Philippines with any safety, if the convoy were directed through the usual channels.”

Concerned about these implications, Long suggested that the United States should seek to have the island chains returned to Germany. This was to only be a temporary transfer, as he also recommended that after the conclusion of the peace conference, the United States should “immediately enter into negotiations with Germany to obtain possession of the Marianas, Carolines, Yap, and the

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4 Ibid., 477-8.
6 Ibid., 514.
Samoan Group, and such others as may be desirable or obtainable." His insistence that any negotiations regarding acquisition of the islands by the U.S. occur only after the conclusion of the peace conference was almost certainly an attempt to ensure that they would be subject to a minimum of scrutiny by third parties such as Britain or Japan.

President Wilson and the American delegation in Paris declined to act on Long’s recommendations, likely for a number of reasons. As noted in Chapter 3, Wilson had little enthusiasm for the maintenance of overseas colonies by the United States. Throughout his two terms in office, he had done everything in his power to lay the groundwork for a complete American withdrawal from the Philippines. The suggestion that the United States should purchase additional colonies at the very time when Wilson was seeking to disentangle the country from its existing ones was unlikely to receive a sympathetic hearing. Additionally, the American delegates to the Paris Peace Conference undoubtedly realized that convincing Britain and Japan to willingly surrender control of the territories they had seized during the war would be an impossible task. This was made clear during a negotiating session on January 27, 1919. Baron Makino Nobuaki declared in no uncertain terms that Japan would insist on maintaining control over the central Pacific islands. He stated that the initial seizure of the islands had been a matter of military necessity for Japan, as the German Asiatic squadron had used them as resupply bases during its flight from the western Pacific:

…the Japanese squadron, upon arrival at Panope, [sic] of the East Caroline group, found that they had just left. From the objects and materials left behind, it was abundantly clear that a full preparation for further raids was being made, using the harbor as their naval base.

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7 Ibid., 515.
8 This fact was not lost on Long, either. Showing a flair for understatement, he had conceded in his memo that any U.S. advocacy for the return of the islands to Germany “would be unpopular.” Ibid., 514.
9 Robert Lansing, 27 January, 1919, Department of State, FRUS: The Paris Peace Conference 1919, III, 739. The island referred to in this exchange is likely Pohnpei, then known as Ponape.
Baron Makino argued that during the war Japan had been obligated to maintain control over the islands to guard against any further mischief on the part of the Germans. In the aftermath of the war, however, a new concern had arisen. In arguments eerily reminiscent of those deployed by American imperialists to justify the acquisition of the Philippines in 1898, Makino declared that Japan would be doing the inhabitants of the islands a disservice by leaving, for these peoples “being on the whole still in a primitive state…are not in a position to organize themselves politically, economically, or socially, in the modern sense.”¹⁰ British and Australian delegates to the conference made their intention to retain their own wartime acquisitions equally clear. In the end, while President Wilson publicly voiced his “annoyance at the secret promises already made between the Allies relative to the Pacific Islands,” he acquiesced in the establishment of a League of Nations Mandate over the former German islands located north of the equator, to be administered by the Japanese.¹¹

A subsequent dispute emerged shortly afterward regarding the status of Yap, a small island located approximately 500 miles west-southwest of Guam. It had formerly served as a German cable station, and much of the United States’ trans-Pacific cable traffic was routed through the island. Reluctant to leave such an important communications terminus under Japanese control, in April of 1919 Secretary of State Robert Lansing 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 the cable lines.”¹² Baron Makino termed this suggestion “a very grave matter,” as the Japanese government saw no reason why Yap should be treated differently from any of the other islands it had

¹⁰ Ibid., 739.
¹² Robert Lansing, 30 April 1919, Department of State, FRUS: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, IV, 653.
seized during the war. The dispute over Yap remained an irritant in U.S.-Japanese relations until 1922, when a final settlement regarding the disposition of the island was negotiated. Under the terms of this agreement, Yap was recognized as part of the Japanese Mandate, and the two nations worked out a separate accord regarding cable rights.

The establishment of the Japanese Mandate had serious implications upon American plans for defense of the Philippines. As noted above, the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall chains lay directly across the sea lanes connecting the Philippines with the United States. Any Japanese military installations situated upon these islands could threaten an advancing U.S. fleet. This concern clearly occurred to Breckinridge Long, who, in his December 14, 1918 memorandum wrote that the islands “would be a constant menace to naval ships moving through the Pacific and between the Philippines and the United States.”

A majority of senior naval officers concurred with Long’s assessment. In one of the final acts of his life, aging naval scholar Alfred Thayer Mahan, according to historian Edward S. Miller, “wrote to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt to plead for a vigorous protest through London, warning of the ‘very critical’ situation America would face if Japan stood permanently astride its communications to Guam and the Philippines.”

Throughout the interwar decades, the concerns of American diplomats and military leaders were continually reinforced by rumors that the Japanese were secretly constructing military facilities throughout the islands of the Mandate. Any such action would have violated

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13 Ibid., 654.
14 For correspondence related to the final resolution of the Yap dispute, see Department of State, FRUS, 1921 (Washington: GPO, 1936), II, 263-313.
16 Edward S. Miller, War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 111. Miller notes that a small but important minority of naval officers in fact supported Japanese acquisition of the Mandate islands, arguing that they could serve as convenient stepping stones during a trans-Pacific campaign. This view appears to have been first expressed by Admiral William Shoemaker in 1914. See Miller, War Plan Orange, 110-11.
the terms under which Japan had been granted sovereignty over the islands by the League of
Nations, but suggestions that the Japanese were covertly violating those terms proved
remarkably persistent. The first recorded evidence of this suspicion appeared in 1918, when
Breckinridge Long referenced rumors that “the Japanese may have fortified to a considerable
extent a few of [the islands].”17 Long was careful to note that no conclusive evidence existed
that would confirm the allegation, but went on to state that if the rumors were true then the U.S.
cable station on Guam would be placed in great jeopardy. Suspicions of the actions of the
Japanese were not limited to U.S. officials. In a 1935 article in The American Political Science
Review, Luther Evans recounted a number of accusations leveled against the Japanese by League
of Nations officials. In November of 1932, a representative of the commission that oversaw all
League Mandates “requested the Japanese representative accredited to the Commission to assure
that body that an article in the Journal de Genève for February 11, 1932, was mistaken in its
statement that Japan had constructed a submarine base in one of the mandated islands.”18 In his
response, the Japanese representative denied the charges, noting that his country was expressly
prohibited from constructing military bases under the terms of its agreement with the League.
This response temporarily quieted the League’s suspicions, but did not abate them altogether. In
1934, the Mandates Commission once again raised the issue:

It quizzed [the Japanese representative] in a manner which clearly indicated that consid-
erable credence was given the frequently repeated rumor that Japan was violating the
mandate. It appeared that the expansion of harbor facilities had proceeded beyond all
trade necessities, and that two airdromes had been constructed.19

18 Luther H. Evans, “International Affairs: The Japanese Mandate Naval Base Question,” The American Political
Science Review 29 (1935), 482-3. Evans quotes a brief passage from the Journal de Genève article, titled
“Harakiri,” which read in part “Violent tous les traités internationaux, les Japonais ont installé des bases sous-marins
dans les îles sur lesquelles ils exercent un mandat de la Société des nations.” Ibid., 482.
19 Ibid., 484.
Whatever its suspicions, the Commission’s ability to influence Japanese behavior was extremely limited, particularly after Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. However, the persistence of these queries illustrates the degree of suspicion that League officials felt toward Japan, a suspicion held with even greater fervor by many in the United States.

In fairness, it should be pointed out that the Japanese government’s own policies with respect to the Mandate islands were in no small measure responsible for fueling these suspicions. Beginning shortly after their occupation of the islands in 1914, the Japanese instituted a policy of secrecy that bordered upon paranoia. Foreign trade with the Carolines, Marianas, and Marshalls was almost completely shut off, and foreign vessels were denied permission to dock at ports within the Mandate. To outsiders, this policy appeared highly suspicious. The decision to exclude foreigners from the islands, U.S. naval officers believed, had been made in order to allow the Japanese military to engage in clandestine base construction operations, the very type of activity that was prohibited under the terms of the Mandate agreement. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Navy mounted a number of operations which were intended to pierce the veil of secrecy that had been dropped over the Mandate. In 1923, the newly commissioned light cruiser USS Milwaukee sailed through the Marshall Island chain during its shakedown cruise. During this voyage, the crew conducted visual examinations of several islands, but uncovered no evidence of illicit military facilities. The voyage of the Milwaukee coincided with a separate (and far more bizarre) attempt at espionage conducted by Marine Lieutenant Colonel Earl “Pete” Ellis. In December of 1922, “Ellis boarded a Japanese steamer under false identity and toured

20 See Long, 14 December 1918, Department of State, FRUS: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, II, 315. A handful of ports within the Mandates were left “open” (i.e., accessible to non-Japanese shipping), among them Saipan, Anguar, Truk, and Jaluit.
21 See Miller, War Plan Orange, 173-4. Miller notes that the State Department had formally requested permission for the Milwaukee to visit a number of the Marshall Islands, but the request was never acknowledged because the timing of the request coincided with the Great Kantō Earthquake, with the result that “by the time the Japanese government learned about it the mission had been completed.” Miller, 174.
the Marshalls and Carolines."  This impromptu spying mission came to naught when Ellis died, suddenly and under somewhat mysterious circumstances, during a stopover in the Palau Islands in May of 1923. In 1929, the State Department requested permission for the gunboat USS Asheville to visit a number of “closed” mandate ports during a voyage home from the Philippines, and simultaneously sought to arrange a visit to other closed ports by a destroyer squadron. These requests were summarily rejected by the South Seas Bureau, the agency within the Japanese government charged with overseeing the Mandates. In reporting this decision, the American chargé, Edwin Neville, informed his superiors at the State Department that “the South Seas Bureau cannot see their way to granting permission to vessels to visit unopened ports.” "Ironically, as a consequence of the 1929 request, the Japanese government agreed to provide the United States with hydrographic data, and the Imperial Japanese Navy overrode the South Seas Bureau and subsequently granted permission for the American destroyer squadron to visit closed islands in the Mandate, provided that the Americans “would not ask to visit islands where there are no Japanese officials…”

None of these American efforts to investigate conditions within the Mandates uncovered any evidence of illegal Japanese military bases. Indeed, evidence that came to light in subsequent decades (primarily during the Pacific War) revealed that the Japanese in fact had not attempted to fortify the Mandates to any considerable extent. The climate of secrecy which the Japanese government had imposed upon the Mandates appears to have been motivated not by an effort to conceal hidden military facilities, but rather by simple embarrassment. In recounting his

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22 Ibid., 174.
23 For correspondence relating to this incident, see Department of State, FRUS: 1929 (Washington: GPO, 1944), III, 256-6.
24 Edwin Neville to Secretary of State, 29 June 1929, Department of State, FRUS: 1929, III, 258.
25 Neville to Secretary of State, 31 December 1929, Department of State, FRUS: 1929, III, 261.
1929 inquiries, Edwin Neville reported details of a conversation with Japan’s Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs in which the latter confessed:

The fact of the matter appears to be that the administration of the Mandated Islands is proving troublesome and expensive. 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 otherwise report them.26

The Japanese government likely desired to avoid any external investigation of conditions within the Mandate, as they might reveal Japan to be in violation of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. This article laid out the terms under which League Mandates were to be administered. With respect to the inhabitants of Mandate territories, Article 22 declared “there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation [sic] and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.”27 While the terms under which Japan had been granted the central Pacific Mandate did not include an obligation to prepare their inhabitants for eventual independence, the Japanese were not exempt from the humanitarian responsibilities outlined in Article 22.28 Perhaps, as Neville’s communiqué suggests, the Japanese underestimated the financial obligations that accepting control over the Mandate would impose upon them, and when the costs exceeded what the government was willing or able to pay, the decision was made to simply isolate the islands from foreign observers in the hope that Japan’s failure to follow through on its commitment would go unnoticed. Evidence in Edward Miller’s War Plan Orange supports this interpretation. In June, 1982, Miller conducted an interview with Japanese historian Nomura

26 Neville to Secretary of State, 16 December 1929, Department of State, FRUS: 1929, III, 260.
28 The Carolines, Marianas, and Marshalls were assigned to Japan as a “Class C” Mandate. Because of their isolated location and small population, Article 22 of the League Covenant declared that such territories could “best be administered under the laws of the Mandatory [i.e., Japan] as integral portions of its territory…” See ibid. For an early examination of Japan’s acquisition and management of the Mandate, see Harlow J. Heneman, “The Administration of Japan’s Pacific Mandate,” The American Political Science Review 25 (1931): 1029-44.
Minoru in which Nomura “explained that his country felt embarrassed lest the world see how little it was doing to improve the lot of the islanders.”

The fact that American suspicions of Japanese behavior in the Mandates were largely unjustified, however, did not make those suspicions any less real. The possibility that Japan might secretly be stockpiling military supplies or constructing bases in the Carolines, Marianas, and Marshalls was one that interwar U.S. military planners had to take very seriously. As will be shown in Chapter 6, early versions of War Plan Orange, a succession of plans outlining strategies that the United States military would pursue in the event of war with Japan, called for a prompt advance to the Philippines by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Japanese naval vessels, submarines, or (later) aircraft stationed in the Mandates would pose a serious threat to any such westward movement by the U.S. Navy. Thus, any movement by the U.S. into the western Pacific would have to be delayed until such time as any Japanese military presence in the Mandates had been neutralized. Later versions of the Orange Plans substituted a gradual, step-by-step advance for the headlong plunge into the western Pacific envisioned by their predecessors. Considering the relative strengths of U.S. and Japanese armed forces by the middle of the 1930s, and the substantial advantages that the United States would enjoy in a protracted war against Japan, these revisions were both logical and sensible. At the same time, they had important (and ominous) implications for the U.S. garrison in the Philippines. The need to secure the Mandates before advancing into the western Pacific meant that the length of time before the defenders of the Philippines could expect relief would be substantially increased. This, in turn, greatly reduced the likelihood that the garrison would be able to hold out until the arrival of reinforcements.

In the view of many professional military officers, particularly those within the Navy, the impact of Japan’s acquisition of the Mandates was not nearly as substantial as that of the

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29 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 173.
international arms limitation treaties concluded during the 1920s and early 1930s. The interwar decades witnessed a succession of international conferences that were both ambitious and groundbreaking. Beginning with the Washington Conference of 1921-22, the world’s greatest naval powers—the United States, Great Britain, and Japan—met in a succession of bargaining sessions in which they attempted to negotiate mutually acceptable reductions in the size of their standing military forces.30 Prior to the 1920s, the notion that nations would voluntarily consent to such reductions would likely have struck most of the participants as unthinkable. However, the post-World War I years constituted a unique historical moment, when conditions within each of the world’s leading naval powers aligned in a manner that led their respective governments—if only fleetingly—to conclude that the security of their nations would be enhanced by negotiations intended to forestall a naval building race.

In the late 1910s, no nation in the world more closely identified naval power with national security than Great Britain. For centuries, the Royal Navy had been the world’s dominant maritime force, the gold standard against which all others measured themselves. Both the Royal Navy’s officer corps and its civilian leadership at the Admiralty took great pride in their service’s standing among the world’s navies, and a strong determination to maintain that standing had long been an article of faith in British naval circles. As the 1910s gave way to the 1920s, though, this determination collided head-on with the uncomfortable reality of the dire economic conditions confronted by postwar Britain. The First World War had been hideously expensive in both human and financial terms, and Britain’s wartime governments had found it necessary to authorize wartime expenditures that left the country deeply in debt. In the modern

30 It should be noted that delegations from both France and Italy also participated in the Washington negotiations, and both countries became signatories of the treaties produced by that conference. However, because neither France nor Italy maintained a substantial naval presence in East Asia, and because neither nation participated in the subsequent arms limitation conferences at Geneva (1927) and London (1930), discussion of the particular concerns of those countries is of limited relevance to this project and thus is largely omitted.
era such circumstances, while being a cause for concern, would not necessarily prompt calls for extreme fiscal austerity. However, as Raymond Westphal notes in a 2010 essay in the *Journal of Military History*, national governments of the early twentieth century were extremely averse to sustained deficit spending. In Britain’s case, this reluctance was expressed in “the pre-Keynesian attitudes of many MPS, which stressed monetary responsibility and the desire for the Treasury to immediately begin curtailing spending.”

The government’s determination to balance the budget was made abundantly clear to the Royal Navy in July of 1919, when Sir Walter Long, the First Lord, conveyed to his Admiralty colleagues the government’s extremely negative response to the 1919-1920 Sketch Estimates. Those Sketch Estimates had requested naval appropriations in the amount of £171 million for the 1919-1920 fiscal year. Outlining the government’s response to this proposal on July 16, 1919:

> Long told his colleagues on the Board that he would ask the Cabinet for ‘a vote on account’ of £70 millions to carry the service through to the following December; but in the breathing space thereby gained the Board would, he said, be required to effect ‘most drastic’ reductions in expenditure.

Obviously, the £70 million figure quoted by Long fell far short of what the Royal Navy had envisioned as its minimum annual requirement. In the ensuing months, the RN’s dismal fiscal prospects were thrown into even sharper relief. On August 15, the government “directed that the service departments should revise their estimates for the 1920-21 financial year ‘on the assumption that the British Empire would not be engaged in any great war during the next ten

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31 Raymond W. Westphal, Jr., “Postwar Planning: Parliamentary Politics and the Royal Navy, 1919-1922,” *The Journal of Military History* 74 (2010), 149. This attitude was not completely unknown even within the Royal Navy. Westphal references a March 13, 1919 memo from First Lord of the Admiralty Walter Long to Prime Minister David Lloyd George, in which Long informed George “that while he was in favor of providing the necessary resources to ensure a strong navy, he also believed that the government had to use all available means to balance the budget.” Ibid., 149, fn. 16.

years.” This policy became known as the “Ten-Year Rule,” and it would continue to exert a strong influence upon Britain’s annual defense allocations until its repeal in 1932. There is little doubt that the Royal Navy felt itself greatly threatened by the severe limits that the government’s fiscal austerity program forced upon it. The proposed budget cuts enjoyed strong backing, however, among both Parliament and the British public, with the result that “the Royal Navy found itself with very few allies within the Cabinet, and even fewer within the House of Commons and amongst the press who would publicly defend the navy’s large Estimates figures.” It seems overwhelmingly likely that by the end of 1919 both uniformed and civilian leaders at the Admiralty could read the handwriting on the wall—at least in the near future, the Royal Navy’s financial prospects were historically bleak. The knowledge that its own construction programs would be severely limited may have greatly increased the attractiveness to the RN of an arms limitation treaty that would also restrict the building programs of Britain’s rivals.

Another factor that may have contributed to the willingness of the British government to enter into arms limitation talks was the advanced age of its capital ship fleet. Like its Japanese and American contemporaries, the Royal Navy witnessed a debate over the future of the battleship. While some officers within the British armed forces (including RAF Generals Hugh Trenchard and Frederick Sykes) charged that the big ships were becoming increasingly obsolete, several prominent figures, including First Lord Long, First Sea Lord David Beatty, and Winston Churchill insisted that this was not the case. In a February, 1921 letter to Sir Arthur Balfour, Churchill went so far as to declare “that he thought there was ‘an overwhelming case for the capital ship as the foundation and ultimate sanction of sea power.’” But if the battleship was to

33 Ibid., 215.
34 Wesphal, “Postwar Planning,” 170.
35 For a brief account of this postwar debate, see Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, I, 222-5.
36 Ibid., 224.
remain the ultimate arbiter of power at sea, then Britain would soon find itself confronted by a dilemma. With the launch of *HMS Dreadnought* in 1906, the Royal Navy had been the first service to introduce the so-called “all big gun” battleship, and Britain had retained the world’s largest battleship fleet throughout the First World War. By 1920, however, many of the Royal Navy’s battleships were rapidly approaching the end of their useful service lives. Because the United States Navy and Imperial Japanese Navy had begun expanding their capital ship fleets substantially later than Britain, U.S. and Japanese battleships tended to be substantially younger (and thus could be counted on to remain in service longer). Moreover, the ships of both Japan’s “eight-eight fleet” and the U.S. Navy’s 1916 building program (see below) consisted of newer capital ship designs that incorporated lessons that both nations had learned from observations of the Royal Navy during the Battle of Jutland. In 1921, Walter Long raised precisely this point as part of a bid to convince the British government to authorize the construction of new capital ships:

> The Admiralty’s case was based on the fact that if Britain built no new capital ships she would by 1925 still possess only one post-Jutland ship of that class (the *Hood*), while the United States fleet would have been strengthened by the six *South Dakota* class battleships and the six *Lexington* class battle-cruisers of the 1916 programme; while Japan would have completed four *Kaga* class battleships and four *Akagi* class battle-cruisers.37

By 1921, then, the Royal Navy had legitimate reason to doubt whether it would be able to maintain its position as the world’s most powerful sea service. Both the U.S. and Japanese navies were fast overtaking the Royal Navy, particularly in numbers of modern capital ships. Neither the British government nor British public opinion was sympathetic to calls for a new construction program to keep up with the country’s potential rivals. Lastly, even in the extremely unlikely event that the Treasury could be convinced to increase its allocations for new naval construction, the Royal Navy would still find itself losing ground. Every new capital ship

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37 Ibid., 221.
produced by the United States or Japan represented an addition to the strength of those nations’
fleets. Due to the more advanced age of its own capital ships, any new vessels whose con-
struction the Royal Navy did manage to secure would not represent an increase in strength.
Rather, this new construction would serve only to replace elderly vessels soon destined for the
breakers’ yards. If an unrestricted naval building race was to break out in the 1920s, the
members of the Board of the Admiralty were highly pessimistic about their nation’s ability to
keep pace with its competitors, particularly the United States. Thus, the notion of a binding
international agreement to forestall such a race—an idea that almost certainly would have been
complete anathema to Royal Navy officers prior to World War I—may have been embraced (if
with less than compete enthusiasm) as an opportunity for Britain to minimize its “slippage”
among the world’s leading naval powers during a period of extreme financial austerity.

The factors that led the government of Japan to temporarily embrace arms limitation talks
were similar, though not identical, to those that prompted British interest. Unlike Britain, Japan
was a newcomer to the ranks of the world’s great naval powers. The arrival of Commodore
Matthew Perry’s “black ships” in Edo Bay in 1853 had touched off a succession of bitter internal
debates regarding how Japan’s relationship with the newly-arrived Westerners should be
managed. These debates culminated with the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which saw the toppling
of the Tokugawa Shogunate that had ruled Japan since 1603. Throughout the late nineteenth
century the Meiji oligarchs had engaged in a determined effort to industrialize and modernize
both Japanese society and the nation’s armed forces. Victories in wars against China in 1894-95
and Russia in 1904-05 convinced many Japanese that their country was firmly on the path to
great power status.
But from the perspective of the Japanese, international recognition of their status as one of the world’s great powers was very slow in coming. Some clear signs of progress existed. The late nineteenth century saw the termination of the unequal commercial treaties that Japan had been compelled to sign with the nations of the west in the decades that followed Perry’s arrival. Most significantly, in 1902 Japan had signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, largely a naval treaty with Great Britain, marking the first such arrangement concluded between western and non-western powers. Yet for every seeming example of progress toward acceptance on the international stage there existed a counterexample which suggested that the western nations still regarded Japan as inferior. As noted in Chapter 3, U.S. laws that openly discriminated against Japanese and Japanese-Americans were a constant irritant to relations between the two countries. During the Paris Peace Conference, members of the Japanese delegation attempted to introduce a clause advocating racial equality into the Charter of the League of Nations. Despite an initially favorable response from Woodrow Wilson, this effort met with a vigorous challenge from Great Britain, with Wilson eventually reversing course and joining the British in successful opposition to the clause’s inclusion in the charter.

These repeated diplomatic snubs produced a great deal of anti-Western resentment within Japan. In the view of many Japanese, their country had clearly earned a place among the leading nations of the world—in a remarkably brief period of time it had modernized its society,

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39 For a more complete account of this episode, see Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (New York: Routledge, 1998). Shimazu notes that Britain’s opposition to the inclusion of the racial equality clause was chiefly due to pressure applied by the governments of the South Pacific Dominions, particularly Australian Prime Minister William “Billy” Hughes. Hughes had come to power largely on the basis of his advocacy of a “White Australia” policy and in his view, the Japanese proposal was nothing more than a thinly-disguised effort to open Australia to non-white immigrants. He refused to consider any compromise on the issue, and his threats to walk out of the conference if the Japanese proposal was accepted convinced a reluctant Lord Arthur Balfour to back Hughes for the sake of preserving unity among the members of the British delegation.
economy, and military, adopted a parliamentary system of government, and even established its own colonial empire in East Asia. Yet despite these efforts, neither Britain nor the United States seemed willing to accept Japan as an equal, and, in fact, frequently rebuffed Japanese advances in ways that conveyed their continued belief in Japanese racial inferiority. Many leading officers within the Japanese military became convinced that the only way that Japan would ever be accorded the respect they felt was her due was through the possession of a first-class, fully modernized army and navy. In *Power in the Pacific*, Roger Dingman quotes remarks made by IJN Rear Admiral Satō Tetsutarō in 1920, in which Satō declared, “The object of armament is to maintain national dignity against foreign nations.”40 For the Imperial Japanese Navy, the key to this maintenance of national dignity was what became known as the “eight-eight fleet.” The concept of the eight-eight fleet had existed since the early twentieth century, but it was formally proposed for acceptance in an October 15, 1918 memorandum prepared for Prime Minister Hara Kei by Navy Minister and IJN Admiral Katō Tomasaburō:

> [Katō] outlined the navy’s needs for the future: seven hundred fifty million yen over a seven year period to build four battleships, four battle cruisers, and numerous smaller craft. This much would give the navy the minimum strength necessary to national security—a fleet whose nucleus was eight battleships and eight battle cruisers.41

During the 1910s, the idea of military expansion enjoyed strong support among a majority of Japanese political leaders. While Dingman notes that Finance Ministry officials occasionally bemoaned the millions of yen annually appropriated to the armed services, few prominent politicians dared to openly challenge the military’s claim to the lion’s share of government spending. Hara Kei’s rise to the Prime Minister’s office owed much to his support for increased military allocations, as his political party, the *Seiyūkai*, “made ‘the perfection of national

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41 Ibid., 48.
defense’ one of its four major platform planks.”

Thus, for much of the 1910s, Japan remained committed to a policy of expansion.

By 1921 several developments had prompted both the Japanese government and at least some of its senior military officers to reconsider this policy. The first of these was a severe recession that hit Japan beginning in 1918. This economic downturn, coupled with an ongoing and large-scale intervention by the Imperial Japanese Army in Siberia, limited the resources that the government could devote to naval construction. The increasing strain on the Japanese economy convinced Navy Minister Katō Tomasaburō that “this building plan [the eight-eight fleet] was bound to exist only on paper.” At his behest, officers of the IJN’s Naval Affairs Bureau calculated that meeting the financial commitments required to produce the eight-eight fleet would consume a third of Japan’s annual budget, an amount far beyond what the nation could afford in the midst of the post-World War I economic crisis. More importantly, despite the fact that he had been the author of the 1918 memo to Hara asking for the funds necessary to complete its construction, by the following year Katō was beginning to question whether pressing ahead with plans for the eight-eight fleet would actually enhance Japan’s national security. The Navy Minister became concerned that Japanese naval expansion, if carried out too aggressively, would trigger a building race with the United States. Katō was under no illusions regarding the outcome of such a competition:

At the budget subcommittee meeting of the Diet in February 1919, Katō admitted, “Even if we should try to compete with the United States, it is a foregone conclusion that we are simply not up to it…Whether the United States, with its unlimited wealth and resources,

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42 Ibid., 55.
43 Ibid., 60-1.
45 Ibid., 57.
would continue its naval expansion is up to that country. My policy is to build up an adequate defensive force within the limits of Japan’s national power.”

By 1921, Katō and his fellows in what came to be known as the “treaty faction” of the Imperial Japanese Navy had become convinced that an international naval limitation treaty would enhance Japan’s national security. The reason for this belief was the realization that such an accord would be the only means of preventing the United States from utilizing its greatly superior industrial capacity to construct a fleet that Japan simply could not match. To avoid this, Katō was willing to accept a treaty that restricted the IJN to lower levels than the United States Navy, provided that the limits accorded to Japan were sufficient to ensure its ability to defend itself. In the aftermath of the Washington Conference, this concession was to prompt a bitter factional fight with the IJN’s “fleet faction,” under the leadership of Admiral Katō Kanji (no relation to Katō Tomasaburō). In 1921, however, both Navy Minister Katō and Prime Minister Hara Kei were sympathetic to the idea of international cooperation in the field of arms control. This flexibility meant that when in July of 1921 the United States extended an invitation to Japan to participate in the upcoming Washington Conference, Hara’s government quickly cabled its acceptance.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the story of the Washington Conference was that it was the United States government that took the lead in both organizing the conference and setting its extremely ambitious agenda. Of the world’s nations, the United States was indisputably the most capable of engaging in a protracted naval arms race in the post-World War I period. Unlike Great Britain, the United States did not emerge from the First World War burdened by a crippling debt load. In terms of both industrial capacity and access to natural resources, the United States dwarfed Japan. It was true that the U.S. had no historical tradition

46 Ibid.
of maintaining large standing military forces during peacetime, and only relatively recently had a sustained effort been undertaken to modernize the U.S. Navy. As it became increasingly likely that the United States might find itself drawn into World War I, however, Woodrow Wilson’s administration had overseen the passage of the Naval Bill of 1916, which authorized a massive expansion in the size of the fleet intended, in the words of senior U.S. Navy officers, to produce “a navy second to none.” Both the Navy and President Wilson continued to advocate the completion of the 1916 program even after the signing of the Armistice in November 1918. While Wilson publicly expressed some support for the idea of arms limitations, he did not do so unequivocally:

President Wilson conditioned his support for arms limitation on the establishment of a League of Nations with a force strong enough to thwart any and all aggressors. If the United States joined such a League, then disarmament would become practicable; otherwise the United States would need a navy second to none.47

Despite the President’s best efforts, support for the completion of the 1916 building program ran afoul of the same revolt in the Senate that eventually blocked U.S. membership in the League of Nations. During the preparation of the budget for the 1920-21 fiscal year, the Navy’s funding was reduced “to 442 million, an amount less than the…Prewar figure taking into account inflation, higher costs for personnel, and the rising cost of naval technology.”48 Among the most vocal of Wilson’s opponents was Idaho Republican Senator William Borah. Borah argued that contrary to the assertions of both the President and “big navy” Senators, increasing the size of the fleet would in fact reduce the national security of the United States:

[Borah] defined the fundamental problem, not as armaments in general, but as competition in naval building among Great Britain, the United States, and Japan. As he described it, America’s naval building program forced the British and the Japanese to respond with

48 Ibid., 24.
large building programs of their own…Borah invoked the analogy of the Anglo-German naval race in the years before the Great War…49

Borah concluded his remarks by arguing for the United States to unilaterally reduce its own naval construction, with the assumption that other naval powers would immediately follow suit. While the winter of 1920-21 saw a great deal of impassioned debate, it did not yield a decision on the future direction of U.S. naval policy. A number of factors had militated against any such decision, among them Woodrow Wilson’s extreme ill health and “lame duck” status, Senator Borah’s inability to convince a majority of his colleagues to back his “Borah Resolution,” and a recommendation from the House Naval Affairs Committee “that Congress give the incoming Harding administration a free hand to determine when and how to conduct [disarmament] negotia- tions.”50

When Warren Harding took office in March of 1921, he may have inherited a Senate deeply divided on the question of naval disarmament. American public opinion, however, showed no such uncertainty. Throughout the early months of Harding’s administration, a flurry of correspondence from every region and segment of society made its way to the White House. With only a handful of exceptions, the authors of these letters urged the President to take the lead in international arms reduction negotiations. Unsurprisingly, many of these appeals were written by representatives of religious organizations. George Warner of the Religious Society of Friends

49 Ibid., 25. In addition to his opposition to unrestricted naval construction, Borah is widely known as one of the Senate’s most outspoken isolationists. From his perspective, efforts to head off a naval building race between the United States, Great Britain and Japan would reinforce the campaign to block U.S. membership in the League of Nations. If a binding agreement between the three great naval powers could be achieved, the security of all three would be greatly increased, rendering the possibility of future conflicts minimal and in turn rendering U.S. membership in the League of Nations superfluous.

50 Ibid., 26. In an April 20, 1921 letter to Harding, Majority Leader Frank Mondell affirmed that in the months preceding Harding’s inauguration, he had urged his colleagues to table the naval question: “I met this issue by appealing to the House to take no action which would in any wise hamper or embarrass the new President and stated that I was confident that in due course and at a reasonably early period you would give attention to the subject.” Mondell to Harding, 20 April 1921, Warren G. Harding Papers, The Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH, MIC-3, Roll 183. Hereinafter cited at WGHP:OHS.
wrote to Harding at the time of his inauguration expressing thanks for “any steps the
Administration may take towards Disarmament,” and urging the President to rid the country of
what he termed “the war mind…the mind which relies on force rather than goodwill, on the
mailed fist rather than the shield of Christian faith.”51 Women’s organizations flooded the mail
rooms of both the White House and Capitol Hill with appeals for the immediate convening of an
international arms limitation conference. Theresa H. Russell of the Women’s Peace Society
beseached Harding to take the initiative in this matter:

In this case beyond the power of language to express delay is dangerous if nations are to
avoid bankruptcy, if the children of the world are to be saved from starvation, and if the
common people everywhere are to have any hope in the future, any courage to go on with
their work and their lives.52

Many of the correspondents clearly subscribed to the then-common notion that the production of
arms and the maintenance of large armed forces was itself a direct cause of war. An April 1921
article in the Baltimore Sun reported on a speech given by Cambridge University professor John
Holland Rose to the members of the Maryland branch of the Woman’s Committee for World
Disarmament. The article quoted Rose as having declared to his audience that “Armament
begets armament and is responsible for war…and unless we find means of ending war civil-
ization is likely to perish from the earth.”53 Rare dissenting voices did make themselves heard
from time to time. New York Justice of the Peace Glenn Mereness wrote to Harding, “I do not
believe in disarmament; that’s poor judgment for any nation.”54 But letters from advocates of
the “big navy” or “preparedness” positions were so outnumbered by the demands of
organizations large and small crying out for peace and disarmament as to have been practically
invisible. Nor was Harding the lone target of this campaign—the Harding Papers collection also

51 George M. Warner to Harding, 22 March 1921, WGHP:OHS, MIC-3, Roll 183.
52 Theresa H. Russell to Harding, undated, WGHP:OHS, MIC-3, Roll 183.
53 “Nations’ Arming Condemned as Breeding War,” Baltimore Sun, 11 April 1921. WHGP:OHS, MIC-3, Roll 183.
54 Glenn E. Mereness to Harding, 25 April 1921, WGHP:OHS, MIC-3, Roll 183.
includes copies of numerous letters addressed to Congressmen and Senators in which their constituents urged them to support the cause of world disarmament. Thus, while of all the world’s nations the United States alone possessed the industrial, material, and financial wherewithal to engage in a sustained program of naval construction in the post-World War I period, the fact that by an overwhelming margin the American public was vigorously opposed to the expansion of the country’s armed forces made it very unlikely that such a program would be politically feasible.

Public opinion was not the only factor that contributed to the U.S. government’s decision to convene an international disarmament conference. Both State Department officials and naval officers saw such a gathering as an opportunity to negotiate the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which had served as a constant irritant to U.S. relations with both countries since it was first signed in 1902. The initial impetus behind the alliance’s conclusion had been a desire on the part of Japanese and British governments to balance Russian naval power in East Asia, a motivation that was largely mooted following the destruction of the majority of the Tsarist fleet during the Russo-Japanese War. In 1911, however, the two governments had renewed the treaty for another ten years, “with a proviso that neither [nation] was bound to fight a power with which it had a treaty of general arbitration.”55 The State Department had not initially opposed the 1911 renewal, believing that in its absence Japan might seek a naval entente with Germany.56 World War I, however, had resulted in the elimination of the German presence in East Asia, and by the late 1910s the American view of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had soured. State Department officials were concerned that a renewal of the treaty might result in the British and Japanese governments working in concert to thwart the objectives of U.S. policy in

56 Ibid., 15.
East Asia. Charles Evans Hughes, Harding’s Secretary of State, raised this concern during a conversation with British Ambassador Sir Auckland Geddes in June, 1921:

...the policy of this Government had embraced what had been called the “Open Door” policy and the integrity of China...that, if [Hughes] could speak freely...he felt that if Great Britain and Japan had any arrangement by which Great Britain was to support the special interests of Japan, the latter might be likely...to be led to take positions that would call forth protests from this government, and that in making such representations this Government might find itself virtually alone...57

Hughes’ concern stemmed from the fact that during the alliance’s lifetime, the British government had increasingly relied upon Japan to ensure the protection of its economic interests in China.58 During the First World War, the Japanese government had made clear, in behaviors such as the issuance of the Twenty-One Demands, that it possessed special interests in China. Hughes and his State Department colleagues feared that the Japanese government might leverage the services it had provided to Britain during World War I into British recognition of Japanese primacy in China.

Concerns about Anglo-Japanese collusion were not unique to State Department diplomats. Among American military planners, the most apocalyptic of the interwar “color plans” was War Plan Red-Orange, which envisioned a conflict between the United States and a British-Japanese coalition. The prospect that the nation might find itself simultaneously fighting both was a source of great anxiety among navy officers, despite repeated assurances from the Japanese and British governments that the United States was not the target of the treaty. As the 1921 renewal date approached, the obvious anxiety that it generated in the United States was addressed in a communiqué from Japanese Ambassador Shidehara Kijuro to Secretary of State

57 “Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the British Ambassador (Geddes),” 23 June 1921, Department of State, FRUS, 1921, II, 314-5.
Hughes. Shidehara charged that the nature of the alliance was being mischaracterized by the American press:

...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.59

Shidehara’s views echoed those of British political and military leaders, most of whom privately conceded that their country would remain neutral in the event of war between Japan and the United States. But Hughes’ inquiries into the future of the Anglo-Japanese treaty came at a time when an increasing number of Britons were coming to believe that the alliance had outlived its usefulness. William Braisted notes that in the final year of Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, John Van Antwerp MacMurray, head of the State Department’s Far Eastern Division (a position he retained during the Harding administration), had suggested that neither nation retained a strong 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 lightly discarding Britain, “the strongest naval power in the world.” Conversely, MacMurray doubted if Britain would risk offending Japan by abruptly terminating the alliance, even though he expected the British shortly to place a powerful fleet in the Pacific.60

During the summer of 1921, Hughes and Geddes gradually came to an understanding that they required a means of terminating the Anglo-Japanese alliance while simultaneously providing a substitute arrangement that would avoid the appearance that the British were “casting aside Japan now that the alliance was no longer needed.”61 The upcoming talks on naval limitations would provide a forum in which this substitute arrangement could be concluded.

59 Shidehara Kijuro, statement to the New York Times, 4 July 1921, reprinted in Department of State, FRUS, 1921, II, 316.
61 Ibid., 561.
Thus, by midsummer of 1921, the governments of the world’s three leading naval powers had concluded that the interests of their respective nations would be served by an international agreement intended to prevent a building race. In early July, undoubtedly to the delight of the organizations that had been inundating the White House with letters since his inauguration, Warren Harding formally extended invitations to the governments of Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy to attend a conference on naval arms limitation that would begin in Washington, D.C. the following November. While the arms control talks would take center stage at this gathering, parallel negotiations aimed at settling unresolved political questions in Asia would also be conducted. In addition to the five major naval powers, delegations from Belgium, China, the Netherlands and Portugal were invited to participate in these secondary discussions, since each possessed interests in the region as well.62 In the days and weeks that followed, the various invitees cabled their acceptance of the president’s invitation. The initiative that Harding had exhibited in calling the conference earned him considerable praise from the international community. A State Department press release of November 18, 1921 included expressions of hope for the success of the conference from the governments of Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, Norway, Sweden, and others, as well as such luminaries as England’s King George V, Japanese Emperor Yoshihito, and Pope Benedict XV.63 While the invitations went out under the President’s signature, the responsibility for setting the conference’s agenda and for representing the interests of the United States was left almost entirely in the hands of Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes.64 Hughes had assumed his position within the Harding

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63 Untitled Press Release, Department of State, 18 November 1921, WGHP:OHS, MIC-3, Roll 183.
64 As noted in Chapter 1, this assertion is the subject of some debate among historians. In *Power in the Pacific*, Roger Dingman asserts that Warren Harding was far more involved in the formulation of the Washington Conference’s agenda than is generally believed, seeing it as an opportunity to overturn perceptions among both the American public and the Republican Party that he was to be mostly a “caretaker” President. However, Dingman’s contention was challenged by Robert Gordon Kaufman in *Arms Control in the Pre-Nuclear Era*. Kaufman supports
administration to considerable public fanfare, and in his conduct of American foreign affairs he would wind up largely overshadowing the man who had appointed him. In *Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence*, biographer Betty Glad references an observation by Undersecretary of State William Phillips that “The new President…did not have much interest in foreign affairs and so left international problems in the hands of Mr. Hughes.”65 For his part, Hughes was quite content to shoulder the chief responsibility for the direction of American foreign affairs, generally formulating a proposed course of action and then presenting it to Harding for his approval. This approval was almost always granted, and Hughes does not appear to have sought additional input into the policy formulation process. As Glad notes, “The President usually accepted his proposals and the cabinet as a whole did not share in this responsibility.”66

Hughes’ penchant for secrecy enabled him to conceal the sheer scope and ambition of his plans for the forthcoming naval limitation talks from all observers, American and foreign alike. In conversations with foreign diplomats in the months leading up to the conference, the Secretary was deliberately coy, refusing to allow himself to be pinned down on the specifics of his agenda. Only when the delegates assembled for the conference’s opening session on November 12, 1921,


[66] Ibid., 139. Glad suggests that a major reason for this was Hughes’ generally low regard for several of his fellow cabinet members, particularly Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, the chief protagonist in the Teapot Dome scandal. Early in his tenure, Hughes became convinced that discussions among the members of Harding’s cabinet would not remain confidential, and as a response he simply ceased consulting with his colleagues on forthcoming foreign policy endeavors. See Glad, *Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence*, 139.
did the Secretary show his hand. Taking the podium to deliver the conference’s opening address, Hughes outlined a set of proposals that left much of his audience stunned. In addition to proposing a ten-year “holiday” on capital ship construction for all of the world’s major naval powers, the Secretary outlined the four “general principles” that had served to guide his thinking:

1. That all capital-ship building programs, either actual or projected, should be abandoned;
2. That further reduction should be made through the scrapping of certain of the older ships;
3. That in general regard should be had to the existing naval strength of the Powers concerned;
4. That the capital ship tonnage should be used as the measurement of strength for navies and a proportionate allowance of auxiliary combatant craft prescribed.67

Hughes went on to outline a specific list of U.S. capital ships then either in service or under construction that would scrapped under the terms of the agreement he proposed, following this up with corresponding proposals relating to the British and Japanese fleets. In all, the United States would scrap 30 ships totaling 845,740 tons, Great Britain would scrap 23 ships totaling 583,375 tons, and Japan would scrap 17 ships totaling 448,928 tons and would agree not to build several of the vessels envisioned by the eight-eight fleet plan but not yet begun.68 Hughes’ proposals received a thunderous ovation from spectators in the gallery, but the reaction of the assembled representatives of foreign navies was probably better described as complete shock. A wag remarked that “Hughes sank in thirty-five minutes more ships than all the admirals of the world have sunk in a cycle of centuries.”69 For the officers present among the audience, even the suggestion that they might voluntarily choose to scrap a large percentage of the forces they had devoted their lives to assembling was likely painful. However, for the reasons outlined above,

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67 Charles Evans Hughes, Address to the 1st Plenary Session of the Washington Disarmament Conference, 12 November 1921, National Archives, RG 165, E 281, Box 5, WPD 261, 23-4. Hereinafter cited as NA.
68 Ibid., 24-5.
none of the leading naval powers were in a position where they could afford to dismiss Hughes’ proposals out of hand. Moreover, by unveiling his proposal publicly, Hughes placed the assembled delegations in an awkward position, for any nation that was seen as blocking an agreement on international arms limitation was certain to become the focus of intense public criticism. In the negotiations that occurred during the following three months, therefore, the primary objective of each of the attending delegations was not to prevent the conclusion of an agreement, but rather to ensure that any provisions of Hughes’ proposal that were viewed as particularly onerous were removed or modified before the final treaty was signed.

Given the many strong personalities involved in the negotiations, and the varied and often conflicting objectives of the respective national delegations, perhaps the most surprising outcome of the Washington Conference was just how much the final version of the treaty resembled the vision laid out by Hughes in his November 12 opening address. The most well-known provision of the Washington Treaty was the establishment of a tonnage cap on the capital ship fleets of the various naval powers. Article IV of the treaty established a limit of 525,000 tons upon the battleship and battle cruiser fleets of the United States and Great Britain. The Japanese Navy’s tonnage limitation was fixed at 315,000 tons, equal to 60% of the American and British totals, while France and Italy were each assigned a cap of 175,000 tons.70 Article VII of the treaty authorized the United States and Britain to maintain up to 135,000 tons of aircraft carriers, while Japan was permitted 81,000 tons, and France and Italy 60,000 tons.71 As a concession to the considerable sums of money that had already been invested in ships whose construction had not yet been completed, Article IX of the treaty authorized each of the signatories to “build not more than two aircraft carriers…[and] use for this purpose any two of their ships, whether constructed

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70 Washington Naval Treaty, Article IV, 6 February 1922, Department of State, FRUS: 1922 (Washington: GPO, 1938), I, 250.
or in course of construction, which would otherwise be scrapped under the provisions of Article II.” Chapter II of the Washington Treaty provided an even more detailed outline for the concessions to be made by each of its signatories. It contained a complete list of each navy’s capital ship fleets, including all vessels either in service or planned for construction. A subsequent list detailed every vessel that each of the signatories would be permitted to keep, and which vessels would have to be either canceled or scrapped.

One noteworthy departure from Hughes’ original proposal (and one that opened the Washington Treaty to a great deal of subsequent criticism, as detailed below) was that the limitations imposed upon the treaty’s signatories applied only to capital ships—battleships, battle cruisers, and aircraft carriers. In his November 12 speech, Hughes had suggested that “capital ship tonnage should be used as the measurement of strength for navies and a proportionate allowance of auxiliary combatant craft prescribed.” Attempts to negotiate tonnage limits for “auxiliary combatant craft” (including cruisers, destroyers, and submarines), however, were undermined by opposition from an unexpected quarter—the French delegation. During discussion sessions held in mid-December, 1921, Admiral Ferdinand De Bon declared that France “could now accept no less than ten battleships of 350,000 tons.” This demand struck both the British and American delegates as far in excess of France’s legitimate requirements, a

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72 Washington Naval Treaty, Article IX, FRUS: 1922, I, 250-1. Both the United States and Japan availed themselves of this option. The IJN’s Akagi and Kaga, and the USN’s Lexington and Saratoga, all of which would see service in World War II as aircraft carriers, were originally laid down as conventional capital ships.

73 It should be noted that the exact tonnages of the vessels that the signatories were permitted to retain differed slightly from the overall caps established in Article IV. Ships to be retained by the United States totaled 525,850 tons, with the corresponding numbers for Great Britain and Japan being 558,950 and 301,320, respectively. The slightly higher tonnage for the ships to be retained by Great Britain was a concession to the generally more advanced age and smaller size of British capital ships vis-à-vis their American and Japanese counterparts. See Washington Naval Treaty, Chapter II, FRUS: 1922, I, 253-64.

74 Hughes, 12 November 1921, 22. Emphasis added.

75 Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922, 631. This claim was made despite the fact that France’s post-World War I navy contained only seven modern battleships totaling less than 167,000 tons. De Bon and his fellow delegates defended this claim by citing a 1912 French law which had established the desired strength of the French fleet at twenty-eight modern capital ships. See “Memorandum by the French Delegation,” 19 November 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 62-3.
point Hughes made clear in no uncertain terms in a message to Prime Minister Aristide Briand on December 16. Noting that delegates from Great Britain, the United States, and Japan had all agreed, at least in principle, to terms that would substantially reduce the size of their respective capital ship fleets, Hughes wrote:

I feel that the suggestion that has been made that France should build 10 new capital ships in replacement with a tonnage of 300,000 tons or more suggests a program of such magnitude as to raise the greatest difficulties. In fact, I regret to say that after canvassing the matter thoroughly…I am compelled to conclude that it would not be possible on this basis to carry through the agreement.76

Hughes’ implication was that if the French held firm to the demand articulated by De Bon, they risked scuttling the entire conference. Over the course of the next two weeks a compromise was negotiated in which the French agreed to accept a cap of 175,000 tons for their capital ship fleet, but only if they were granted a massive tonnage allowance for auxiliary vessels. This demand in turn triggered a protest from the British delegation that in light of the French declaration, Britain could no longer accept any limitation in its own auxiliary warships. A gradual consensus evolved in support of this viewpoint, and as a result the naval limitations imposed upon the signatories by the Washington Treaty only applied to capital ships.77

One of the most contentious questions that arose during the negotiations at Washington concerned the precise ratio that Japan was to be allotted with respect to the American and British navies. Since the early 1900s, the United States had been the nation most frequently held up by Japanese naval leaders as the “hypothetical enemy” against whom Japan’s defenses must be measured.78 In order to have any hope of success in a conflict with the United States, Japanese

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76 Hughes to Briand, 16 December 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 132.
77 For a more detailed overview of this episode, see Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922. See especially Chapter 38, “The French Crisis,” 629-38.
78 Sadao Asada observes that this statement should not be interpreted as indicating that Japanese leaders anticipated war with the United States. Asada traces the origin of the term “hypothetical enemy” to Japanese naval theorist Satō Tetsutarō, noting that he “used the term ‘hypothetical enemy’ as a ‘standard for armaments,’ a bureaucratic rationale for building appropriations.” Asada, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, 47.
naval leaders became convinced that they required a fleet equivalent in power to 70% of the United States Navy:

The notion of the 70 percent ratio—“insufficient to attack (in transpacific waters), sufficient for defense (in Japan’s home waters)” —was reinforced by war games, tabletop maneuvers, and fleet exercises, and it crystallized into a firmly held consensus—even obsession—within the Japanese navy until the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack.\(^{79}\)

At Washington, however, the Japanese delegation found itself faced with strong pressure from both the British and American delegations to accept a 60% ratio. Katō Tomasaburō, in his role as the lead negotiator for the Japanese delegation, protested that a 10:10:6 ratio would place Japan in a greater position of inferiority vis-à-vis the United States and Britain than was the case under the status quo. Hughes vigorously challenged this position, asserting that the offer of a 60% ratio was, in his opinion, quite generous; “On the basis of existing strength of capital ships, including the extent of construction of ships in process, the ratio would be nearer 10-5 than 10-6, but we suggested 10-6 to be very liberal.”\(^{80}\) The Japanese delegates responded with a memorandum of their own, reiterating their demand for a 70% ratio:

Baron Kato stated that it would not be possible for him under any circumstance to set aside the principle of national security… and consequently it must be understood that the main contention of Japan for the minimum of 70 per cent, based upon her national security, is not to be affected by any result of these meetings.\(^{81}\)

For several days both sides held firm to their declared positions, and it appeared that the conference was on the verge of an insoluble impasse. At this point, however, Baron Katō proposed a means by which a compromise might be achieved. This suggestion eventually became Article XIX of the Washington Naval Treaty—the so-called “nonfortification clause.”

\(^{79}\) Ibid., 48. The 70% figure was arrived at on the basis of calculations hypothesizing that in order to conduct a successful naval offensive over substantial distances, an attacking fleet would require a 50% margin of superiority over a defending fleet. If Japan’s fleet strength was fixed at 70% of the USN’s strength, the United States would lack the 50% margin of superiority that would allow it to conduct a successful naval offensive against Japan.

\(^{80}\) Hughes to the Ambassador in Japan (Warren), 19 November 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 65.

\(^{81}\) Memorandum by the Japanese Naval Experts,” 30 November 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 70.
The genesis of the breakthrough came during a meeting held at the offices of the State Department on December 2. During a conversation with Hughes and Lord Arthur Balfour, the head of the British delegation, Baron Katō expressed his sincere desire to reach an agreement on naval limitation, but also reiterated his support for the 70% ratio. As a means of bridging the gap between his position and that of Hughes and Balfour, he offered the following suggestion:

[Katō] had noticed 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 great 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 would be 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 ratio.82

This feeler from Katō was quickly seized upon by Hughes and Balfour, setting in motion a process that eventually produced Article XIX of the Washington Treaty. Under the terms of Article XIX the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan agreed that “the status quo at the time of the signing of the present Treaty, with regard to fortifications and naval bases, shall be maintained in their respective territories and possessions specific hereunder.”83

The weeks between Katō’s initial proposal and the finalization of the treaty witnessed a great deal of haggling over precisely which territories would be subject to the nonfortification clause. In the end, the United States agreed to accept limitations upon fortifications in the Philippines, Guam, and the Aleutian Islands (the Hawaiian Islands, significantly, were not subject to the terms of Article XIX). Great Britain agreed to halt all expansion of its base facilities at Hong Kong, while Japan agreed to restrictions upon the Kurile and Bonin Islands, as well as Amami Oshima, Formosa, and the Pescadores.84 In what amounted to a quid pro quo, the Japanese

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82 M.P.A. Hankey, 2 December 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 77-8.
84 Ibid., 253.
delegation agreed to drop its demand for a 10:10:7 fleet ratio, accepting the 10:10:6 ratio proposed by Hughes in exchange for U.S. and British agreement to the terms of Article XIX.

The conclusion of a naval limitation accord was not the only item of business on the agenda at the Washington Conference. One of the principal objectives of the American delegation, the termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, was achieved by the conclusion of the largely symbolic Four-Power Pact. Concluded on December 13, 1921, by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France, the Four-Power Pact declared that its signatories:

…agree as between themselves to respect their rights in relation 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.85

The Four-Power Pact was, from the perspective of both Hughes and Harding, an ideal agreement. While it called for signatories to submit any Pacific territorial disputes to an international conference for adjudication, it contained no provisions requiring the use of force in support of the aggrieved party. It thus avoided the problem that had contributed to the Senate’s refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, specifically the concern that membership in the League threatened to undermine U.S. sovereignty, particularly with regard to decisions on the use of military force. The very toothlessness of the Four-Power Pact meant that Senate “irreconcilables” such as William Borah had no issue around which they might rally opposition to the treaty.

A final piece of business conducted at Washington was the conclusion of the Nine-Power Pact. Negotiated between the signatories of the naval limitation treaty, as well as Belgium, the

85 Four Power Treaty, Article I, 13 December 1921, FRUS: 1922, I, 35.
Netherlands, Portugal, and China, the declared purpose of the Nine-Power Pact was to “stabilize conditions in the Far East, to safeguard the rights and interests of China, and to promote intercourse between China and the other Powers upon the basis of equality of opportunity.” The primary motivation behind the drafting of the treaty was a desire to formally renew the Open Door policy, an outcome viewed as necessary by U.S. and European leaders in the wake of the First World War. During the war, the Japanese government had sought to establish a special claim on Chinese territory and trade, culminating with the issuance of the Twenty-One Demands in 1915. The Nine-Power Pact was intended to ensure that this behavior would not be repeated in the postwar period. In Article I of the treaty, the signatories pledged to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, and in Article III they agreed not to pursue special advantages through the conclusion of unilateral commercial treaties with the Chinese government. Tellingly, however, the Nine-Power Pact did not include any provision for enforcement in the event that one of the signatories violated its terms. Thus, much like the Four-Power Pact, the treaty’s value was purely symbolic.

The signing of both the naval limitation treaty and the Nine-Power Pact on February 6, 1922 marked the end of the Washington Conference. Four days later, President Harding delivered a report to the U.S. Senate, summarizing the conference’s achievements and requesting prompt ratification of the treaties negotiated during the preceding three months. The President hailed the conference as a triumph for American diplomacy, one that would ensure the peace and prosperity of the nation for future generations:

…your ratification of the covenants made will 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,

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86 Nine-Power Pact, 6 February 1922, FRUS: 1922, I, 276.
87 Ibid., 278-9.
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.\textsuperscript{88}

The language of Harding’s address clearly showed his determination to reassure his audience that he was familiar with the reservations that had contributed to the refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Throughout his remarks, Harding continually reiterated that none of the treaties negotiated at the recently concluded conference in any way threatened either the national sovereignty of the United States, or the Senate’s prerogatives in the conduct of American foreign relations. By removing any incentive for their signatories to go to war, the President asserted, the treaties drafted at Washington had substantially enhanced U.S. national security, and had done so at a minimal cost. While the Four-Power Pact became the subject of some controversy among the Senate’s more committed isolationists (William Borah stated that he regarded ratification of the Four-Power Treaty as tantamount to U.S. membership in an alliance, going so far as to declare that “even if every man, woman, and child in the United States were in favor of it, I should unhesitatingly defeat it if I could.”), efforts to substantially amend the Pact were defeated, largely as a result of close collaboration between Secretary of State Hughes and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had himself served as a member of the U.S. delegation at the Washington Conference.\textsuperscript{89} Borah and the irreconcilables were turned back, and by March 30, 1922, every treaty negotiated during the Washington Conference had been formally ratified.\textsuperscript{90}

Naval officers in the United States, Great Britain, and Japan reacted to the Washington Naval Treaty with much less enthusiasm. The fact that the terms of the treaty granted the United

\textsuperscript{88} Warren G. Harding, Address to the United States Senate, 10 February 1922, \textit{FRUS: 1922}, I, 304.
\textsuperscript{89} Borah to James Barton, 6 March 1922, quoted in Thomas H. Buckley, \textit{The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922} (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 179.
\textsuperscript{90} For an account of the ratification fight in the Senate, see Buckley, \textit{The United States and the Washington Conference}, 172-84.
States parity in capital ship tonnage with the Royal Navy produced no small amount of grumbling among British naval officers, who “condemned the treaty as marking the passing of the Royal Navy’s long period of world dominance.” The reaction among some Japanese naval officers was far more violent. Leading the movement of those deeply unhappy with the treaty was Admiral Katō Kanji, who had served as one of the Imperial Japanese Navy’s technical advisors at Washington. In From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, Asada notes that “On the day Japan accepted the 60 percent ratio, Katō Kanji was seen shouting, with tears in his eyes, ‘As far as I am concerned, war with America starts now. We’ll get our revenge over this, by god.’” Following the death of Katō Tomasaburō from colon cancer in August 1923, the IJN’s “fleet faction,” led for much of the interwar period by the younger Katō, gradually ascended to dominance within the service’s upper ranks. In the ensuing years, agitation against the Washington Treaty and the demand for a 70% ratio would become a constant source of tension between Japanese naval officers and their American and British counterparts.

The furious reaction to the Washington Naval Treaty on the part of Japanese naval officers largely mirrored the reaction that took place within the ranks of the United States Navy. A sentiment rapidly emerged among many naval officers in the aftermath of the Washington Conference that the concerns of their service had not been taken seriously by the senior members of the American delegation, and that the navy itself had been largely marginalized in the ongoing negotiations. Naval officers were quick to point out that the chief negotiator for the Japanese delegation had been none other than Katō Tomasaburō, who in addition to his post as Navy

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91 Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, I, 330. Roskill quickly attempts to debunk this claim, noting even in the absence of a naval treaty “economic considerations alone made it impossible for Britain to prolong her period of naval dominance.” Ibid., 330. Roskill goes on to argue that Britain benefited substantially from the Washington Naval Treaty, as its enactment eliminated any possibility of an Anglo-American building race that could have severely damaged relations between the two powers.

92 Asada, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, 92.
Minister was also an active-duty IJN admiral. The British delegation had included Lord Lee of Fareham, then serving as First Lord of the Admiralty, as well as First Sea Lord Sir David Beatty, who had commanded the Royal Navy’s battle cruiser squadron at the Battle of Jutland. By contrast, U.S. naval officers of comparable stature were notable by their absence. In addition to Secretary of State Hughes, the principle American negotiators at Washington were: Henry Cabot Lodge, selected due to his position as head of the Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee; Senate Minority Leader Oscar W. Underwood; and former Senator Elihu Root, who had also served as Secretary of War during Theodore Roosevelt’s administration. Thomas Buckley, in his examination of the conference, points out a glaring omission from the ranks of the American delegation; “the Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby, was not appointed as a delegate to a conference that was to discuss naval limitation.”93 Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. along with a number of mid-ranking naval officers, served as advisors to the U.S. delegation’s civilian negotiators. However, the general consensus among scholars of the Washington Conference is that the counsel of these individuals was sought only on strictly technical matters, and that Hughes and his colleagues exhibited an attitude somewhere between indifference and outright hostility to the notion that the navy should offer input into the strategic implications of the proposals under discussion.94 As a result, many naval officers came away from the Washington Conference convinced that the civilian diplomats who had negotiated on behalf of the United States had failed to fully consider the consequences of several of the treaty’s provisions.

The U.S. Navy’s concerns regarding the Washington Treaty, which were aired both early and often, took a number of forms. One of the most outspoken critics of the Washington Treaty

93 Buckley, The United States and the Washington Conference, 47.
94 This issue will be addressed in much greater detail in Chapter 5.
was retired U.S. Navy Captain Dudley Wright Knox. Almost before the ink was dry on the treaty, Knox published *The Eclipse of American Sea Power*. In this brief work, Knox outlined a litany of complaints. While careful to praise Charles Evans Hughes as a man sincerely dedicated to the cause of world peace, Knox argued that the conference’s other participants had taken advantage of the Secretary of State’s altruism, and that, as a result, the United States had sacrificed far more than any of the treaty’s other signatories. He noted that the United States had voluntarily agreed to abandon the majority of the construction planned under the 1916 program (on which, he claimed, more than $330 million had already been spent) at a time when economic constraints would have prevented Britain and Japan from engaging in matching programs:

…with noteworthy generosity *America offered to give up a certain first place* (with no close second) *in sea power and a positive ability to safeguard American interests the world over—and furthermore volunteered to do so at stupendous financial loss to herself.*

In contrast, Knox asserted, the delegates from Japan, Great Britain, and France had directly opposed any efforts to restrict what they regarded as the vital security interests of their respective nations. He raised this point “not…to imply that these other nations were not justified in properly safeguarding their individual interests, but only to point out the striking contrast between America’s great liberality and the attitude of all other nations represented at the Conference.” This statement can be interpreted as an indirect criticism of Hughes and his fellow delegates, as it implies that they did not defend American strategic interests with the same fervor as their foreign counterparts.

The principal object of the ire of the U.S. Navy generally and Knox in particular was Article XIX, the nonfortification clause. As noted above, under the terms of Article XIX the

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96 Ibid., 43-4.
United States pledged not to make any further improvements to either the fortifications or military base facilities of any of its Pacific possessions west of the Hawaiian Islands. Many senior naval officers were incensed by the inclusion of the nonfortification clause in the final version of the Washington Treaty. It had long been realized that any war with Japan would require possession of a first class, fully developed base in the western Pacific from which the fleet could operate against the Japanese home islands. Prior to 1922, Manila Bay had been widely regarded as the preferred location for this western Pacific base. The requirement that U.S. military facilities in the Philippines be frozen in the status quo made this impossible, and Navy leaders were quick to voice their frustrations. Knox argued that Article XIX had greatly undermined the navy’s prospects for success in the event of war with Japan:

> Unless the only stepping stones that will be available to us in war—the present American possessions—are properly fortified and equipped before the outbreak of war, there is little likelihood of their being available to our fleet upon its arrival in their vicinity under circumstances involving the security of the Philippines. \(^{97}\)

The criticism of Article XIX was twofold. First, while considerable investment had been made in the construction of naval facilities at Manila Bay prior to 1922, the base there was still far short of what the navy felt it would require to effectively service the bulk of the Pacific Fleet. Moreover, the inability to improve the static fortifications in the Philippines made it less likely that the forces defending the islands would be able to successfully hold out until the arrival of the fleet from the West Coast. Knox was not the only individual to raise this concern. Gerald Wheeler notes that “The United States Naval Institute in its Proceedings followed the trail blazed by Captain (later Commodore) Knox. In many articles it carped continuously on the subject.”\(^{98}\)

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 50.

\(^{98}\) Gerald E. Wheeler, “The United States Navy and the Japanese ‘Enemy’: 1919-1931,” *Military Affairs* 21 (1957), 70. He proceeds to note why the appearance of these articles is significant, “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. 41. That
The Navy’s frustrations with Article XIX were no doubt exacerbated by allegations that the Japanese government, in the months leading up to the Washington Conference, had rapidly completed the process of fortifying the Bonin Islands before the nonfortification clause went into effect. One source for this charge was British author and naval journalist Hector C. Bywater. In a 1923 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Bywater accused the Japanese delegation, and specifically Katō Tomasaburō of duplicity on the matter of Pacific fortifications. During the Washington Conference, Bywater noted, Katō had floated the idea of a non-fortification agreement between the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, and offered to include several Japanese island groups, including the Bonins, as a *quid pro quo* for American agreement to a freeze on facilities in the Philippines and Guam. This concession by the Japanese, Bywater charged, was largely a hollow one:

> Baron Kato did not add, however, that 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 [Manila Bay] and Guam.99

The accusation that the Japanese had agreed to include in the list of territories subject to Article XIX an island group whose fortifications had already been completed must have rankled U.S. naval officers badly. As Louis Morton pointed out in a 1959 *World Politics* essay, the U.S. military was quite scrupulous in adhering to the provisions of Article XIX, even going so far as to abort delivery of a shipment of antiaircraft guns already en route to the Philippines at the time the treaty was signed:

> “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

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and possessions specified; that no measures shall be taken to increase the existing naval facilities…and that no increase shall be made in the coast defenses…”

As noted in the discussion of the Mandate Islands above, the interwar U.S. Navy was populated by many individuals inherently suspicious of Japanese behavior. The allegations by Bywater that the Japanese had, in effect, hoodwinked Hughes and his fellow delegates during the negotiations at Washington would have provided further fuel for these suspicions, and also served to heighten the Navy’s resentment of Article XIX.

A final criticism of the Washington Treaty was that despite the pronouncements of its authors the treaty had not, in fact, brought about an end to competition in naval armaments. The reason for this lay in the one crucial distinction between the vision articulated by Hughes in his opening address and the treaty as it was actually concluded—the absence of a tonnage cap for auxiliary warship classes (i.e., non-capital ships). In *The Eclipse of American Sea Power*, Dudley Knox was quick to seize upon this point:

> An agreement restricting the number of ships, or amount of tonnage, that each nation can have to only one or two of the many types that constitute a fleet cannot possibly of itself be effective in halting competitive building, nor even in eliminating great naval expenditures. Such purposes require that practically all naval types be included…because one or more kinds of naval power can serve to a great extent as a substitute for another.  

The crux of Knox’s critique was that the Washington Treaty, in its final version, had not halted competition in naval armaments, but had simply transferred this competition into those classes of vessels that were not subject to limitation. While Knox was highly critical of the omission of a cap on auxiliary tonnage, the U.S. Navy’s initial reaction does not appear to have been one of great concern. John Kuehn decribed the Navy’s reasoning in a 2010 essay in *The Journal of Military History*:

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the General Board of the Navy came to support the Washington ratio system as a mandated building target tied to the size of the Japanese fleet. In fact, the Navy adopted the 5-3 ratio for all its classes of ships, not just capital ships...This was enshrined in the 1922 U.S. Naval Policy signed by Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby...Such a fleet compensated for the limitation on overseas basing conferred by the fortification clause. 102

In other words, in the immediate aftermath of the Washington Conference, the General Board of the Navy assumed that it would be maintained at a level relative to the IJN as though the 10:6 ratio established at Washington applied to all classes of ships, even though it did not. It is unclear to what extent the General Board believed that Congressional appropriations would conform to its expectations, but what is certain is that the Navy was to be sorely disappointed in the upcoming years. In fact, Japanese naval construction in auxiliary warships vastly exceeded that of the United States in the post-Washington years. This trend was evident as early as 1923. In his Atlantic Monthly essay, Hector Bywater declared “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 than all the other powers combined.” 103 The difference in construction rates between Japan and the United States during the 1920s was quite stark:

[between 1922 and 1930] Japan not only began construction on 123 warships, but completed most of them by the London Naval Conference of 1930: 3 aircraft carriers, 20 cruisers, 50 destroyers, and 50 submarines. At the same time, Congress had authorized construction for only 31 warships: 3 aircraft carriers, 22 cruisers, and 6 submarines. Even these figures vastly overstate the vigor of America’s naval effort. The American Navy did not lay its first keel of the 22 cruisers Congress had authorized until 1926. 104

103 Bywater, “Japan: A Sequel to the Washington Conference,” 243. Bywater’s concern was that Japan’s aggressive program of auxiliary warship construction would lead to a corresponding increase in British and American naval building. While it was deferred for several years, this prediction did come to fruition during the mid-1930s, when Congress passed a succession of naval construction bills. This action was cited by the Japanese as the principal reason for their abrogation of the Washington Treaty. See below.
104 Kaufman, Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era, 79.
Thus, while the U.S. battleship fleet did retain a 40% margin of superiority over Japan’s capital ship fleet, in auxiliary classes Japan was rapidly approaching parity. In some classes, such as cruisers, Japan actually possessed both a numerical and a qualitative advantage by the late 1920s.\textsuperscript{105}

Allegations that the Washington Naval Treaty had been, at best, an incomplete success spurred calls for a new international naval conference. The purpose of such a summit would be to close what critics regarded as dangerous loopholes in the Washington Treaty, most notably its lack of a tonnage cap for non-capital warship classes. The next decade witnessed two such efforts—the abortive Geneva Naval Conference of 1927, and the London Naval Conference of 1930.

The Geneva Conference, like the Washington Conference, was initiated at the behest of the United States, this time at the instigation of President Calvin Coolidge. In February of 1927, the President extended invitations to the governments of Japan, Great Britain, France, and Italy, requesting their participation in upcoming talks in Geneva, Switzerland “to initiate negotiations looking towards an agreement providing for limitation in the classes of Naval vessels not covered by the Washington Treaty.”\textsuperscript{106} Unlike the response to Warren Harding’s 1921 invitation to the upcoming talks in Washington, the reaction to Coolidge’s invitation was far less enthusiastic. Only Great Britain expressed an unreserved willingness to participate in the conference. The French and Italian governments flatly declined to participate, with the French government insisting that such negotiations were best handled by the League of Nations, and the Italian government unwilling to attend unless it received a guarantee that the parity it had been

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 79. See also Asada, \textit{From Mahan to Pearl Harbor}, 106.

\textsuperscript{106} See Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Herrick), 3 February 1927, \textit{FRUS: 1927} (Washington: GPO, 1942), I, 4.
granted with France under the terms of the Washington Treaty would not be compromised.\textsuperscript{107} While the Japanese government cabled its agreement to participate in the upcoming conference shortly after receiving the invitation, many officers within the Imperial Japanese Navy regarded the prospect of an expanded naval treaty with great trepidation.\textsuperscript{108} Asada notes that the invitation to Geneva was not unexpected. The Imperial Navy was aware of the 1922 U.S. Navy General Board proposal calling for the maintenance of a 10-6 ratio in all classes of ships, and was determined to contest this call vigorously during the upcoming conference. Asada states, “The Japanese Navy was ‘absolutely opposed’ to such a ratio and planned to declare at the outset that it must be regarded as a ‘separate’ gathering, not an extension of the Washington Conference.”\textsuperscript{109}

Japanese concerns that the auxiliary ratio question would prompt a confrontation with the United States were valid, but they also proved to be several years premature. The Geneva Conference foundered as a result of an unrelated and largely unanticipated disagreement that arose between the American and British delegations. This dispute revolved around the number, types, and total tonnage of cruisers that each of the two nations would be permitted to retain under the terms of the proposed treaty. The American delegation, headed by U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Hugh Gibson and U.S. Navy Admiral Hilary P. Jones (Jones’ inclusion is particularly noteworthy, as it represents the only instance in which a senior officer of the U.S. Navy held such a high position on an official delegation during the interwar years), proposed a limit of “300,000 tons of the cruiser class for the United States and the British Empire and 180,000 tons

\textsuperscript{107} For the French response, see Herrick to Secretary of State, 15 February 1927, \textit{FRUS: 1927}, I, 10-3. For the Italian government’s response, see William R. Castle, “Memorandum by the Chief of Western European Affairs” 22 February 1927, \textit{FRUS: 1927}, I, 17-9.


\textsuperscript{109} Asada, \textit{From Mahan to Pearl Harbor}, 106-7.
Gibson and Jones also proposed that “each power could build any number of 10,000-ton, eight-inch-gun cruisers within the assigned totals.”

This proposal was in keeping with what the U.S. Navy saw as its own needs with respect to cruisers, an outlook that had emerged in large part as a reaction to Article XIX of the Washington Treaty. Because it lacked an extensive network of overseas bases, and because the development of such bases in the Pacific, regarded as its most likely theater of operations, was prohibited by treaty, the U.S. Navy required ships with the size and endurance to serve as effective scouts and commerce raiders in the event of war with Japan.

From the U.S. perspective, this need could best be met by building fewer, but larger ships, as smaller vessels would lack the fuel storage capacity required for extended operations in the vast reaches of the Pacific. The Royal Navy entered the conference with a very different set of priorities with respect to cruisers. The global scope of the British Empire required a much larger number of ships, whose principal role was trade defense. The British thus sought an accord which granted them more, but smaller, cruisers (the reduced cruising range of smaller vessels was not regarded as a handicap by the British because of the worldwide network of base facilities upon which Royal Navy vessels could rely). Two insoluble problems quickly arose. One involved the sheer number of cruisers that the British delegation argued were required for the Empire’s needs, which struck the American delegates (particularly Jones) as excessive:

On 28 June, the British set their requirements at 15 large treaty cruisers and 60 of the smaller type, although they subsequently reduced the latter to 55. Shocked by the enormous tonnage these figures implied, Jones learned from [Royal Navy Admiral Sir

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110 Gibson to Secretary of State, 20 June 1927, FRUS: 1927, I, 46.
111 William F. Trimble, “Admiral Hilary P. Jones and the 1927 Geneva Naval Conference,” Military Affairs 43 (1979), 2. The 10,000 ton figure was arrived at because under the terms of the Washington Treaty, any vessel displacing more than 10,000 tons was considered a capital ship, and would therefore be subject to the tonnage limitations established in 1922.
112 See Kaufman, Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era, 109.
Frederick] Field that the numbers “had not been arrived at as something to bargain with but [were] definitely what had always been intended.”

The British proposal for cruiser tonnage, if adopted, would have nearly doubled the limit of 300,000 tons initially suggested by Gibson and Jones. In order for the United States to attain parity with Britain, Congress would have to authorize funding for a massive expansion in the U.S. navy’s cruiser fleet, an eventuality that the American delegates at Geneva regarded as extremely unlikely. The second problem stemmed from the unwillingness of the American naval advisors, led by Jones, to agree with Britain’s request that cruisers smaller than 10,000 tons be mandated to carry six-inch, rather than eight-inch guns. During a July 5 meeting of the conference’s technical committee, Jones read into the record a statement of American naval policy which, among a number of other points, stated “we do not see any reason for limiting the caliber of guns at the [sic?] smaller class of cruisers to anything different from that in the larger [ones].” Jones’ statement was interpreted as an ultimatum by the meeting’s British attendees, resulting in a heated confrontation between the British delegates and Gibson the following day. Subsequent discussion soothed ruffled feathers on both sides, but did nothing to resolve the fundamental incompatibility between the British and American positions. On August 4, the American, British, and Japanese delegations issued a joint statement outlining their respective

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114 The “treaty cruisers” in the British proposal were equivalent to the 10,000-ton heavy cruisers preferred by the U.S. Navy. The “smaller types” were to be of a class of ship displacing no more than 7,500 tons and armed with 6-inch guns. Had the British proposal been adopted, even with the number of smaller cruisers reduced to 55, it would have involved 562,500 tons of ships. This corresponds with the figure presented in Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, I, 506.
115 Gibson to Secretary of State, 5 July 1927, FRUS: 1927, I, 71. Jones also stated that in exchange for freedom of design with regard to cruiser types of less than 10,000 tons, the U.S. might be willing to accept a total tonnage of up to 400,000 tons of cruisers for itself and Britain, but also declared that the U.S. would prefer that the final figure be lower than this.
116 For Gibson’s account of this meeting, see Gibson to Secretary of State, 6 July 1927, FRUS: 1927, I, 74-5.
positions, detailing their failure to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement, and calling for the issues of contention to be addressed again at a future conference.\(^{117}\)

The Anglo-American antipathy that had derailed discussions at Geneva had substantially waned by the time of the London Conference of 1930. A number of developments had occurred in the intervening years which made a rapprochement between the two countries possible with respect to naval issues. One of these developments had taken place in Britain in 1928, and concerned the status of the “Ten-Year Rule.” Winston Churchill, then serving as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was still engaged in a campaign to reduce Britain’s annual naval expenditures.

To further this goal, Churchill declared in a memo to Britain’s Committee of Imperial Defence:

That it should now be laid down as a standing assumption that at any given date there will be no major war for 10 years from that date; and that this should rule unless or until, on the initiative of the Foreign Office or one of the fighting Services, or otherwise, it is decided to alter it.\(^{118}\)

The impact of this unilateral declaration was that it made the Ten-Year Rule, which prior to 1928 had been subject to annual review, self-perpetuating unless specifically canceled or amended.

With respect to the cruiser figures that the British delegation had proposed at Geneva, this ruling was a death knell, for it clearly indicated that whatever the Royal Navy’s perceived needs or wishes, the Treasury was unwilling to commit the resources necessary to make them a reality.

Governmental changes in both the United States and Great Britain also contributed to a renewed enthusiasm for a new naval agreement. While neither Calvin Coolidge’s administration in Washington nor Stanley Baldwin’s government in London had been hostile to the idea of an expanded arms limitation accord, they did not pursue agreement with the fervor of their

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\(^{117}\) See Secretary of State to President Coolidge, 4 August 1927, *FRUS: 1927*, I, 153-5.

respective successors, Herbert Hoover and Ramsay MacDonald. In September of 1929, Hoover extended an invitation to MacDonald to attend a series of personal meetings in Virginia, an invitation that the Prime Minister quickly accepted. While the one-on-one meetings “failed to reach agreement on the particulars,” according to Kaufman, they did succeed “in promoting friendship and cooperative spirit between the British and the Americans.” The close personal relationship that developed between Hoover and MacDonald helped to dispel any lingering notions that a future dispute between the two democracies might lead to a military confrontation, thus rendering the likelihood of an accommodation between them more likely.

One conclusion shared by civilian observers in both countries was that the tension that had existed at Geneva had occurred between the two delegations’ naval advisors, rather than their civilian delegates. It was therefore determined that civilians would play a much more prominent role at the next international disarmament conference. The composition of the American delegation to the London Conference represented a stark departure from what had been the case at Geneva. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson served as the head of the American delegation, stepping into the role that Charles Evans Hughes had played in 1921-22. The active participation of the Secretary of State was viewed as a necessity, as it ensured “that the American delegation would not suffer from the lack of prestige that had contributed to the failure of the Geneva Naval Conference of 1927.” Assisting Stimson were Senators David Reed (R-OR) and Joseph Robinson (D-AR), representing the Senate’s Foreign Affairs and Naval Affairs Committees, respectively. Kaufman notes that by mutual agreement naval officers were not appointed as delegates by either Great Britain or the United States, being relegated to a

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119 For a discussion of Hoover and MacDonald’s commitment to the cause of naval arms limitation, see Kaufman, *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era*, 113-24.
120 Ibid., 123.
121 Ibid., 124.
purely advisory capacity. In an effort to avoid a repeat of Jones’ behavior at Geneva, great care was exercised in the selection of the senior U.S. naval advisor. That choice, Chief of Naval Operations William V. Pratt, was selected because of his staunch support of the treaty system, a belief that placed him among a very small minority of senior U.S. Navy officers.

By the time of the London Conference, which again featured participation by delegations from the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, the two Western democracies had largely resolved the issues that had divided them at Geneva three years earlier. As a result, the Japanese delegation, headed by former Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijirō and Navy Minister Takarabe Takeshi, found itself confronting the situation it had feared would arise in 1927—pressure from a unified Anglo-American front to accept a ratio lower than that demanded by the IJN. Asada notes that Wakatsuki, the delegation’s nominal head, urged cooperation with the United States and Britain, noting that “it was not to Japan’s advantage ‘to insist on its stated position to the last extremity.’”122 This suggestion, however, met with violent opposition from Takarabe and the delegation’s naval advisors. Efforts to negotiate an internal compromise failed, as “The civilian and naval delegates had become locked in irreconcilable differences.”123 In order to break this deadlock, the delegation’s civilian members were forced to engage in a set of back-door negotiations with the Americans in order to achieve a successful, but ultimately fleeting, agreement.

After the early negotiating sessions at the London Conference had failed to produce much movement between the two positions, Japanese delegate Matsudaira Tsuneo and Senator David Reed began a series of private discussions on February 25, 1930.124 These talks produced what became known as the Reed-Matsudaira Compromise, eventually codified as Article 16 of the

122 Asada, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, 136.
123 Ibid., 137.
124 Ibid., 138.
London Naval Treaty. On the surface, the compromise appeared to give the Japanese something very close to the 10:7 ratio in auxiliaries demanded by the IJN. As finalized in the London Naval Treaty, the Japanese were granted 64.5% of the cruiser tonnage allocated to the United States, a 70% ratio in destroyer tonnage, and parity with the United States in submarine tonnage. Despite this, the IJN representatives on the Japanese delegation were furious when the details of the conversations between Reed and Matsudaira were made public. They believed that they had been misled by Wakatsuki, who “had assured them that any formula to come out of the informal talks with Reed would be merely a ‘private plan’ with no binding force.” Yet when the compromise worked out by the two men was announced, the delegation’s civilian leadership immediately began appealing to the government leadership in Tokyo to put pressure on the IJN to accept the compromise with no further modifications. Moreover, while superficially the compromise came very close to the 70% ratio long sought after by the IJN, several of its specifics met with strong resistance. First, while the Reed-Matsudaira compromise did grant the IJN parity with the USN in submarine tonnage, it did so at a far lower level than the IJN considered necessary for Japan’s needs. Additionally, as noted above, in the years following the Washington Conference, Japan had far outstripped the United States in cruiser construction, with the result that at the time of the London Conference the IJN actually possessed a substantially larger cruiser fleet than the United States Navy. Thus, under the terms of the Reed-Matsudaira Compromise, “Japan was further obligated to halt further construction of heavy

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126 Asada, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, 140.
127 Article 16 of the London Treaty granted both countries an allotment of 52,700 tons. London Naval Treaty, Article 16, FRUS: 1930, I 140. The IJN objected to this because they regarded that amount as “not sufficient for Philippine operations.” Moreover, the IJN’s existing submarine fleet in 1930 already filled its entire treaty allotment, which meant that “Japan would not be able to build a new submarine for the duration of the treaty, [so] it would be difficult to maintain submarine technology.” Asada, From Mahan to Pearl Harbor, 142.
cruisers until 1936, while the United States would be free to construct fifteen of them.” In the short run, the civilian delegates successfully suppressed the revolt by their naval colleagues, and with the consent of the government in Tokyo, Japan became a signatory of the London Naval Treaty. The manner in which the treaty was arrived at, however, provoked an open revolt against Japan’s civilian government on the part of the Japanese military, which from 1930 onward exercised what it termed the “right of supreme command” to bring down governments that sought to enact policies with which the Army or Navy disagreed.

For their part, most U.S. Navy officers greeted the London Treaty with as little enthusiasm as their Japanese counterparts. During ratification hearings on the treaty, 22 senior officers testified against ratification, compared to only five who testified in favor. Opponents of the treaty largely repeated the same arguments that had been leveled against the Washington Treaty in 1922—that the 10:6 ratio guaranteed local superiority to Japan in the western Pacific in the early stages of a war with the United States, and that the \textit{de facto} 10:7 ratio in auxiliary warships granted by the London Treaty exacerbated this condition. Even some of the officers who testified in favor of the treaty appear to have offered only lukewarm support. Admiral Harry Yarnell argued that the London Treaty “‘affected very little one way or another,’ the safety of the Philippines or America’s interests in the western Pacific generally,” noting that it did nothing more than reinforce the weakened strategic position imposed upon the United States by the Washington Treaty.

\footnote{Ibid., 141. Asada notes that Reed and Matsudaira had attempted to redress this criticism by negotiating a codicil whereby the United States would postpone construction of several heavy cruisers until after 1935, the year in which the next naval conference between the powers was scheduled. This was viewed by the IJN delegates as a purely “paper” concession, however.}

\footnote{For a discussion of the origins of the “right of supreme command” and its consequences for Japan in the aftermath of the London Conference, see Asada, \textit{From Mahan to Pearl Harbor}, 154-7.}

\footnote{Kaufman, \textit{Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era}, 139-41.}

\footnote{Ibid., 140.}
early Depression era, he believed that ratification of the Treaty would prompt legislators to fund the navy at treaty levels.\textsuperscript{132}

In retrospect, it appears that what was represented by Stimson, Wakatsuki, and other civilian delegates at the London Conference as a diplomatic triumph was in fact no more than a temporary patch over the increasingly contentious issues that divided the treaty’s signatories. The influence of the military within the Japanese government grew rapidly in the years following the London Conference, and manifested itself in an increasingly belligerent foreign policy, beginning with the 1931 invasion of Manchuria. The compromise brokered between Reed and Matsudaira that made the signing of the London Treaty possible was largely illusory. Kaufman raises the point that in 1922, the United States had possessed a powerful bargaining chip in its negotiations with Japan and Great Britain—namely, the 1916 building program. In the absence of a successful naval arms limitation agreement, the United States could have pressed ahead with the plan to construct “a navy second to none.”\textsuperscript{133} At the time of the London Conference, the position of the United States vis-à-vis Japan had been reversed, particularly with respect to cruisers, where the IJN had amassed a substantial advantage over the USN. What little willingness the Japanese Navy possessed to abide by the terms of the London Treaty was based solely upon the fact that the United States Navy was not maintained at the full strength permitted under the treaty. This is evidenced by the Japanese reaction to legislation passed during the early years of Franklin Roosevelt’s administration which authorized sufficient new construction to bring the U.S. fleet up to the maximum strength permitted under the London Treaty. Shortly after the passage of this legislation, rumors began to reach the U.S. embassy staff in Tokyo that

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 140.

\textsuperscript{133} Whether the American public would have supported such an effort, given the widespread public opposition to increased expenditures on naval construction documented above is highly questionable. But given their respective situations vis-à-vis the United States in 1921, this was a risk that Japan, and to a lesser extent Great Britain, could ill afford to take.
Japan intended to abrogate the Washington Treaty (as well as the London Treaty). U.S. Ambassador Joseph Grew had conveyed the Japanese government’s reasoning as early as September 15, 1933 in a cable to Washington:

> 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.134

In 1934, delegations from the three major powers convened again in London in a final attempt to resolve the issues that increasingly divided them. In retrospect, this endeavor was likely doomed from the start. The Imperial Japanese Navy’s determination to be rid of what it regarded as the humiliations imposed upon it by the Washington and London Treaties was well known to both U.S. and British delegates. Moreover, the international environment in 1934 was becoming increasingly unsettled, with the preceding years having witnessed the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and its subsequent withdrawal from the League of Nations, the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany, and the ongoing global economic crisis resulting from the Great Depression. Given these developments, the prospects for the conclusion of a successful naval limitation treaty would have been viewed as dismal by even the most optimistic of observers. As a result, one of the major objectives of both the U.S. and British delegations at the second London Conference appears to have been simply to ensure that the responsibility for the inevitable abrogation of the existing treaties fell completely upon the Japanese. Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued instructions to this effect to Norman Davis, head of the U.S. delegation in London:

> In all events, it is our feeling that you should refrain from doing anything which would diminish the embarrassment of the Japanese, as the time of denunciation approaches, or

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134 Joseph Grew to Secretary of State, 15 September 1933, FRUS: Japan, 1931-1941 (Washington: GPO, 1943), I, 250.
which would associate the British and ourselves with the act of and responsibility for
denunciation.\textsuperscript{135}

Just over a month later, with talks still ongoing in London, Hull received the news he had clearly
been anticipating, as Japan’s Ambassador delivered formal notice of his country’s intention to
abrogate the Washington Treaty.\textsuperscript{136}

Japan’s 1934 announcement meant that the signatories of the Washington and London
Treaties would no longer be bound by their provisions after December 31, 1936. In theory, the
expiration of the treaties offered the United States an opportunity to substantially improve its
strategic posture in the western Pacific, an option that held some attraction (particularly among
naval officers) at a time of steadily rising tensions between the two nations. In particular, the
lapse of the treaties meant that the United States would no longer be subject to the prohibition on
further improvements to Philippine base facilities imposed by Article XIX of the Washington
Treaty in 1922. Substantial investments in the facilities and fortifications in the Philippines
might have improved the prospects for a successful defense of the islands. As pointed out in
Chapter 3, however, by the mid-1930s there was little chance that funding for any such projects
would ever be authorized. The passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934 had established a
firm timeline for the independence of the Philippines, and a strong body of Congressional
opinion was eager to see the United States wash its hands of the islands.

A common theme running through the discussion of the efforts at naval arms limitation
during the interwar decades is the constant tension that existed between U.S. military officers
(particularly within the U.S. Navy) and the civilian officials responsible for the negotiation of the
treaties. In the aftermath of both the Washington and London Naval Conferences, many current
and former naval officers clearly believed that their concerns with respect to the treaties under

\textsuperscript{135} Cordell Hull to Norman Davis, 26 November 1934, \textit{FRUS: Japan, 1931-1941}, I, 267.
\textsuperscript{136} Saito to Hull, 29 December 1934, \textit{FRUS: Japan, 1931-1941}, I, 274.
negotiation had not been given adequate consideration, and that, as a result, the U.S. strategic position in the western Pacific had been gravely weakened. In fact, a substantial argument can be made that not only were the concerns of naval officers not given serious consideration, but that for much of the interwar period, representatives of the armed forces were systematically excluded from discussions of U.S. foreign policy. This resulted in the emergence of a substantial gap between the ends being pursued by U.S. diplomats, and the means available to the U.S. military to assist in the achievement of those objectives. The reasons for the emergence of this gap, and its consequences for U.S. strategic policy in general, and for the defense of the Philippines in particular, are the topic of the next chapter.
Chapter 5 – U.S. Civil-Military Relations: “Disintegration” and its Consequences

In attempting to understand the causes of the disaster that befell the garrison of the Philippines in the early months of the Pacific War, no factor is more important than the near complete breakdown in communication that characterized U.S. civil-military relations for much of the interwar period. The consequences of this breakdown were most severe. A number of important questions which should have been asked and answered as a matter of course were never satisfactorily addressed. As a result, by the early 1940s the United States found itself in a situation where the military means at its disposal were manifestly incapable of fulfilling the policy objectives established by civilian leaders within the government. Because of their exposed strategic position, the Philippine Islands bore the brunt of the consequences stemming from the emergence of this “means-ends gap.” This chapter argues that the U.S. foreign policy-making process during the interwar years exhibited what Barry Posen terms “disintegration,” a failure of civilian and military leaders to properly calibrate their efforts in support of a unified policy agenda. It begins by briefly recounting Posen’s work on the subject, outlined in his 1984 monograph The Sources of Military Doctrine. It then traces the emergence of this climate of disintegration, and attempts to identify some of the reasons for its occurrence. The chapter concludes with an examination of some of the efforts to bridge the civil-military gap that were undertaken in the mid- to late-1930s, and explains why these efforts, though initially promising, were ultimately unsuccessful.

Posen introduces his discussion of the concept of “disintegration” by noting that the foremost responsibility of any national military organization is to ensure the continued survival of the state that it serves. This mission, he argues, is far easier to carry out when civilian officials and military officers work to ensure that their objectives are properly harmonized:
Disintegrated grand strategies, in which political objectives and military doctrine are poorly reconciled, can lead to both war and defeat—jeopardizing the nation’s survival. In time of peace, a military doctrine should allow the state to ensure its security at economic, political, and human costs that it can afford…In time of crisis or war, military doctrine will be tested against the qualitative and quantitative adequacy of the forces provided in time of peace.¹

Posen goes on to define “grand strategy” as “a chain of political ends and military means” whose effectiveness “is highly dependent on the extent to which the ends and means are related to one another.”² States possessing armed forces whose doctrines align with and support the objectives of civilian policymakers are said to exhibit political-military integration. Posen notes, however, numerous examples exist of states whose military doctrines are not compatible with the foreign policy objectives of civilian leaders. He identifies Israel at the time of the 1973 Yom Kippur War as one such case.³ In earlier conflicts with its Arab neighbors, one of the cornerstones of Israeli military doctrine had been the use of the Israeli Air Force (IAF) to launch preemptive strikes upon hostile nations if war was believed to be imminent. This doctrine had been executed to devastating effect in the Six-Day War of 1967. Between 1967 and 1973, however, a major complication had arisen. The Soviet Union had massively increased its military aid programs to several of Israel’s longtime enemies, most notably Egypt and Syria. This had forced Israel into a patron-client relationship of its own with the United States, as U.S. military aid to the Israeli Defense Forces was seen by the Israelis as the only means of offsetting Soviet transfers to their hostile neighbors. This aid, however, came with certain strings attached, chief among them the expectation that the Israelis would not engage in the pre-emptive air campaign they had utilized in the 1967 Six-Day War. In a meeting held just hours before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War broke out, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel informed Prime Minister Golda Meir that “imme-

² Ibid., 25.
³ The following discussion is drawn from Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine, 27-9.
diate and timely resupply of equipment, sure to be lost in the war, might not be forthcoming if Israel struck first.”⁴ This placed Israel’s leaders in an extremely uncomfortable position, as the execution of the military doctrine which IDF officers felt offered their best prospects for success in the early stages of a conflict threatened to damage one of the lynchpins of Israeli foreign policy—its relationship with the United States. Posen views the collective failure of Israeli leaders to come to grips with this dilemma in the years leading up to the Yom Kippur War as an example of “disintegrated” policymaking, and argues that as a result “a perhaps inevitable war was rendered more dangerous and costly for Israel than it needed to be.”⁵

As noted in Chapter 2, Posen hypothesizes that the most frequent cause of disintegration in the formulation of national security policies is efforts on the part of military leaders to secure their independence from civilian control. To some extent, disintegration is an understandable outcome of attempts to reconcile two very different points of view:

The separate responsibilities for diplomacy and war of organizations and individuals commanding different skills, information, and material generates a structural barrier to political-military integration.⁶

Constructing an effective, integrated foreign policy requires that both civilian and military leaders engage in constant dialogue to help them bridge the gaps between their respective outlooks. Posen argues that resistance to efforts to engage in these types of conversations is far more common among military officers than among civilians. He argues that military leaders are often reluctant to alter doctrines to conform to the objectives of the nation’s policy:

This is not necessarily to argue that [soldiers] deliberately try to disconnect their means from political ends. Often, however, soldiers will elevate the narrow technical requirements of preferred operations above the needs of civilian policy.⁷

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⁴ Ibid., 28.
⁵ Ibid., 29.
⁶ Ibid., 52.
⁷ Ibid., 53.
Posen offers the example of the continental powers of Europe on the eve of World War I, where military leaders, committed to doctrines emphasizing offensive operations at the earliest possible opportunity, set in motion a chain of events (the mobilization of their respective states’ armies) that undermined the efforts of diplomats to prevent the conflict from breaking out. This problem is exacerbated, Posen argues, because “military organizations are unwilling to provide civilian authorities with information that relates to doctrinal questions, especially those having the most to do with the actual conduct of operations.”8 Without access to this specialized knowledge regarding military operations, he notes, civilian policymakers are often left to labor in the dark, unaware of how their own actions will affect their military counterparts. The prescribed remedy for this problem, Posen notes, is continuous and assertive civilian involvement in the establishment of military priorities and missions, something that is particularly necessary in states with multiple independent services:

Interpreting the external environment is the specialty of civilians. Building and operating military forces is the task of the services. Setting priorities among the services, and among forces or branches within services, is a central task of grand strategy.9

Posen is skeptical of the ability of military organizations, particularly those comprising multiple branches, to assemble a grand strategy that complements the objectives of the state’s foreign policy in the absence of civilian direction. If a state’s military is left to its own devices, a number of problems are likely to emerge. One potential outcome is that the branches of a nation’s armed forces will strike a deal with one another to preserve their individual priorities (such as control over particular missions or a guaranteed share of the budget—Posen terms such arrangements “negotiated environments”). As a result, “Each service will prepare for its own

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
The resulting disintegration, not only between civilians and military leaders, but between the branches of the state’s armed forces, can have severe consequences for the security of the state as a whole.

The case of the United States during the 1920s and 1930s offers a fascinating test for Posen’s arguments. The available evidence suggests that the U.S. foreign policymaking process for much of the interwar period clearly exhibited symptoms of disintegration. The fundamental objectives being pursued by the interwar State, Navy, and War Departments were frequently at odds with one another, with the result that U.S. “grand strategy,” to the extent that the country can even be said to have had one, became a hopeless muddle. That same evidence, however, suggests that the causes of the interwar disintegration that plagued the U.S. were very different from the expectations laid out by Posen in *The Sources of Military Doctrine*. Rather than stemming from a desire on the part of U.S. military leaders to preserve or increase their independence from civilian control, it appears that civilian leaders (primarily officials of the State Department) were chiefly responsible for the emergence of the climate of disintegration. On numerous occasions during the interwar years, civilian leaders deliberately strove to marginalize representatives of the U.S. armed forces in discussions of national policy. Contrary to Posen’s predictions, it was military leaders, not civilians, who most frequently sought to initiate conversations regarding the objectives of U.S. foreign policy, requests that often went ignored. This should not be interpreted as an argument that the military bore no responsibility for the confusion that characterized the policymaking process. Indeed, many professional officers, particularly within the U.S. Army, appear to have been willing accomplices in their own marginalization. However, the behavior of senior State Department officials on a number of occasions during the interwar decades suggests that efforts on the part of the Army and Navy to

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10 Ibid., 54.
interject themselves into discussions of national policy would have been futile even if these claims had been pressed with greater assertiveness.

In the years immediately following the First World War, efforts to establish consultative bodies to coordinate the activities of the Cabinet departments most directly responsible for foreign affairs were undertaken on two separate occasions. In both cases, these proposals originated with representatives of the armed forces, specifically with the civilian secretaries of the War and Navy Departments. Unfortunately, in each instance the initiatives met with either apathy or hostility from the State Department officials to whom they were addressed, a pattern that came to typify U.S. civil-military relations for much of the interwar period.

The first of these proposals was the brainchild of future President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1919 was serving as Acting Secretary of the Navy during the administration of Woodrow Wilson. On May 1, Roosevelt drafted a letter to Secretary of State Robert Lansing in which he outlined his vision for what he termed a “War Portfolio”—in essence, a body that would serve to coordinate between the State, War, and Navy Departments in order to ensure that the vital national security and foreign policy concerns of the United States were being properly addressed. In the letter, Roosevelt stressed a point that would be repeated on numerous occasions by U.S. military men in subsequent years—that the armed forces had a vital role to play in the conduct of the nation’s foreign affairs:

It is…an accepted fact that the foreign policy of a government depends for its acceptance by other nations upon the naval and military force that is behind it…It is probable that certain policies are of such importance to our national interests that they must be defended at all costs… On the other hand certain policies are not, by the expense they would entail, justified if they lead to war.11

11 Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert Lansing, 1 May 1919, National Archives, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0989, 110.7/56, 1. Hereinafter cited as NA.
Roosevelt took pains to reassure Lansing that his proposal was not an effort to usurp the State Department’s authority, declaring “It is a fundamental principle that the foreign policy of our government is in the hands of the State Department.” At the same time, however, Roosevelt argued that the Navy Department would be better positioned to support the State Department’s endeavors if it were kept apprised of the ends being pursued by the nation’s diplomats. As a means of facilitating consultation, he proposed the establishment of a “National War Portfolio.” Attached to the letter was a massive blueprint in which “the duties of the State, War, and Navy Departments are defined, and a Joint Plan Making Body is provided for in which all the features involving the three departments are worked out.” (See Figure 1)

Unfortunately, the fruits of Roosevelt’s labors met with a most ignominious fate. The unhappy voyage of the Acting Navy Secretary’s proposal was first uncovered by Ernest May, who recounted the tale in a 1955 essay in *Political Science Quarterly*. First dispatched to the offices of the State Department in May 1919, Roosevelt’s letter does not appear to have ever reached its intended recipient:

The letter and its enclosure went, by mistake, to the State Department’s Division of Latin American Affairs. After some misspent months in that Division’s filing cabinets, the document was interred in the general records, never opened by the Secretary of State.

The fact that the letter had been accidentally dispatched to the wrong bureau does not appear to have been discovered until July 21, nearly three months after it had originally been sent. When May came across the materials, he discovered “the blueprint was stapled to it, closed, and,
as far as I could tell, the staple had never been removed, the blueprint never unfolded.”16 While May conceded that the organization envisioned by Roosevelt was likely so cumbersome that its establishment would not have been viable in 1919, he nevertheless regards this episode as a clear example of a missed opportunity. Had Lansing or one of his subordinates ever actually responded to the Navy Secretary’s proposal, the resulting conversations “might have engineered some practical organization for national defense.”17 There is no evidence that any such response

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16 May, “The Development of Political-Military Consultation,” 168. In October of 2009 this author also had the opportunity to examine both the letter and the accompanying blueprint, which remain in storage at the NARA II facility in College Park, Maryland. Though more than a half century has passed since May’s discovery of these materials, they remain in excellent condition, which lends credence to May’s conclusion that they had experienced very minimal handling prior to their transfer to the National Archives (or subsequently, for that matter).

17 Ibid., 168.
was ever considered, however, and in March of 1921, in the final days of the Wilson administration, Roosevelt’s proposal was permanently and quietly filed away. “Such,” May lamented, “was the fate of the first proposal for a National Security Council.”

While this first proposal for the establishment of a mechanism for civil-military consultation was received with what is probably best characterized as benign neglect, its successor, undertaken in the first year of the Harding administration, encountered a far more hostile reception. On December 7, 1921, Secretary of War John W. Weeks and Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby co-authored a letter to Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. In language very similar to that used by Franklin Roosevelt two years earlier, the service secretaries asserted that the “development of War Plans of the Army and Navy should be based upon the national policies they are to support.” In order to ensure this was the case, Weeks and Denby requested that Hughes “designate a responsible official of the State Department to sit in with the Joint [Army-Navy] Board when notified that questions involving national policy are under consideration.”

The response of senior State Department officials to this proposal was universally negative. Upon receipt of the letter, Hughes forwarded it to Undersecretary of State Henry P. Fletcher, appending a typed note which read, “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.” In a December 13 letter to Fletcher, Assistant Secretary of State Fred Dearing argued that the proper venue for consultation between the War, Navy, and

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18 Ibid., 168.
19 John W. Weeks and Edwin Denby, letter to Charles Evans Hughes, 7 December 1921, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123.
20 Ibid. The Joint Army-Navy Board was a body comprised of senior officers from each service (typically numbering around eight members in all) whose responsibilities included drafting and refining war plans, and promoting effective coordination between the two services.
21 Charles Evans Hughes, memorandum to Henry P. Fletcher, 12 December 1921, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123.
State Departments was the Cabinet, and joined Hughes in opposition to the suggestion put forward by Denby and Weeks:

I recommend strongly that the State Department should decline the invitation, and agree with the Secretary in thinking that our participation would be undesirable and that the suggestion amounts merely to a request to lay matters of foreign policy before the Joint Board. ²²

Having secured the unanimous concurrence of his most senior aides, Hughes formally responded to Denby and Weeks in a letter dated January 17, 1922. The Secretary repeated his belief that it was not advisable for a representative of the State Department to sit in on regular meetings of the Joint Board. In any event, Hughes added:

The only officials of the State Department who can speak for it with authority on questions of national policy are the Secretary and Under Secretary of State, and it is impossible, in the existing circumstances, for either of them to undertake this additional duty. ²³

Chastened by Hughes’ response, Weeks and Denby dispatched what amounted to an apology for intruding on the State Department’s affairs on January 17th, writing “we realize the difficulty of our original suggestion.” ²⁴ In an effort to salvage something of their original purpose, the service secretaries inquired if the Joint Board might request the attendance of Hughes or a designated representative at specific meetings for the purpose of discussing subjects “which in their opinion…[are]…interwoven with the international policies of the United States…” ²⁵ As this amended request would not entail a substantial or repeated commitment on the part of the

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²² Fred Dearing, letter to Henry P. Fletcher, 13 December 1921, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123.  
²³ Charles Evans Hughes, letter to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, 17 January 1922, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123, 3. It should be noted that this series of exchanges between Hughes, Weeks, and Denby took place while the Washington Naval Conference was in session, a fact that gave Hughes a bit of political cover for his rejection of the service secretaries’ request.  
²⁴ Weeks and Denby, letter to Charles Evans Hughes, 17 January 1922, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/124.  
²⁵ Ibid.
State Department, Hughes had little reason to object, and on March 14 he replied to Denby and Weeks, assuring them that he found this proposal to be “quite satisfactory.” 26

Such episodes might seem to suggest that State Department officials regarded all consultations with U.S. military men as undesirable, and as something to be avoided at every opportunity. A closer examination of the evidence, however, suggests a slightly more nuanced explanation. In the course of their duties State Department officials did interact with both Army and Navy officers and civilian representatives of the War and Navy Departments on a regular basis. However, there does seem to have been a deeply ingrained belief among U.S. diplomats that all such consultations should take place exclusively on their terms. Even Charles Evans Hughes, who so vociferously rejected the 1921 overture from Weeks and Denby inviting the State Department to participate in meetings of the Joint Army-Navy Board, clearly did regard the U.S. military as a potentially valuable source of specialized technical knowledge. While preparing for the Washington Naval Conference, Hughes requested that the War Department provide him with information on the armed forces of the nations who would be participating in the naval limitation talks. Three weeks after Hughes’ initial request, the War Department forwarded to the Secretary of State an extensive report prepared by the Army’s War Plans Division. The report, as Weeks noted in its cover letter, included “sketches [of] some of the foreign policies of the great powers and indicates in general terms the vital needs which have influenced these policies.” 27 Hughes appears to have solicited the report in order to provide himself with a thorough briefing on the security concerns of the nations with whom he would be negotiating at the upcoming conference.

26 Hughes to Denby and Weeks, 14 March 1922, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123.
27 John W. Weeks to Charles Evans Hughes, letter of 22 September 1921, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 1, WPD-80. For the report itself, see B. H. Wells to Chief of Staff, “Subject: Policies and Influences which have determined the development of the Armaments of the Great Powers,” 22 September 1921, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 1, WPD-80.
While U.S. diplomats do appear to have been willing to make use of their uniformed counterparts as a source of information on matters with which they themselves had little direct experience, they do not appear to have attached a great deal of weight to specific concerns raised by military officers. Several episodes that occurred during the interwar decades suggest that State Department officials felt that the concerns and desires of the U.S. military should be subordinated to their own preferences. In each of these cases, military objections to the course of action being pursued by State Department officials were simply pushed aside, often accompanied by behavior intended to emphasize that it was civilian leaders, and not professional officers, who were responsible for crafting the foreign policy of the United States.

One such exchange occurred in the summer of 1921, and dealt with the status of the fortifications of several key U.S. Pacific possessions, including the Philippines and Guam. As noted in Chapter Four, Article XIX of the Washington Treaty prohibited any improvements or expansions to these military facilities for as long as the treaty remained in effect. Article XIX had been included in the Washington Treaty at the behest of Katō Tomasaburō, who argued that in the absence of such a provision it would be a very difficult political task to secure Japanese acceptance of the 60% tonnage ratio for capital ships advocated by the U.S. and British delegates.

That Baron Katō would introduce such a proposal during the negotiations should not have come as a surprise to Hughes. By the summer of 1921, the idea that Japan might seek some sort of restriction upon U.S. Pacific fortifications had been anticipated by both Army and Navy intelligence, and similar speculation was already being reported in American newspapers. On September 22, Secretary Weeks dispatched a letter to Hughes informing him of the proposal he was likely to encounter. Enclosed along with Weeks’ letter was a copy of an article that had appeared in the Washington Star on September 15. The article’s author, Junius B. Wood, reported rumors from
Tokyo that the Japanese delegation’s proposals for the Washington Conference would include a demand that the United States “demolish the fortresses and abandon the naval bases in Guam, Hawaii and the Philippines.”

Just two days prior to the publication of Wood’s article, the Office of Naval Intelligence forwarded to the Navy’s General Board a telegram from the U.S. naval attaché in Tokyo reporting essentially identical rumors, and speculating that the Japanese might also seek to limit U.S. fortification of the Panama Canal.

In his letter to Hughes on September 22, Weeks outlined the War Department’s objections to the anticipated proposal, and requested “that favorable consideration should not be given to any such suggestions.” Weeks recounted the reasons why the War Department regarded its Pacific fortifications as important, and suggested that any agreement imposing restrictions upon them would impair the ability of the Army and Navy to support U.S. policies in Asia:

Our possession of strongly fortified naval bases in Hawaii and at Guam is absolutely essential not only to render secure our communications with the Philippine Islands but, more important yet, to permit the development of American naval superiority in the Western Pacific for whatever purpose the national interests may require.

Weeks went on to argue that restrictions upon U.S. fortifications in the Eastern Pacific (Hawaii and the Panama Canal Zone) would pose a direct threat to the security of the continental United States, and that “the War Department could not consent to the abandonment of these defenses while it retains responsibility for measures of preparedness for defense of the homeland.” He then suggested that an effort be made to prompt a public discussion of the benefits that the

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29 Office of Naval Intelligence to General Board, “Japanese at Disarmament Conference,” 13 September 1921, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 1, WPD-77.
30 John W. Weeks to Charles Evans Hughes, letter of 22 September 1921, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 1, WPD-77, 1.
31 Ibid., 1.
32 Ibid., 2.
possession of overseas military facilities conveyed upon the United States, in the hope that a more informed press corps would be less sympathetic to the anticipated Japanese proposal.\footnote{It does not appear that any such public discussion ever took place. The notion that the American press corps was considerably more naïve (or at least less nationalistic) than its foreign counterparts was a recurring complaint among U.S. military personnel. In 1922, Dudley Knox expressed this view in \textit{The Eclipse of American Sea Power}, writing of the Washington Conference, “While the foreign press was wholeheartedly engaged each in presenting its side of the case to the people of its own country as each aspect of limitation of armaments came up for consideration, and in this way strengthening the hand of its diplomats, the American press, with few exceptions, failed to serve the same function for the people of the United States and their diplomatic representatives.” See Dudley W. Knox, \textit{The Eclipse of American Sea Power} (New York: American Army & Navy Journal, Inc., 1922), 14.}

In the end, however, Hughes chose to override the War Department’s objections, and agreed to the inclusion of the nonfortification clause in the text of the Washington Treaty. While Hughes did manage to have Hawaii stricken from the list of territories subject to Article XIX, the U.S. delegation agreed to accept restrictions on U.S. bases in the Philippines and Guam (contrary to the rumors circulating in September of 1921, the Japanese do not appear to have ever suggested that the Panama Canal should be subject to the nonfortification clause). This decision, in the eyes of many military officers, particularly within the Navy, dealt a serious and potentially fatal blow to the strategic position of the United States in the western Pacific. Early versions of War Plan Orange regarded the possession of a fully developed naval base in the western Pacific as a necessary precursor for the final stage of any campaign against Japan. With the conclusion of the Washington Naval Treaty, the development of such a base would remain impossible for as long as the treaty remained in effect. This, in turn, called into serious question whether it would be possible to establish the “American naval superiority in the western Pacific” that Weeks had referred to in his September 22, 1921 letter to Hughes.

In retrospect, some of the criticisms leveled by American military officers against the Washington Treaty (and particularly against Article XIX) were clearly exaggerated. The “strongly fortified naval base” at Guam that Weeks identified as essential to securing U.S. lines of communication with the Philippines never existed as anything other than a series of budget
estimates in the files of the Joint Army-Navy Board. And given the well documented reluctance of Congress to appropriate large sums of money for national defense during the 1920s and 1930s, it is highly unlikely that substantial improvements would have been made to U.S. military facilities in the western Pacific even in the absence of a nonfortification agreement. However, the manner in which the U.S. military’s representatives were treated by State Department officials both before and during the Washington Conference undoubtedly left them feeling slighted. In the preceding months they had witnessed the exclusion of the Secretary of the Navy from the American delegation, subsequent negotiations in which professional naval officers were consulted only on technical questions (as opposed to matters of national policy and strategy), Hughes’ decision to accept the inclusion of a nonfortification clause in the treaty over the stated objections of the War Department, and most importantly the Secretary of State’s heavy-handed dismissal of the effort by Denby and Weeks to solicit the State Department’s participation in meetings of the Joint Board. All of these actions fostered the growth of a belief among many U.S. military officers that their concerns regarding what they considered as the grave handicaps imposed upon the United States by the Treaty had been completely ignored.

The status of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps garrisons in China was another constant irritant in relations between the War and State Departments throughout the first several decades of the twentieth century. The Army’s involvement in China dated back to the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. The United States was one of a number of nations that deployed military forces to China during the conflict. After the fighting had ceased, the governments of the Western Powers, Japan, and China concluded what became known as the Boxer Protocol. Under the terms of this agreement, the foreign powers were authorized to retain military forces in China. These forces performed two functions, “to guard the legation quarter in Peking, and to occupy
certain points along the railway leading from the capital to the sea in order to keep open the line of communications in the event of renewal of an antiforeign outbreak.”34 The continuing presence of the Army garrison in China became a recurring source of concern for the War Department, as the size of the China garrison (whose numbers seldom exceeded 1,000 men) raised serious questions regarding its ability to carry out the mission assigned to it under the terms of the Boxer Protocol.35 Efforts on the part of senior Army or War Department leaders to alter the Army’s mission in China, however, were continually blocked by the State Department:

…every secretary of state from Hay to Hull [insisted] that army and marine troops were in China solely to assist and support the American minister discharge his responsibilities. What this meant was that the garrison in China was, in the final analysis, under the control of the State Department for all matters except administration and discipline.36

This highly unusual command relationship became the subject of a number of disagreements between the Army and the State Department. In 1922, a dispute between Colonel William F. Martin, commanding the Army’s 15th Infantry Regiment at Tianjin (Tientsin), and U.S. minister Jacob Schurman resulted in Martin’s recall to the United States and precipitated an acrimonious exchange of letters between Hughes and Army Chief of Staff John Pershing.37 Tensions between the Army and the State Department regarding the China garrison became even more pronounced in the early 1930s. In the face of increasingly aggressive Japanese policies in China, U.S. Army leaders became concerned about the possibility of an incident between U.S. and Japanese troops. In April 1931, Secretary of War Patrick Hurley recommended that the Army garrison in China be withdrawn. In a letter to Secretary of State Henry Stimson, Hurley recited a litany of arguments in favor of withdrawal, noting that of all the Army’s overseas deployments

35 This concern mirrored, on a smaller scale, similar concerns regarding the U.S. garrison in the Philippines.
37 For an account of the circumstances that precipitated this conflict, see Morton, “Army and Marines on the China Station,” 55-7.
the forces in China were “least vital” to national security, and asserting that withdrawing the troops would result in a financial savings to the War Department out of all proportion to the garrison’s size. Hurley then played his trump card:

Furthermore, in view of the presence of military contingents from other powers, with differing and sometimes conflicting interests, there exist possibilities that the United States Government may be drawn, with or without China’s design, into action which may disturb its harmonious relations with the Chinese or other Governments concerned.38

Hurley concluded his letter with a request that, in light of the considerations he had outlined, Stimson offer his assent for the withdrawal of the Army’s China garrison.

Stimson, however, declined to endorse Hurley’s request, although he left the door open to reconsideration of the issue in the future. Stimson noted that the United States was one of many signatories to the Boxer Protocol, and, as a result, it could not unilaterally withdraw its troops from China without first consulting with its treaty partners. “The present moment,” he wrote, “I do not think an opportune time for proposing or taking action in the matter,” although he did consent to a gradual reduction in the number of troops maintained by the Army in China, provided that the drawdown was conducted in a “gradual and inconspicuous” manner.39 No such reduction in the garrison’s strength was carried out. It is unclear whether the War Department’s lack of action stemmed from a belief that a reduction by half-measures would not achieve the sought-after financial savings, or from a fear that a partial withdrawal would further exacerbate the vulnerability of the troops who remained in China. Stimson’s rebuff served to forestall further debate on the issue for several years. In 1934 the Army’s War Plans Division again raised the possibility of a withdrawal, but Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur discouraged the WPD from pursuing the inquiry. In a November 1934 memo, MacArthur reminded the WPD

38 Patrick J. Hurley to Henry L. Stimson, letter of 9 April 1931, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 128, WPD 3533-1, 2. While this passage does not mention the “other Governments concerned” by name, Hurley is clearly alluding to Japan, a fact that would not have been lost on Stimson.
that “the desires of the War Department and their recommendations are well understood by the State Department. To present the matter again in this formal way at this critical time will merely act as an irritant.”

The longstanding interdepartmental dispute finally came to a boil in July of 1937, when heavy fighting broke out between Japanese and Chinese forces in the wake of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. This development served to heighten the War Department’s concerns over the vulnerability and exposure of the China garrison, and resulted in yet another formal request for its withdrawal. Once again, this request was denied, an action that so infuriated Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson that he took the unusual step of contacting President Franklin Roosevelt in an effort to convince him to override the State Department’s decision. The tone of Johnson’s letter suggests that he was giving vent to many years’ worth of pent-up frustrations:

On further inquiry I find that this action of the State Department in ignoring military advice has been characteristic of its attitude for many years past. Many instances could be cited. My investigation discloses that this is an attitude not assumed by the foreign office of any other nation. On the contrary, none embarks upon a foreign policy having any military implications without giving the fullest consideration to the advice of the responsible military authorities.

Louis Morton, who investigated the history of U.S. forces in China in a 1960 essay in The Pacific Historical Review found no record of Roosevelt’s response to Johnson’s letter. Perhaps, Morton suggested, the increasingly fluid and volatile situation within China finally convinced the State Department to take action. On September 15, two weeks after the dispatch of Johnson’s letter, plans were set in motion to bring an end to the Army’s mission in China, a process that was completed in March of the following year.

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40 Douglas MacArthur to A.C. of S., War Plans Division, 27 November 1934, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 128, WPD 3533-3.
41 Louis Johnson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, memorandum of 1 September 1937, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 128, WPD 3533-1.
suggested that the ongoing dispute over the status of the China garrison helped lay the groundwork for the establishment of closer and more formalized ties between the State and War Departments in the late 1930s, “by emphasizing in dramatic form the weaknesses and frustrations arising from a lack of co-ordination.” While this contention is impossible to disprove, the most that can be said in its support is that it may have been one of a number of factors driving civil-military rapprochement, a point Morton himself readily concedes. For much of the preceding two decades, it had been simply one more venue in which the expressed interests and preferences of U.S. military officers were subordinated to the wishes of the country’s civilian diplomats.

The Navy Department also experienced its share of awkward interactions with representatives of the State Department during the interwar years. One example occurred during the Anglo-American negotiations that were conducted prior to the London Naval Conference of 1930. The purpose of these talks was to seek a solution to the impasse that had led to the failure of the 1927 Geneva Conference. As noted in Chapter 4, the U.S. and British delegations had found themselves deadlocked on a number of questions relating to limits on cruiser types and tonnage. The United States Navy, anticipating operations in the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean, advocated the construction of a limited number of large cruisers, whose greater endurance would compensate for its relative lack of overseas bases. The Royal Navy, by contrast, had an abundant network of bases, but found itself charged with the responsibility for defending the seaborne commerce of a global empire. British naval leaders thus sought a larger number of smaller cruisers, whose primary role was envisioned as the protection of imperial trade routes. Confronted with British demands for a tonnage allowance far in excess of what

43 Ibid., 73.
they believed the U.S. Congress would be willing to authorize, the U.S. delegates dug in their heels, and the conference had broken up with no agreement having been reached.

Even after the breakup of the 1927 naval conference, Geneva had continued to host a succession of conversations on arms control, conducted under the auspices of the League of Nations’ Preparatory Commission on Disarmament (although the United States had refused to join the League, U.S. representatives did participate in meetings of the Preparatory Commission). The chief priority of U.S. representatives in these talks was devising a way to bridge the “cruiser gap” with Great Britain. On April 22, 1929, Hugh Gibson, the Chairman of the U.S. delegation, proposed a possible solution:

…a formula that would assess the equivalent value of ships in terms of combat effectiveness instead of relying exclusively on tonnage and gun dimension…[The impasse on naval arms limitation] could be…reduced to a conflict between the British desire for 6-inch-gun cruisers in sufficient quantity to satisfy her needs and the American demand for 8-inch guns and mathematical equality in ships with Great Britain. The formula offered hope for a solution of the cruiser problem and a new approach to the question of parity.  

Gibson’s proposal touched off an effort to formulate what came to be known as the “yardstick,” a means that would allow for comparisons between military vessels of differing capabilities. The idea was greeted with great enthusiasm by the representatives of the international community assembled in Geneva. This wound up placing both Gibson and his superiors, Secretary of State Stimson and President Herbert Hoover, in an awkward position, for “the response indicated a belief that the yardstick actually existed, and that it had been worked out by the President and his aides with the mathematical exactitude expected of a highly successful engineer.” Indeed, the British Ambassador in Washington responded to Gibson’s April 22 speech by approaching

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45 Ibid., 448.
Stimson with a request for further details on the proposed “yardstick.” Recounting the conversation in a memorandum to Gibson, Stimson confessed:

I told him…that the proposal or suggestion, which was not in any way completed, was merely to provide for the elaboration of a formula which would permit a common estimate of the strategic usefulness of a ship in one class to be made in terms of a ship in another class contained within the same category, giving as an example the cruiser question as it appears in the British and American points of view.46

Indeed, even describing Gibson’s proposal as “not in any way completed” may have been an exaggeration on Stimson’s part. Not only did no definitive formula for the yardstick exist, the process of developing such a formula had not even begun. The U.S. Navy’s General Board had not even been consulted regarding the practicability of such a formula, a fact that led historian Raymond O’Connor to remark drily that within the Hoover administration Gibson’s initial proposal “had not been explored too carefully.”47

The enthusiasm with which the assembled delegates at Geneva greeted the notion of the yardstick forced the Hoover administration’s hand, however. At the end of May, Gibson’s proposal was finally brought before the General Board in an effort to solicit the Navy’s views. The response could not have pleased Hoover or Stimson, as “The admirals considered it highly improbable that an accurate computation of the combat value of a naval vessel could be made, or that agreement could be reached on the weight to be assigned to the factors involved.”48 After considerable prodding from Hoover and Stimson, the General Board reluctantly produced a formula for comparing ships within a single class, but it “insisted that the formula could not be used to evaluate the fighting quality of ships in different categories.”49 This was as far as the

46 Secretary of State to the Chairman of the American Delegation (Gibson), 6 May 1929, Department of State, FRUS: 1929 (Washington, GPO, 1943), I, 101. Emphasis added.
47 O’Connor, “The ‘Yardstick’ and Naval Disarmament, 448.
48 Ibid., 451-2.
49 Ibid., 453.
General Board was prepared to go, and further negotiations, including a face-to-face meeting between the Board, Hoover, and Stimson failed to produce a breakthrough:

There was no meeting of the minds during these exchanges between the civilians and the naval officers. Their training and point of view often made it difficult, and their responsibilities and prerogatives often made it impossible.\textsuperscript{50}

The “yardstick” initially proposed by Gibson, greeted with so much enthusiasm by the British delegates, and then sought after by Hoover and Stimson, was never developed. Raymond O’Connor observes that given the General Board’s reservations about a mechanism that would, of necessity, be based on subjective estimates of the differing capabilities of naval vessels, the development of a viable yardstick would have been a difficult task under the best of circumstances. The fact that the Navy was not consulted on the issue until after Gibson’s initial proposal in Geneva meant it was likely doomed from the start. In the end, this failure mattered little. The rapid improvement in Anglo-American relations that began in 1929 enabled the two countries’ diplomats to identify solutions to the issues that had previously divided them, paving the way for the London Naval Treaty of 1930. It should be noted, however, that this achievement occurred in spite of the nature of U.S. civil-military coordination, rather than as a result of it.

Each of the incidents outlined above contributed to the development of a sense among many military officers that their viewpoints and professional expertise were held in low regard by State Department officials. But the emergence of the climate of disintegration that characterized interwar U.S. foreign policy was fueled in more subtle ways as well. The 1920s and 1930s witnessed several instances in which U.S. military officers directly solicited the guidance of the State Department (or other civilian authorities) on questions of national policy. Far too often, these requests went unanswered, with the result that those tasked with respon-

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 461.
sibility for the defense of U.S. interests overseas frequently found themselves uncertain of the exact nature of the policies they were expected to enforce.

One such episode occurred in 1919, and originated with a memorandum written by the Joint Army-Navy Planning Committee (JPC).\(^{51}\) The JPC was engaged in a review of its existing portfolio of war plans. In an October 28 memorandum to the Joint Board, the members of the JPC wrote that before any further war plans could be developed, it would be necessary for them to understand the objectives of U.S. national policy, for in their words “the National Policy…is, in fact, the foundation of any War Plan.”\(^{52}\) The authors of the memo specifically identified Japan as a potential foe against which it would be impossible to draft adequate war plans in the absence of a complete understanding of the objectives of U.S. foreign policy:

From a consideration of our national interests in the Pacific, present and future, from the point of view of 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 own trade and prestige in Asia?\(^{53}\)

Much as Franklin Roosevelt had done in his proposal to Robert Lansing earlier that year, the members of the JPC took pains to note that “These questions are not for the War and Navy Departments to answer, but for the State Department.”\(^{54}\) While disclaiming responsibility for the determination of U.S. policy, however, it does appear that the JPC was at least hoping that its memorandum might spur discussion within the State Department. In a handwritten note accompanying the memorandum, Navy Captain Harry E. Yarnell wrote “If we cannot succeed in

\(^{51}\) One of the most important of the Joint Planning Committee’s responsibilities was drafting and refining war plans. See Chapter Six.

\(^{52}\) Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, “National Policy and War Plans,” 28 October 1919, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 23, 1.

\(^{53}\) Ibid, 1.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 1.
obtaining a statement of Policy, we might succeed in educating them as to the relation that exists between War and Policy which in itself would be of great value.”55 The memorandum concluded not only by requesting that the Joint Board forward the JPC’s questions to the State Department, but also by recommending that the Undersecretary of State be appointed as a member of the Joint Board (this may have been the genesis of the 1921 proposal submitted to Charles Evans Hughes by Denby and Weeks).56 In accordance with the JPC’s request, the Joint Board forwarded the request to the State Department, but no reply was ever received. Louis Morton observes that the likely reason for this was that “uncertainty about national policy with regard to the Pacific islands was not confined to the military and naval planners.”57 U.S. policy with respect to Asia was in a state of flux. 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.58 This lack of consensus within the government made it impossible to provide an answer to the question put forward by the Joint Planning Committee.

The senior U.S. Army and Navy commanders in the Philippine Islands were no more successful in securing a response when they put the same question to their superiors fifteen years later. On March 1, 1934, Admiral F. B. Upham, commanding the U.S. Navy’s Asiatic Fleet, and General Frank Parker, the commanding officer of the U.S. Army’s Philippine Department, drafted a joint letter to their superiors in Washington. Their chief purpose in writing the letter appears to have been to protest that the resources at their disposal were insufficient to allow them to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them under the then-current version of War Plan

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55 Harry E. Yarnell to John W. Gulick, undated, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 23.
56 JPC to JB, 28 October 1919, 2.
58 As noted in Chapter 3, the Jones Act of 1916 had declared that it was the intention of the United States government that the Philippines were to be granted their independence, but the Act did not establish when that independence would be granted. Moreover, the likelihood that the Republican Party would reclaim the White House following the election of 1920 meant that many of the steps taken by the Wilson administration with respect to decolonization might be delayed or even completely reversed.
Orange. But in addition, they also specifically requested that their commanding officers inform them of the objectives of U.S. national policy in the Philippines:

1. Since naval and military policies rest upon the National Policy, a decision should be had on the following questions:
   a. Is it the National Policy to defend the Philippine Islands, whether or not they be given their independence?
   b. Is it the National Policy to withdraw our defensive forces and voluntarily relinquish our control and responsibility for defense of the Philippine Islands?60

From the perspective of the local commanders, these were not unreasonable questions. At the time Upham and Parker drafted their letter, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was still working its way through the halls of Congress, and it was not yet clear what obligations the United States might retain with respect to the Philippines, or for how long these obligations would have to be upheld. This uncertainty, coupled with the continuing growth of Japanese power in the western Pacific and the very limited forces at their disposal, meant that the two commanders had reason to seek additional guidance from Washington. However, any hopes that Upham and Parker had that they could wring the desired clarification from their superiors were quickly dashed. While the Joint Board responded at length to the military considerations raised in Upham and Parker’s letter, the request for a clarification of U.S. intentions with respect to the Philippines received no response. As Louis Morton notes, “Clarification of national policy was outside the province of the Washington planners.”61 From the available documents, it does not appear that Upham and Parker’s question was ever forwarded to the State Department, perhaps because past experiences had convinced senior military officers that such questions would fall on deaf ears.

59 Both the Upham-Parker letter and the Joint Board’s response to it are addressed at greater length in Chapter 6.
60 F. B. Upham and Frank Parker to the Chief of Naval Operations and Army Chief of Staff, 1 March 1934, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 533, M-1421, Roll 10, 2.
The frustration felt by many within the armed forces over their inability to receive useful feedback from U.S. diplomats surfaced once again during a 1939 debate over a suggestion put forward by Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson that the government should establish a National Defense College. In a memorandum prepared for Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, Brigadier General George V. Strong outlined the advantages and disadvantages of such a move, as identified by the Army War Plans Division:

Briefly, the advantages to be derived are found to lie principally in a better understanding between the various executive departments concerned in the preparation for national defense in peace and with the conduct of actual war. Opposed to the practical attainment of such advantage was found to be the unlikelihood that executive departments other than the War and Navy Departments would participate in the work of the National Defense College, by sending personnel of sufficiently high caliber or those who could be expected to hold responsible positions in time of war.  

The War Plans Division’s assessment, as summarized by Strong, neatly encapsulated the substantial gap that existed between the aspirations and experiences of the interwar U.S. military. In expressing its desire for “a better understanding between the various executive departments,” the WPD was reiterating the longstanding belief (voiced by Roosevelt in 1919, and by Denby and Weeks in 1921) that the U.S. armed forces had a significant role to play in the conduct of the nation’s foreign affairs. At the same time, the WPD anticipated that other cabinet departments (i.e., the State Department) would be reluctant to support the work of the proposed National Defense College. The frequent refusal by U.S. diplomats to engage in conversations with military officers suggests that the WPD had reason for pessimism. Strong went on to note that the muddled state of communications between the armed services and the State Department greatly complicated the task of drafting war plans:

Frequently in joint planning tasks, the Joint Planning Committee has had to work in the dark with respect to what the national policy now is with respect to a specific problem, or

62 George V. Strong, “Memorandum for the Chief of Staff,” 22 July 1939, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 89, WPD 2500-6, 1.
what it may be expected to be. The Joint Planning Committee has not always been in a position to seek authoritative expressions of facts or opinion from representatives of other Executive Departments, in particular, the State Department. As the intended recipient of Strong’s memorandum, Marshall would doubtless have been quite familiar with a point that his deputy left unsaid, namely that efforts by military officers to seek “authoritative expressions of facts or opinion” from the State Department had often failed to receive a response. Strong’s lament is one of the clearest expressions of frustration with the State Department that appears during the interwar decades.

What accounts for the behavior of State Department officials during the 1920s and 1930s? Why were military officers and their civilian representatives almost routinely excluded from discussions of U.S. foreign policy for much of the interwar period? The answer appears to lie within the ideology and mindset of the interwar Secretaries of State, and to a lesser degree with the mindset of the interwar U.S. military.

To some extent, the State Department’s reluctance to engage with uniformed servicemen in discussions of national policy may have been nothing more than a reflection of the general attitude of anti-militarism that characterized the post-World War I United States. As noted in Chapter 4, in the aftermath of that conflict a substantial segment of the American public had become deeply suspicious of military organizations in general. A popular argument held that the mere possession of large quantities of armaments would inevitably lead to warfare. As representatives of the military establishment, uniformed officers were inherently suspect, regarded as reckless warmongers whose behavior, if left unchecked, would inevitably bring disaster upon the nation. This attitude had not been unknown in the United States even prior to its entry into the First World War. Woodrow Wilson’s first Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, was one of the most outspoken anti-militarists ever to hold office. Ernest May recounts Bryan’s reaction

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63 Ibid., 6.
to a recommendation by the Joint Board (made during a period of heightened tensions with
Japan) that the U.S. fleet undertake movements to “anticipate the possibility of war”:  

According to one member of the Cabinet, David F. Houston, this recommendation
angered Bryan, who “flared up...got red in the face and was very emphatic. He thun-
dered out that army and navy officers could not be trusted to say what we should or
should not do, till we actually got into war; that we were discussing not how to wage war,
but how not to get into war.”64

This overt mistrust of the motives of military officers gained a considerable public following in
the United States as a result of the nation’s experiences during the World War I.

For the most part, however, the behavior of the interwar State Department appears to
have been driven by something far more complex than simple anti-militarism. None of Bryan’s
successors as Secretary of State appear to have shared his open disdain for the representatives of
the U.S. armed forces. Most of them, however, do appear to have broadly agreed with the
sentiment behind his outburst—the notion that the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs was a matter
best left in the hands of civilians. Attaching a single ideological label to the behavior of
American diplomats of this period is somewhat hazardous. After all, the interwar Secretaries of
State differed substantially in both their personal and political backgrounds, and each faced a
unique set of international problems during his years in office. Nevertheless, State Department
officials, with a consistency that transcended both individual personalities and political party
affiliations, exhibited an outlook that, according to historian Lester Brune:

Reflect[ed] some variety of liberal internationalism described by President Wilson or
other advocates of world order without a power balance, [which] sought to inspire other
nations to adopt peaceful, moral attitudes as the means for securing international
stability.65

As biographer Betty Glad wrote of Charles Evans Hughes, they devoted themselves to “what [Hughes] called the ‘most distinctive’ enterprise of his times—the development of institutions for the promotion of international arbitration, adjudication, and conciliation, as well as the codification of international law.” In the view of many of these men, the experiences of the First World War had demonstrated the futility of seeking to achieve national objectives through the use of force. Because they held this view, it does appear that State Department officials tended to regard themselves as the sole legitimate architects of U.S. foreign policy. If it were possible for any and all international disputes to be resolved by negotiation, and for aggression to be discouraged by institutionalized norms of civilized behavior, then the use or threat of force would no longer be recognized as a valid means of achieving a nation’s desired foreign policy goals. And, if the use of force (i.e., warfare) had no role to play as a tool of national policy, then consultations with military officers or their civilian representatives would become unnecessary.

Historians of the interwar period have noted that the conviction that Betty Glad attributed to Charles Evans Hughes with respect to the efficacy of negotiation and diplomacy as means of resolving international disputes also manifested itself in the behavior of Hughes’ successors. Frank B. Kellogg, who served as Secretary of State in the Coolidge administration, was one of the principal architects of the Kellogg-Briand pact, whose signatories repudiated the use of force as a tool of national policy. U.S. acceptance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which was ratified by the Senate in January of 1929 with only a single dissenting vote, may have represented the high-water mark for the liberal internationalist vision of foreign affairs, but a determined faith in the ability of negotiation to resolve disputes continued to characterize the behavior of State

67 Ironically, the Pact’s signatories included the nations whose aggression would eventually lead to the outbreak of the Second World War, including Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union.
Department officials well into the 1930s. Dorothy Borg once famously characterized Cordell Hull as a man who “believed, with a conviction too profound to be influenced by any external factors, that the most basic problems of international relations could be solved by moral education.”68 Perhaps the best example of this attitude may be found in Hull’s reaction to the outbreak of war between Japan and China in July of 1937. In a speech given shortly after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Hull called for a renewed international commitment to what he termed the “eight pillars of enduring peace,” which he had first proposed at a conference of Western Hemisphere nations in Buenos Aires the preceding December.69 In an essay on the State Department in *Pearl Harbor as History*, James C. Thomson quotes Hull as declaring “I never lost an opportunity…to state and restate these principles…To me these doctrines were as vital in international relations as the Ten Commandments are in personal relations.”70 Hull’s reluctance to consider the adoption of any measures sterner than diplomatic protests, however, have led his critics to charge that his approach to dealing with Japan was ineffective, and that his “preachments seemed a cover for inaction.”71

The prevalence of such attitudes among State Department officials has made them the target of some criticism from scholars of the interwar decades. The most telling charge is that the interwar diplomats’ sincere conviction that negotiation and mediation could resolve any international dispute, no matter how severe, resulted in the development of something of a blind spot regarding the value (and in some cases the necessity) of military force as an adjunct to traditional diplomacy. In dealings with nations who, like the United States, were broadly

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71 Ibid.
supportive of the international status quo, this attitude probably had a positive impact on the outcome of negotiations. It has been suggested that the compromise on the cruiser issue that made possible the London Naval Treaty of 1930 was achieved because the diplomats representing the United States and Great Britain were absolutely convinced that war between their nations was completely inconceivable, with the result that they were prepared to trust one another to a far greater extent than their respective military advisors recommended. But it left them at a disadvantage in dealing with “revisionist states,” those whose governments sought to “increase, not just preserve, their core values and to improve their position in the system.”

In Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence, Betty Glad charges that her subject failed to understand that the guarantees of respect for Chinese independence and territorial integrity negotiated during the Washington Conference of 1921-22 were only effective to the extent that the Nine-Power Pact’s signatories were willing to enforce them:

> States will not in the long run be restrained by either their own promises or abstract principles when they can secure goals they consider important with a relatively cheap expenditure of their military, economic, or political resources…Japan, in this case, was not likely to be restrained for long by paper promises which ran contrary to the reality of her military hegemony in the Far East.

In September of 1931, the Japanese military launched an invasion of the northeastern Chinese territory of Manchuria, swiftly conquering it and establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo. The U.S. response over the next several years exposed both Henry L. Stimson and Cordell Hull to the same charge that Glad leveled against Charles Evans Hughes. Stimson held the Secretary of State’s office at the time of the Japanese invasion, and thus held responsibility for directing the U.S. response to what was clearly an act of international aggression. After a period of initial vacillation, he concluded that the United States needed to express in very strong terms its

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73 Glad, Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence, 302.
opposition to Japan’s actions. On January 7, 1932, with President Hoover’s approval, Stimson dispatched a communiqué to the governments of Japan and China which read, in part:

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 what would eventually become known as the “Stimson Doctrine,” a strict policy of non-recognition of the legitimacy of Japanese conquests in China, or of the puppet regimes established by the Japanese to administer these territories. When Cordell Hull succeeded Stimson as Secretary of State in 1933, he chose to continue the policies established by his predecessor. 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. It rapidly became quite clear, however, that the announcement of a policy of nonrecognition was as far as the U.S. government was prepared to go, a decision that led historian Howard Jablon to characterize the State Department’s behavior as choosing to “resist from a position of weakness.” In brief, the charge leveled against the interwar diplomats is that in their faith in the power of negotiation led them to regard force “constituted a separate category and last resort to be used only if diplomacy failed.” As a result, in their conduct of U.S. foreign affairs, they often failed to fully utilize all of the tools at their disposal.

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74 Henry Stimson to Consul General at Nanking (Peck), 7 January 1932, Department of State, FRUS: 1932 (Washington: GPO, 1948), III, 7-8.
75 Jablon, Crossroads of Decision: The State Department and Foreign Policy, 1933-1937 (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 138. Jablon writes “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 in any way.” Ibid., 136. Jablon argues that a policy of nonrecognition unsupported by other measures was the worst of all possible worlds. The mere existence of the nonrecognition policy was a constant irritant in Japanese-American relations, but in the absence of any additional measures it was also ineffective in convincing the Japanese government to modify its policies.
U.S. military personnel frequently complained of what they saw as the cavalier treatment they received at the hands of State Department officials, as the preceding examples illustrate. The most common refrain heard in these complaints was the perception that their opinions and concerns were not taken seriously by civilian diplomats. Yet if the State Department and its personnel can be legitimately criticized for their attempts to keep military personnel at arms’ length in discussions of U.S. national policy, it also appears that the military was to some degree complicit in its own marginalization. As noted in Chapter 1, several historians, most prominently Russell Weigley, have attributed this phenomenon to long-institutionalized U.S. norms of civilian control over the military. While the roots of this tradition can be traced back to the earliest days of the Republic, Weigley cited the very active role played by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War as a key moment in its development. Despite the presence of such assertive and capable individuals as Ulysses Grant and William T. Sherman, it was Lincoln who was “the chief Union strategist of the Civil War; the military conduct of the war was essentially his…”

Lincoln’s behavior (and, by extension, that of Grant and Sherman, through their acceptance of Lincoln’s authority as commander in chief) established a clear definition of roles that would persist for decades after his death:

The ready, uncarping military acceptance of civilian supremacy that thus characterized the arrival of genuinely professional American military leadership during the Civil War became the established American tradition of civil-military relations for more than eighty years thereafter.

Weigley argued that this tradition became more and more deeply ingrained within U.S. society throughout the post-Civil War decades, with support peaking in the years immediately preceding U.S. entry into World War II. In practice, this norm of civil-military relations manifested itself

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78 Ibid., 39.
in a belief held by many (though by no means all) military personnel, who regarded their exclusion from the national policymaking process as completely legitimate. Numerous displays of this attitude can be found in the interwar decades.

Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon can be found in the efforts of War and Navy Department officials to secure closer coordination with the State Department. Both Franklin Roosevelt in his 1919 letter to Robert Lansing and Edwin Denby and John Weeks in their 1921 letter to Charles Evans Hughes took pains to disclaim any responsibility for policy formulation on the part of their departments. Before introducing his proposal for a “War Portfolio,” Roosevelt assured Lansing of his acceptance of the fact that “the foreign policy of our government is in the hands of the State Department.” Denby and Weeks also took pains to cast their departments in a subordinate position relative to the State Department, observing only that “The development of War Plans of the Army and Navy should be based upon the national policies they are to support.” The request by Denby and Weeks for State Department participation in meetings of the Joint Board did include one passage that suggested an expanded role for the military in national policymaking, but only under specific circumstances. It requested the Secretary of State:

…To refer to The Joint Board those national policies which may require the potential or dynamic support of the Army and Navy. In such cases The Joint Board will state its opinion as to whether the Army and Navy as at that time constituted and disposed are capable of supporting the policy in question. If this opinion is in the negative, The Joint Board will make recommendations as to the military and navy dispositions which are necessary for the effective support of the policy.

It was likely this passage to which Hughes was referring when he dismissively labeled Denby and Weeks’ letter “a suggestion that…matters of foreign policy be submitted to the Joint Board.”

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79 Roosevelt to Lansing, 1 May 1919, 1.
80 Denby and Weeks to Hughes, 7 December 1921, 1.
81 Ibid., 2.
in his December 12 note to Henry Fletcher. An alternative explanation, however, is that what Denby and Weeks sought was not a role for the Joint Board in the establishment of national policy, but rather the creation of a forum in which the Board’s members could be made aware of the policies which they might someday be called upon to enforce. The behavior of U.S. military officers in the ensuing decades was more consistent with this interpretation than it was with the image conjured up by Hughes’ note, a vision in which the armed forces would possess de facto veto power over the conduct of American foreign affairs.

The extent to which many of the U.S. Army’s officers viewed themselves as passive bystanders in the policy formulation process was dramatically illustrated during one of its periodic clashes with the State Department over the China garrison. In 1936, Lieutenant Colonel L.T. Gerow reiterated the Army’s desire to see its troops removed from China in a conversation with Stanley Hornbeck. Hornbeck “inquired why [the Army] did not seek to have America’s policy in that region changed,” which, he suggested, “was more logical than requesting the removal of the military forces supporting that policy.”

This comment met with a vigorous rebuttal from Gerow:

I told him that the War Department was not the State policy making agency, that being a State Department responsibility. But that the War Department was responsible for the military aspects of any policy adopted and that it was a duty of the War Department to point out the extent to which we might become involved through military commitments and make recommendations accordingly.

In Gerow’s view, the most that the Army could legitimately do was to request that its forces be removed from their exposed position in China. But he seemed offended by the

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suggestion that the Army or the War Department would actively lobby for changes in the foreign policy of the United States.

The reluctance of U.S. Army officers to interfere in the policymaking process manifested itself in more personal ways as well. In his biography of George Marshall, Mark Stoler notes that his subject shared with many of his contemporaries a belief “…that political activity was antithetical to his professional responsibilities and values and that officers should have nothing to do with partisan politics.”

Marshall’s convictions in this regard were so strong that he even refused to vote in elections, a practice followed by a majority of the Army’s officers during the interwar period. The belief that the decision to pursue a military career required the surrender of certain privileges of citizenship was articulated by Dwight Eisenhower in an address to an audience composed of Filipino ROTC graduates in 1939:

As members of the Reserve Officers Training Corps you are primarily citizens, and secondarily soldiers. In the first of these capacities you enjoy all the rights and privileges of any other citizen; in the other you are compelled to forego such of those rights and privileges as involve participation in the political activities, decisions and policies of your nation. This distinction must be meticulously observed, because, in a democracy, the military is and must remain subordinate to civilian power.

There were, of course, individuals within the Army who did not subscribe to the notion that military men should excuse themselves from conversations on national policy. Douglas MacArthur’s military career included numerous instances in which he sought to inject himself into political discussions, both in the U.S. and in his capacity as military advisor to Philippine President Manuel Quezon. MacArthur’s willingness to engage in this sort of behavior, however, was frowned upon by many of his fellow officers. Kerry Irish, in an essay recounting the

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deterioration of the personal relationship between MacArthur and his longtime deputy Dwight Eisenhower, cites MacArthur’s repeated violations of the interwar Army’s taboo on involvement in political debates as one of the chief causes of the falling out between the two men.87

As noted in Chapter 1, this attitude with respect to policymaking and politics appears to have been far less of an article of faith among U.S. Navy officers. Naval personnel consistently displayed a much greater willingness to inject themselves into discussions of U.S. national policy, although their efforts to influence the behavior of the nation’s civilian policymakers were no more successful than those undertaken by the Army. What explains the difference in behavior between the two services with respect to their assertiveness in the foreign policy process?

To a considerable degree, the Navy’s greater sensitivity to matters of policy stemmed from differences in how the two services perceived their respective roles with respect to national defense. The parsimonious appropriations allocated for national defense during the interwar years had a pronounced impact upon both services, but they were felt far more keenly by the Army (see Chapter Six). Reduced to a virtual skeleton force, the Army’s leadership realized that its capabilities were extremely limited, and, as a result, it would be unable to play a significant role in the early stages of any conflict in which the United States became involved. Only after its ranks had been filled out by mass conscription would the Army become a force capable of projecting substantial power into distant regions of the globe. Very few of the interwar Army’s personnel were actually deployed outside the Western Hemisphere (the garrison in the Philippines was very much an anomaly in this respect). Thus, the Army could afford to adopt a somewhat detached attitude with respect to U.S. foreign policy.

87 Ibid., 468-9, 472-3.
The U.S. Navy’s situation was considerably different. While annual budget appropriations had not been sufficient to maintain a fleet of the size envisioned by the General Board, the U.S. Navy remained a very formidable force throughout the interwar decades. Naval leaders were also acutely aware of the state to which the Army had been reduced as a result of interwar cost-cutting. Should the United States find itself at war, the gravely weakened condition of its sister service meant that the Navy would be forced to shoulder most of the responsibility for national defense, at least in the early stages of a conflict. As Fred Greene observes, the Navy’s leaders saw it as their duty “to meet any attack while the army mobilized its full strength behind this shield.”

Because of this, the Navy was forced to pay closer attention to international developments and crises, as it might be expected to respond to them on relatively short notice. The difference in outlook between the two services was summarized in a memorandum written by Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig in 1937:

This difference of views is natural, perhaps, since the Navy is practically ready for instant action at all times and accordingly looks far afield in employing the Fleet, whereas the Army is far from ready for a venture of any magnitude, but is, nevertheless, responsible for the direct defense of the coastal and land frontiers of our homeland and overseas possessions.

Because of the necessity that it be “practically ready for instant action,” the Navy was also far more active than the Army in seeking to identify and plan against specific threats. From the earliest years of the twentieth century, the Navy had identified Japan as the nation whose policies were most likely to lead to conflict with the United States. Throughout the post-World War I years, Japan remained the focus of the vast majority of the Navy’s war planning efforts. As will

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89 Malin Craig, “Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations,” 7 December 1937, NA, RG 165, E 282, Box 269, F Orange 2720-104, 1. This memorandum was written during a period of intense disagreement between the Army and Navy members of the Joint Board’s Joint Planning Committee. The subject of this disagreement was an ongoing revision of War Plan Orange. This issue is examined in greater detail in Chapter Six. The memorandum in question appears to have been nothing more than a draft, as a handwritten note reading “not used” appears on the document. Nevertheless, it accurately captures the fundamental differences in the organizational outlooks of the Army and Navy in the late 1930s.
be shown below, this planning process continued in spite of assurances from the State Department that the United States possessed no interests in East Asia of sufficient importance to necessitate war with Japan.

An additional clue that helps to explain the greater political activism of the Navy during the interwar period is found in William R. Braisted’s *Diplomats in Blue*. The book is a history of the experiences of U.S. Navy officers in China during the 1920s and early 1930s. Like the Army, the Navy also maintained a presence in China throughout much of the interwar period. But Braisted’s work highlights a key distinction between the roles and responsibilities of naval personnel and those of their Army counterparts. Throughout the period of their deployment in China, the U.S. Army contingent was almost always deployed in close proximity to major cities, areas where civilian diplomats or consular officials were also present. As the State Department made clear on many occasions, the primary responsibility of the Army’s forces in China was to support its personnel in the performance of their duties. By contrast, the duties of naval officers, often of relatively junior rank (such as the gunboat commanders of the various river patrols) often took them to extremely isolated regions of the Chinese interior. It was not uncommon for these officers to find themselves confronted with situations—such as friction between competing Chinese factions or between the Chinese and American citizens or Europeans—in which they were the sole representatives of American authority. As a result, they were often forced to assume responsibilities that under other circumstances would have been performed by civilian diplomats, such as negotiations with local political or military leaders for the purpose of defending American treaty rights. The need to assume these traditionally diplomatic responsibilities likely had the effect of eroding the taboo against military involvement in the policymaking process that was so prevalent within the Army. As the interwar years progressed,
many of these junior officers subsequently worked their way up through the Navy’s ranks, and several of them attained positions of considerable power and authority by the time of the U.S. entry into World War II. As these men attained senior posts within the Navy, they brought with them the tradition of (at least limited) independence from civilian authority that had been forced upon them earlier in their careers. This may, at least to some extent, explain the greater willingness of naval personnel to publicly express their opinions on matters of national policy vis-à-vis their colleagues in the interwar Army.

The state of disintegration that plagued U.S. civil-military relations for much of the interwar period appears to have abated somewhat beginning in the mid-1930s. The administration of Franklin Roosevelt saw several initiatives launched whose objective was to bridge the gap that had emerged between the nation’s top civilian and military policymakers. Unfortunately, while in some ways these were valuable (and long overdue) steps, their overall impact in bringing the perspectives of the civilian diplomats and military officers into alignment was less than might have been hoped.

The first of these initiatives was the appointment of a permanent liaison from the State Department to the Joint Planning Committee. As had been the case in both 1919 and 1921, the proposal that led to this breakthrough originated within the War and Navy Departments. In November of 1935, Secretary of War Harry Woodring and Navy Secretary Claude Swanson approached Cordell Hull with a proposal. The driving concern of both service secretaries was what they regarded as the dangerously weakened strategic position of the United States in the western Pacific:

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. 90

Woodring and Swanson added that as a result of these concerns, the Joint Board was embarking on what they termed “a comprehensive re-evaluation of our military (including naval) position in the Far East,” an effort in which they desired the assistance of the State Department. In order to ensure that the Joint Board’s efforts were based upon a complete and accurate understanding of the foreign policy objectives of the United States, they asked Hull to appoint “a representative of the State Department…to the Joint Planning Committee…to which will be entrusted the preliminary investigation and consideration of this problem.” 91

This was hardly the first attempt on the part of representatives of the U.S. Army and Navy to secure State Department guidance on what they regarding as pressing matters of national policy. What set the 1935 request apart from its predecessors, however, was the State Department’s prompt response. On November 27, just one day after Woodring and Swanson had dispatched their letter, Hull dispatched a reply. In two short paragraphs, Hull acknowledged the War and Navy Departments’ request and announced the appointment of Stanley Hornbeck, Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, to serve as the State Department’s representative on the JPC. 92 Hull’s letter exhibited none of the reluctance to engage in discussions of national policy with U.S. military personnel that had characterized the behavior of his predecessors, and in this sense it represented a rather radical change in behavior on the part of the State Department. On

90 Harry Woodring and Claude Swanson to Secretary of State, 26 November 1935, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 163, WPD-3887. This language is strikingly close to that used by Upham and Parker in their 1934 letter. Those U.S. Army officers who by the early 1930s were arguing in favor of a complete withdrawal from the western Pacific also couched their appeals in language virtually identical to that seen here. See Chapter 6.
91 Ibid.
92 Cordell Hull to Secretary of War, 27 November 1935, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 163, WPD-3387.
December 5, Woodring informed Hull that Colonel Walter Krueger had been assigned to keep Hornbeck apprised of upcoming JPC meetings.93

The long-delayed appointment of a permanent liaison between the State Department and the Joint Planning Committee was undoubtedly a step in the right direction. However, the fact that the State Department had finally consented to provide advice to military planners in no way guaranteed that its advice would be heeded. This was demonstrated by the U.S. military’s reaction to the statements made by Hornbeck during his initial meetings with the JPC. One of Hornbeck’s first tasks as liaison to the JPC was to defend the continuing presence of the Army’s 15th Infantry in China. While acknowledging that “Our forces could easily be destroyed,” Hornbeck argued that their presence constituted a formidable deterrent to further Japanese aggression, as “they represent our potential strength…[and] there is a natural hesitation to create a crisis by any aggression…”94 Given the longstanding feud between the War and State Departments over the Army presence in China, it is unsurprising that Hornbeck’s statement received a chilly response. Louis Morton, with considerable understatement, notes that “The Army planners did not agree with Hornbeck.”95

The Army’s differences with Hornbeck may have led to vocal disagreements, but in the end the War Department, as it had done throughout the interwar period, ultimately accepted the State Department’s prerogative to set policy. A 1938 episode, however, resulted in the Joint Planning Committee (particularly its naval members) largely ignoring specific pronouncements issued by career diplomats. In January of 1938, Hornbeck and his colleague Maxwell Hamilton gave a series of lectures on U.S. East Asian policy to the students and faculty of the Army War

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93 Woodring to Secretary of State, 5 December 1935, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 163, WPD-3887.
94 Stanley Hornbeck, First Meeting, Joint Planning Committee, undated, JB 305, Ser. 573, Joint Planning Committee Development File.
95 Morton, “Army and Marines on the China Station,” 68.
College. One of the chief arguments raised by these lectures was that Asia was not regarded as a region in which the United States possessed vital national interests:

Hamilton and Hornbeck explained that although the nation strived to uphold law and order in international affairs, the United States had no interests in China which were worth fighting for against Japan. On January 10, Hamilton outlined America’s “tangible and intangible” interests in China, emphasizing that even the tangible interests were “not worth a fight.”

These lectures repeated a point first raised by Hornbeck in his initial meeting with the Joint Planning Committee in 1935—with regard to East Asia, the United States was in a position of advocating “Peace at any price.” U.S. political and commercial ties to Europe and the Western Hemisphere were of sufficient importance that conflict in their defense might become necessary, but U.S. interests in East Asia were of a decidedly secondary nature. The remarks of the two State Department specialists were widely circulated among Army and Navy officers, 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 significant 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 war plan to which the JPC continued to devote the majority of its attention outlined strategies for a conflict against a nation with whom the State Department desired to avoid hostilities at almost any cost.

While Hornbeck’s appointment as a liaison to the JPC may have had only a limited impact in terms of reconciling the outlooks of the U.S. military and diplomatic corps, it was unquestionably a step in the right direction. A much more important step occurred in 1938 with the establishment of the Standing Liaison Committee (SLC), a group organized at the request of Hull. A three-man committee comprised of the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval

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97 Ibid., 109. See also May, “The Origins of Political-Military Consultation,” 172.
Operations, and the Undersecretary of State, the Standing Liaison Committee was “the first American agency for regular political-military consultation on foreign policy.” In theory, the committee’s establishment was exactly the remedy needed to facilitate the re-integration of the civilian and military aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Several factors, however, limited its effectiveness. The first of these was the relatively limited scope of the issues considered by the SLC. Mark Stoler notes that “the State Department limited the Liaison Committee’s functions to hemispheric concerns instead of the broader, global policy matters desired by military planners.” The defense of the Western Hemisphere was undeniably a matter of great importance to the U.S. military. By the late 1930s, a great deal of the Army’s strategic planning was focused upon the possibility of German aggression (either overt or covert) in South America, and the means by which such threats might be countered. However, confining the Standing Liaison Committee’s discussions solely to matters affecting the Western Hemisphere meant that more comprehensive talks on the overall objectives of U.S. foreign policy did not occur. In that sense, the committee must be regarded as a missed opportunity. An even greater factor limiting the SLC’s effectiveness stemmed from the fact that it was only established in 1938. Had the committee been given more time before the United States became a belligerent...

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99 Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 15.
100 For an explanation of the Army’s concerns with respect to potential German aggression in Latin America, see George C. Marshall, “Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue,” Tape 9, “Mobilization problems, 1939-41; Atlantic Conference, 1941; relations with the British.” Available online at the George C. Marshall Foundation, http://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/pogue.html. See especially Question 85.
101 To provide one example, on July 5, 1940 George Marshall requested that the Liaison Committee devote time in an upcoming meeting to the political repercussions of the defeat of France, including both the disposal of its Western Hemisphere territories and the possibility of hostilities between French and British naval vessels stationed at Martinique. George C. Marshall to Sumner Welles, 5 July 1940, George C. Marshall Papers, Box 85, Folder 49, George C. Marshall Library, Lexington, Virginia (Hereinafter cited as Marshall Papers, Marshall Library). Note: The file copy of this letter actually bears the date “May 5, 1940,” but this appears to be an error. In the letter, Marshall refers to events “just occurred between the French and British naval forces at Oran.” This can only be a reference to the British attack on French vessels stationed at Mers-el-Kébir, an action that occurred on July 3. Moreover, questions relating to the “disposal of the French possessions in this hemisphere” would not have been relevant had the letter been written on May 5, as the German attack upon France and the Low Countries was not launched until May 10. Therefore, it seems likely that this letter was actually written on July 5, not May 5.
in World War II, it might have eventually turned its attention to the broader discussions of national policy that its military members desired. However, as Ernest May notes, by the time of the SLC’s establishment, time was in short supply:

Rarely…did questions of policy come up for the Committee’s discussion, perhaps because the members had little time for talk. The military chiefs were busy, fabricating fleets, armies and air forces out of raw metal and rawer men, while the undersecretary and his department were swirling through diplomatic crises that absorbed their time and powers. So the Liaison Committee failed to march with the perilous times.102

While the establishment of the Standing Liaison Committee was not a bad idea, it was an example of a good idea implemented too late. The climate of disintegration that had been decades in the making could not be completely dispelled in the handful of years that remained before American entry into World War II.

The efforts to re-establish a unified set of policy priorities for the United States were further complicated by an internal division within the ranks of the Roosevelt administration during the late 1930s. This division arose as a result of disagreement regarding how the United States should respond to Japan’s increasingly aggressive policies in China and East Asia. It pitted those who advocated a conciliatory approach, including Cordell Hull, Sumner Welles, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew, former minister to Peking (Beijing) John Van Antwerp MacMurray, and, at least through mid-1941, Franklin Roosevelt, against officials who favored adopting a hard line, including Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Navy Secretary Frank Knox and the State Department’s Stanley Hornbeck.103 Those favoring a conciliatory approach do appear to have realized that a

103 It should be noted that Hornbeck was something of a latecomer to the hard-liners’ camp. As his comments at the Army War College cited above demonstrate, for much of the 1930s he had been generally supportive of Cordell Hull’s policies, but as the decade progressed his views changed. He became increasingly convinced that Hull’s approach achieved nothing, and in fact encouraged further acts of aggression by Japan, which he had come to regard as perhaps the greatest threat to global peace and stability. 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
conflict between the United States and Japan was becoming increasingly likely. However, they viewed this development as either unnecessary or undesirable, and believed that if the United States could strike the proper balance in its approach to Japan that this conflict could be avoided, or at least delayed.

Grew and MacMurray, who had served lengthy stints in Japan and China, respectively, offered significantly different rationales for avoiding the adoption of a hard line in negotiations with the Japanese government. As the 1930s progressed, Grew was clearly troubled by the actions of the militarists who had come to dominate the Japanese government. Akira Iriye writes that as early as 1934, Grew had begun to regard Japan’s expansionist behavior “as a fixed policy” which was unlikely to change significantly in the short term. At the same time, however, he believed that an aggressive response to Japanese behavior on the part of the United States would do more harm than good. Such actions, in Grew’s opinion, would strengthen the hand of the militarists, who would use it as a pretense to stir up resentment against the U.S. among the Japanese public. Grew believed that if the United States adopted a conciliatory, non-threatening approach in its dealings with Tokyo, this would strengthen the hand of Japanese moderates and ultimately make possible constitutional reforms that would reduce the influence of the military within the government.

On several occasions during his lengthy tenure with the State Department, MacMurray advanced a very different argument with respect to developments in East Asia. He argued that

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106 Ibid.
Japanese behavior towards China, while regrettable, stemmed not from inherent aggressiveness on the part of the Japanese government, but rather from the failure of the governments of China, Great Britain, and the United States to abide by the terms of international agreements such as the Nine-Power Pact. MacMurray frequently complained that the United States insisted that Japan abide by every provision of the agreements it had signed in 1921 and 1922, but failed to hold the Chinese government to the same standard. In a famous 1935 memorandum written for Stanley Hornbeck, MacMurray suggested that the policies adopted by the United States with respect to developments in Asia were both confusing and frustrating for the Japanese:

[Japan] had loyally and scrupulously lived up to the American conception that such cooperation [with respect to China] should include all adherents to the Washington Treaties… [but] China, nevertheless, had eschewed the promised cooperation, and established a policy of antagonism and of irresponsibility with regard to her co-signatories, and particularly with regard to Japan…

MacMurray’s 1935 memorandum was essentially a reprise of arguments he had advanced during his tenure as Minister to China during the 1920s. In brief, he regarded unilateral Chinese efforts to secure the repudiation of previously negotiated treaties as the principal cause of the increasing destabilization in the region. As the passage quoted above suggests, MacMurray believed that Japan, far more than China, had sought to abide by the agreements it had signed. The Japanese government’s decision to employ military force against China, in his view, had been undertaken as a last resort after leaders in Tokyo realized that they could not count upon the United States and Great Britain to pressure the Chinese to recognize the rights granted to Japan under the terms of the Nine-Power Pact.

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It should be noted that neither Grew nor MacMurray appear to have exerted much influence upon the direction of U.S. policy toward Japan. In an essay on Grew in *Diplomats in Crisis*, Edward Bennett notes that the Ambassador never enjoyed “insider” status within the Roosevelt administration. Moreover, during the early 1930s Secretary of State Hull began to doubt Grew’s judgment after the latter submitted a series of reports that substantially overstated the likelihood of liberal constitutional reform in Japan.\(^{109}\) In *Pearl Harbor as History*, Akira Iriye offers a similar assessment, suggesting that the U.S. embassy in Tokyo served as little more than a conduit for proposals developed in Washington.\(^{110}\) MacMurray proved to be an even more polarizing figure. His views regarding Chinese culpability for the erosion of the Nine-Power Pact had resulted in his marginalization within the State Department during the 1920s.\(^{111}\) Frustrated by what he regarded as a failure by his superiors to heed his advice, MacMurray resigned from the State Department in 1929. He rejoined the department during the first year of the Roosevelt administration, and two years later he was commissioned by Stanley Hornbeck to draft what the latter termed a “rather comprehensive study of the problem of our Far Eastern relations.”\(^{112}\) As noted above, MacMurray used this document, “Developments Affecting American Policy in the Far East,” to reprise arguments he had made during his tenure in Peking. But the assertion that China (and, by extension, the United States) bore much of the responsibility for Japan’s increasingly aggressive behavior resonated no better with Hornbeck than it had with Frank Kellogg ten years earlier. MacMurray’s report was not widely circulated within

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\(^{111}\) For an overview of the ongoing dispute between MacMurray and Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, see Arthur Waldron, “Introduction: The Making of the Memorandum,” in MacMurray, *How the Peace was Lost*, 20-7.

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 32.
either the State Department or the Roosevelt administration, and prior to the outbreak of the Pacific War it appears to have been read by no more than a handful of individuals.\textsuperscript{113}

While senior State Department officials such as Hull and Welles also appear to have been troubled by the growth of Japanese power in the western Pacific, they appear to have attached far greater importance to the impending conflict between the German and Italian dictatorships and the European democracies. They believed that in the event of a European war, the United States would eventually be forced into the conflict alongside Britain and France. As a result, they were, as Robert Dallek has noted:

\begin{quote}
…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.\textsuperscript{114}
\end{quote}

The object of pursuing a relatively conciliatory policy toward Japan, one in which provocative Japanese actions were met with diplomatic protests but little in the way of substantive action, was to postpone the outbreak of hostilities for as long as possible.

The Roosevelt administration’s hard-liners, somewhat ironically, appear to have been much less convinced that war between Japan and the United States was inevitable. They believed that the United States possessed sufficient economic leverage over Japan that a comprehensive program of trade sanctions would compel the Japanese to modify the aspects of their behavior that the U.S. regarded as objectionable without the need to resort to war. One of the most vocal advocates of this approach was Treasury Secretary Morgenthau. In 1937, in the aftermath of the sinking of the Asiatic Fleet gunboat USS \textit{Panay} by Japanese aircraft, he outlined his ideas on how an aggressive program of economic pressure could work:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{114} Robert Dallek, \textit{Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1933-1945} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 194.
\end{quote}
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! We’ve got the power, we’ve got the instruments, we’ve got the agreement, we can do it...What the hell is Japan going to do?” To a State Department official Morgenthau said, “Now, if you people get to the point that you want to stop the god-damned thing, I believe—and if the President and Mr. Hull want me to do it—that in one week I can have it for them.”

The crisis in the aftermath of the Panay’s sinking was ultimately resolved when the Japanese government tendered an apology and offered to pay an indemnity, but Morgenthau and his fellow hard-liners continued to argue that Japan could be brought to heel through a concerted application of U.S. economic sanctions.

Opinion among the U.S. military appears to have been somewhat divided on this question. Most historians have identified the service secretaries, Henry Stimson and Frank Knox, as being in general agreement with Morgenthau and the hard-liners. However, the uniformed service chiefs, George Marshall and Harold Stark, appear to have been closer to Hull in their outlook, albeit their reasoning was substantially different from that of the Secretary of State. Both men were in the process of overseeing massive expansions in the size of their respective services, and they were determined that active U.S. belligerency must be put off for as long as possible. An aggressive program of sanctions against Japan might very well provoke conflict before the U.S. Army and Navy were fully prepared.

The conflict of opinions came to a head during the summer of 1940, in an episode that might have had extremely significant consequences for the U.S. government and military alike. The incident had its roots in a seemingly innocuous event—the enactment on July 2 of the

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117 See Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and U.S. Foreign Policy, 242.
National Defense Act of 1940. A component of the military’s ongoing re-armament program, the Act “gave the president authority to declare certain items vital to the national defense and thus eligible for export only under license.”\textsuperscript{118} The measure was intended to ensure that the U.S. military was given the first claim on stockpiles of critical raw materials. The Act was to be overseen by the National Defense Advisory Committee (NDAC), a board which Roosevelt staffed with a number of prominent industrial leaders. While conducting an inventory of available strategic materials, NDAC staffer Robert Wilson discovered that the U.S. stockpile of aviation gasoline was inadequate to meet the needs of the Army Air Force if U.S. industry succeeded in meeting targets for aircraft production set by the President. As Jonathan Utley notes, this was not an insoluble problem, as “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{119} Wilson’s proposed solution was that the United States immediately cease all exports of 100-octane aviation gasoline.

This action by itself would have generated little controversy. Morgenthau, however, saw in Wilson’s proposal an opportunity to put his theories of economic warfare to the test. Taking advantage of Hull’s temporary absence from the country, Morgenthau proposed that the United States and Great Britain impose an embargo on all petroleum exports to Germany, Italy, and Japan.\textsuperscript{120} This proposal was received with abject horror by Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles. In the summer of 1940, the United States remained the source of the vast majority of Japan’s petroleum supply, and Welles feared that Morgenthau’s proposal “could very well lead

\textsuperscript{118} Utley, \textit{Going to War With Japan}, 95.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 97. In fact, Morgenthau’s proposal went a great deal further than this. He also proposed that the British destroy the oil production facilities in the Dutch East Indies, and that the United States and Britain collectively purchase all other oil currently available in the world market. Ibid., 97.
Both men took their case to the President, who ultimately sided with Welles, accepting Wilson’s original suggestion that only 100-octane aviation gasoline be subject to embargo.  

At this point, however, Morgenthau engaged in a bit of subterfuge. Contacting Colonel Russell Maxwell, 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, he signed Proclamation No. 2417, which declared:

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. Had Welles been a slightly less attentive proofreader, the United States may have found itself an active participant in World War II far sooner than it actually did. At a minimum, this episode clearly demonstrates the deep divisions that existed within the Roosevelt

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121 Ibid., 97.
122 The imposition of this limited restriction on petroleum exports would have had little impact on Japan, because Japanese military aircraft, unlike their U.S. counterparts, could run on gasoline of less than 100-octane. Ibid., 100.
123 Ibid., 98.
125 Utley, Going to War With Japan, 99.
administration. As Jonathan Utley describes the situation, “The problem, by the end of 1940, was not the absence of a foreign policy, but too many policies within one administration.”127

The inability of the civilian leadership within the Roosevelt administration to collectively define the objectives of U.S. foreign and military policy remained a matter of great frustration for the military in the final months of 1940. In November, Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark, acting under the realization that the United States would very likely soon find itself engaged in active hostilities, launched one final effort to spur a discussion on this topic. On November 12, he drafted what became known as the “Plan Dog” memorandum. In twenty-six typewritten pages, Stark outlined several scenarios for conflicts in which the United States might soon find itself involved:

(a) War with Japan in which we have no allies…
(b) War with Japan in which we have the British Empire, or the British Empire and Netherlands East Indies, as allies…
(c) War with Japan in which she is aided by Germany and Italy, and in which we are or are not aided by allies…
(d) War with Germany and Italy in which Japan would not be initially involved, and in which we would be allied with the British…128

The Plan Dog memorandum was in many ways a revolutionary document, because it went beyond simply outlining strategies, venturing into the realm of policy recommendations (albeit gingerly, as will be seen). Stark asserted that the national security interests of the United States were fundamentally linked to the survival of Great Britain and the British Empire, noting that “Should Britain lose the war, the military consequences to the United States would be serious.”129 He went on to observe that Britain, unassisted, lacked the capability to defeat Germany and Italy, for “Victory would probably depend upon her ability ultimately to make a

127 Utley, Going to War With Japan, 102.
128 Harold R. Stark, “Memorandum for the Secretary,” 12 November 1940, NA, RG 165, E 282, Box 270, F Rainbow 4175-15 #1, 2. In addition to these conflicts, Stark also added the possibility that the United States would remain neutral and concentrate solely on the defense of the Western Hemisphere.
129 Ibid., 5.
land offensive against the Axis powers.” Stark added that a successful assault on the European continent (the only means by which he believed the war could be won) was impossible without U.S. assistance, and that the United States would inevitably be required to “send large air and land forces to Europe or Africa, or both, and to participate strongly in this land offensive.” Stark’s memorandum recommended, therefore, that in the event of war the successful prosecution of the conflict in Europe must be the country’s foremost priority. He made clear that this would mean sacrifices in other regions, “Under Plan (D) we would be unable to exert strong pressure against Japan, and would necessarily gradually re-orient our policy in the Far East.” This represented a substantial departure from the Navy’s thinking throughout much of the interwar period, which had identified Japan as the most likely future opponent of the U.S. But given Stark’s underlying assumption that the national security interests of the United States could best be served by preventing a British defeat, his argument made sense. While he was confident (as most interwar U.S. military officers were) that the United States could defeat Japan in a war in the Pacific, Japan’s defeat alone was not sufficient to ensure Britain’s survival. As a result, the Plan Dog memorandum is frequently cited as the genesis of the “Germany first” strategy adopted by the United States following its entry into World War II.

George Marshall, upon reviewing the Plan Dog memorandum, signaled his general assent with its prescriptions. To the extent that the Army War Plans Division had reservations about Stark’s creation, they lay in the fact that they believed it left the Navy with too free a hand to engage in adventures in the Pacific. On the whole, however, the Army and Navy appeared to have arrived at a mutually acceptable understanding of the ideal U.S. strategy. Stark forwarded

\[\text{\footnotesize 130 Ibid., 17.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 131 Ibid.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 132 Ibid., 23-4.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 133 See Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 29.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 134 Ibid., 33.} \]
the memorandum to President Roosevelt, who responded by informing the CNO that “he would like War, State, and Navy to draw up a joint estimate.” In essence, this was a request by Roosevelt for a unified statement from the War, State, and Navy Departments. But the Secretary of State once again balked; as recounted by Stoler:

[Hull] labeled the JPC memorandum “excellent” and expressed “general agreement” with it, but he “questioned the appropriateness” of “joining in the submission to the President of a technical military statement of the present situation.” Astounded that anyone could consider the memorandum a “technical military statement,” the service chiefs tried to convince Hull that his signature was both appropriate and badly needed. In the present emergency the nation required a “very definite policy” on which to base military plans, one that “involved broad national questions as well as those pertaining to military and naval operations.”…Hull refused to sign, however, and the memorandum thus went to the White House under the signatures of only Stimson and Knox.  

As discussed previously in this chapter, Hull had been relatively receptive to the idea of consultation with U.S. military leaders. He had quickly agreed to the request to provide a liaison officer in 1935, and had even initiated the establishment of the Standing Liaison Committee three years later. But despite this flexibility, at this critical moment Hull was unable to overcome the traditional conviction that had characterized the behavior of the State Department for decades—one that regarded the foreign and military policies of the United States as activities that occupied separate spheres. As a result, the document that was forwarded to President Roosevelt did not contain the unanimous endorsement of his key foreign policy advisors, a most unfortunate omission.

In the final months of 1940, the strategic situation of the United States in the western Pacific, and specifically in the Philippines, appeared exceedingly grim. As will be shown in Chapter 6, a substantial body of opinion within the U.S. military held that the islands could not be held in the event of a Japanese attack. This belief could only have been strengthened further

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135 Harold Stark to George Marshall, 22 November 1940, NA, RG 165, E 282, Box 270, F Rainbow 4175-15 #1, 1.
in the aftermath of the publication of the Plan Dog memorandum, which identified Europe as the region of greatest strategic concern to the United States. The same document argued that any conflict in the Pacific must be a secondary priority, on the grounds that a major U.S. military effort in that region would divert men and materiel required to ensure victory in Europe. But the seeming consensus embodied in the Plan Dog memorandum was never matched by any formal articulation of U.S. national policy from the Roosevelt administration’s civilian leaders (it was precisely this type of statement that Stark, Marshall, Stimson, and Knox were seeking when they sought Cordell Hull’s endorsement of the Plan Dog memorandum), and, as a result, the government’s actions continued to be characterized by indecision and drift.

In fairness to Roosevelt and his advisors, it should be noted that considerable pressure was being exerted upon them to commit the United States to the defense of the Philippines. While the Tydings-McDuffie Act had established July 4, 1946 as the date upon which the Philippines would be granted complete independence, the same legislation had also charged the United States with the responsibility for the protection of the islands for the duration of the Commonwealth period. By the final months of 1940, many Filipino leaders, most notably Manuel Quezon, were observing Japanese behavior in East Asia with increasingly apprehensive eyes. In late October, Quezon, acting through U.S. High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre, dispatched a letter to Roosevelt in which he expressed his anxieties. The Commonwealth President wrote:

I desire to express the very grave concern that the Commonwealth Government feels with regard to the safety and security of its citizens…We…note the precautionary measures taken by the State Department to remove its citizens from countries bordering the Philippines, which indicate the possibility of war…and yet we don’t know what steps have been or should be taken for the protection of the Philippines against invasion or whether there is any danger of the Philippines becoming involved in war.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{137} See Francis B. Sayre to Franklin Roosevelt, 24 October 1940, NA, RG 225, Records of the Joint Army-Navy Board, J.B. 305, Ser. 672, M-1421, Roll 6.
Quezon went on to request that Roosevelt release to the Commonwealth government funds collected from the excise tax on Filipino sugar. Quezon assured Roosevelt that “we are willing to spend all this money in the acquisition of aeroplanes and such war material as the Department Commander of the United States Army may consider necessary.”\textsuperscript{138} Quezon’s appeal received only a lukewarm endorsement from Sayre. Sayre wrote that the United States was under no obligation to release the requested funds to the Filipino government. After consultation with the senior Army and Navy commanders in the Philippines, he urged that any funds that the Roosevelt administration did choose to allocate for the purpose of defense of the islands should be spent through the War and Navy Departments, noting that “wise expenditure of course depends upon what general defense plans are adopted in Washington.”\textsuperscript{139} Despite Sayre’s reticence, Quezon’s letter was circulated widely among Roosevelt’s cabinet, and several members drafted letters requesting that the matter be given further study. Perhaps the most bizarre reply was written by Hull. The Secretary of State acknowledged that given the unsettled political situation in East Asia, “President Quezon has reason to express apprehension... as it is patent that the Commonwealth authorities are in no position...to provide adequate defenses against potential enemies in the Far East.”\textsuperscript{140} He then went on to make a statement that illustrated just how wide the gulf between the administration’s civilian and military leaders remained, despite the efforts made in recent years to improve inter-departmental consultation:

…in view of the aforementioned developments in the Far East, it seems desirable that our own military authorities should explore the possibility of using the Philippine Islands in

\textsuperscript{138}Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{139}Francis B. Sayre to Franklin Roosevelt, 16 October 1940, NA, RG 225, J.B. 305, Ser. 672, M-1421, Roll 6. In an earlier communication, Sayre implied that Quezon’s true motive in asking the United States government to fund the expansion of the Commonwealth’s armed forces was a desire to re-allocate Filipino government funds from military spending to domestic projects. See Sayre to Roosevelt, 6 August 1940, NA, RG 225, J.B. 305, Ser. 672, M-1421, Roll 6. Sayre consistently advised Roosevelt that any expenditure on Philippine defense should be handled through the War and Navy Departments, as this would prevent Quezon from exercising any direct control over the funds.
\textsuperscript{140}Cordell Hull to Franklin Roosevelt, 4 November 1940, NA, RG 225, J.B. 305, Ser. 672, M-1421, Roll 6, 1.
case of necessity as a base in operations for the defense of our interests in those Islands
and in the Far East in general.\textsuperscript{141}

The United States Army and Navy had, of course, been wrestling with precisely this question for
several \textit{decades} prior to 1940. That this idea apparently only occurred to Hull as the political
situation in East Asia was nearing a crisis illustrates just how ignorant the State Department had
remained with respect to U.S. military planning. Somewhat surprisingly, Hull also expressed
conditional support for the idea that the revenues requested by Quezon should “be sued \textit{sic} for
such defense plans as the War and Navy Departments may devise…”\textsuperscript{142} How Hull reconciled
his suggestion that the defenses of the Philippine Islands should be heavily augmented with his
own conviction that war with Japan should be avoided remains something of a mystery. It is
possible that the Secretary believed that a substantial augmentation of U.S. defenses in the
Philippines would act as a deterrent against Japanese aggression. This seems unlikely, however.
The recognition of deterrence as a tool of U.S. foreign policy would have been a substantial
departure from the traditional \textit{modus operandi} of the interwar State Department, which, as the
preceding pages have shown, was seldom inclined to consider the ways in which the U.S.
military might be used to support its ongoing diplomatic initiatives.

Thus, in the final months remaining to the United States before its entry into World War
II, U.S. policy with respect to the defense of the Philippines underwent a pronounced shift.
Despite the long-established belief among many military officers that a successful defense of the
islands was impossible, despite the fact that the Plan Dog memorandum clearly prioritized events
in Europe over victory in the Pacific, 1941 saw a renewal of interest in Philippine defense within
the halls of the War Department. In July, Douglas MacArthur, who, since his departure from the
post of Army Chief of Staff in 1935, had been serving as a military advisor to Commonwealth

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 2.
President Quezon, was recalled to active duty and named as the commander of the newly established U.S. Army Forces, Far East (USAFFE), a command that replaced the Army’s Philippine Department. At the same time, the War Department undertook an eleventh-hour effort to reinforce the U.S. garrison in the Philippines, particularly its air element (this buildup and the motivations behind it are explored in the Epilogue). In August, Secretary of War Stimson even went so far as to compose a draft of an Executive Order which would have appointed the USAFFE’s commanding officer as Military Governor of the Philippines. This Executive Order was to “be issued only in case of the actual disintegration or recalcitrance of the Government of the Commonwealth, and not without the recommendation of the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East.”143 Thus, if anything, the behavior of the Roosevelt administration in the months leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor suggests an increased commitment to the defense of the Philippines, a decision that flew in the face of decades of military planning.

The War Department’s eleventh-hour reversal with respect to the defense of the Philippines was in many ways a fitting coda to the story of the interwar U.S. policymaking process. Throughout the interwar decades, the government of the United States had consistently failed to formulate a conception of its foreign policy goals in which the perspectives and concerns of civilian diplomats and military officers were fully reconciled. This remained true even as the relatively placid international climate of the 1920s gave way to the far more turbulent 1930s. One final question that must be addressed is why the interwar presidential admin-

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istrations allowed this climate of disintegration to persist. After all, as Graham Allison and Morton Halperin point out, U.S. Presidents are uniquely positioned to impose order upon the frequently-chaotic policymaking process. As both Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. armed forces and the man responsible for the appointment of cabinet members, the President is the one individual to whom all of the government’s key policymakers are accountable. Why, then, did the interwar presidents largely fail to impose the clarity and direction which was so badly needed in the formulation of the country’s foreign policy?

Prior to 1933, the answer appears to be simply that the international issues confronting the United States did not appear to be of sufficient severity to warrant direct presidential intervention. In their 1972 *World Politics* essay, Allison and Halperin argued that presidential intervention in the policymaking process is most likely to be effective when “his involvement [and] his words are unambiguous.” In other words, in order for a president’s intervention to be decisive, he must clearly outline the objectives which he would like to see attained, and must remain involved in subsequent conversations in order to ensure that his directives are being carried out. However, this kind of consistent attention is unlikely to occur in the absence of a crisis. When the issues confronting the government appear to be “business as usual,” presidents are less likely to personally involve themselves, leaving the conduct of government policy in the hands of the relevant departments and agencies. This appears to have been largely the case with the Republican administrations of the 1920s. Most scholars of the interwar era appear to regard Warren Harding as little more than a bystander within his own administration, leaving the conduct of U.S. foreign policy almost entirely in the hands of Charles Evans Hughes. Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover were both somewhat more active with respect to U.S. foreign

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affairs. Coolidge, however, served during a period of relative tranquility in the international system, and few developments arose that would have required his close or prolonged attention. Hoover’s outlook on foreign affairs also appears to have been one of relative unconcern, even when events like the Manchurian Crisis of 1931-32 appeared to signal that the stability which had characterized the 1920s was beginning to slip away. Hoover consistently maintained that the United States possessed no interests in Asia that justified war, and resisted any suggestions that the U.S. response to Japanese actions should include anything more substantial than the Stimson Doctrine’s policy of non-recognition. Norman Graebner has remarked that 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.”145 Hoover’s reluctance to recognize that the events in East Asia were but the precursors to an era of greatly increased international tension left him little disposed to take personal command of U.S. foreign policy.

Unlike his predecessors, Franklin Roosevelt does not seem to have regarded U.S. foreign policy as a matter of secondary concern. It cannot be disputed that the first priority of the Roosevelt administration during its early years in office was addressing the economic crisis brought on by the Great Depression. Yet accounts of the Roosevelt administration make clear that despite his recognition of the attention that must be devoted to the Depression, the President was also keenly interested in international affairs. This interest in both the international environment and U.S. foreign policy only intensified during Roosevelt’s second term, which witnessed the outbreak of war in Asia in 1937 and Europe in 1939. Yet despite the President’s demonstrated interest in U.S. foreign policy, he was still unable to bring about an end to the climate of disintegration that had afflicted the United States since the days of his service with the Navy Department during the Wilson administration. Why was this the case?

Any conclusions offered can be, at best tentative, but one possible explanation stems from Roosevelt’s legendarily chaotic management style. In his 1991 monograph *The Juggler*, Warren Kimball noted that Roosevelt “never articulated a cohesive philosophy. He avoided contradictions rather than trying to reconcile or confront them.”146 Mark Stoler offers a similar assessment, after providing a list of instances in which Roosevelt’s actions or speeches appeared to conflict with other actions he was taking, often concurrently:

> Given the president’s method of operation, such behavior was anything but surprising. A master opportunist who disliked rigid planning, FDR had consistently sought throughout his administration to make specific decisions only at the last moment and when absolutely necessary.147

This behavior also characterized Roosevelt’s relationship with his cabinet, particularly with regard to the State Department. Throughout the majority of the interwar period, the State Department had unquestionably been the dominant actor in the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs, and Secretaries of State had wielded a degree of influence that frequently exceeded that of the presidents they nominally served. This was clearly not the case in the Roosevelt administration, however. Cordell Hull’s role was far more circumscribed than that of his predecessors, so much so that he was not even permitted to select his own deputies.148 Throughout his presidency, Roosevelt maintained an arm’s length relationship with his Secretary of State. When issues arose that required action on the part of the State Department, Roosevelt relied far more heavily upon Sumner Welles than upon Hull. In *Strategy of Involvement*, his biography of Welles, Frank Warren Graff quotes from the memoirs of longtime *New York Times* journalist Arthur Krock:

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When it came to really doing the manoeuvering [sic] on the great chessboard of diplomacy, [Roosevelt] never let Hull have much to do with it at all. He would send for Sumner Welles to come over to the White House, and it was with Sumner that he would say, ‘Now look, don’t let old Hull know about this, but you and I will do thus and so.’

Graff suggests that Roosevelt’s preference for Welles stemmed both from the close ties that existed between their respective families (Welles, in fact, had served as an attendant at Roosevelt’s wedding) and from Welles’ efforts in support of Roosevelt’s presidential campaign in 1932. It is possible that Roosevelt also valued his longtime friend’s professional background—while Hull had virtually no experience with U.S. foreign affairs prior to his nomination as Secretary of State, Welles was a longtime Foreign Service officer who had held a variety of posts in Latin America. Given his clear preference for working with Welles, as well as the emphasis he placed upon his “Good Neighbor” policy in the early years of his presidency, it is unclear why Roosevelt did not tab him for the Secretary’s office. It is equally unclear why Hull was willing to tolerate the marginalized position he held within his own department for as long as he did.

Given these circumstances, it comes as little surprise that the working relationship between Hull and Welles was more than a little awkward. This was by no means an aberration within Roosevelt’s administration. Throughout his years in the Oval Office, he fostered open (and often very lively) debates among his advisors, and was famously reluctant to reveal where his own sympathies truly lay with respect to the issues under discussion. This management style most likely did provide Roosevelt with a degree of flexibility that might not have been available had he been more explicit about his own preferences. However, in the specific circumstances that confronted the United States between 1939 and 1941, it likely worked against the best interests of the country. Despite the steps taken in the mid- and late 1930s to address it, the state

149 Ibid., 216.
150 Ibid., 2, 24-6.
of disintegration between the State Department and the U.S. military had not been resolved.

Direct presidential intervention in support of a clearly defined national security agenda was the only thing that might have forced a resolution of the issues that continued to divide the administration. FDR’s management style, however, was such that these conversations were never held, with the consequence that a consensus outlook on U.S. foreign policy in general—and its policies with respect to the defense of the Philippines, in particular—could not be developed.
Chapter 6 -- Interwar U.S. Strategic Planning and its Limitations

The disintegrated nature of the interwar U.S. foreign policy process must bear the lion’s share of the responsibility for the chronic uncertainty that characterized U.S. planning with respect to the Philippines. An examination of war plans produced during the 1920s and 1930s, however, reveals a similar degree of ambiguity. The fundamental question confronting U.S. military planners with respect to the Philippines was whether or not the garrison could be expected to hold out until the arrival of a relief expedition dispatched from either the West Coast or Hawaii. For much of the interwar period, U.S. strategic planners frequently oscillated between genuine optimism and extreme pessimism. On a number of occasions, these mood swings appear to have been influenced far less by changes in the strategic balance in the region as by the beliefs and personal priorities of the individuals responsible for driving them. By the mid-1930s this question had been further complicated by the emergence of a severe difference of opinion between the U.S. Army and Navy with respect to the value of a continued U.S. military presence in the western Pacific. In theory, this debate should have been resolved by the Joint Army-Navy Board, the body of senior Army and Navy officers that counted among its responsibilities the promotion of effective coordination between the two services. In practice, however, the Joint Board exhibited a tendency to avoid grappling with difficult questions, but instead brokering compromises that largely papered over differences between the Army and Navy positions. The resulting plans were sufficiently ambiguous that they allowed officers from each service to see what they wanted to see. As a means of preserving harmony between the two services, this approach proved generally successful. In terms of producing war plans that crafted a realistic balance between intentions and capabilities, however, it left something to be desired. This chapter traces the history of U.S. war planning throughout the interwar period, with
particular attention devoted to the evolution of War Plan Orange. It also explores the emergence of the deep divide between the Army and the Navy that emerged by the early 1930s with respect to the U.S. military presence in the Philippines. It concludes by tracing some of the major developments in U.S. foreign and defense planning in the final years before the U.S. entry into World War II, developments which placed an increasing strain on the scarce resources available to the Army and the Navy and cast the prospects for a successful defense of the Philippines into even more serious doubt.

Some of the difficulties that beset the planning process stemmed from the nature of the U.S. military command structure throughout the pre-World War II years. Throughout the interwar period, each of the services was overseen by a separate cabinet department. Through the end of the nineteenth century, no formal mechanism for coordination between the War and Navy Departments existed. This changed in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. While the campaigns against Spanish forces in Cuba and the Philippines had ultimately been successful, the war had revealed serious problems in coordination that could have proved disastrous against a more capable foe. The Joint Army and Navy Board was established in 1903 as a means of preventing such problems from recurring in the future. The Joint Board’s membership included senior officers drawn from both services, and its principal function was to oversee interservice cooperation and coordination. Its responsibilities also included the study of what were initially termed “war problems,” precursors to the more formal war plans produced by the Joint Board in

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1 Unification of the U.S. armed forces would not occur until the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.
2 See Brian McAllister Linn, Guardians of Empire: The U.S. Army and the Pacific, 1902-1940 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 54. Linn observes that the establishment of the Joint Board was merely one component of what were termed the “Root reforms,” after Secretary of War Elihu Root. The overall objective of the Root Reforms was to build a more professionalized army, one better suited for operations in the modern era than the “frontier Army” of the nineteenth century.
the post-World War I years. In 1904, for example, the Joint Board drafted a study for the
Secretaries of the War and Navy Departments outlining circumstances which could lead to the
United States becoming involved in a conflict, identifying the most likely cause as “some act or
purpose undertaken by a European power which conflicted with the policy enunciated by
President James Monroe…” During the same year, the Joint Board also approved a “scheme for
the representation by symbols of foreign countries in war plans.” In addition to a symbol, both
the United States and various foreign nations were designated a unique color to be used as a code
name.

The Joint Board met frequently for the first decade of its existence, but a 1913 incident
resulted in its activities being greatly circumscribed, and it appears that the Board was fortunate
to survive at all. In April of that year, the United States and Japan became briefly embroiled in
one of a succession of diplomatic clashes stemming from U.S. laws that openly discriminated
against Japanese citizens living in the United States, in this case a measure that prohibited land
ownership by aliens “ineligible to citizenship.” The passage of this measure prompted demon-
strations in Japan, a formal protest by Japan’s ambassador to the United States, and considerable
concern among U.S. naval officers that the two countries were on the brink of war. The Navy’s

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3 Ibid., 54. These problems were cast in fairly broad terms, rather than focusing upon particular potential foes, as
would be the case with the postwar “color plans.”
4 See George Dewey to Secretary of War, 24 June 1904, and George Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, 24 June 1904,
both in NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 16, M-1421, Roll 9.
5 Tasker Bliss to Capt. John E. Pillsbury, Recorder of the Joint Board, November 1904, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser.
19, M-1421, Roll 9.
6 This decision was clearly the basis for the “color plans” developed later, but the designations assigned in 1904
underwent some modification in subsequent years. While many countries retained the colors originally assigned to
them through the outbreak of World War II (“Blue” for the United States, “Red” for Great Britain, “Black” for
Germany), a handful of colors were changed. The 1904 document assigned “White” as a designation for France,
and “Green” as a designation for Russia. By 1919, however, “Green” had been reassigned to Mexico, while
“White” was utilized as a code for internal civil disturbance within the United States. The Joint Board records I
have reviewed make no mention of whether or not new designations were assigned to France and Russia. For the
1904 list, see Bliss to Pillsbury, November 1904. The same letter bears a handwritten note that the Joint Board
formally approved the proposed designations on December 23.
7 See William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press,
2008), 125.
anxiety apparently was not shared by President Wilson, who in response to a request by Assistant Navy Secretary Franklin Roosevelt that the fleet undertake preparations for war as a means of deterring Japan from hostile action replied that he desired “‘no action’ for the time being.”¹⁸ Despite Wilson’s decision, the Joint Board pressed ahead with plans to dispatch naval vessels to both Panama and Hawaii, and details of these proposals were printed in U.S. newspapers.⁹ Upon learning of the Board’s behavior, a furious Wilson informed Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels “that, should there be a recurrence, he would abolish both the General and Joint Boards. Wilson wanted the Joint Board to refrain from meeting until it was convened by his order.”¹⁰ The President’s response to what he regarded as a gratuitous example of his military advisors overstepping their bounds resulted in the Joint Board being rendered effectively impotent for six years.

In July of 1919, the Joint Board was re-constituted with the drafting of a new Precept to guide its actions. The revised Precept of the Joint Board provided for three representatives from each service, and once again charged it with responsibility for “conferring upon, discussing, and reaching common conclusions regarding all matters calling for the cooperation of the two services.”¹¹ The same document also called for the establishment of a Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee (JPC) charged with the duty to “investigate, study, and report upon questions relative to the National Defense and involving joint action of the Army and Navy,

¹⁸ Ibid., 130. Braisted suggests that Roosevelt’s concerns were overblown, and “were apparently generated more from within the Navy Department and the press…than from Japan,” noting that by May of 1913 the furor that the legislation’s passage had produced in Japan was already abating. Ibid., 131.
⁹ Ibid., 134.
¹⁰ Ibid., 134.
¹¹ Newton D. Baker and Josephus Daniels, “Precept of the Joint Board,” 24 July 1919, NA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Box 0990, 110.7/123, 1. The Army’s representatives on the Joint Board were the Chief of Staff, Director of the Operations Division of the General Staff, and the Director of the War Plans Division. The Navy members would include the Chief of Naval Operations, Assistant CNO, and the Director of the Plans Division of the Office of Naval Operations.
referred to it by the Joint Army and Navy Board."\textsuperscript{12} In the ensuing years, the JPC assumed responsibility for the drafting and revising of war plans at the behest of the Joint Board.

The establishment of the Joint Army-Navy Board—particularly in the aftermath of its 1919 “rebirth” and the establishment of the JPC—clearly represented a step in the right direction with respect to inter-service consultation and coordination. It suffered from a number of shortcomings, however. The Joint Planning Committee was quite small, and its members were chronically overworked. The reasons for this were outlined in a 1939 memorandum written by Army Brigadier General George V. Strong:

Both the Army and the Navy members of the Joint Planning Committee have other assigned tasks and responsibilities, whose demands are frequently so urgent that the specific work of the Joint Planning Committee has temporarily to be neglected in whole or in part.\textsuperscript{13}

In addition, because the members of the Joint Planning Committee were appointed by their service superiors, it was possible for a senior officer to “pack” the JPC with members who shared his particular strategic outlook.\textsuperscript{14}

A final shortcoming of the interwar Joint Board system stemmed from the nature and powers of the Board itself. While the Board was tasked with facilitating coordination between the services and with the development of war plans (through the JPC), it lacked any formal command authority. Indeed, the process by which local defense planning was performed left a great deal of autonomy in the hands of area commanders, and the Joint Board’s ability to exert

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{13} George V. Strong, “Memorandum for the Chief of Staff,” 22 July 1939, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 89, WPD 2500-6, 5. Strong’s memorandum was written at a time when the JPC was addressing itself to the “Rainbow Plan” series, which eventually replaced the interwar “color plans.” At the time, Strong noted, only two members of the JPC—one from each service—were involved in the writing of the Rainbow Plans, as the Committee’s other members had been called away from Washington by other duties.

\textsuperscript{14} Edward Miller alleges that CNO Robert Coontz engaged in such behavior during the drafting of the 1924 version of War Plan Orange—see p. 255 below.
influence upon this process was quite limited. Brian Linn offers an explanation of how this
planning process worked at the local level:

…on 26 November 1919 [Army Chief of Staff Peyton] March divided future strategic
planning into “defense projects” and “plans” Under these guidelines…defense projects
outlined the object to be accomplished and the program for doing this. When approved
by the War Department, the defense project became the basis for the plan, defined as the
means to accomplish the object.15

War plans produced by the Joint Board, such as War Plan Orange, often provided only limited
guidance for the men charged with the drafting of defense projects and plans. Richard Meixsel
notes that while such plans typically did include at least a basic “mission statement” for
department commanders, determining the most effective means by which that mission might be
fulfilled was left to the discretion of the individuals on the scene:

In practical terms…the wording of Washington-designated missions for the army in the
Philippines was essentially meaningless. If Manila Bay could be defended best by with-
drawing the army into Bataan or rushing the infantry to Corregidor, so be it; 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.16

In theory, at least, the “defense projects” developed by local commanders were subject to
approval by the Army’s War Plans Division or the Navy’s OP-12B. In reality, however, the
review process frequently took so long that by the time it was completed “too often [the project]
proved either technologically obsolete or low in the priorities of a new departmental
commander.”17 In this environment, local commanders discovered that they could, in effect,
chart their own course with little regard for the strategies outlined in the “official” war plans
produced by the Joint Board. The formulation by the Army’s Philippine Department of the

15 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 167. Linn goes on to note that responsibility for drafting “defense projects” was
placed exclusively in the hands of local commanders of various overseas departments (Hawaii, Panama, and the
Philippines).
17 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 168.
extremely aggressive WPO-3 in 1940 and 1941 (see Epilogue) was one example of this phenomenon. Douglas MacArthur, one of WPO-3’s most ardent supporters, “quickly learned that, although his military superiors might deny him equipment and personnel, they would neither enforce compliance [with war plans produced by the Joint Board and JPC] nor attempt supervision.”18 The Joint Board’s shortcomings with respect to the command and direction of U.S. forces appear to have been one of the principle reasons for its replacement by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) system shortly after U.S. entry into World War II.19

In the years following its establishment in 1919 the JPC produced a substantial number of war plans. The majority of these belonged to the “color plan” family. The color plans outlined strategies to be pursued in the event of a bilateral conflict between the United States and particular foreign foes, each of which was designated by a unique color. Most of these plans were not developed in great detail, nor were they frequently updated. In his 2003 monograph *The Road to Rainbow*, Henry Gole suggests that even some of the plans which did receive periodic updates were not taken particularly seriously by the JPC:

Green (Mexico) was an annoyance. Few planners or policymakers lost sleep worrying about the threat from the other bank of the Rio Grande in the 1930s. Red (England) was an unlikely foe in the 1930s, but it provided the rationale for an exercise in Atlantic warfare and defense of the East Coast, the kind of mental gymnastics and manipulation of data that might prove useful if the foe turned out to be any European power.20

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18 Ibid., 237.
19 Mark Stoler notes that after the establishment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in February of 1942 “the service chiefs now had the power actually to determine strategy and to direct forces and operations, not simply coordinate and advise on planning.” Emphasis added. See Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 65.
20 Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 27-8. It should be noted that *The Road to Rainbow* confines its analysis to the 1930s. During the 1920s, as noted in Chapters 4 and 5, suspicion of Great Britain among at least some U.S. military officers was considerably greater, and prior to 1930 War Plan Red may have been regarded as something more than an abstract academic exercise. By the time of the London Naval Conference, however, the political rapprochement between the two countries had progressed to such an extent as to make conflict between them virtually unthinkable. Thus, with respect to the period on which his work focuses, Gole’s interpretation of the way in which U.S. planners viewed War Plan Red appears convincing.
The one clear exception to this pattern was War Plan Orange (WPO), which outlined strategies to be pursued in the event of war between the United States and Japan. War Plan Orange was the only member of the color plan family to be continuously revised and updated throughout the interwar period, with the final version securing approval in 1938. During its various iterations, the basic strategies outlined in WPO underwent a substantial evolution, with early versions calling for the immediate launch of a trans-Pacific offensive against Japan gradually giving way to far more conservative plans outlining a deliberate, step-by-step advance across the Pacific.

In many respects, War Plan Orange, particularly in its final version, provided a very solid foundation upon which U.S. commanders were able to build during the Pacific War. As early as the 1920s, the authors War Plan Orange had anticipated that war with Japan might be initiated without a formal declaration of war. After a somewhat shaky start, the members of the JPC set about crafting a campaign strategy that would allow the United States to take advantage of its substantial advantages over Japan in resources, manpower, and industrial capacity. Henry Gole argues that of the entire color plan family, “only Orange was important and realistic.”21 In his book on the evolution of U.S. war planning vis-à-vis Japan throughout the early twentieth century, Edward S. Miller boldly asserts that War Plan Orange “was in my opinion history’s most successful war plan.”22 While there is no denying that there was much that was praise-worthy in the final versions of War Plan Orange, Miller’s acclamation, at least, seems excessive. For all of their foresight, the authors of the interwar Orange Plans struggled mightily to arrive at a satisfactory answer to what may be termed the “Philippine question.” The Philippine question had two components, one political and one military. The military aspect of this debate hinged

21 Ibid., 27.
22 Edward S. Miller, War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), xix. Miller subsequently clarifies that this praise is directed at the plan in its final form, as he is quite critical of War Plan Orange in several of its earlier iterations.
upon the critical issue of whether or not it would be possible for the defending garrison to mount
a successful defense of a handful of strategic points (most importantly the entrance to Manila
Bay) until the arrival of a relief force. The political debate sought to determine whether or not it
was the official policy of the United States government that the Philippines should be defended
against a hostile invasion. The failure of the interwar civilian administrations, the Joint Board
and the authors of the Orange Plans to reach a decision on these questions meant that the
Philippines inhabited a gray area within U.S. war plans, one characterized by chronic indecision,
ambiguity, and frequent policy reversals.

The earliest versions of War Plan Orange, prepared in 1911 and 1914, respectively, were
entirely the products of the U.S. Navy’s General Board and the Naval War College.23 The 1911
plan offered a rather grim prognosis for American possessions in the western Pacific, despite the
fact that the U.S. Navy was judged to be considerably stronger than that of Japan. An analysis
conducted by the Naval War College in 1910 during the drafting of the plan determined that:

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 over-
seas 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.24

The 1911 plan conceded the loss of both the Philippines and Guam, and prioritized the defense
of the Hawaiian Islands, whose loss, it argued, would represent “an irretrievable disaster.”25
This pessimistic outlook was a reflection of both geography and U.S. fleet deployments. It was
accepted almost as an article of faith by many naval officers that the U.S. battleship fleet must be
retained as a single, concentrated unit. At the time the War College took up the study of the

23 As noted above, the Joint Planning Committee was not established until the reorganization of the Joint Board in
1919.
25 Ibid., 33.
Orange Plan, the U.S. battleship fleet was normally stationed in the Atlantic Ocean, with little more than token forces retained on the West Coast and in the western Pacific. Therefore, no major operations against Japan could be undertaken until the arrival of the battle fleet from the Atlantic. Because the Panama Canal remained unfinished in 1911, this would require an extensive voyage, either around the tip of South America or by way of the Suez Canal. The length of time required for the redeployment of the fleet, in the eyes of the War College staff, necessitated a purely defensive stance in the early stages of a war against Japan.

This line of thinking underwent a radical reappraisal in the aftermath of the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914. This had the effect of dramatically shortening the transit time required for the U.S. fleet to reach the Pacific, and sparked a renewed optimism that it might be possible for the fleet to reach the Philippines before the defenders could be overwhelmed. This optimism was evident in the 1914 War Plan Orange, which outlined a strategy Edward Miller derisively labels the “Through Ticket to Manila.” The principal advocates of the “through ticket” strategy were a group of naval officers Miller refers to as “thrusters.” Miller defines “thrusters” as those officers who “believed that victory had to be won quickly because the American people would not endure a long war. They advocated a rush to the Far East.” The swift movement of the U.S. Fleet to the western Pacific, they believed, would bring about a decisive battle with the numerically inferior Japanese fleet, and the IJN’s subsequent destruction would be sufficient to compel the Japanese government to sue for peace. This outlook had

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26 Ibid., 25. References to the importance of keeping the battle fleet concentrated can be found throughout Braisted’s two-volume history.  
27 See Miller, War Plan Orange, 89. Citing figures from General Board studies completed in 1910 and 1915-16, Miller’s book features a table listing distance from the U.S. East Coast to the Philippines by way of the Straits of Magellan as 19,725 nautical miles. The completion of the Panama Canal reduced the distance to the Philippines to 11,772 nautical miles. The General Board estimated that sailing by way of the Straits of Magellan would require 111 days, but a voyage by way of the Panama Canal would require only 65. The completion of the Canal, therefore, resulted in the projected voyage being shortened by approximately 8,000 nautical miles and 46 days.  
28 Ibid., 79.
enjoyed considerable support within the U.S. Navy in the early 1900s, but had been shelved after the drafting of the 1911 Orange Plan. The completion of the Panama Canal seemingly offered the opportunity for a return to this strategy. During the formulation of the 1914 Orange Plan, the General Board determined that after an initial rendezvous at Hawaii:

…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 thus discarded its predecessor’s assumption that the United States would be forced to stand on the defensive in the initial stages of a war with Japan. Instead it urged that immediately following the outbreak of hostilities—or at least as soon after that moment as possible—the U.S. fleet should launch itself across the Pacific at its enemies.

The actions of the War and Navy Departments over the next several years appear to have been influenced by the vision of an Orange War outlined in the 1914 plan. In 1916, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Navy’s Asiatic Fleet requested clarification regarding the mission of both the Army and Navy forces in the Philippines. This prompted a brief discussion between Secretary of War William Ingraham and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. In October, Ingraham and Daniels dispatched their reply:

The President directs that in 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.  

The defense of the Manila Bay area would remain a central component of the Philippine garrison’s mission through the end of 1941. The importance that senior U.S. military officers

attached to this objective was made clear in a subsequent letter to the Secretary of War from Admiral George Dewey. In the letter, Dewey quoted from a report prepared by the Army’s War College Division the preceding year which asserted, “If in accordance with national policy it is decided to keep the American flag flying in the Philippines, it becomes necessary to hold Manila Bay.” Noteworthy about this mission statement is the absence of any expectation that the Philippines were to be defended in their entirety. The islands comprising the Philippine archipelago offered far too many potential landing sites for the available forces to defend. Many U.S. officers, however, believed that a defense of the entire archipelago would be unnecessary if the enemy could be denied access to Manila Bay. In order to assist the Philippine garrison in this task, the early and mid-1910s witnessed the construction of powerful artillery defenses upon several small islands located within the bay’s mouth. By 1916, the islands of Corregidor, Caballo, Carabao, and Fort Drum (a small island termed the “concrete battleship”) boasted forts mounting an array of powerful naval guns ranging from ten to fourteen inches, as well as batteries of twelve-inch mortars and an assortment of lighter armaments. These extensive fortifications served two purposes. Most obviously, they provided a strong deterrent against any attempt by a hostile fleet to force its way into Manila Bay. But the decision to site these fortifications on islands possessed a secondary function as well, one based upon the U.S. Army’s observation of early trench warfare in Europe. George Dewey elaborated in his November 1916 letter to the Secretary of War:

Operations now in progress in Europe indicate that the capture of positions covered by wire entanglement and flanked by machine-gun fire is a very difficult enterprise, even when the assault is delivered over a short distance from a parallel trench. To make such an assault from boats after crossing several thousand yards of deep water…involves much greater difficulties…It appears, therefore, that Corregidor should be able to resist

31 George Dewey to Secretary of War, “Joint Mission of the military and naval forces in the Philippines after declaration of war,” 14 November 1916, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 39, 2.
32 See Linn, Guardians of Empire, 92.
capture by assault for a considerable time after a hostile occupation of the Bataan Peninsula. 33

The establishment of a secure bastion in Manila Bay, therefore, offered a means by which the Philippine garrison might prolong its resistance, increasing the odds that at least a portion of the Manila Bay area would remain in U.S. hands upon the arrival of the fleet.

By the late 1910s, enthusiasm for the “through ticket” strategy outlined in the 1914 version of War Plan Orange had waned considerably. This change in outlook was the product of a number of factors, some of them relating to War Plan Orange itself, others to the status of the U.S. garrison in the Philippines. A number of naval officers began to question the assumptions underlying the 1914 plan, with much of their anxiety based upon logistical considerations.

Critics noted that the plan made little provision for the massive amounts of coal that would be consumed by the fleet during the course of its trans-Pacific voyage:

En route to the Orient, the fleet would consume 197,000 to 480,000 tons of coal, depending on 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, some rigged with sail. The U.S. mercantile marine had another thirty-seven, which were needed to serve railroads and industries. The NWC calculated that a hundred foreign bottoms would have to be purchased or chartered by agents fanning out ahead of the fleet. 34

The shortage of colliers, coupled with the relative lack of U.S. possessions in the mid-Pacific where coaling operations could be conducted called into question the ability of the fleet to undertake the rapid transit to the Philippines envisioned by advocates of the “through ticket” strategy.

Other officers suspected that the Philippine garrison lacked the strength to successfully hold out against a hostile attack. Dewey essentially conceded this point in his letter to the Secretary of War in November 1916. The same War College Division statement that declared

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33 Dewey to Secretary of War, 14 November 1916, 3.
34 Miller, War Plan Orange, 90.
the necessity of holding Manila Bay in the event of war also estimated that an “active defense of six months” would require “a mobile force of approximately 56,000 men of all arms and branches…”35 In 1916 the Army garrison stationed in the Philippines consisted of just 11,817 U.S. troops and 5,788 Philippine Scouts.36 His own optimistic statements about the ability of Corregidor Island to withstand a protracted siege notwithstanding, Dewey himself noted “it is important to note the distinction between ultimate capacity to hold, and the duty or mission to defend.”37 Dewey argued that the United States, by virtue of its colonial relationship with the Philippines, retained an obligation to attempt a defense of the islands, regardless of how unlikely the prospects for success of this endeavor appeared.

Concerns about the prospects for a successful defense of the Philippines were not confined to planners in Washington. During the 1916 debate over the mission of the Philippine garrison, the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral A. G. Winterhalter, cabled the Chief of Naval Operations expressing his deep doubts about the utility of the Philippines as a military asset to the United States. Winterhalter’s concern appears to have stemmed from the small size of the U.S. Army’s garrison in the islands:

Believe successful defense all Philippines or any part impracticable, prohibitive cost needless sacrifice. Command of sea only proper security. Naval bases undefended useless.38

The cable reveals Winterhalter’s belief that the Philippine garrison was incapable of ensuring the security of the naval facilities at Manila Bay. He went on to recommend “naval board appraisal for sale [of] all buildings and material not needed in opinion of Army and Navy Joint Board for

35 Dewey to Secretary of War, 14 November 1916, 2. Underlining in original.
36 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 253. This number represents army personnel only, but even the addition of U.S. Navy personnel assigned to shore-based facilities in the Philippines would not have increased this number substantially. Shore-based service personnel would in any event have lacked the specialized combat training necessary for effective operations as part of the “mobile force” mentioned in the War College Division study.
37 Dewey to Secretary of War, 14 November 1916, 4. Emphasis in original.
38 A. G. Winterhalter, cablegram #18129, April 1916. Copy included in Secretary of the Navy to the President, Joint Board, 21 September 1916, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 2, F 49, 3-4.
defense of Manila Bay." The sale of military facilities in the Philippines should be followed, Winterhalter suggested, by a complete abandonment of the islands by the U.S. military.

The political developments of the post-World War I years reinforced the pessimism among U.S. military personnel with respect to the defense of the Philippines. Japan’s acquisition of the central Pacific Mandate greatly complicated the task of mounting a relief expedition to the islands, as any military forces stationed within the Mandate would be ideally positioned to interdict U.S. shipping bound for the western Pacific. This development seemingly sounded the death knell of the “through ticket” to Manila strategy outlined in the 1914 Orange Plan, as evidenced in a 1919 letter by U.S. Navy Captain Harry Yarnell, then serving as one of the Navy’s representatives on the Joint Planning Committee:

At one time…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.

The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 further reinforced Yarnell’s conclusion. While the treaty left the United States with a considerably larger capital ship fleet than Japan, the obligation to maintain a substantial portion of the U.S. fleet in the Atlantic guaranteed the IJN local superiority in the western Pacific in the event of war between the two nations. Moreover, Article XIX of the treaty prohibited any improvements to existing U.S. fortifications and base facilities in the Philippines. Thus, by the early 1920s, a growing body of opinion among U.S. military leaders regarded the capture of the Philippines by Japan in the event of war as highly likely, if

39 Ibid., 4.
40 Winterhalter would not be the last U.S. officer to recommend this course of action, but that such a recommendation should come from a naval officer is noteworthy. Historically, Army officers were far more likely to advocate a withdrawal from the western Pacific than were their Navy counterparts.
not inevitable. The increasing acceptance of this viewpoint was accompanied by a desire to abandon the “through ticket” strategy advocated by the Navy’s “thrusters”.

In 1923, however, this line of argument became the target of a substantial pushback by those who regarded the defense of the Philippines as vital to U.S. interests in Asia. The individual most responsible for this campaign was Philippine Governor-General Leonard Wood. On February 5, 1923, Wood wrote to Secretary of War John Weeks begging for a reconsideration of what he termed “the fatal assumption on the part of the Navy that in case of war with Japan the Philippine Islands could not be defended…”42 Wood was unsparing in his criticism of this outlook, 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.”43 Wood closed his letter by advocating that the relief of the Philippine Islands be made the primary mission of the U.S. Navy in the event of war with Japan, exceeding in importance even the destruction of the Japanese fleet.44

Wood’s letter received a sympathetic hearing in Washington. The Joint Board promptly ordered a review of the strategic situation in the Philippines. The conclusions of this review, summarized in a letter to Secretary Weeks by John J. Pershing, could have been written by Wood himself. The Philippines, the Board declared, “constitute a potential commercial center upon the development of which the success of future American trade relations with the Asiatic continent depends to a very large extent.”45 The letter acknowledged the vulnerability of the Philippines to a Japanese attack, arguing that the loss of the islands would deal a substantial blow to national prestige and would have a deeply negative impact upon the morale of the American public. It

42 Leonard Wood to Secretary of War, 5 February 1923, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 7, F 209, 1.
43 Ibid., 1.
44 Ibid., 4.
also boldly asserted 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
in recapturing the Philippines from Japan.”46 After summarizing the conclusions of the Joint
Board’s review, Pershing went on to outline plans for the immediate dispatch of a relief
expedition to the western Pacific in the event of war. The plan outlined by Pershing would
reappear, with only minimal modification, in the 1924 version of War Plan Orange.

The Joint Board’s receptiveness to Wood’s 1923 appeal for a reconsideration of U.S.
defense policy with respect to the Philippines appears to have been largely a function of
fortuitous timing. At the time Wood’s letter arrived in Washington, the post of Chief of Naval
Operations was held by Admiral Robert Coontz, one of the most ardent members of the
“thruster” school. With the willing assistance of Coontz, who appears to have manipulated
assignments to the Navy’s War Plans Division (OP-12) to ensure a preponderance of officers
who shared his strategic outlook, the ensuing version of War Plan Orange was by far the most
aggressive of the entire series.47 The 1924 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Orange
declared the chief objective of both services to be “To establish, at the earliest possible date,
United States sea power in the Western Pacific in strength superior to that of Japan.”48 It
committed the U.S. Navy to an immediate trans-Pacific offensive, and called for the Army to

46 Ibid., 2.
47 On Coontz’s manipulation of OP-12’s personnel, see Miller, War Plan Orange, 123-4. It should be remembered
that the 1924 Orange Plan was the first such document actually produced by the Joint Board and Joint Planning
Committee. Earlier versions of War Plan Orange, as noted above, were exclusively naval projects.
48 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan - Orange, 15 August 1924, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 228, M-1421, Roll 9,
1. This language would be retained in later versions of War Plan Orange, but the authors of the 1924 plan appear to
have taken this directive far more literally than their successors.
have a force of 50,000 men ready to depart Hawaii for the Philippines within fourteen days of the war’s outbreak.49

The 1924 Orange Plan has been widely criticized by historians, who have argued that its authors largely ignored inconvenient truths that, if confronted honestly, would have called its viability into serious question. Louis Morton described it as “more a statement of hopes than a realistic appraisal of what could be done,” while Edward Miller labeled the thought process that had driven its creation as “the reductio ad absurdum of imposing an impossible political goal onto a military campaign strategy.”51 Both the 1924 Orange Plan and the subsequent Fleet Plans devised by the Navy to put it into effect were riddled with questionable assumptions, most of them relating to the speed with which the fleet and Army components of the United States Asiatic Expeditionary Force could be organized and launched.52 The comments of those who supported the drafting of the plan suggest that little serious consideration had been given to the massive logistical difficulties involved. In his 1923 letter to Secretary Weeks, Leonard Wood airily dismissed the concerns of those who questioned the viability of the relief of the Philippines:

It may seem an impossible problem to bring a preponderate American fleet across the Pacific to the Philippines…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.53

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49 Ibid., 4. This represented a slight departure from the timeline originally proposed by Pershing, which had called for the relief expedition to depart Hawaii no later than ten days after the outbreak of war. See Pershing to Secretary of War, 7 July 1923, 4.
50 Morton, “War Plan Orange,” 231.
51 Miller, War Plan Orange, 131.
52 One example of this is that the plan assumed that all “Essential organizational equipment” for the 50,000-man Army force that was to depart Hawaii for the Philippines 14 days after the outbreak of war “will be stored in the Philippines in time of peace,” despite the fact that no steps were ever taken to pre-position the massive quantities of materials required. See 1924 War Plan Orange, 4. CNO Coontz also oversaw the drafting of a fleet plan which called for the Navy’s vessels to be refueled at sea during their trans-Pacific voyage, despite the fact that the Navy had not yet developed a satisfactory method of underway refueling. See Miller, War Plan Orange, 129-30.
53 Wood to Secretary of War, 25 May 1923, 3.
In a similar vein, Coontz responded to protests from OP-12 that the Orange Plan’s timetable for the departure of the U.S. fleet from the West Coast was far too ambitious by making “an assumption…that a clairvoyant government would assure ample time for docking and stocking by ordering mobilization forty days in advance of the war.”

How the government would be able to anticipate the outbreak of hostilities with such precision was left unspecified by Coontz.

Another problem with the 1924 Orange Plan was the almost complete absence of a strategy for dealing with whatever forces Japan might manage to concentrate in the Mandate. The potential threat posed by such forces was hardly unknown among U.S. officials, as evidenced by the comments of Breckinridge Long noted in Chapter 5, and also by Harry Yarnell’s 1919 remarks on U.S. Pacific strategy, written in response to the establishment of the Mandate. Despite this, the Mandate islands are referenced only in passing in the 1924 Orange Plan. The “Estimate of the Situation” that appears at the beginning of the plan does note that “United States’ success in the Western Pacific will probably require…The occupation or control of all harbors in the islands mandated to Japan and in the Philippines.” No specific plan or timeline for the seizure of the Mandate islands is provided, however. The Mandate was clearly not intended to be the initial objective of any U.S. campaign. The 50,000-strong Army component that was to be ready to depart from Hawaii within fourteen days of the war’s outbreak was specifically earmarked for the western Pacific, “it being understood that the promptest possible reinforcement of Manila Bay is of the greatest military and naval importance.”

The closest the plan came to declaring the Mandate as an objective appeared in the following paragraph, which called for the assembly of an additional force of fifteen thousand men “for transportation by the Navy to such other localities in the Pacific Ocean as are to be

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54 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 126.
55 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Orange, 16 August 1924, 1.
56 Ibid., 4.
seized and held.”57 The minimal attention devoted to addressing the strategic complications posed by the existence of the Mandate strongly suggests that it was regarded as little more than an afterthought by the plan’s authors. Given the widespread suspicion that the Japanese military had been engaged in an illicit campaign to fortify the Mandate islands, the absence of any serious consideration of the threat they posed is a curious and glaring omission, and serves as further reinforcement to the arguments of those critics who dismiss the 1924 plan as a fundamentally unserious document.

Almost immediately after the release of the 1924 Orange Plan, many U.S. officers began to express skepticism that the strategy it outlined could be pursued successfully. This skepticism coincided with the increasing influence within the Navy of what Edward Miller terms the “cautionaries.” “Cautionaries” were confident in the ability of the United States to defeat Japan, but they viewed their “thruster” counterparts as dangerously reckless, willing to unnecessarily stake the outcome of the war on a single throw of the dice in pursuit of a quick victory.58 The “cautionary” strategy for war with Japan advocated a gradual, step-by-step advance across the Pacific, with an initial offensive likely directed against the Mandate. Once the Mandate was secured, and a base established, the fleet would proceed westward. The “cautionaries” realized that such a strategy would prolong the war, but they believed that this benefited the United States far more than Japan, as it would allow time for the vastly superior weight of American industry to make itself felt.

By 1928, the “thrusters’” dominance among the ranks of senior U.S. military planners had been somewhat diminished. The increased influence (though by no means complete ascendancy) of the “cautionaries” was evident in the subsequent version of War Plan Orange.

57 Ibid., 4.
58 Ibid., 79.
The 1928 Orange Plan still called for a direct voyage of the fleet from Hawaii to the Philippines, but this movement was to be conducted far more deliberately than that outlined in the 1924 plan. The size of the initial expeditionary force the U.S. Army was expected to provide was reduced to 16,000 men from the 50,000 projected in the 1924 plan (though the 1928 plan also called for the dispatch of 20,000 Marines), and the 1928 plan estimated that thirty days would elapse between the outbreak of war and the departure of the first U.S. forces from Hawaii.⁵⁹

The 1928 Orange Plan also included several passages which tacitly suggested that the Philippines were expected to fall before a relief expedition could arrive. The Philippine garrison was ordered to “hold the Manila Bay area as long as possible with the military and naval forces in the Western Pacific at the outbreak of war and to deny this area to the Japanese as a naval base in case we cannot use it ourselves.”⁶⁰ Upon the arrival of the fleet in the western Pacific, the plan called for the “establishment of an Advanced Fleet Base at Manila Bay, or at some other location in the Southern Philippines.”⁶¹ Even more tellingly, the 1928 plan’s “Joint Decisions” prioritized the reinforcement of both the Panama Canal Zone and Hawaii over the dispatch of the trans-Pacific expedition. The “initial combined trans-Pacific movement” of the U.S. Army and Navy was the last of the fourteen such decisions listed, and was to be undertaken “only upon authorization of the President of the United States.”⁶²

Historians have come to very different conclusions regarding the extent to which the 1928 Orange Plan represented a dramatic alteration of its 1924 predecessor, and what it suggested with respect to the fate of the Philippines. Edward Miller argues that the 1928 Orange

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⁵⁹ Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Orange, 17 April 1928, NA, RG 165, E 282, Box 268, F. Orange 368, 13-4.
⁶¹ Ibid., 5. Military planners appear to have identified Dumanquitas Bay, on the island of Mindanao, as the most promising site for a base in the Southern Philippines. The thorough consideration given to the idea that the fleet’s major advanced base might be sited in the Southern Philippines suggests that it was considered unlikely that Manila Bay would still be in U.S. hands at the time of the fleet’s arrival. See Miller, War Plan Orange, 141-2.
⁶² 1928 War Plan Orange, 11.
plan was still far closer to the “through ticket” strategy than it was to the step-by-step plan advocated by the “cautionaries.” Miller regards the “cautionary” strategy as the far more realistic of the two approaches, and as such, he believes that the 1928 Orange Plan represented only a minor improvement over the dangerously reckless 1924 plan, terming it only “a marginally saner policy” and “a half-step toward prudence.” He notes that efforts by Navy “cautionaries” to delay the advance of the fleet to the western Pacific were at best partially successful, and that while the 1928 plan accepted the need for the seizure of Japan’s Mandate islands, it did so only grudgingly, to be conducted by follow-on forces only after the departure of the battle fleet and the joint Army-Marine contingent from Hawaii to the western Pacific. Brian Linn, by contrast, views the 1928 plan as a clear departure from its predecessor, noting that the defense of Hawaii and the Panama Canal Zone appear to have been assigned greater priority than the movement of forces to the Philippines. In Linn’s view, the plan’s provision that the Philippine garrison should focus upon denying use of Manila Bay to the Japanese represented “a recognition that, as the pessimists contended, in all probability the Philippines would have fallen by the time the fleet arrived.”

The dramatically divergent interpretations of the 1928 Orange Plan arrived at by Miller and Linn reflects the somewhat ambiguous nature of the available evidence. An examination that confines itself to the text of the 1928 Orange Plan would seem to support the general argument advanced by Miller. While the extreme aggression of the 1924 Orange Plan was somewhat toned down in 1928, the plan nevertheless outlined a campaign strategy that emphasized the rapid movement of both the majority of the U.S. fleet and a substantial Army and Marine Corps force to the western Pacific. Such rapid movement seems very much at odds with

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63 Miller, War Plan Orange, 140.
64 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 174.
the far more deliberate advance to the west by way of the Mandate islands advocated by the
“cautionaries” of the late 1920s, and thus Miller’s conclusion that the 1928 Orange Plan
remained predominantly a “thruster” document is completely understandable.

However, the actions of a number of U.S. military officers in subsequent years suggest
that they viewed the plan in a very different light—or at least that they held significant doubts
that the strategy outlined in the 1928 plan would actually be carried out in the event of war with
Japan. The clearest example of this is the behavior of Douglas MacArthur after his appointment
as Army Chief of Staff in 1930. MacArthur felt a close personal connection to the Philippine
Islands, having lived there as a boy during his father’s military service, and having been
stationed in the islands on a number of occasions during his own career, including a stint as the
Commanding General of the Philippine Department immediately preceding his rise to Chief of
Staff. He regarded the defense of the Philippines as a matter of vital importance to the United
States, and his behavior during his tenure as Chief of Staff strongly suggests that he was unsat-
isfied with the provisions for their relief outlined in the 1928 Orange Plan. Brian Linn suggests
that this dissatisfaction stemmed from the fact that both the Orange Plan and the Army’s subse-
quently mobilization plans “had distinguished between the ‘immediate’ relief of Hawaii and
Panama and the ‘ultimate’ relief of the Philippines.”65 MacArthur may have interpreted this as a
de facto admission that the islands could not be successfully defended, for between 1930 and
1933 he undertook a number of actions which make little sense unless they are viewed as efforts
to push back against a plan he viewed as defeatist; Linn writes:

In 1930, at MacArthur’s direction, the WPD [Army War Plans Division] conducted a
study of U.S. policy toward the Philippines based on the following 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 dis-
rupt the Asian balance of power; that their loss would detract from American prestige and

65 Ibid., 176.
hamper national efforts to defend its Far Eastern interests; that the military effort to defend them was less than the effort to recapture them; and...that it was “not practicable” to build up a local defense force that could hold them without relief from the United States.66

As MacArthur’s directive compelled the planners to base their analysis upon a set of premises clearly intended to dictate its results, it comes as little surprise that the WPD report concluded that the Philippines were an indispensable asset that must be defended. On the basis of the WPD’s conclusions, the Chief of Staff ordered the drafting of plans for the immediate dispatch of a relief force to the islands in the event of war. Finalized in November of 1933, this plan called for the deployment of no fewer than six divisions from the United States as part of the Army’s initial mobilization plan. Two of these divisions would be sent to the Panama Canal Zone, with another two destined for Oahu, and the final two divisions bound for the Philippines, departing from the East Coast of the United States and sailing to Manila by way of the Suez Canal.67

It is difficult to understand how the Chief of Staff could have believed such an undertaking to be possible. The U.S. Army of the 1920s and 1930s had been reduced to a pathetic condition, a product of post-World War I demobilization and extremely parsimonious annual budget appropriations (see below). This greatly reduced the likelihood that the Army would be capable of playing a major role in any future conflict until its ranks had been filled out by conscription. Yet as Brian Linn notes:

MacArthur’s plan called for the immediate dispatch of six divisions—a force roughly equivalent to the entire Regular Army in the continental United States—at the very time these experienced troops would be most needed to train the reserves and conscripts.68

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66 Ibid., 175-6.
68 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 177.
More glaringly, as Linn notes, MacArthur’s plan made no provision for a naval escort for the troops bound for the Philippines. This was either a massive oversight or a determined effort to evade reality, as there was little reason to believe that the U.S. would still control the waters surrounding the Philippines when they arrived. Under the terms of the 1928 Orange Plan, the U.S. fleet was not expected to depart Hawaii for at least 30 days following the outbreak of war. Until the arrival of the U.S. fleet in Philippine waters, the Japanese would possess overwhelming naval superiority in the western Pacific, making it extremely unlikely that the transports carrying the reinforcements would be able to reach their destination safely. Indeed, it appears that the ultimate abandonment of MacArthur’s scheme in December of 1934 stemmed from a belated realization of this fact. A WPD memo from that month includes the following notation:

The expedition via the Suez for reinforcement of the Philippines has been omitted [from an updated version of the Army’s Strategical Plan – Orange]. This is because the Chief of Staff, when informed that the Navy declined to divide the fleet and thus provide an escort for the Suez Expedition, stated that he would drop the idea.69

From its beginnings in the early twentieth century, U.S. naval strategists had always emphasized concentration of the fleet’s assets as absolutely essential for the success of any campaign against Japan. How MacArthur could have believed that the Navy would have abandoned one of the most fundamental tenets of its maritime strategy in order to support the Suez Expedition defies comprehension.

Moreover, the reinforcement plan conceived by MacArthur was being formulated at a time when an increasing number of U.S. Army and Navy officers were beginning to openly question the wisdom not only of plans for the defense of the Philippines, but of the basic strategy of War Plan Orange. The most vocal criticisms emanated from the Philippines themselves, authored by General Stanley D. Embick, who in 1933 had been appointed to command the

defenses of Manila and Subic Bays. In April of 1933, Embick drafted a memorandum in which he challenged the fundamental logic upon which the 1928 Orange Plan had been drafted. He argued that the rapid growth of Japanese power and the reductions in the strength of the Philippine garrison had placed the United States in a position of strategic inferiority in the western Pacific. As a result, he declared:

…the Philippine Islands have become a military liability of a constantly increasing gravity. To carry out the present Orange Plan—with its provisions for the early dispatch of our fleet to Philippine waters—would be literally an act of madness. No milder term can be employed if facts are squarely to be faced.70

Embick went on to recommend that the United States seek to ensure the “neutralization” of the Philippines at the earliest possible date, and that the U.S. should “adopt the line, Alaska-Oahu-Panama, as our strategic peace-time frontier in the Pacific…” Embick’s memorandum was forwarded to Washington with the unqualified endorsement of the Philippine Department’s commanding officer, General Ewing E. Booth. In an accompanying memorandum drafted for the Army’s Adjutant General, Booth described Embick as “a very able officer whose views are far sighted and comprehensive and whose conclusions are invariably sound.” While Booth conceded that “at times diplomatic and political considerations force an unsound military policy,” he urged his superiors at the War Department give serious consideration to Embick’s proposals, specifically his call for the neutralization of the Philippines and a complete withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the islands.73

Brigadier General Charles Kilbourne, the WPD’s Assistant Chief of Staff, offered an examination of the issue in a memorandum written for MacArthur on June 12. The memor-

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71 Ibid., 3.
73 Ibid., 3.
andum is emblematic of the air of confusion that surrounded Philippine defense planning. Referring to the 1928 Orange Plan, Kilbourne admitted that “the Joint Plan is not entirely satisfactory to those responsible,” and that the Philippine Department’s officers “are not convinced either of the wisdom or the practicability of their mission.” Yet Kilbourne went on to assert the fundamental soundness of the Orange Plan, utilizing the curious logic that the plan as written “does not require the immediate advance to the Western Pacific unless the situation existing, after the concentration at Hawaii, justifies such action.” Continuing, Kilbourne wrote:

> Should Orange initiate the war by operations to secure the Manila Bay area, it would be known before 30-M [the day on which the trans-Pacific expedition was to depart from Hawaii] and the immediate advance to the Western Pacific, it is believed, would not be attempted.

The assertion that the U.S. fleet would not engage in an immediate movement to the western Pacific under unfavorable strategic conditions did address one of Embick’s concerns, but it did so in a manner that did not in any way alleviate the vulnerability of the Philippine garrison. Even more bizarrely, the WPD continued to refine plans for the reinforcement of the Philippine garrison by way of the Suez Canal. Thus, even as Kilbourne and the WPD were conceding that the movement of the U.S. Fleet to the Philippines might not take place in accordance with the timeline established in the 1928 Orange Plan, they were continuing to develop the plan for the Suez Expedition—a plan that could not possibly be executed in the absence of the proposed fleet movement.

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75 Ibid., 4. Emphasis in original.
76 Ibid., 4. Emphasis in original.
77 The memoranda written by Embick and Booth were drafted in April of 1933, and Kilbourne’s memorandum to MacArthur containing the WPD’s response was written in June. Yet the plans for the Suez Expedition were apparently not finalized until November of 1933, or more than six months after Kilbourne (and, by extension, MacArthur) were made aware of the concerns of the Philippine commanders. See Linn, *Guardians of Empire*, 176.
The uncertainty, ambiguity, and indecision that characterized interwar U.S. Philippine policy was further illustrated the following year. On March 1, 1934, Admiral F. B. Upham, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, and General Frank Parker, the new Commanding General of the Philippine Department, drafted a joint letter to Douglas MacArthur and Chief of Naval Operations William H. Standley. In language that echoed Embick’s in 1933, the two men protested that the forces at their disposal were insufficient to enable them to carry out the mission assigned to them under War Plan Orange:

The reduction of military and naval forces in the Philippine area has proceeded to such an extent that the carrying out of the mission at present assigned the Army and Navy in the event of an Orange War is impossible of accomplishment.78

They cited a number of factors which, in their estimation, had greatly increased the vulnerability of the Philippines, among them “The spectacular rise of Orange as a military power…[and the] introduction of aerial warfare, gas, doubling the speed and power of surface ships…”79 As a result of these developments, Upham and Parker argued that the utility of Manila Bay and Corregidor had been “nullified,” and that any attempt to defend these locations would be “futile with the forces available.”80

Upham and Parker next suggested that the missions assigned to them under War Plan Orange should be amended. They recommended that the Philippine Department’s mobile forces should fight a brief delaying action against any enemy landing on Luzon, followed by an immediate withdrawal to Corregidor Island (rather than carrying out a planned retreat to the Bataan Peninsula). With respect to the Asiatic Fleet they proposed, “Upon the earliest indication of an Orange War, [to] dispatch to the eastward the cruiser Augusta and Destroyer Squadron

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78 F. B. Upham and Frank Parker to CNO and CoS, 1 March 1934, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 533, M-1421, Roll 10, 1.
79 Ibid., 2.
80 Ibid.
Five,” while concentrating the Asiatic Fleet’s submarines in Manila Bay.\(^81\) As noted in Chapter 5, they also requested a “statement of National Policy” with respect to the Philippines, a matter they identified as being “of primary importance at this time.”\(^82\)

It appears that the Joint Board first took up the questions raised by Upham and Parker in May of 1934, approximately two months after their letter was dispatched.\(^83\) The Board’s formal response, issued the following month, rejected Upham and Parker’s request that their respective missions under War Plan Orange be amended. The Board recommended:

…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.\(^84\)

The Board declared the Joint Decisions, Army and Navy missions, and the mission of the Asiatic Fleet outlined in War Plan Orange to be “sound,” and insisted that they “should not be changed,” although the Board’s members did recommend the incorporation of several additional provisions into the Orange Plan “for purposes of clarification.”\(^85\)

The Joint Board does appear to have accepted Upham and Parker’s contention that the forces under their command were inadequate to perform the missions assigned to them. In its June 20 letter, it recommended a number of augmentations to the Philippines’ peacetime garrison:

(1) Army mobile troop strength (this can be accomplished partially by the movement of the 15\(^{th}\) Infantry from Tientsin [Tianjin] to the Philippines);
(2) Army harbor defense strength;

\(^81\) Ibid. The purpose behind the withdrawal of the Asiatic Fleet’s flagship and its destroyer squadron would be to effect a rendezvous with the main body of the U.S. Fleet as it made its way across the Pacific. The idea of such a movement, it should be noted, did not originate with Upham and Parker in 1934. See below.

\(^82\) Ibid., 1.

\(^83\) See C. E. Kilbourne to the Secretary of the Joint Board, 1 May 1934, and J. K. Taussig to the Joint Board, 1 May 1934, both in NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 533, M-1421, Roll 10.

\(^84\) Douglas MacArthur to Secretary of War, “Inadequacy present military and naval forces, Philippine area, to carry out assigned Missions in event of an ORANGE war,” 20 June 1934, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 533, M-1421, Roll 10, 1.

\(^85\) For a list of the suggested changes to the Orange Plan, see ibid., 1-4.
(3) Army anti-aircraft defense strength;
(4) Army air forces 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 2 DM [destroyer minelayer].

These reinforcements, while significant, would still have fallen far short of what would have been required to defend the Philippines against a serious attack. Moreover, any augmentation of the U.S. forces in the Philippines would have required Congressional approval, and the Board’s members cannot have had much optimism that the Congress (currently engaged in working out the details of the Tydings-McDuffie Act) would look favorably upon its proposals. As Brian Linn succinctly notes, “it is difficult not to conclude that the board was writing for the record, advocating policies that had little chance of approval.” The Board’s subsequent correspondence leaves little room for any other interpretation. In a June 29 memorandum for the Army’s Adjutant General, Kilbourne wrote:

The question of peace time reinforcements for the Philippines, recommended by the Joint Board, will be taken up later, but it is not certain that any of the increases recommended by the Joint Board can be furnished.

Messages dispatched to Upham and Parker informing them of the Joint Board’s decision contained essentially identical language.

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86 Ibid., 3. The Board further recommended that additional fuel stockpiles should be provided, that Pacific Fleet submarines operating from Pearl Harbor be ready to move to the Philippines “on short notice,” and requested Upham and Parker to “investigate possible sites for and establish air fields on eastern and southeastern Mindanao…” Ibid., 4. This last recommendation was consistent with the expectation, first outlined in the 1928 Orange Plan, that the U.S. fleet would most likely establish itself at Dumanquilas Bay rather than Manila Bay.
87 Linn, Guardians of Empire, 230.
If nothing else, the Joint Board’s response was a masterpiece of mental and linguistic gymnastics. The Board’s members restated their 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 forces currently available to the Philippine Department and the Asiatic Fleet were of insufficient strength to carry out the missions assigned to them, going so far as to draw up a detailed list of recommended reinforcements. It did so, however, with the understanding that its recommendations would most likely be disregarded.

The Upham-Parker letter and the Joint Board’s subsequent reaction offered other illustrations of the confusion that characterized U.S. Philippine defense policy as well. One interesting aspect of the episode is that neither the letter drafted by Upham and Parker on March 1 nor any of the Joint Board’s subsequent correspondence contain any mention of Douglas MacArthur’s proposed Suez Expedition. As noted above, the decision to abandon the Suez Expedition was not made until December of 1934, long after the Joint Board had offered its response to the Upham-Parker letter. The absence of any reference to the reinforcement plan is by no means conclusive proof that the U.S. Philippine commanders were unaware of its existence. However, some of the suggestions advanced by Upham and Parker make little sense if they believed that the Philippines would be promptly reinforced by two full U.S. Army divisions, particularly General Parker’s recommendation for the immediate withdrawal of Army forces on Luzon to Corregidor Island in the event of a Japanese landing. A force of the size proposed by MacArthur would have been squandered on tiny Corregidor, as it would have lacked room to maneuver and would have greatly increased the rate at which the garrison’s supplies were consumed. If Parker expected that the reinforcements would actually reach the
Philippines, there would have been little reason for him to abandon plans for the defense of the Bataan Peninsula. The circumstantial evidence thus suggests that Upham and Parker either were unaware of the plans for the Suez Expedition or doubted that they would actually be carried out.

Another curious aspect of the Upham-Parker letter was Admiral Upham’s suggestion that the Asiatic Fleet’s surface combatants be dispatched to the east in the event of war. This idea appears to have originated not with Upham, but rather with former Chief of Naval Operations William V. Pratt in March of 1933. In a cable to Admiral Montgomery Taylor (Upham’s predecessor as Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet), Pratt wrote that should war with Japan occur, the Asiatic Fleet could be most usefully employed “in support of U.S. Fleet operations generally, and particularly in the latter’s proposed prompt movement to the westward.” Pratt viewed the retention of Asiatic Fleet’s surface ships in the Philippines as undesirable, as “the loss of a squadron of destroyers or a cruiser without the accomplishment of commensurate results would not be warranted.” In response to Pratt’s cable, Taylor proposed that in the event war with Japan appeared imminent, these ships be dispatched to the eastward “to join the Blue main fleet.” When Upham replaced Taylor, he inherited this proposal, incorporating it into the joint letter he authored with Parker in 1934.

The proposed movement of the Asiatic Fleet, however, would only be possible if it managed to rendezvous with the U.S. fleet significantly west of the Hawaiian Islands. In the absence of such a rendezvous, the destroyers attached to the Asiatic Fleet would have lacked the fuel to make the voyage from Manila Bay to Pearl Harbor. Taylor, at least, appears to have

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91 Ibid.
93 The destroyers attached to the Asiatic Fleet throughout the 1930s were all vessels of the Clemson class, the last and most numerous of the U.S. Navy’s “flush deck” destroyer designs. Citing a study conducted by the U.S.
been aware of this, as his June 1933 cable to Pratt noted that his suggested course of action was based upon “the probability of a quick movement of the U.S. Fleet to the Philippine area.” But an examination of the timetables established for this movement in the 1928 Orange Plan suggests that no such rendezvous would have been possible. The Asiatic Fleet’s vessels would have required approximately two weeks to complete the voyage to Hawaii. If they sailed from Manila Bay on M Day, as proposed by Taylor in 1933, they could be expected to arrive in Hawaii on or slightly after M + 14. If that was the case, then they would not have been able to effect a rendezvous with the U.S. fleet prior to their arrival in Hawaii, as the 1928 Orange Plan had established the date upon which the U.S. fleet was to sail for the western Pacific as M + 30. Thus, under the timetables then guiding the U.S. Navy’s planning, the Asiatic Fleet’s surface combatants would reach Hawaii nearly two weeks before the departure from Pearl Harbor of the fleet with which they were supposed to rendezvous. Given Pratt’s instructions to Taylor in 1933, the latter’s suggestion of an eastward movement of the Asiatic Fleet is understandable. Pratt’s

Atlantic Fleet during World War II, Norman Friedman lists the maximum endurance of an un-refitted Clemson-class destroyer, sailing at its most economical speed, as between 3,900 and 4,100 nautical miles. Norman Friedman, U.S. Destroyers: An Illustrated Design History (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 56. The distance from Manila Bay to Pearl Harbor is approximately 5,000 nautical miles, meaning that even by sailing a least-time course at cruising speed, a Clemson could not complete this voyage without refueling. The fact that the Asiatic Fleet’s destroyers had been stationed continuously in the Philippines for many years, likely resulting in considerable degradation of their machinery (with a corresponding decrease in fuel economy), the fact that any voyage to Hawaii would have required a detour of several hundred miles to avoid sailing through Mandate waters, and the likelihood that the Asiatic Fleet would have encountered Japanese forces during its voyage (necessitating an increase to full speed which would have further accelerated fuel consumption), taken together, suggests that the action proposed by Taylor (and, later, Upham) could not have been completed without a rendezvous with refueling vessels far to the west of the Hawaiian Islands.

94 Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet to Chief of Naval Operations, 16 June 1933.
95 As noted above, sailing the most direct course from the Philippines to Hawaii would have involved a voyage of approximately 5,000 nautical miles. At a cruising speed of 14-15 knots, the fleet would have traveled approximately 350 knots per day, thus requiring slightly more than fourteen days to reach Pearl Harbor.
96 See Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Orange, 17 April 1928, 14.
failure to note the discrepancies in the timelines and to issue a clarification to his subordinate, however, is more difficult to understand.⁹⁷

While the 1928 Orange Plan reaffirmed the intention of the U.S. military to carry a war against Japan to the western Pacific at the earliest possible opportunity, in the ensuing years skepticism regarding the wisdom of this strategy continued to grow within both services. Edward Miller argues that the “cautionary” strategy for war with Japan gained an increasing number of adherents in the late 1920s and early 1930s, largely as a result of war games conducted at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. On the basis of their experiences at Newport, many young officers came to regard the “through ticket” strategy as one that needlessly exposed the United States to the prospect of a quick defeat:

After 1930, Naval War College analysts figured that American capacity to fight in the western Pacific had slipped to “decided inferiority”...A cautionary backlash gripped Newport. On the gaming floor the Blue train and its escorts were always wrecked by the Orange team. Warships fared no better in the crossing...The postmortems scorned the Through Ticket as “pure fantasy...unfeasible...it could not be done.”⁹⁸

In The Road to Rainbow, Henry Gole includes an extended quotation from U.S. Navy Captain Edward J. Foy, who served in the late 1930s as his service’s faculty representative at the Army War College (AWC). Foy related the experiences of students at the Naval War College to a work group of AWC students who had proposed that in the event of war with Japan U.S. forces should boldly advance to the Philippines—a recapitulation of the “thruster” strategy:

I won’t say that this highly imaginative plan is an unheard of thing in the Navy. It isn’t at all. It is played year after year at the Naval War College. There is always somebody who thinks he can win the war that way, and it is fortunate that there are people who think that way. Otherwise we would get into a groove of thinking and become stale. However, this game is played over and over again at Newport and this particular solution invariably loses...The fact that it has been brought up I think is very good...and I’m glad

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⁹⁷ It is possible that this was nothing more than function of bad timing. Taylor’s June 16 cable arrived two weeks before the end of Pratt’s tenure as CNO. William Standley succeeded Pratt on July 1, and the matter may have slipped through the cracks during the ensuing transition process. See Miller, War Plan Orange, Appendix.

⁹⁸ Miller, War Plan Orange, 168.
it was used by the committee because I think it is the last time you will ever come in contact with it unless you go to the Naval War College where it is licked over and over again on the game board. 99

The ascendancy of the “cautionaries” within both services was realized in a substantial revision of War Plan Orange undertaken in 1935. These revisions represented a radical reconceptualization of the U.S. military’s fundamental strategy for war with Japan. The immediate advance of the U.S. fleet to the western Pacific was struck completely from the plan. In place of the direct movement to the Philippines, the Joint Planning Committee substituted “a progressive movement through the Mandates,” whose initial objective “will be the ejection of Orange from the Marshall and Caroline Islands…”100 From the perspective of U.S. grand strategy, the substitution of the step-by-step advance for the headlong plunge into the western Pacific was undoubtedly a wise decision, but this change had obvious (and ominous) implications for the defenders of the Philippines. Curiously, despite his previous insistence upon the immediate relief of the Philippines, Douglas MacArthur raised no objection to the proposed changes, exhibiting what Brian Linn terms “either a complete lack of strategic consistency or total misunderstanding.”101 Edward Miller suggests that MacArthur was bamboozled by Stanley Embick, recently appointed by MacArthur as head of the Army’s War Plans Division:

Embick told…MacArthur that the fleet merely wished to perfect its line of communication before setting sail for the western Pacific…and that the amendments altered only the initial goal of the offensive. The Orange Plan had “not been changed materially,” he added disingenuously.102

101 Linn, *Guardians of Empire*, 179.
102 Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 183. MacArthur’s choice of Embick as head of the WPD is yet another oddity in the history of interwar U.S. strategic planning. The question was not one of competence, as Embick was highly respected among his contemporaries. However, he was also one of the Army’s most outspoken pessimists with regard to the military situation confronting the U.S. in the Philippines. Given MacArthur’s frequent public declarations that the Philippines could and should be defended, as well as his legendary intolerance for officers whose strategic outlooks differed from his own, his selection of Embick seems a strange choice in retrospect.
Apparently convinced by his deputy’s arguments, MacArthur attached his signature to the revisions to War Plan Orange. These revisions were subsequently approved by the Secretaries of War and the Navy on May 9 and 10, respectively. Soon after the revisions were enacted, MacArthur stepped down from his position as Chief of Staff and departed for the Philippines to assume the role of military advisor to Manuel Quezon, President of the newly-established Commonwealth government.

The revisions to War Plan Orange enacted in 1935 were the result of collaboration between the Army’s War Plans Division (under the leadership of Stanley Embick) and advocates of the “cautionary” strategy among the U.S. Navy. This partnership, however, appears to have been nothing more than a temporary alliance of convenience, for by the mid-1930s U.S. strategic policy in the Pacific became the subject of a bitter inter-service feud. Distilled to the simplest possible terms, the U.S. Army appears to have increasingly focused upon avoiding war with Japan, while the U.S. Navy focused its own planning efforts on winning a war with Japan. The reasons for this stark divergence in priorities most likely stemmed from the condition in which the U.S. Army and Navy found themselves during the interwar period, and the ways in which each service’s condition shaped its organizational outlook.

The institutional outlook of the interwar U.S. Army was, as a matter of necessity, heavily shaped by the dramatic reductions in both manpower and materiel that it experienced in the years following the First World War. In the immediate postwar period, the U.S. Army’s leadership had at least some reason to believe that their service would be maintained at a reasonable size, despite the demobilization that followed the return of the American Expeditionary Force from Europe. The National Defense Act of 1920 provided for the establishment of a Regular Army.

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103 See Albert E. Brown to Joint Board, 9 May 1935, and A. S. Carpenter to Joint Board, 10 May 1935, both in NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 546, M-1421, Roll 10.
whose strength was “not to exceed two hundred and eight thousand, including the Philippine Scouts.” The legislation also provided for the establishment and maintenance of both an extensive National Guard and Army Reserve, which would be available to supplement the regular Army in the event of an emergency. D. Clayton James notes that while the National Defense Act of 1920 differed substantially from recommendations that the War Department had provided to Congress following the end of the First World War, it appears to have been regarded as an acceptable compromise by the majority of senior U.S. generals:

The War Department’s proposed strength for the Regular Army had been nearly double the figure obtained in the act, but generally the Army was satisfied with the legislation, particularly its provisions for modernizing the tactical and administrative framework of the military establishment.

Had the interwar U.S. Army been maintained at the levels established by the 1920 legislation, its approach to strategic planning would likely have been considerably different from what actually transpired. In the relatively tranquil international political climate of the 1920s, however, many Congressional leaders quickly identified the Army as a candidate for a program of strict fiscal austerity as a means of reducing overall government expenditures. Fred Greene recounts that in 1924, Congressional appropriations were provided for only 125,000 enlisted men, and in 1926 and 1927 the Army’s enlisted strength bottomed out at approximately 110,000 enlisted men. These figures provided for a Regular Army force less than half the size established by the National Defense Act of 1920, and the cuts inflicted by Congress upon the National Guard and Organized Reserve were even more severe. Senior War Department officials appear to have viewed with great pessimism the notion that Congress could be persuaded to reverse its policies with respect to the Army’s manpower levels, as in 1927 “the Secretary of War told the Chief of

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Staff…not to seek an increase, for Congress felt that it had been generous in raising existing strengths from their depressed levels to 118,000.”107 Not even the heightened international tensions of the 1930s proved sufficient to convince Congress to bring the U.S. Army up to the strength levels authorized in 1920. Russell Weigley notes that when German troops crossed the Polish border on September 1, 1939, the U.S. Army still numbered just 190,000 men.108

The dramatic reductions in the strength of the interwar U.S. Army in large measure were responsible for shaping its strategic outlook. By the late 1920s, many senior officers realized that given the Army’s emasculated condition, its ability to play a significant role in any future conflict would be extremely limited. Building up the Army to a level at which it could hope to influence events would require a massive expansion of its ranks through conscription. If nationwide conscription were enacted, the limited strength of the Regular Army would be desperately required to serve as a training cadre for the masses of raw recruits entering military service. The early commitment of the Army’s scarce manpower reserves to any other task (such as the defense of overseas colonies) would necessitate a diversion of resources from this crucial organizational objective. Thus, as the interwar period progressed, the Army’s strategic planning outlook increasingly prioritized the defense of the Western Hemisphere (an objective that Army leaders believed their service could perform even in its depleted state). By the 1930s, the Army was increasingly strident in its appeals for a complete withdrawal from the western Pacific, as the removal of its overseas garrisons would have the twin advantages of reducing the Army’s initial exposure in the event of a future conflict and concentrating the bulk of the Regular Army in the United States where it would be more readily available to engage in training activities.

107 Ibid., 359.
The U.S. Navy, by contrast, tended to be both more internationalist and more aggressive in its outlook. Senior naval officers were far more likely than their Army counterparts to actively discuss the ways in which their service could be utilized in support of the objectives of U.S. foreign policy (although, as noted in Chapter 5, these comments tended to fall upon deaf ears when directed at State Department diplomats). The interwar U.S. Navy devoted a far greater degree of effort than did the Army to the identification of specific threats, with the result that throughout the 1920s and 1930s its planners became increasingly focused upon Japan.

To some extent, the Navy’s outlook during the 1920s and 1930s was a function of the weakness of the Army. As noted in Chapter 4, the Navy was by no means exempt from the deep reductions in annual military appropriations that characterized the post-World War I years, and the signing of the Washington Naval Treaty in 1922 imposed additional restrictions upon the size and composition of the U.S. fleet. Even at the height of its power, however, the anti-navalist lobby within the U.S. Congress lacked the strength to impose reductions in the size of the Navy that were in any way comparable to those to which the Army was subjected. The Navy’s relative success in escaping the keenest edge of the budgetary axe was the object of no small amount of jealousy from Army officers. In a postwar interview with biographer Forrest Pogue, George Marshall attempted to explain why the Navy had fared so much better than his own service:

…the main point was that the navy was dealing in something you had to have years of construction preliminary to making an effective result. The feeling was that you could make a ground army very quickly, but you couldn’t build a battleship in a week—it was a matter of years.109

109 George C. Marshall, “Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue,” Tape 8, “National Guard, 1939-1941; Relations with the British and the Army Air Corps.” Available online at the George C. Marshall Foundation, http://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/pogue.html. See especially Question 10, 259-60. It will come as no surprise that Marshall disagreed completely with the notion that a massive army could be assembled with great rapidity, telling Pogue “the hardest thing in the world is to train a ground army of infantry and artillery.” Marshall argued that the conditions under which army troops were expected to operate in fact necessitated a very high degree of training, a level that the crash expansion program of the late 1930s and early 1940s failed to achieve.
The implication of Marshall’s comment was that in the eyes of many Congressmen it was necessary to maintain the Navy at a higher level of readiness than the Army, because if the United States should find itself on the brink of a major conflict, deficiencies in the Navy would require far longer to address than deficiencies in the Army. In order to assure U.S. national security, even in a climate of relative international calm, it was necessary for at least one of the armed services to be prepared for action on relatively short notice. Many of the Navy’s own officers appear to have held precisely this outlook, as Fred Greene notes that Navy planning for much of the interwar period was driven by the realization that should the United States find itself at war, the responsibility for the immediate defense of the country would fall upon it “while the army mobilized its full strength behind this shield.”

Naval officers, far more frequently than their Army counterparts, asserted that the U.S. armed forces had an obligation not only to defend the country during wartime, but to play a role in support of the efforts of civilian diplomats during peacetime:

A strategically isolated America could influence world affairs only by way of the sea, and so needed naval strength commensurate with its world position. [The Navy] argued that the “silent pressure of sea power” could support diplomacy firmly and rapidly, adding that this was primarily a defensive weapon, serving aggressive purposes only when used to sustain a dominant commercial position or to exploit weaker peoples overseas.

Among the most important of the country’s diplomatic objectives, the Navy argued, was the maintenance of the status quo in Asia. In practical terms, this meant support for the continued territorial integrity of China and the defense of the Open Door policy. Because the Navy viewed the enforcement of the Open Door as one of its principle responsibilities during the interwar decades, its leaders viewed the Philippines as a much more valuable strategic asset than it appeared to most Army officers. Naval vessels stationed at Manila Bay were ideally positioned

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111 Ibid., 366.
to respond rapidly to developments on the Asian mainland, either to show the flag in Chinese waters or to intervene to protect the lives of American citizens in China. Withdrawal from the Philippines would mean the loss of this capability, and naval officers therefore tended to object strenuously to any suggestion that the U.S. should reconsider its military presence in the islands.

A related aspect of the interwar U.S. Navy’s strategic outlook, which became more pronounced in the post-World War I years, was a propensity to focus upon Japan as the most likely future adversary of the United States. As early as 1921, a study by the Navy’s General Board “concluded that Japan was aiming for eventual commercial and political domination of the Far East.”\(^{112}\) A 1927 reexamination of the U.S.-Japanese relationship by the General Board reaffirmed the conclusions first outlined in 1921, namely that Japan “was still the primary ‘enemy’ of the American Navy,” and that a “basic clash of interests still existed, with Japan attempting political and economic control of eastern Asia, and the United States continuing to maintain that the Open Door should not be closed.”\(^{113}\) Japanese behavior throughout the early 1930s, beginning with the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, further strengthened the widespread conception within the Navy’s ranks that a clash between the two nations was rapidly becoming inevitable.

This belief produced a conflict with Army leaders, however. While the geography of what would become the Pacific theater dictated that any conflict between the United States and Japan would be predominantly naval, the various iterations of War Plan Orange inevitably envisioned a substantial contribution from the U.S. Army, as well. Under the “thruster” plans produced during the 1920s, the Army was expected to rapidly assemble a large body of combat-ready troops who would be rushed to the western Pacific to assist in the relief of the Philippines.

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\(^{113}\) Ibid., 65.
The “cautionary” strategies that gradually supplanted their “thruster” predecessors in the 1930s called for a more deliberate advance across the Pacific, abandoning the headlong rush to Luzon or Mindanao. However, even the “cautionary” plans would require a substantial commitment of manpower from the U.S. Army, both for participation in the seizure of islands in the Mandate and to assist in the construction and defense of bases to support the drive toward Japan. Given the condition of the U.S. Army during the early 1930s, and the resulting outlook that prioritized the defense of the Western Hemisphere, these types of large-scale manpower commitments were precisely what a majority of Army leaders wished to avoid.

The dispute between the Army and Navy began to take shape in late October of 1935. One of the first indications of this divide was a memorandum authored by Colonel Walter Krueger of the Army’s War Plans Division. In this document, Krueger declared that the U.S. acquisition of the Philippines in the aftermath of the Spanish-American war had been “an accident, one fraught with grave consequences for us, for it has brought us directly face to face with the power that visualized its future as lying on the adjacent mainland of Asia.”\(^\text{114}\) He also directly challenged the notion, championed for the past decade by individuals such as Leonard Wood and Douglas MacArthur that the United States benefited as a result of its continuing relationship with the Philippines. He noted that the anticipated economic benefits cited by U.S. imperialists as one of the key reasons for maintaining control over the islands had never materialized, and that such arguments had largely lost their relevance once the decision had been made to grant the islands their independence. Krueger unequivocally rejected the notion that the United States possessed any vital national interests in Asia, and charged that claims to the contrary were nothing more than rhetoric devoid of substance:

\(^{114}\) Walter Krueger, “Our Policy in the Philippines” (draft), 28 October 1935, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 17, F 573, 1.
phrases such as “the open door,” “American interests,” “trade expansion,” and so on, become, by mere repetition, dogma incontrovertible by force of reason, and it is by this dogma that our policy has been guided. 115

Krueger argued that as a continental power, the needs of the United States could be supplied entirely by the territories of the Western Hemisphere, and that involvement in a war in either Asia or Europe would only occur as a result of “our own bungling policy.” On the basis of these assumptions, Krueger concluded his memorandum by asserting that “the only sound course for us to follow is radically to reorient our military policy in the Pacific by washing our hands completely of the Philippines…and not to retain even a coaling station, to say nothing of a naval base there [after independence].” 116

Just over a month after Krueger drafted this document, his superior at the War Plans Division, General Embick, released a memorandum of his own that echoed Krueger’s conclusions. Embick began by conceding that under the terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Act the United States “must continue to keep military and naval forces in the Philippines for the defense of those islands,” although he warned that under the conditions then prevailing in the western Pacific such a defense confronted “almost insurmountable military difficulties…” 117 But he argued that it would be a grave mistake for the United States to maintain a military presence in the islands after July 4, 1946, arguing that such action would:

1. Continue us in an isolated and advanced military position vis-à-vis Japan that would be hazardous in the extreme...
2. Imply that the United States assumes responsibility for the defense of the Philippines...

115 Ibid., 1-2.
116 Ibid., 4.
117 Stanley D. Embick, “Military Aspects of the Situation that would Result from the Retention of the United States of a Military (including Naval) Commitment in the Philippine Islands,” 2 December 1935, NA, RG 165, E 284, Box 17, F 573, 1. As an appendix to this memorandum, Embick attached a copy of the letter he had written to Ewing Booth in 1933, which had outlined the difficulties the United States would confront in the event it attempted to mount a 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 regain those establishments.118

As he had done in 1933, Embick argued that the United States should immediately begin negotiations intended to secure the neutralization of the Philippines in the aftermath of the 1946 grant of independence. He offered several arguments in favor of this policy, among them the fact that such action would be a clear signal to foreign governments of the intentions of the United States, and that it would afford adequate time for leaders and diplomats in Washington to gauge foreign reactions to the proposal.

Like many officers of his era, Embick appears to have regarded Japan as the nation with whom the United States was most likely to come to blows. However, Embick insisted that the U.S. military presence in the Philippines, rather than increasing American national security, in fact served as an irritant that exacerbated the threat of conflict:

The policy of our Government is definitely committed to the maintenance of peace and the avoidance of any entanglements which would lead us into war. Our military commitments in the Philippine Islands are the gravest menace to the success of that policy.119

Embick suggested that the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Philippines at the earliest possible date, coupled with diplomatic initiatives to secure the neutralization of the islands, would greatly reduce the likelihood of conflict with Japan, as in Embick’s view Japan held no designs on the eastern Pacific. In an appendix to the memorandum, he repeated his recommendation that the United States adopt the line from Alaska to Hawaii to Panama “as our peace-time frontier in the Pacific. If this were done, he boldly declared, the vital interests of the United States would be “invulnerable,” and in the unlikely event that war with Japan did occur, “we will

118 Ibid., 3-4.
119 Ibid., 4.
be free to conduct our military (including naval) operations in a manner that will promise success instead of national disaster.”

Predictably, Embick’s broadside provoked a prompt response from the Navy. On December 19, OP-12B (the Navy counterpart of the 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.

The report concluded with a recommendation that no changes be made to the U.S. military posture in East Asia, 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.

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120 Ibid. See Appendix A, “The Defense of the Philippine Islands by the United States,” 5.
121 OP-12B, “Memorandum for Discussion in Joint Planning Committee,” 19 December 1935, NA RG 165, E 284, Box 17, F 573, 3.
122 Ibid., 4.
The dispute between the two services spilled over into the following year. In November of 1935, shortly before the release of Embick’s memorandum, the Secretaries of War and the Navy authorized what they termed “a comprehensive re-examination of our military (including naval) position in the Far East…”123 This “comprehensive re-examination” was to be the responsibility of the Joint Planning Committee. In the spring of 1936, the JPC drafted a letter to the members of the Joint Board informing them that its Army and Navy members had been “unable to reach an agreement on their Conclusions and Recommendations,” and that, as a result, the committee was submitting separate reports from the representatives of each service.124 These split reports largely mirrored the memoranda produced by Embick and OP-12B the preceding December. In their report, the Army’s representatives noted that while the United States would retain legal responsibility for the defense of the Philippines throughout the life of the Philippine Commonwealth, the forces then present in the islands were inadequate to fulfill this obligation. After detailing the weakness of the garrison and recounting the political developments that had precluded a greater commitment to the Philippines by the U.S. military they declared “It is clear from the foregoing that our present position in the Philippines and therewith our position in the Far East, vis-à-vis Japan, is so weak as to be untenable.”125 They repeated Embick’s conclusion that the United States should immediately begin negotiation of an international treaty securing the neutralization of the Philippines after the grant of independence, and asserted that the United States should under no circumstances retain naval facilities in the islands after 1946, despite the fact that the language of the Tydings-McDuffie Act left the door open for this possibility. While

123 Harry H. Woodring and Claude A. Swanson to Secretary of State, 26 November 1935, NA, RG 225, JB 305, Ser. 573, M-1421, Roll 6, 1. Woodring and Swanson dispatched this letter in the hope of securing State Department input into the questions confronting the U.S. military in late 1935. It was this inquiry that prompted Cordell Hull to appoint Stanley Hornbeck as a liaison officer to the Joint Planning Committee (see Chapter 5).
124 See W. Krueger and A. S. Carpenter to Joint Board, “Re-examination of our military (including naval) position in the Far East,” undated (but after March 5, 1936), NA, RG 225, JB 305, Ser. 573, M-1421, Roll 6, 1.
125 Army Section, Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, 5 March 1936, NA, RG 225, JB 305, Ser. 573, M-1421, Roll 6, 4.
conceding that such facilities might have some utility to the Navy during peacetime, such benefits would disappear in the event of war with Japan:

Undefended naval reservations and fueling stations would, however, have the great disadvantage that in case of war they would probably fall into the hands of the enemy at the very start, and would be of benefit to him and not to us.\(^{126}\)

The Army planners concluded by once again asserting that the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the Philippines after the granting of independence should be complete, and that such a withdrawal would both strengthen the U.S. strategic position in the Pacific and remove one of the major irritants in U.S.-Japanese relations.\(^{127}\)

The Navy members of the JPC, by contrast, suggested the adoption of a “wait and see” approach with respect to the status of the Philippines. Their report gently chastised the Army for its advocacy of the immediate negotiation of a neutralization treaty for the Philippines, noting that the determination of the timeline for any such negotiations “is the primary responsibility of the Department of State, and not of the War or Navy Departments.”\(^{128}\) Its authors disputed the claim that the U.S. military’s presence in the Philippines represented a continuing provocation to Japan, asserting that maintaining the Army garrison and the Asiatic Fleet at their present levels would not, “for the present at least, precipitate any unfavorable complications in the Far East.”\(^{129}\)

Curiously, the naval section’s report also included a reference to the strategy for war with Japan outlined in War Plan Orange. This passage noted that the U.S. military’s overriding priority in the event of war remained, “To establish, at the earliest practicable date, United States naval power in the Western Pacific in strength superior to that of ORANGE, and to operate offensively in that area,” and that “an adequate base in the Western Pacific is indispensible for the successful

\(^{126}\) Ibid., 6.
\(^{127}\) Ibid., 8.
\(^{128}\) Navy Members, Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, 6 February 1936, NA, RG 225, JB 305, Ser. 573, M-1421, 14.
\(^{129}\) Ibid., 15.
execution of the accepted Decision…”\textsuperscript{130} The Navy members were careful to include a disclaimer that the precise location for this base had not yet been determined. However, the inclusion of such statements in the context of a report that focused almost exclusively upon the Philippines suggests that the Navy still retained at least some hope that Manila Bay might fulfill this role, despite admissions elsewhere in the report that U.S. forces in the Philippines were inadequate to ensure its security against a Japanese invasion. The naval section concluded its report with a recommendation that the status quo in the Philippines be maintained, adding that in its opinion “no pronouncements relative to our future military (including naval) policies in the Far East [should] be made at this time.”\textsuperscript{131} The naval section also recommended that discussions on the retention of naval bases in the Philippines in the aftermath of full independence be tabled “pending further developments in the Far Eastern situation.”

In subsequent months, the simmering inter-service feud became the subject of a number of accounts in the popular press. 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 two services. Even a cursory examination of these pieces clearly demonstrates that the Times’ correspondents were being provided with information from within the upper echelons of both services. The first article, published on October 9, outlined the U.S. Army’s position in language lifted almost verbatim from that used by Stanley Embick:

\begin{quote}
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 to Panama. Any outposts west of that line would be only costly liabilities in time of war, in their opinion.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 14.
\item Ibid., 15. In making this recommendation, the JPC’s naval members apparently discounted their own observation that the formulation of U.S. foreign policy was the exclusive responsibility of the State Department.
\end{enumerate}
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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
statements clearly reflect the arguments put forward by the respective services in the split reports
prepared for the Joint Board the preceding spring.

A second story on the subject appeared two months later. This piece offered substantially
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 Philip-
pines, and suggested that the islands were so isolated as to be insupportable in the event of war
with Japan:

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. The development
of aviation has introduced a new and essentially adverse factor into the problem, while
the numerous actual and potential bases of Japan in the mandated islands so menace our
communications that their capture would be an essential prerequisite to our armed inter-
vention in the Far East.

The article drew a distinction between the American position in the Philippines and that of the
British base at Singapore, which, its author noted, “has supporting bases in its immediate rear,
[and] a protected line of communications leading to the home citadel…” The article also
included a number of specific details which, coupled with its overall tone, strongly suggests that
its author had been given access to the March 5 report prepared for the Joint Board by the Army
section of the JPC.

133 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
136 For example, the article included references to changes in the strategic situation that had taken place since 1907.
Both Embick’s December 1935 memorandum and the Army section’s March 1936 contained similar statements.
Additionally, the Times article noted that in the event of a Japanese invasion of the Philippines, the primary
responsibility for the defense of Luzon would fall upon “four Filipino regiments” and three U.S. aviation squadrons.
Both the numbers of troops available and the roles assigned to them are lifted almost word for word from the army
section’s report of March 5.
Whatever public sympathy such stories may have earned the Army, they did nothing to resolve the strategic debate in its favor. Disputes regarding the direction of Pacific strategy continued throughout the next two years, and were very much in evidence during the development of the final version of War Plan Orange. In November of 1937, Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig approached the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Leahy, with a request that the Joint Planning Committee be directed to draft an updated version of the plan. Referring to the existing Orange Plan (the 1935 revisions to the basic plan established in 1928), Craig wrote “I have long had grave doubts as to its wisdom. I am now convinced that it is unsound.”\(^{137}\) The Joint Board took up the question a week later.\(^{138}\) A memorandum for the Joint Planning Committee on November 10 declared that a review of the existing War Plan Orange had found it to be “unsound in general and specifically to be wholly inapplicable to the present conditions,”\(^{139}\) and directed the JPC to draw up a new version of the plan.

The JPC’s initial effort to draft a plan that met with the agreement of both services proved no more successful than had its 1935 effort to re-evaluate the U.S. strategic posture in the Pacific. Twice within the next six weeks, the JPC found itself deadlocked along service lines. On November 30, the JPC informed the Joint Board that its members had been unable to reach agreement, and, as had occurred in 1935, the Army and Navy Sections of the JPC each submitted its own proposed draft of the revised War Plan Orange.\(^{140}\) Ordered by the Joint Board on


\(^{138}\) See Minutes of the Joint Board, 10 November 1937, NA, RG 407, E 365, Box 688, AG #225.

\(^{139}\) Malin Craig to Joint Planning Committee, “Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Orange,” 10 November 1937, NA, RG 165, E 282, Box 269, F 2720-104.

December 7 to take up the issue again, the JPC returned to its deliberations.\textsuperscript{141} On December 27, it submitted a revised version of War Plan Orange to the Joint Board. In its cover letter, the JPC informed the Board that its Army and Navy members had “agreed on all the provisions of [the plan], except Sections III and IV, and paragraph 3 of Section V.”\textsuperscript{142} In the disputed sections, the text proposed by each service was included side by side for the Board’s review. This letter gave the appearance that the two services’ representatives had resolved most of the disagreements that had divided them. However, the sections that remained in dispute were those pertaining to “Concept of the War,” “Missions,” and “Operations in the Western Pacific.”\textsuperscript{143} As these were the very issues that had divided the two services for years, the reality was that the JPC had made virtually no progress toward fulfilling the Joint Board’s directives. The Army members of the JPC still sought a war plan that assigned as its top priority the defense of the Alaska-Hawaii-Panama line and the security of the West Coast, with any operations west of the 180\textsuperscript{th} meridian to be conducted only with the direct authorization of the president.\textsuperscript{144} The Navy section desired a plan that provided for an offensive war against Japan, and again argued that the key to success in such a conflict would be the establishment of U.S. naval power “at the earliest practicable date… in the Western Pacific in strength superior to that of ORANGE.”\textsuperscript{145} Apparently realizing that ordering further action by the JPC would be futile, in January of 1938 the Joint Board assigned the responsibility for hammering out an agreement to General Embick, now serving as Deputy Chief of Staff to Malin Craig, and Rear Admiral James O. Richardson, the Assistant

\textsuperscript{141} See Secretary of the Joint Board to Senior Army Member, Joint Planning Committee, “Joint Army and Navy War Plan – Orange, directive,” 7 December 1937 and Secretary of the Joint Board to Senior Navy Member, Joint Planning Committee, “Joint Army and Navy War Plan – Orange, directive,” 7 December 1937, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 617/618, M-1421, Roll 10.


\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. See Enclosure (A), “A draft of an Army and Navy Basic War Plan Orange,” 2-3, 11.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 2, 11.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 11.
Over the course of the following month, the two men negotiated a compromise that produced the final version of War Plan Orange. In many ways, the 1938 Orange Plan did represent a clear improvement over its predecessors. The recklessness and nearly complete disregard for logistical considerations that had characterized the 1924 Orange Plan (and to a much lesser extent the 1928 plan) had been abandoned, and the strategy outlined in the 1938 version clearly reflected the ways in which the strategic situation confronting the United States had altered in the post-World War I years. Its authors correctly predicted that the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States would be preceded by a “period of strained relations,” during which time the U.S. military would be able to begin the process of mobilization. The 1938 Orange Plan also anticipated that Japanese military action against the United States would be initiated without a formal declaration of war. While the plan itself did not specifically identify the initial targets of offensive operations directed against Japan, the overall strategy clearly reflected the overwhelming dominance of the “cautionary” approach. It called for the assumption of “an initial temporary position in readiness” intended to ensure the protection of the U.S. mainland, Alaska, Oahu, and Panama. Only after the assumption of this “position in readiness” were U.S. armed forces to undertake operations “to extend our command of the sea in the Pacific progressively to the westward as rapidly as is consonant with the maintenance of secure lines of communication.”

Though this approach meant that victory would not be won quickly, the overall strategy outlined in the 1938 Orange Plan was one that would enable the United States to make maximal use of the

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147 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Orange (1938), Section II, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 618, M-1421, Roll 10.
148 Ibid., Section II.
149 Ibid., Section V. Note the absence of the Philippines from the list of territories mentioned in this section.
150 Ibid., Section V. Emphasis added.
numerous advantages it would possess in a with Japan (e.g., a larger and more secure resource base, larger population, and vastly superior industrial capacity), rather than staking the war’s outcome on a single roll of the dice, as its “thruster” predecessors had done.

But, while on the whole the 1938 Orange Plan outlined a sound strategy, it was not without its shortcomings. To no small degree, these stemmed from the unique circumstances that led to its production. The task of finalizing the 1938 plan had been handed to General Embick and Rear Admiral Richardson because the JPC had been unable to resolve the dispute between its Army and Navy members, an unsurprising development given the vastly different organizational priorities and strategic outlooks of the two services. The compromise adopted by Embick and Richardson left most of these fundamental questions unaddressed—as Louis Morton wrote in 1959, the 1938 Orange Plan “embodied the central point of each of the services, with the result that its provisions were less than clear.”

Morton went on to detail the concessions made by each service in order to produce the compromise:

In return for the Army’s removal of the proviso that operations west of the Hawaiian Islands would require Presidential authorization, the Navy took out its references to an offensive war, the destruction of Japanese forces, and the early movement of the fleet into the Western Pacific.

Morton concluded that the 1938 Orange Plan satisfied both the Army and the Navy because the two services “each won recognition of the principles it held important.” It might be more accurate, however, to say that the compromise allowed each service to read into the plan what it most desired to see. To the Army, it appeared to be a defensively-oriented plan that prioritized the security of the West Coast and the Alaska-Hawaii-Panama “strategic triangle,” objectives completely to its liking. The Navy, by contrast, saw a plan in which it retained the freedom to

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152 Ibid., 247-8.
153 Ibid., 248.
conduct its cherished trans-Pacific campaign against Japan, albeit after a slight delay. The ambiguity inherent in the Embick-Richardson compromise thus allowed the services to draw very different conclusions about the fundamental nature of the plan, a situation that boded ill for effective inter-service cooperation in the event that war broke out.

A second shortcoming of the 1938 Orange Plan was its failure to clarify expectations regarding the fate of the Philippines in the event of a U.S.-Japanese war. The mission assigned to the Philippine garrison by the 1938 Orange Plan remained almost identical to that of earlier versions of the plan: “To hold the entrance to Manila Bay, in order to deny Manila Bay to Orange forces.” In the event of a Japanese landing on Luzon, the Army’s Philippine Department was to conduct a brief delaying action, followed by a withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula. Maintaining control of the Bataan Peninsula for as long as possible was deemed important because it would deny the enemy the ability to station artillery in positions from which Corregidor Island (viewed as the key to the defense of the entrance to Manila Bay) could be brought under fire. U.S. naval forces in the Philippines were simply ordered “To support the Army.”

A close reading of the 1938 Orange Plan suggests that its authors held little hope for a successful defense of the Philippines. The islands were not included in the list of territories whose security was to be assured by the “initial temporary position in readiness” to be assumed by the U.S. military upon the outbreak of war. Additionally, as noted elsewhere in this chapter, previous versions of War Plan Orange had included detailed timetables for the dispatch of relief forces to the western Pacific. Such detailed proposals were conspicuously absent from the 1938 Orange Plan, and the section of the document outlining the responsibilities of the garrison noted

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154 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Orange (1938), Section V.
155 Ibid., Section V.
that the Philippine Department would be “augmented only by such personnel and facilities as are available locally.”

The authors of the 1938 plan clearly anticipated that considerable time would pass before U.S. forces reached the western Pacific. The progressive, step-by-step advance outlined in Section V of the plan in effect meant that U.S. forces could not be expected to reach Philippine waters for far longer than the garrison could reasonably be expected to hold out. When all of these provisions are taken into consideration, the picture that emerges is one of a war plan that at least implicitly conceded that the Philippines could not be held against a Japanese invasion.

But if the loss of the Philippines was implicitly conceded, nowhere in the plan was that expectation stated explicitly. In defense of Embick and Richardson, it is quite possible that they believed that no such depressing pronouncement was required. Embick’s longstanding belief that the defense of the Philippines was a hopeless cause was hardly a secret to members of either service. And, while naval officers had argued far more vociferously than their Army counterparts that the United States would benefit from the retention of military facilities in the Philippines, even they conceded that the principal benefits of such bases would be accrued only during peacetime. It may be true, as Brian Linn has argued, that some Navy officers did hold out hope that the U.S. garrison would manage to retain control at least of the Manila Bay area. If this miracle could be achieved, the facilities at Manila Bay, incomplete as they were, would prove a most valuable asset to the U.S. fleet as it set about closing the ring on Japan. However, it is clear that by the late 1930s and early 1940s a successful defense of the Philippines was by no

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156 Ibid., Section V. This passage is clearly referring to the Army of the Philippine Commonwealth, the organization that was to serve as the nucleus of an independent Philippine Army in the post-independence period. In his capacity as military advisor to Manuel Quezon, Douglas MacArthur’s responsibilities had included the organization and training of the Commonwealth Army. MacArthur’s overestimation of the capabilities of a force that as late as 1941 existed primarily on paper was to play a role in the War Department’s last-ditch effort to reinforce the Philippine garrison in the final months of peace. See the epilogue.
means regarded as a necessary component of the Navy’s plans to defeat Japan. It may be, therefore, that Embick and Richardson simply expected their audience—the Joint Board and those senior commanders of both services who were to be privy to the details of War Plan Orange—to read between the lines and draw their own conclusions with respect to the likely fate of the Philippines. At no point, however, was the expected fate of the Philippines explicitly spelled out by any senior U.S. military authorities. The failure of either the authors of the 1938 Orange Plan, the Joint Board, or the service chiefs to issue such a pronouncement left the door open for one final revolt against the pessimists. This effort, originating with senior U.S. Army officers in the Philippines, but eventually spreading to Washington, was to have a significant impact upon U.S. military policy in the summer and fall of 1941, as will be shown in the Epilogue.

While the contours of the strategy outlined in War Plan Orange underwent considerable evolution and change during the interwar period, one aspect of the plan had remained constant from the 1910s through the late 1930s. Every version of the Orange Plan had envisioned a conflict in which the United States and Japan were the sole belligerents. By the close of the 1930s, however, this assumption was becoming more and more unrealistic. The rise of the fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy, those nations’ increasingly strained relations with the democracies of Western Europe, and the slow but steady strengthening of diplomatic and military ties between Germany and Japan, combined to foster a belief among many U.S. military leaders that the country might soon find itself facing conflicts on multiple fronts. A similar

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157 In *War Plan Orange*, Edward Miller provides a map illustrating the contours of the U.S. Navy’s Fleet Plan O-1, which outlined the campaign the navy intended to conduct in order to fulfill its obligations under the 1938 Orange Plan (and, later, War Plan Rainbow-3). This fleet plan envisioned an initial offensive directed into the Marshall Islands, with the objective of securing the islands of Wotje and/or Eniwetok. The next step in the U.S. advance was to be directed against Truk, in the Carolines. After this, the plan outlined a number of potential targets, of which an advance to the Philippines was only one possibility. Under at least some of the potential courses of action suggested under O-1, the Philippines would have been bypassed completely in favor of moves against Formosa or the Bonin Islands. See Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 237.
realization clearly occurred to civilian leaders, for in the fall of 1938 President Roosevelt ordered
the preparation of a series of new war plans whose assumptions better reflected the prevailing
conditions of the international environment. These assumptions 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.158

The resulting documents were known as the “Rainbow Plans,” their name clearly a play upon the
earlier “color plan” family. The various color plans had been written to outline scenarios
involving the United States and specific individual foreign powers, while the plans of the
Rainbow series detailed situations in which the United States found itself confronting multiple
foes.159

By the time the first drafts of the various Rainbow Plans were completed, the United
States found itself confronted by an international environment radically different from the one
that had existed even as recently as 1938. While the United States remained at least technically
neutral until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the intervening years had
seen a vast increase in the demands being made upon the U.S. military, demands that by 1941 far
outstripped its available resources. The U.S. Navy found itself under orders from President

159 A total of five Rainbow Plans were proposed, of which three appear to have been developed at length by the Joint
Planning Committee. Rainbow-1 and Rainbow-4 were focused primarily upon the defense of the Western
Hemisphere. They envisioned the United States facing Japanese aggression against U.S. possessions in the Pacific,
coupled with “violations of the Monroe Doctrine” in South America by Germany and/or Italy. Rainbow-2 and
Rainbow-3 foresaw U.S. participation in a global conflict as part of a coalition including both Great Britain and
France against a hostile coalition of Japan, Germany, and possibly Italy and the Soviet Union. In both plans, the
principal effort of the U.S. armed forces was to be made in the Pacific, with Rainbow-2 envisioning a rapid advance
to the western Pacific and Rainbow-3 outlining a somewhat more cautious campaign plan. Rainbow-5 postulated a
war between Germany and Britain and France in which U.S. intervention was necessary to stave off the defeat of its
allies. It prioritized the projection of U.S. military power to Europe and/or Northern Africa, and prioritized the
defeat of Germany over that of other potential foes. See Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, “Joint Army and
Navy Basic War Plans – RAINBOW,” 9 April 1940, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 642, M-1421, Roll 11. See
April 1940, 1-3.
Roosevelt to maintain the bulk of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, rather than its typical stations on the West Coast. Roosevelt appears to have been driven by a belief that the forward positioning of the fleet would serve to deter Japan from precipitous action in East Asia. The decision produced considerable anxiety among naval leaders, who were concerned about the extended deployment of the fleet in what they regarded as an unnecessarily exposed position. Admiral Richardson, recently promoted to the post of Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet, expressed his opposition to the move with sufficient fervor that he was relieved of his command, and Admiral Husband Kimmel appointed as his replacement. The commitment to the Pacific was far from the Navy’s only responsibility. One consequence of the events of 1940, particularly the fall of France, was the emergence of an increasingly tight security relationship between the United States and Great Britain. In hindsight, both Roosevelt and Churchill were clearly correct in their estimation that such an alliance would work to the benefit of both nations. In the short run, however, the need to provide assistance to both Britain and its Commonwealth allies placed even greater demands upon the resources of the U.S. Navy.

The Anglo-American alliance began to take shape during early 1941. Between January and March, Washington D.C. was the site of the “ABC-1” talks, a series of meetings that brought together representatives of the armed forces of the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. While these conversations produced more than a few disagreements, by the time they were concluded, a rough framework had been developed to ensure the coordination of the efforts of U.S. and Commonwealth forces if and when the United States formally entered the war. In

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161 For a brief but useful overview of the ABC-1 talks, see Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 37-40. Stoler notes that the greatest disagreement between U.S. and British military officers stemmed from efforts on the part of the British to secure an American commitment to the defense of Singapore. The U.S. officers who participated in the talks expressed violent opposition to this notion, as their strategic outlook was largely shaped by the ideas presented in
the aftermath of ABC-1, the Navy saw a dramatic increase in the tempo of its operations in the Atlantic Ocean. Under the terms of the Joint Canadian-United States Basic Defense Plans (themselves an offshoot of the ABC-1 talks), drafted during the spring and summer of 1941, the United States accepted responsibility for the provision of naval protection to shipping in its Atlantic coastal waters, a task that would require the services of a large portion of the Atlantic Fleet. In April of 1941, Roosevelt, at the urging of CNO Harold Stark, authorized an expansion of what was termed the “hemispheric defense zone” for the purpose of easing the burdens of a badly overstretched Royal Navy. By the fall of 1941, the Roosevelt administration’s determination to aid the beleaguered British had effectively made the U.S. Navy an active belligerent in an undeclared war with Germany.

The U.S. Army also experienced a substantial transformation between 1938 and 1941. Probably the greatest concern for Marshall and his deputies was managing the vast expansion of manpower made possible by the passage of the first peacetime draft legislation in U.S. history. On September 14, 1940, after months of often bitter debate, Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which was formally signed into law by President Roosevelt two days later. There can be no disputing that this legislation was viewed as absolutely essential by the War

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Harold Stark’s Plan Dog Memorandum the preceding November. In their view Europe, not Asia, was the theater in which the primary Allied effort should be made. Stoler claims that this impasse was broken only by the personal intervention of Winston Churchill, who, “determined to reach an accord and obtain U.S. entry into the war under any circumstances,” ordered the British representatives to “drop the Singapore request.” Ibid., 38.

162 See Joint Canadian-United States Basic Defense Plan No. 2, 18 August 1941, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 717, M-1421, Roll 11. A copy of the same plan was also included as an appendix to Rainbow-5.

163 See Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 41-2.

164 Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942 (New York, Penguin Books, 1993), 62. Pogue notes that Roosevelt, while favoring the passage of the Selective Service Act, deliberately kept his distance from the measure during the Congressional debate, leaving much of the advocacy in the hands of the War Department. While their influence was gradually diminishing, U.S. isolationists retained a great deal of political power even as late as 1940. Isolationists were deeply suspicious of Roosevelt, believing that he was actively seeking to maneuver the United States into the Second World War. The President feared that if the proposed legislation became too closely associated with him, his political opponents would seize upon that connection as a reason to oppose its passage, thus threatening a measure that he regarded as necessary to ensure the national security of the United States.
Department—indeed, as Forrest Pogue notes “it was the Selective Service Act...that made possible the huge United States Army and Air Force that fought World War II.” In the short run, however, the act’s passage produced considerable turmoil, as the Army struggled to absorb the masses of raw recruits now entering its ranks. The following year the situation threatened to spiral into outright disaster. Under the terms of the 1940 legislation, draftees were obligated to serve a term of only one year. The following summer, President Roosevelt called upon Congress to extend the term of service to eighteen months, unleashing a firestorm of criticism from opponents. The extension of the 1940 legislation was approved by the House of Representatives by a vote of 203-202. In a postwar interview, George Marshall explained why the defeat of the extension would have crippled the U.S. Army on the eve of American entry into World War II:

> We were in a very desperate situation to maintain the little we had and not have it entirely destroyed, because we had largely dismembered the Regular Army in order to permit the buildup of the new army; because some of the increases [in manpower] were almost a thousand percent and we had to take our few existing Regular organizations completely apart and parcel them out, some at the rate of about twenty men per the new organization. Now this was all threatened and was only saved by one vote.  

Had the legislation not been approved, August of 1941 would have found the U.S. Army with its entire organizational structure thrown into chaos.

The passage of the Selective Service Act and its subsequent extension may have solved the Army’s manpower shortage, but it did nothing to alleviate an equally severe shortage of equipment. The unfortunate fact was that the United States had waited too long to begin the process of rearmament. The inevitable bottlenecks that occurred as American firms retooled their facilities to accommodate the massive new orders suddenly being placed by the War and Navy Departments meant that the process of creating a fully modernized and fully equipped

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165 Ibid., 62.
Army would be a long one. Evidence of this ongoing struggle was readily apparent even to civilian observers. In *From Pearl Harbor to V-J Day*, D. Clayton James reminisced about his experiences in 1941 when, as a ten-year-old boy, he observed columns of U.S. Army troops en route to Louisiana to take part in large-scale field exercises:

> The sight of artillery, half-tracks, and light tanks on the flat cars, guarded by troops with machine guns, was awesome to the youngsters. But sometimes when the fast-moving convoys drove through Natchez, the boys wondered why so many of the trucks looked old, why some of them bore cardboard signs saying “Heavy Tank,” and why the soldiers in the trucks carried wooden rifles.¹⁶⁷

The wooden rifles and “constructive” tanks observed by James and his friends in the fall of 1941 offer a particularly vivid example of just how far the Army remained from its goals, even on the eve of American entry into World War II.

Further complicating the task of national rearmament was the fact that, particularly after the spring of 1940, the U.S. armed forces occupied only some of the chairs around what became known as “the hungry table.”¹⁶⁸ The War and Navy Departments soon found themselves competing for scarce resources with the armed forces of Great Britain, China, and later the Soviet Union. Winston Churchill approached Roosevelt directly with a series of urgent requests following the French military collapse of May 1940. While the miraculous evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk had succeeded in saving the vast majority of its personnel, it had done so at the expense of virtually all of its heavy equipment. Facing the very real possibility of a German invasion of the British Isles, Churchill desperately requested the transfer of vast amounts of war materiel from the United States. The reaction of U.S. military leaders to Churchill’s overtures was cool at best. While he consented to the transfer of a

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substantial quantity of World War-I era surplus small arms from the War Department’s reserves, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall vigorously contested British requests for aircraft.\textsuperscript{169} Marshall’s reticence appears to have been based upon two considerations. First, as Chief of Staff, it was his responsibility to oversee that the expansion and modernization of the U.S. Army was carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible. Any diversion of U.S. war production to Great Britain would further delay this process. Marshall also appears to have harbored serious doubts regarding Britain’s ability to withstand the impending German onslaught. Nor was he unique in this view. David Haglund argues that in the immediate aftermath of Dunkirk, many U.S. leaders, “civilian and military alike…[believed] that Britain was as doomed as France, and that any further aid sent her way would only be wasted, and would greatly compound the dangers facing the United States.”\textsuperscript{170} Haglund recounts an exchange between Marshall and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau in which the Chief of Staff questioned the value of the provision of military aid to Great Britain:

\begin{quote}
…Marshall explained to Morgenthau, two days after Churchill’s entreaty [of May 15], that “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.”\textsuperscript{171}
\end{quote}

It should be noted that the opposition to the provision of U.S. military aid to Great Britain had largely abated by summer’s end. By early August, the RAF’s staunch defense against the \textit{Luftwaffe} during the Battle of Britain convinced a majority of American observers that not only were the British determined to continue the fight, but that they could do so successfully.\textsuperscript{172} From

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 747.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 748. Pogue gives Marshall’s final sentence as “That is it.” Pogue, \textit{George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope}, 50.
\textsuperscript{172} Haglund also suggests that the Royal Navy’s July 3 attack upon the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir offered an unmistakable signal of British determination. See Haglund, “George C. Marshall and the Question of Military Aid to England,” 757-8.
that point forward, the flow of U.S. assistance to Great Britain increased dramatically, beginning with the “destroyers for bases” deal of September 1940, and culminating with the passage of the Lend-Lease Act the following March. While the diversion of a substantial percentage of U.S. war production to Britain necessarily meant less materiel would be immediately available for the American armed forces, a consensus had emerged among U.S. civilian and military leaders that this short-term sacrifice was more than outweighed by the benefit that Britain would offer as an ally if and when the United States formally entered the conflict. A similar dynamic played out during the debate over whether to extend Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union in the months following the launch of Operation Barbarossa.

The result of these developments was that the U.S. military found itself in a very precarious position by the summer of 1941. The belated rearmament efforts undertaken in the final years of neutrality promised to eventually redress the glaring shortages of men and equipment that had been allowed to develop during the preceding decades. In the short term, however, the military’s obligations were expanding at a much greater rate than its capabilities. If a single phrase could be used to describe the status of the U.S. armed forces in the summer of 1941, that phrase likely would have been “not enough”—there were not enough men, not enough ships, not enough equipment, and most importantly of all, not enough time. Given the scale of

173 Forrest Pogue notes that during the negotiations over the provisions of the Lend-Lease Act, George Marshall in fact worked to ensure its passage, reassuring a number of wavering Senators that the proposed legislation had the army’s support. See Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 70-1.


175 As an example of how thinly stretched the resources of the two U.S. armed services were in mid-1941, in August the War Department attempted to halt plans by the Navy to convert three large troop transports into auxiliary aircraft carriers. The Army protested that in order to carry out deployments specified by Rainbow-5 it required the services of at least two of the vessels desired by the Navy, and that approval of the conversions threatened to throw off its timetables for the movement of U.S. troops overseas. In October, after discussions among the members of the Joint Board, the Army withdrew its objections. That the Joint Board’s direct intervention was required to settle a debate over the fate of just three auxiliary vessels, however, is a telling indication of the critical shortages that confronted
the conflict that senior military leaders anticipated, the United States lacked the resources to meet the needs of commanders in every projected theater of combat. The authors of the Rainbow Plans were clearly operating under the realization that careful prioritization would be essential if the United States and its allies were to be victorious in the conflict to come.

A complete overview of the Rainbow Plans is beyond the scope of this project. However, a few salient points should be made with respect to Rainbow-5, as this was the plan under whose guidance the U.S. armed forces went to war in December of 1941. Rainbow-5 clearly exhibited the influence of both Stark’s “Plan Dog” memorandum and the ABC-1 talks. In its final form, Rainbow-5 envisioned the United States as a member of a coalition that included the British Commonwealth, China, the Soviet Union, the “Free French,” and the governments-in-exile of the Netherlands and Belgium. These nations would confront an Axis coalition including Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Japanese entry into the war on the side of the Axis was regarded as probable, but not certain.176 Japanese behavior notwithstanding, the plan was unambiguous with respect to the strategic priorities of the U.S. military:

Since Germany is the predominant member of the Axis Powers, the Atlantic and European area is considered to be the decisive theatre. The principal United States military effort will be exerted in that theatre, and operations of United States forces in other theatres will be conducted in such a manner as to facilitate that effort…

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176 Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan - Rainbow No. 5, Revision #1, 19 November 1941, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 642-5 (Revised), M-1421, Roll 11, 1. The “General Assumptions” in the early paragraphs of Rainbow-5 listed two potential opposition coalitions. One of these listed solely the five European nations, while the other also included Japan, Indo-China, and Thailand.

177 Ibid., 3.
The identification of Europe as the “decisive theatre” by definition reduced other regions—including East Asia and the western Pacific—to no more than secondary importance. Accordingly, the authors of Rainbow-5 declared that only limited resources would be brought to bear against Japan should that nation enter the war on the side of the Axis:

If Japan does enter the war, the Military strategy in the Far East will be defensive. The United States does not intend to add to its present Military strength in the Far East but will employ the United States Pacific Fleet offensively in the manner best calculated to weaken Japanese economic power, and to support the defense of the Malay Barrier by diverting Japanese strength away from Malaysia.  

While Rainbow-5 was focused upon a global conflict, as opposed to the regional conflict envisioned by War Plan Orange, it nevertheless included a more detailed description of the responsibilities of the Philippine garrison than had been included in the 1938 Orange Plan. The U.S. Army garrison, in conjunction with the Philippine Army, was assigned four responsibilities:

a. In cooperation with the Navy, defend the Philippine Coastal Frontier…
b. Support the Navy in raiding Japanese sea communications and destroying Axis forces.
c. Conduct air raids against Japanese forces and installations within tactical operating radius of available bases.
d. Cooperate with the Associated Powers in the defense of the territories of these Powers in accordance with approved policies and agreements.

The U.S. Navy was assigned a similar set of responsibilities. The fact that the missions of the U.S. Army and Navy forces in the islands were spelled out in greater detail than had been done in past plans does not, however, appear to have been based upon a renewed sense of optimism regarding the defenders’ prospects. A close reading of Rainbow-5 strongly suggests that its authors regarded the loss of the Philippines as inevitable. The plan contained no provision for the dispatch of reinforcements to the islands. The passages detailing the responsibilities of the

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178 Ibid., 3. Ironically, this version of Rainbow-5 was approved at a time when the War Department was engaged in an effort to build up its military forces in the Philippines. The tension between the provisions of Rainbow-5 and the War Department’s behavior will be addressed in the Epilogue.

179 Ibid., 12-3.
garrison made it clear that the only forces available to carry out the assigned tasks would be the United States Army Forces, Far East (formerly the Philippine Department), the Philippine Army, and the Asiatic Fleet. An annex outlining the proposed timetable for overseas troop deployments included no mention of any movement of Army forces to the west of the Hawaiian Islands.\footnote{See Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Rainbow No. 5, Annex III, “Overseas Movements of Army Troops,” 6 November 1941, NA, RG 225, JB 325, Ser. 642-5 (Revised), M-1421, Roll 11, 1-3.}

The passage detailing the Navy’s responsibilities in East Asia included the ominous note that the first obligation of the Asiatic Fleet was to support the Army’s defense of the Philippines only “so long as that defense continues.”\footnote{Joint Army Navy Basic War Plan – Rainbow 5, 13.} And while Rainbow-5 did make some provision for offensive operations on the part of the Pacific Fleet, the campaign described was far more circumscribed than that mentioned in even the most cautious of the Orange Plans. The fleet was tasked with supporting the Associated Powers in the defense of the Malay Barrier, but this support was to be provided only indirectly, “through the denial or capture of positions in the Marshalls, and through raids on enemy sea communications and positions.”\footnote{Ibid., 12.} The plan contained no reference whatsoever to an advance into the western Pacific, most likely because its authors envisioned that any such action would have to be postponed until after the defeat of Germany had been assured.

Like its predecessors, Rainbow-5 included no explicit comment on the expected fate of the Philippines. However, in the case of Rainbow-5, such a caveat may have seemed far less necessary. It clearly established the defeat of Germany as its overriding strategic priority, and it included no detailed plans for the movement of additional U.S. forces into the western Pacific should Japan enter the war on the side of the Axis. Under those conditions, the inability of the Philippine garrison to stave off a Japanese invasion should have been evident to all but the most
willfully blind of observers. Of all the war plans produced by the JPC during the interwar decades, Rainbow-5 thus came closest to offering a direct admission that a successful defense of the Philippines was, for all intents and purposes, impossible.

Given the strategic situation confronting the U.S. military in 1941, the tacit decision not to contest local Japanese superiority in the western Pacific seems not only understandable, but obvious. As the demands upon the U.S. Army and the Navy were expanding much more rapidly than the resources available to meet them, the dispatch of any men or materiel to regions viewed as “non-decisive” would necessarily have to be subject to the strictest economies. Given both the developments of the preceding twenty years and the evolution of U.S. war planning, the Philippines seemingly should have been one region to which no further commitment of strength would be made. By early 1941, the strategic situation confronting the U.S. military in the islands was quite grim. The Army’s Philippine Department and the Navy’s Asiatic Fleet remained little more than token forces, which meant that much of the responsibility for the defense of the islands would fall upon the raw and untested Commonwealth Army. Negotiations between the United States and Japan aimed at finding a resolution to the ongoing “China Incident” showed few signs of progress, and Japanese aggression against British and Dutch colonial possessions in Southeast Asia was regarded as increasingly likely. The strategy outlined in Rainbow-5 established Europe, not the Pacific, as the theater of primary effort in the event the United States became a participant in the ongoing world war. As a consequence, any military operations in the Pacific would have to be conducted with a minimum of resources, lest they detract from the principal objective of the plan—securing victory in Europe. Moreover, a considerable body of U.S. military opinion regarded the Philippines as a strategic liability, and an expendable one at that. Since the early 1930s, many Army leaders had been actively urging a complete withdrawal
from the islands at the earliest possible time. Naval leaders saw far more value in the retention of a U.S. military presence in the islands, but this belief did not translate into an ironclad determination that they must be held in the event of a Japanese attack. Indeed, as noted above, both the 1938 War Plan Orange and War Plan Rainbow-5 at least tacitly (though not explicitly) conceded that the islands would be overrun long before help could reach the beleaguered garrison. Given all of these factors, it would have been completely understandable—even expected—for U.S. military leaders to arrive at the conclusion, however unpalatable, that the garrison would have to be left to its own devices.

In fact, however, the War Department chose to do exactly the opposite. Beginning in July of 1941 and continuing up to the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Army launched a massive eleventh-hour effort to heavily reinforce the garrison of the Philippines. This decision seemingly flew in the face of both the beliefs expressed by many of its own senior officers and of the strategic priorities outlined in Rainbow-5 and, as such, it defies easy explanation. It is to an examination of the possible motivations behind the War Department’s abrupt about-face that this narrative now turns.
Epilogue – The Curious Case of the 1941 Reinforcement Effort

The 1941 effort to reinforce the Philippine garrison is an episode that has proven very difficult for historians to understand. A number of possible explanations have been suggested, but a closer examination of the available evidence reveals aspects of each of them that remain fundamentally unsatisfying. The following pages attempt to briefly reconstruct the events that led to the War Department’s decision in the summer of 1941. They then turn to an explanation of why senior U.S. leaders chose to disregard what was, by 1941, a broad strategic consensus regarding the defensibility of the Philippines.

As noted in Chapter 6, the impetus behind the decision to reinforce the garrison originated not in Washington, but in the islands themselves. Brian Linn traces the origins of this campaign to Major General Lucius Holbrooke, who in 1935 succeeded Frank Parker as the Philippine Department’s Commanding General. Holbrooke rejected the notion that the U.S. garrison should respond to a Japanese invasion with an immediate withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula, the strategy envisioned by the authors of War Plan Orange. Instead, Holbrooke’s plan, drawn up in 1936, called for the U.S. Army’s Philippine Division (the only substantial U.S. Army formation in the archipelago), backed by units of the Philippine Army, to meet the invaders on the landing beaches, with a withdrawal to Bataan occurring only if a successful beach defense proved impossible.¹ This was, in Linn’s view, “a major, and perhaps irrevocable step toward the Philippines-wide defense attempted by MacArthur in December 1941.”²

To say that this scheme was somewhat problematic would be a severe understatement. At the time it was first drafted, the Philippine Army (whose units were counted upon to support the Philippine Division in its defense of Luzon) was almost entirely nonexistent. In the absence

² Ibid., 233.
of supporting Filipino formations, the implementation of Holbrooke’s plan would have left the Manila Bay area almost totally devoid of combat troops. This would have severely threatened the ability of the forces remaining in the area to carry out the mission assigned to them by War Plan Orange. Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig appears to have informed Holbrooke that his proposal was in conflict with plans prepared in Washington, and that the War Department would not approve his recommendations.\(^3\) But Craig did not issue orders insisting that defense planning in Manila conform to the guidelines laid out in War Plan Orange. Linn offers a number of possible rationales for Craig’s reluctance to take more decisive action:

A charitable explanation is that the Herculean task of rectifying the nation’s appalling neglect of its defenses precluded the War Department from more than cursory attention to areas of such limited strategic value as the Philippines. Given the War Department’s long history of refusing to interfere in local defense plans, even when they were clearly contradictory to the national war plans, it would have been unusual for Craig to demand his Philippine subordinates follow his lead.\(^4\)

Another possible explanation stems from the fact that Holbrooke’s endeavors enjoyed the support of Douglas MacArthur, recently arrived in the islands and charged with overseeing the development of the Philippine Army. Although MacArthur was technically subordinate to Craig after the end of his tenure as Chief of Staff, his personality continued to cast a long shadow. It is possible that Craig was simply unwilling to overrule a proposal that enjoyed the support of his flamboyant predecessor.

In 1936, the Philippine Army was clearly incapable of playing the role envisioned by Holbrooke. The situation by late 1940, however, appeared to have changed substantially, with the result that when Major General George Grunert assumed command of the Philippine Department, he ordered alterations to the Philippine Joint Defense Plans which utilized and

\(^3\) Ibid., 236.
\(^4\) Ibid. Linn also suggests that Holbrooke may have been allowed such leeway because the War Department regarded the defense of the Philippines as a hopeless cause, and as such it was believed that the local commanders should be afforded the right to script their own ending in whatever manner they chose.
expanded upon Holbrooke’s ideas. Grunert’s efforts came to fruition in what was termed “WPO-3,” a shorthand title for the preferred strategy outlined in the 1940 revision of the Philippine Department’s Plan Orange. Its predecessor, drafted in 1938, called for forces assigned to local commands in Luzon to conduct such delaying actions as possible “[w]ithout uncovering the defense of the entrance to Manila Bay…” followed by a withdrawal of the garrison to the Bataan Peninsula. Grunert’s 1940 plan was far more aggressive, calling for a forward defense intended if at all possible to stop hostile landings on the beaches:

(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.

In Grunert’s view (and also that of MacArthur, who wholeheartedly endorsed the plan) WPO-3 offered many advantages over its predecessor, among them “the ability to gather more supplies; to make use of all the air facilities on Luzon (rather than consigning them immediately to the enemy; [and] to allow a more organized defense of the entrance to Manila Bay, ‘including the defense of the Pico de Loro area…” When Douglas MacArthur supplanted Grunert as the commander of the newly established United States Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) in July of

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5 For an account of Grunert’s tenure as Commanding General of the Philippine Department, see Richard B. Meixsel, “Major General George Grunert, WPO-3, and the Philippine Army, 1940-1941,” The Journal of Military History 59 (1995), 303-24. Meixsel’s article identifies Grunert as the individual most responsible for the Philippine Department’s adoption of plans advocating an “offensive defense.” Grunert does appear to have been the driving force behind the development of the Department’s “WPO-3.” However, an examination of the 1938 and 1940 Joint Defense Plans for the Philippines, coupled with the insights provided by Linn’s Guardians of Empire, strongly suggests that rather than completely re-casting the mindset of the Philippine Department, Grunert instead was building upon the foundation laid by Holbrooke. See Army and Navy Joint Defense Plan for Philippine Islands Coastal Frontier (1938 Revision), NA, RG 407, E 365, Box 89, F 238; see also G-3 Annex to Philippine Department Plan – Orange (1940 Revision), NA, RG 407, E 365, Box 89, F 326.

6 Army and Navy Joint Defense Plan for Philippine Islands Coastal Frontier (1938 Revision), 8.

7 G-3 Annex to Philippine Department Plan – Orange (1940 Revision), 1. Emphasis added.

8 Meixsel, “Major General George Grunert,” 311. For a complete list of the advantages claimed by the authors of WPO-3, see G-3 Annex to Philippine Department Plan – Orange (1940 Revision), 6-7.
1941, he not only endorsed the aggressive defensive strategy outlined in WPO-3, he in fact expanded upon it. As originally formulated by Grunert and his staff, the plan called for attempts to be made to contest Japanese landings at the invasion beaches, but it also envisioned the possibility that these efforts might not be successful. Because of this, WPO-3 retained the provision for a withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula that had been recommended by the authors of the Orange Plans in Washington, although with the caveat that this withdrawal was only to be undertaken “as a last resort.” Upon his succession to the command of USAFFE, MacArthur de-emphasized the planned withdrawal, in effect staking the fate of the Philippines on an all-or-nothing effort to defend the landing beaches. According to D. Clayton James, this culminated in an order issued on December 3 in which MacArthur declared “that the beaches must ‘be held at all costs…”

The efforts of officers such as Holbrooke, Grunert, and MacArthur, in and of themselves, would not necessarily have constituted a sea change in U.S. strategic planning. The War Department could have chosen to regard the question of the employment of the Philippine Army as one best left in the hands of local commanders. Certainly the adoption of a defensive plan focused upon attempting to repel hostile landings throughout the islands represented a substantial departure from the guidelines laid out in War Plan Orange, which had prioritized the defense of the Manila Bay area. However, if this defense was to be conducted solely with forces already present in the islands, it would not have required a reconsideration of the “Germany first” strategy proposed in Stark’s Plan Dog Memorandum and later codified in Rainbow-5.

A substantial change in policy with respect to the Philippines would require a firm commitment to the islands’ defense on the part of military and civilian leaders in Washington, and it was to this goal that Grunert and MacArthur turned their attention in late 1940. Almost

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from the moment of his arrival in the Philippines, Grunert began bombarding Marshall with urgent requests for men and materiel. The scope, frequency, and urgency of these requests appear to have struck a nerve with the normally reserved Chief of Staff. In a September 1940 letter, Marshall reminded his subordinate that the defense of the Philippines was just one of a multitude of obligations then confronting the Army:

I am fully aware of your difficulties and they have been a matter of almost daily discussions between the Secretary of War and myself. The trouble is, as you may not fully appreciate at your distance from Washington: We are involved in a tremendous expansion, new obligations in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and all the recently acquired bases in the Atlantic and Caribbean area – for all of which materiel is required.10

During the winter of 1940-1941 Marshall was able to secure some limited assistance for Grunert, including the dispatch of a small number of 3-inch antiaircraft guns and, more importantly, authorization to double the manpower of the Philippine Scouts (native Filipinos serving with the U.S. Army in the Philippines) from 6,000 to 12,000.11 Grunert declared the increase in the Scouts’ manpower to be “a God-send,” and assured Marshall that the newly recruited Filipinos were being subjected to an intensive training regimen.12

Such incremental measures did not yet signal an all-out commitment to the defense of the Philippines on the part of the U.S. Army and the War Department. Early in his tenure as Chief of Staff, Marshall appears to have shared Stanley Embick’s deep skepticism regarding the

11 See Marshall to Grunert, 8 February 1940, Marshall Papers, Box 69, Folder 34, Marshall Library. Meixsel notes that “the tactical needs of the Philippine Department had no bearing” on the number of men recruited to join the Philippine Scouts. The decision to limit the Scouts to 12,000 men was a function of a forty-year-old U.S. law which had established that number as the maximum number of Filipinos who were permitted to serve with the U.S. Army. See Meixsel, “Major General George Grunert,” 314.
12 George Grunert to George C. Marshall, 1 March 1941, Marshall Papers, Box 69, File 34, Marshall Library. A quick mention should be made here of the divided command structure that existed in the Philippines between 1934 and 1941. As the commander of the Philippine Department, Grunert’s authority was restricted to U.S. Army personnel (including the Philippine Scouts). Units of the Army of the Philippine Commonwealth were not subject to U.S. Army authority unless called into U.S. service by the President. No such proclamation was issued during Grunert’s tenure as head of the Philippine Department.
defensibility of the Philippines, hardly a surprising revelation given that Marshall regarded Embick as one of his closest confidants.\textsuperscript{13} During a meeting of the Joint Board in February of 1940, Marshall had openly opposed a proposal to reinforce the Philippine garrison:

> It was pointed out by the Chief of Staff that any increase of the air component of the Philippine garrison, as well as the rest of the Army garrison now stationed in the Philippines, would be subject to annihilation or complete loss in the event of Japanese attack.\textsuperscript{14}

By the close of 1940, Marshall had relented somewhat, as evidenced by his efforts to provide Grunert with at least a portion of the vast quantities of materiel he had repeatedly requested, and his efforts to expand the size of the Philippine Scouts. Many glaring deficiencies remained unaddressed, however. In April, responding to yet another letter from Grunert in which the latter had noted a critical shortage of .30-caliber ammunition, Marshall wrote “I can well understand your problems…[but] regret that I can do nothing for you at this time in that respect,” adding that the War Department would have to cancel a promised delivery of 12.5 million .30-caliber rounds pending a repayment from Great Britain of ammunition delivered via Lend-Lease.\textsuperscript{15}

The major reversal in the War Department’s outlook with respect to the Philippines appears to have occurred in June and July of 1941. A number of factors appear to have contributed to this development. The first, and probably the most important, was President Roosevelt’s growing determination to adopt a hard line against Japan in the hope of deterring that country’s militarists from further aggression in East Asia. Waldo Heinrichs asserts that Roosevelt’s decision was prompted by an analysis of decrypted diplomatic communiqués that revealed the Japanese government’s intention to demand access to naval and air bases in French Indochina, demands to which the Vichy regime quickly acquiesced. These cable intercepts, “so

\textsuperscript{14} George V. Strong to Chief of Staff, “Practicability of increasing Army Aviation Strength in the Philippines,” 2 March 1940. Copy seen in Marshall Foundation National Archives Project, Reel 39, Xerox 1561, Marshall Library. (Original in WPD 4192-3, National Archives, College Park, MD).
\textsuperscript{15} George C. Marshall to George Grunert, 8 April 1941, Marshall Papers, Box 69, Folder 34, Marshall Library.
shamelessly contradicting [Japan’s] avowals of peaceful intent,” finally established in the
President’s mind the “concept of Japan as an incurably predatory and duplicitous nation…”\textsuperscript{16}
After some weeks of deliberation, culminating in discussions between Roosevelt and Winston
Churchill at the Argentia Conference in Newfoundland, the president opted to utilize the most
powerful economic weapon at his disposal—what Heinrichs terms a “de facto oil embargo,”
coupled with the seizure of Japanese financial assets in the United States.\textsuperscript{17} Ideally, in the
president’s view, a U.S. embargo, especially one coordinated with similar measures by the
British and Dutch governments might force the Japanese government to reconsider its behavior
in Indochina.

The dilemma confronting Roosevelt—and, by extension, U.S. military leaders—was that
the Japanese government might well react to the announcement of the embargo by launching
military action aimed at seizing the petroleum rich Dutch East Indies, as well as British colonial
possessions in Southeast Asia. If this were to happen, the Philippines would almost certainly be
targeted as well, in order to ensure that U.S. forces stationed there would not threaten the sea
lanes connecting what the Japanese military termed the “Southern Resource Area” with the home
islands. To forestall such an attack, the U.S. would have to possess a military deterrent in the
islands capable of complementing the administration’s program of economic pressure.

Prior to 1941, U.S. military leaders had regarded the possibility that such a deterrent
presence might be established in the Philippines as extremely unlikely. In the weeks following
the imposition of the oil embargo, however, a development occurred that apparently convinced
several key figures within the War Department, including both Marshall and Secretary of War
Stimson, to reconsider this position. In 1938, the Army had accepted the first delivery of a new

\textsuperscript{16} Waldo Heinrichs, \textit{Diplomacy and Force: America’s Road to War, 1931-1941}, ed. Marc Gallichio and Jonathan
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 192. A similar account appears in Pogue, \textit{George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope}, 182-3.
heavy bomber, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. A series of production delays and funding limitations had precluded the acquisition of more than a handful of these aircraft over the following three years.\textsuperscript{18} By the summer of 1941 these bottlenecks were finally being resolved, and substantial numbers of an upgraded model (the B-17E), promised to be available by early 1942. Stimson and Marshall became convinced that the B-17 might offer a solution to the Philippine defense dilemma. In 1940, a limited number of B-17s had been transferred to the Royal Air Force, which intended to use them to conduct long-range bombing raids on German-occupied Europe. In 1941, Stimson began to receive “reports of the B-17’s ‘sudden and startling success’ in daylight raids over Germany” which, according to historian Daniel Harrington, inspired the Secretary of War to “see America’s Far Eastern problems in a new light.”\textsuperscript{19} The B-17’s long range meant that it would be possible for aircraft to reach the Philippines from the U.S. mainland by way of a “ferry route” whose waypoints included Hawaii, Midway, Wake Island, the Australian base at Port Moresby on the island of New Guinea, and the north Australian port city of Darwin. This would greatly accelerate the process of strengthening U.S. air power in the Philippines, and prompted an enthusiastic Stimson to write “that the United States now had a chance to ‘get back into [the] islands in a way it hadn’t been able to for twenty years’”\textsuperscript{20} A visit to Boeing’s Seattle production line in late August seems to have left Marshall similarly impressed with the B-17’s potential.\textsuperscript{21}

This enthusiasm was further bolstered by a series of exaggerated claims being made about the B-17, and particularly about the accuracy of the Norden bombsight. Hopeful planners


\textsuperscript{20} Pogue, \textit{George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope}, 186.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 186. Harrington also cites this visit as having heavily influenced Marshall’s thinking, but claims that it occurred in September. Harrington, “A Careless Hope,” 226.
within the War Department leaped at the idea that in sufficient numbers B-17s might offer a means of keeping Japan at arm’s length from the Philippines by threatening to smash an invasion convoy before it could reach the islands’ shores. Some senior officials (including, apparently, Roosevelt himself) even dared to hope that B-17s stationed in the Philippines might be able to threaten the Japanese home islands. The president envisioned negotiating an agreement with the Soviet government granting U.S. aircraft access to bases in Siberia. Bombers flying from Luzon would strike targets in Japan and then proceed to Soviet airfields to be refueled and re-armed. They would then return to the Philippines, carrying out an additional strike on the return flight.\(^{22}\)

The threat of large-scale B-17 attacks, it was hoped, would completely deter Japan from any further aggression in East Asia, with Marshall going so far as to suggest to Roosevelt that “not only might the planes deter Japan, but also ‘wean her from the Axis.’”\(^{23}\)

The final piece of the puzzle with respect to the reversal of U.S. Philippine policy stemmed from the actions of Douglas MacArthur. As noted previously, since his departure from the Chief of Staff’s office, MacArthur had been charged with overseeing the development of the Commonwealth Army. While he shared Holbrooke and Grunert’s contempt for what he regarded as the pessimistic, even defeatist mission assigned to the Philippine garrison by War Plan Orange, he had frequently clashed with the Philippine Department commanders on other matters, most commonly involving the status of the Commonwealth Army and its personnel.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{22}\) See Russell Weigley, “The Role of the War Department and the Army,” in *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations 1931-1941*, edited by Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 183; Heinrichs, *Diplomacy and Force*, 208, 217, Harrington, “A Careless Hope,” 226, 231-2. In retrospect, this proposal represented little more than a desperate flight of fancy. It failed to explain how and why the Soviet government, then confronted with a life and death struggle against the German invasion, might be persuaded to abandon its non-aggression pact 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 Norden bombsight, wartime experience was to demonstrate that hitting a moving ship with bombs dropped from high altitude was a virtual impossibility.


\(^{24}\) The Philippine Department commanders argued that the overriding U.S. objective (defending the Philippines against a Japanese attack) could best be achieved by placing the Commonwealth Army’s personnel under their
Despite this, as relations between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate through late 1940 and early 1941, MacArthur began to entertain the idea of a return to active duty. According to D. Clayton James, MacArthur first broached the idea in an April 1941 letter to Stephen Early, President Roosevelt’s personal secretary.25 MacArthur proposed that he be appointed as head of a reorganized U.S. Army command in the Philippines, one that would encompass both the Philippine Department and the Commonwealth Army. Ironically, Grunert had forwarded a similar proposal to Marshall the same month, urging “the mobilization of the ‘organized forces of the Philippine Army on the island of Luzon’ for at least two to four months of advanced training under ‘his [i.e., Grunert’s] complete command, supervision, and control.’”26

The proposal for the establishment of a unified command in the Philippines appears to have secured Marshall’s approval in May. The following month, Marshall privately assured MacArthur that the leadership of this reorganized command would be his, but urged him to bide his time, pledging that “‘should the situation approach a crisis’…Secretary Stimson would recommend the appointment to the President.”27 In the aftermath of Japan’s actions in Indochina in July and the subsequent imposition of the oil embargo, the War Department leadership determined that just such a crisis had arisen:

On July 26 Roosevelt signed the order calling the Philippine Army into the service of the United States, the combined Army forces in the islands to be commanded by a general…designated by Stimson…That same day, the War Department established the new Far...
Upon assuming his new position, MacArthur’s chief responsibility was to integrate the U.S. Army garrison and the Commonwealth Army units into a cohesive defensive force capable of offering effective resistance to a Japanese invasion.

From his earliest days as military advisor to Manuel Quezon, this was a task that MacArthur had always insisted was achievable, despite the formidable obstacles involved. In a 1936 speech, he had declared that his objective “was to create a defensive force of such strength as to make an invasion so costly in lives and money that ‘no Chancellery in the World…will ever willingly make an attempt to willfully attack the Philippines.”29 In MacArthur’s view, the principal instrument of this defense would be the Philippine Army. To War Department officials located thousands of miles away from the islands, the Philippine Army may have appeared to be a formidable force indeed. At the time of the Japanese invasion, it possessed a single Regular Army division of approximately 4,000 men, as well as ten reserve divisions with a total strength of 76,000 men.30 The War Department appears to have held the impression that these raw numbers were an accurate depiction of the Philippine Army’s strength and capabilities, but in fact, such simplistic reporting masked serious underlying deficiencies. These problems, however, were minimized—to the extent they were mentioned at all—by MacArthur in his correspondence with his superiors in Washington.

From the time of his appointment as the head of USAFFE to the outbreak of the Pacific War, MacArthur’s messages were relentlessly positive in their evaluation of the state of the Filipino units’ training and morale. D. Clayton James suggests that MacArthur’s “overcon-
fidence and unjustified optimism as to the abilities of himself, his staff, and the untried Filipino soldiers…became a contagion which ultimately affected even the War Department and the Joint Army and Navy Board.”  

This optimism is in evidence in a letter to Marshall written on October 28. In it, MacArthur declared, “The response of the Philippine Army [to inclusion within USAFFE] has been excellent…Morale has been exceptionally high and all ranks show a real eagerness to learn. In consequence, training has progressed even beyond expectations.”

MacArthur also asserted that the creation of the USAFFE had revitalized the morale of the entire Filipino populace:

Morale in the Commonwealth is high. The local press and innumerable speeches by leaders throughout the country give evidence of poise; there is no hysteria…Prior to [the establishment of USAFFE], there was uneasiness and dread, noticeably accentuated by each minor crisis precipitated in the Western Pacific area.

Marshall appears to have given at least some credence to MacArthur’s assessments. In a September 9 memorandum to President Roosevelt, Marshall quoted approvingly from an August 30 letter written by MacArthur in which the USAFFE chief declared that the mobilization of the Philippine Army was progressing “in a most satisfactory manner,” and credited Roosevelt’s July proclamation with having “changed a feeling of defeatism to the highest state of morale I have ever seen.”

In a draft reply to MacArthur’s letter of October 28, Marshall declared “The progress reported in your letter…is most encouraging.”

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31 Ibid., 609.
33 Ibid., 3.
34 Quoted in George C. Marshall to Franklin Roosevelt, 9 September 1941, Marshall Papers, Box 80, Folder 30, Marshall Library.
35 George Marshall to Douglas MacArthur, date unknown, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 243, WPD 4477-2. The file copy of this letter bears the date “December 14,” but this is almost certainly incorrect. Marshall references MacArthur’s October 28 letter, but makes no mention of ongoing hostilities with Japan. The majority of the letter deals with the anticipated schedule for the arrival of reinforcements in the Philippines. Given the context of the letter, it would appear that it was actually written on November 14. The second page of this letter bears a stamp reading “NOT USED,” indicating that it was never actually sent to MacArthur.
Apparently spurred by Roosevelt’s renewed determination to adopt a firm line against the Japanese, and convinced by both the potential of the B-17 and MacArthur’s favorable evaluation of the Philippine Army’s potential, by the end of July the War Department abruptly reversed its longstanding policy that the Philippine garrison was not to be reinforced. On August 1, “Marshall told his immediate staff, ‘It was the policy of the United States to defend the Philippines.’”36 On the heels of this announcement, the War Department launched a substantial effort to heavily augment the U.S. military presence in the islands. Army reinforcements consisting of a coastal artillery regiment, two tank battalions, and 50 self-propelled guns were dispatched from the U.S. in August, and all of these units had arrived in the islands by the middle of October.37 Most of the War Department’s efforts, however, were focused on building up the aviation elements of MacArthur’s command, the newly-established Far East Air Force (FEAF), which as late as July remained little more than “a token force.”38 A nine-plane squadron of B-17s successfully completed its trans-Pacific journey to Manila via the northern “ferry route” on September 12.39 On the same day, in response to an inquiry from Stark, Marshall drafted a memorandum listing the air units that the War Department intended to send to the Philippines. Initial elements of the reinforcement program would consist of two additional B-17 squadrons and 50 P-40E interceptors (at the time the Army’s most advanced fighter), with 32 additional P-40s being dispatched in October to provide MacArthur with an operational reserve.40 In December these forces were to be augmented by two more B-17 squadrons, an additional fighter

36 Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 31.
37 Ibid., 33.
38 Ibid., 37.
40 Ibid.
group, and a group of A-24 dive bombers. Army plans called for the FEAF to have approximately 240 P-40 fighters at its disposal by the end of 1941, and for its strength in heavy bombers to reach 165 by March of the following year.

In addition to the extensive materiel reinforcements dispatched to the Philippines, the War Department also endorsed a proposal from MacArthur for a revision of the Philippine garrison’s mission under Rainbow-5. In brief, MacArthur proposed to conduct a defense of the entire archipelago rather than concentrating his forces on the island of Luzon. On November 3, Major General Lewis Brereton, who had been selected to serve as the commander of MacArthur’s Far East Air Force, arrived in Manila bearing Marshall’s endorsement of the revised defense plan:

Reacting boyishly…[MacArthur] embraced the air officer, saying, “Lewis, you are just as welcome as flowers in May.” To his chief of staff, Brigadier General Richard K. Sutherland, he shouted happily, “Dick, they are going to give us everything we have asked for.”

Such was MacArthur’s confidence in the progress being made in strengthening the USAFFE’s position that he actually declined one of the potential reinforcements offered to him by the War Department. In early September, Marshall cabled MacArthur with an offer to dispatch “one first class National Guard division to Philippines [of] approximately eighteen thousand men.”

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41 Ibid. The A-24 was the U.S. Army’s version of the Navy’s SBD Dauntless dive bomber. Louis Morton notes that as a result of difficulties in collecting the necessary aircraft, the A-24s were only dispatched as far as Hawaii. Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 39.
42 George C. Marshall to Secretary of War, “Reinforcement of the Philippines,” undated, Marshall Papers, Box 84, Folder 6, Marshall Library. A handwritten note on this memorandum lists the date of its authorship as “October 29/41 (?).” A total of 35 B-17s and approximately 100 P-40s had reached MacArthur’s command by December 7, 1941, but Japanese attacks rendered further reinforcement of the FEAF impossible.
43 Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 188.
44 George C. Marshall to Douglas MacArthur, 5 September 1941, Marshall Papers, Box 74, Folder 48, Marshall Library. While Marshall was doubtless sincere in his offer, he added the caveat that the provision of this division would cut deeply into the shipping tonnage then being used to convey materiel to the Philippines.
MacArthur said that he preferred to have the precious shipping space used for materiel reinforcements: “Equipment and supply of existing forces are the prime essential…I am confident if these steps are taken with sufficient speed that no further major reinforcement will be necessary for accomplishment of defense mission.”

In other words, if the War Department could only provide MacArthur with the admittedly vast quantities of materiel necessary to equip the Philippine Army, he was confident in his ability to repulse a Japanese invasion with the manpower already available to him.

Thus, by the late summer of 1941, both the War Department and the U.S. Army’s leadership had experienced a dramatic surge of optimism in their ability to hold the Philippines. A closer examination of the evidence, much of which was available to senior U.S. officials in the summer and fall of 1941, suggests that much of this optimism was ill-founded. The extent to which individuals such as Stimson and Marshall seem to have seized upon the potential of the B-17 is one such example. Daniel Harrington notes that the glowing reports that had been passed to Stimson regarding the performance of early-model B-17s in British hands had been greatly exaggerated, for “In truth, the Boeing ‘Flying Fortress’ failed in the hands of the RAF. The Chief of the Army Air Forces, Major General Henry H. Arnold, later described the episode as a fiasco.”

In a 1956 interview with Forrest Pogue, George Marshall revealed that he, at least, had been informed of problems with the Flying Fortresses, perhaps as early as 1940:

> Our fellows were reporting back that…these bombers…were not being used. In fact, they were standing out in the field and the grass [was] growing up around the tires… I sent for a Britisher and I asked him to explain this thing to me very frankly…He said they couldn’t use these bombers. Their defensive arrangements were lacking. They had no tail guns for one thing, which was the most serious thing, which would mean that they would all get shot down…then we began sending each tank [sic—Marshall clearly meant to say “plane”] through the modification plant up at Seattle…

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45 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, I, 613.
The problems that Marshall’s British informant relayed to him related to the B-17C and B-17D, and were substantially resolved with the introduction of the B-17E in 1941. The demand for the upgraded bombers vastly outstripped the available supply, however, with the result that the B-17 squadrons that had joined MacArthur’s command prior to the Japanese attack were all equipped with the older (and substantially less capable) models.48

A second problem confronting the War Department’s planners was the question of how the rapidly expanding Far East Air Force was to be supplied, and its squadrons provided with replacement aircraft. In making the decision to reinforce the Philippines the War Department had decided, at least to some extent, to set aside its conclusion—outlined in Rainbow-5 and elsewhere—that the demands of the European theatre would take precedence over the Pacific. However, even when Marshall informed his staff that “it was the policy of the United States to defend the Philippines,” this statement was accompanied by the caveat “that the execution of the policy would not ‘be permitted to jeopardize the success of the major efforts made in the theater of the Atlantic.’”49 As noted in Chapter 6, the mobilization plans outlined in the final revision of Rainbow-5 made no provision for the dispatch of additional forces to the Philippines following the outbreak of war, meaning that the garrison would have to rely largely upon its own resources. Even if the War Department had been able to complete its planned buildup before the Japanese attack, the ability of the garrison’s air arm to maintain its combat effectiveness for a prolonged period of time was highly questionable. A 1939 study conducted by the U.S. Army Air Corps, based upon data collected during the First World War, calculated that a heavy bomber unit could be expected to suffer 10% attrition per month during combat operations, with attrition for other

48 Louis Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 42. See Table 3, “Aircraft in Philippines and Hawaii, 1 December 1941.”
49 Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 68.
types of aircraft estimated at 15% per month. If the Far East Air Force was to maintain its effectiveness, it would need to receive sufficient numbers of aircraft and personnel to allow it to replace its losses. For B-17s, such replacement may have been possible, as the initial flights of October and November had demonstrated the viability of the trans-Pacific “ferry route” between the U.S. mainland and the Philippines. Smaller aircraft, however, lacked the range to utilize this method, and in the absence of such units (particularly fighters to protect the bases from which the B-17s would operate) the effectiveness of the FEAF could be expected to deteriorate rapidly. Transporting additional medium bombers, fighters, and observation aircraft to the Philippines (to say nothing of spare parts, aviation fuel, ammunition, ordnance, and personnel) would place severe demands upon the already overstrained shipping resources available to the U.S. military. Thus, even if MacArthur’s command had received all of the air-craft that the War Department was planning to dispatch, it would have faced extraordinary difficulties in sustaining an effective combat strength should it find itself engaged in a protracted campaign.

Another problem with the proposal to rapidly increase the size of the Far East Air Force stemmed from the underdeveloped state of U.S. air fields in the Philippines. The islands’ base facilities were in no condition to accommodate the number of aircraft then arriving in the islands. From Brereton’s perspective, this created a number of difficulties, most notably the inability of the FEAF to properly disperse its aircraft, particularly the B-17s. D. Clayton James notes that in early December, only two airfields in the entire archipelago—Clark Field on Luzon and Del

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51 A major concern with respect to the ferry route was the vulnerability of Wake and Midway Islands, both of which were regarded as exposed and highly susceptible to Japanese attack. In recognition of this problem, the War Department in August 1941 began efforts to develop an alternate ferry route through the South Pacific, making use of Christmas Island, Canton, Fiji, and French New Caledonia as waypoints for U.S. heavy bombers bound for Australia. However, the establishment of the southern route was delayed by resource shortages, with the result that the northern route was expected to be the only viable means of reinforcing the Philippines until at least the middle of January, 1942. See Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 70-1.
Monte on Mindanao—were capable of servicing the heavy bombers.\textsuperscript{52} The necessity to concentrate the entire B-17 force at just two bases greatly increased the vulnerability of the bombers while grounded. MacArthur was clearly aware of this issue. In his October 28 letter to Marshall, he informed the Chief of Staff that “Good progress is being made on the development of air fields,” and asserted that “We are prepared to take care of the contemplated additional units as rapidly as these can be sent out.”\textsuperscript{53} This forecast, however, proved premature, and on November 29, MacArthur was forced to admit that “Progress [on airfield development] is slow due to the lack of earth moving machinery in the Philippines,” although he still insisted that this problem would be alleviated with the arrival of engineer units from the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

The shortcomings of U.S. base facilities in the Philippines were further exacerbated by the fact that senior officers, including both MacArthur and Marshall, appear to have badly underestimated the threat to the islands posed by Japanese aircraft operating from bases in Formosa. MacArthur was quite confident that the major U.S. air bases in the islands lay beyond the range of Japanese land-based fighters. In a letter to Marshall written on December 1, he insisted that:

Geographical considerations and the types of planes available to the Japanese place a very definite limitation upon the strength of the air forces that can be brought against us. Attacking bombers must operate at ranges approaching the limit of their radius of action and their pursuit protection will be confined largely to carrier-borne aircraft.\textsuperscript{55}

Most U.S. Army leaders did not regard as likely the prospect that carrier-borne aircraft alone could challenge for air superiority over the Philippines, as U.S. doctrine “held that carrier-based aircraft were no match for land-based planes…”\textsuperscript{56} Thus, if the Japanese could be prevented from

\textsuperscript{52} James, \textit{The Years of MacArthur}, I, 611-2.
\textsuperscript{53} MacArthur to Marshall, 28 October 1941, 2.
\textsuperscript{54} Douglas MacArthur to George Marshall, 29 November 1941, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 122, WPD 3489-21, 4.
\textsuperscript{55} Douglas MacArthur to George Marshall, 1 December 1941, NA, RG 165, E 281, Box 22, WPD 3489-21, 1.
\textsuperscript{56} Harrington, “A Careless Hope,” 228. This notion had been one of the fundamental components of U.S. air doctrine for several years. References to the assumed superiority of land-based aircraft over carrier-based planes appeared as early as 1934, in a memo written by the Joint Planning Committee in response to the Upham-Parker letter. See Joint Planning Committee to Joint Board, “Inadequacy present military forces, Philippine Area, to carry
establishing air bases within the Philippines, U.S. officers were confident that the FEAF could maintain air superiority over the islands. This belief turned out to be badly mistaken. One of the Japanese military’s best kept secrets on the eve of its entry into the Second World War was the development of the Mitsubishi Zero. Among its many outstanding characteristics, the A6M2 version of the Zero possessed a combat radius unprecedented among contemporary fighter designs. As the defenders of the Philippines would discover to their sorrow, Zeroes were quite capable of escorting Japanese bomber formations on attack missions from Formosa, and contributed greatly to the crippling of the FEAF during the opening days of the Pacific War.57

U.S. leaders such as Stimson and Marshall may have been guilty of placing too much faith in the ability of B-17s to serve as a deterrent to Japanese aggression. Those misjudgments, however, pale in comparison to those made with respect to the capabilities of the Philippine Army. Despite the numerous assurances and positive assessments provided by Douglas MacArthur in the months that followed the establishment of the USAFFE, the Philippine Army was far from being a combat ready force, a fact that likely would have been evident to the planners in Washington had they scrutinized the situation more closely.

To begin with, the Philippine Army was plagued by chronic shortages of equipment. These shortages involved virtually every item required for the conduct of modern warfare, ranging from trucks and artillery pieces to basic items of clothing for individual soldiers.58

57 I am grateful to Richard Frank for pointing out U.S. leaders’ nearly complete unfamiliarity with the Zero’s characteristics prior to December, 1941. Richard Frank, conversation with the author at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History, June 2011.

58 See Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 25-30. D. Clayton James adds that on October 1st, MacArthur filed a single request with the army’s quartermaster general which asked for “360,000 cotton sox, 240,000 cotton shirts, 240,000 flannel shirts, 240,000 cotton trousers, 120,000 pairs of service shoes, 120,000 leggings, 120,000 raincoats, 120,000 denim hats, 120,000 denim coats, and 120,000 denim trousers—all for the Philippine Army.” James, The Years of MacArthur, I, 613.
Virtually all of the Philippine Army’s equipment consisted of surplus materiel provided by the U.S. Army, most of it of World War I vintage. Filipino units were badly under strength in automatic and heavy weapons. For example, the Philippine Army’s 31st Division could allocate only two .50-caliber machine guns and six 3-inch mortars to each of its infantry regiments.59

The 31st Division’s situation does not appear to have been an isolated phenomenon. Even a cursory review of the War Department’s records would have revealed to senior officials exactly how much (or rather how little) materiel the Philippine Army had at its disposal in late 1941.

Of even greater significance than the equipment shortages, however, was the lamentable (in many cases almost nonexistent) state of training that Philippine Army personnel had received prior to the Japanese invasion. The rapid expansion of its manpower during the summer and fall of 1941 had simply overwhelmed the limited number of available officers and NCOs, to say nothing of the facilities in which these units were expected to train.60 Concerns regarding the ability of the Philippine Army to manage the process of expansion had been noted in the 1940 revisions to the Philippine Defense Plan which eventually produced WPO-3. The authors of the 1940 revisions expressed confidence in the abilities of the Philippine Scouts, who were formally integrated into the Philippine Department’s command structure:

The military capacity of the individual Filipino soldier in the Regular Army of the United States is satisfactory. He is well equipped and well trained. On his own soil and under American leadership he is believed to be capable of rendering effective combat service against any foreign invader.61

The Commonwealth Army’s personnel, however, were uniformly assessed as “young, [and] partially trained…”62 Grunert reiterated this concern in March of 1941, apparently in response

59 Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 29.
60 Morton notes that when the Philippine Army’s 31st Division was first mobilized, its training camp had not yet been completed, and lacked even a functional water system. Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, 28.
61 G-3 Annex to Philippine Department Plan – Orange (1940 Revision), 3.
62 Ibid., 3.
to a request from Marshall for his evaluation of MacArthur’s claims regarding the progress of the Philippine Army’s mobilization. Grunert informed Marshall that in his opinion MacArthur’s assessments painted an overly optimistic picture:

The letter wherein it is stated that “Ground forces will be fifty percent complete in 1941” gives the impression that fifteen of the proposed thirty reserve divisions will then be in existence. By the end of 1941 they may have the personnel and the paper organization but not complete equipment nor the requisite training.63

Grunert went on to declare that as far as the Commonwealth Army’s units were concerned, “reasonably adequate training demands calling them into [U.S.] service for training as is now being done in the United States for National Guard and other units.”64

Grunert believed that the Commonwealth Army could only be developed into an effective organization if the Philippine Department assumed responsibility for training its personnel. As noted above, this measure was finally taken in July, when the USAFFE was established and President Roosevelt issued the executive order calling the Commonwealth Army into U.S. service. Not even the Philippine Department’s personnel, however, were prepared for the difficulties they encountered as they turned to the task of readying the Filipino units for war. In addition to the widespread equipment shortages noted above, the training process was greatly hampered by the polyglot nature of the Philippine population. D. Clayton James quotes at length from the experiences of Colonel Glen Townsend, assigned to command the Philippine Army’s 11th Infantry Regiment at Baguio in northern Luzon:

Nearly a score of dialects were spoken by members of the unit…English was only understood to some extent by about 20% of the enlisted personnel…On occasions when it was necessary for an American officer to address the entire regiment a minimum of five instructors had to be employed. Even then a considerable number of men could not understand what was said.65

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63 George Grunert to George Marshall, 3 March 1941, Marshall Papers, Box 69, Folder 34, Marshall Library, 1.
64 Ibid.
Townsend’s experiences with the 11th Infantry Regiment were by no means unusual. Similar difficulties were experienced with units raised in the Visayan Islands of the central Philippines, where “most of the officers were Tagalogs from central Luzon and the men spoke one or more of the many Visayan tongues.” The precise extent to which these linguistic difficulties retarded the training and development of the Philippine Army is impossible to determine, but as the diplomatic crisis between the United States and Japan continued to worsen in the summer and fall of 1941, even brief delays threatened to have severe consequences.

Hints that the mobilization of the Philippine Army would be an extremely drawn-out process were evident even in letters written by the relentlessly optimistic MacArthur. His letter to Marshall on October 28, which was unstinting in its praise for the quality and eagerness of Filipino recruits, nevertheless noted that only one regiment from each of the Philippine Army’s ten reserve divisions had been mobilized in September, and that the full mobilization of those divisions was not anticipated until December 15. Even after this process had been completed, months of additional training would be required before they would be capable of functioning as coherent units, a necessary prerequisite if the defensive strategy envisioned in WPO-3 was to be successfully executed. By the fall of 1941 the defenders of the Philippines were already living on borrowed time. When the first Japanese troops landed in the islands, the majority of the Philippine Army’s divisions were not yet fully assembled, and even those units that had been mobilized had received little more than rudimentary training. Filipino soldiers who in many cases had never even fired their weapons in a training exercise were hurled into combat against hardened IJA units, with tragic but predictable results.

66 Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 27.
67 MacArthur to Marshall, 28 October 1941, 1.
Perhaps the most damning indictment that can be leveled against MacArthur is that he seems to have done little to ensure that his subordinate commanders were sufficiently briefed on the existing defense plans. As a result, it appears that many of the Philippine Army’s officers were actually ignorant of the roles and responsibilities they were expected to fulfill. Meixsel notes that on the night that the Japanese invasion commenced, word filtered down through the chain of command that they were to execute WPO-3.69 This announcement resulted in considerable confusion. Many Philippine officers appear to have recalled the provision of WPO-3 that called for a withdrawal to Bataan, and as a result, “many officers may have known to commence withdrawing” rather than advancing to conduct the beach defense envisioned by MacArthur.70 The resulting confusion completely disrupted any hope for a cohesive attempt at resistance, as articulated by James:

The plan which would be followed when the Japanese invasion came would be “neither fish nor fowl,” neither MacArthur’s planned “last-ditch” stand on the beaches nor the Orange and Rainbow plans for immediate withdrawal of all ground forces to the Bataan-Corregidor “citadel” defense.71

Even worse, because MacArthur, in his commitment to the beach defense strategy, had neglected plans for a withdrawal to Bataan, the supply stockpiles that were supposed to sustain the garrison after its withdrawal had been only incompletely collected. Thus when the defenders of Luzon were forced to retreat to Bataan in the face of relentless Japanese attacks, they discovered that the peninsula contained only a fraction of the food, ammunition, and other war materiel that they required in order to offer effective resistance.72

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69 Meixsel, “Major General George Grunert,” 316.
70 Ibid. While conducting research for his article, Meixsel conducted interviews with a number of former Philippine Army officers. Many of these men denied any knowledge of WPO-3 whatsoever, and retired General Leonardo Tan told Meixsel that his own divisional commander had no idea what “WPO-3” meant. See Ibid., fn. 32, 315-6. That a substantial number of senior Philippine Army officers were completely unfamiliar with the defense plan they were expected to implement is a telling comment upon the laxity of the USAFFE’s leadership.
71 James, The Years of MacArthur, I, 609.
72 Ibid., 609-10.
The many difficulties that both U.S. and Filipino leaders experienced during their efforts to organize, mobilize, and train the Philippine Army should not have come as a surprise to the leadership of the War Department. As noted in Chapter 6, Marshall and his subordinates had encountered numerous challenges, some of them quite daunting, during their efforts to expand and equip the U.S. Army between 1939 and 1941. Given these experiences, they would have had little reason to believe that the same process could be carried out with greater rapidity in the Philippines, particularly given the fact that the Commonwealth manifestly lacked the capabilities that had made the expansion of the U.S. military possible, namely an unmatched industrial base and, after 1941 at least, virtually limitless financial resources.

In retrospect, it seems likely that the War Department’s leadership was well aware that the measures being taken to bolster the strength of the Philippine garrison (the dispatch of B-17s and the mobilization of the Philippine Army) could not, ultimately, guarantee the islands’ security. As Russell Weigley succinctly argues, “Even MacArthur’s hypnotic talents…probably could not have reversed the Orange plans had not the army and the government desperately wanted to escape their pessimistic conclusions about the Philippines.”73 But President Roosevelt’s insistence that the United States adopt a harder negotiating line in its efforts to restrain Japanese behavior placed the U.S. military (and particularly the War Department), in an awkward position. U.S. military leaders, and likely the president himself, realized that one possible consequence of the asset freeze and the imposition of the oil embargo would be war with Japan. Waldo Heinrichs asserts that the deployment of the B-17s, was an attempt to add a military component to the president’s program of economic deterrence.74 Regardless of the

74 Heinrichs, Diplomacy and Force, 194.
motivation behind it, however, this action was in direct conflict with the U.S. Army’s longstanding belief that the Philippines could not be successfully defended. During the decades following the end of the First World War, Japanese military superiority in the Southwest Pacific region had been developed to such a degree that it was unlikely to be substantially altered by the War Department’s frantic efforts in late 1941. As the authors of one of the U.S. Army’s official history volumes noted, the effort to strengthen the Philippine garrison (and the likelihood that the Japanese would act to prevent its strengthening) “raised questions of American policy so obvious and fundamental that no one except the President of the United States could open formal discussion of them. He did not do so…”

The 1941 reinforcement effort is perhaps best viewed as a final, lingering example of the civil-military disintegration that had characterized U.S. policymaking throughout the interwar period. For decades, representatives of the U.S. Army and Navy had continually been informed, both explicitly and implicitly, that their input on discussions of national policy was not desired. These frequent rebukes had the effect of reinforcing norms of deference to civilian authority by many U.S. officers, even in instances when such deference threatened to have severe consequences for both the armed services and the nation. Russell Weigley has argued that the behavior of both Marshall and Harold Stark in the summer of 1941 amounted to a dereliction of duty:

The issue was not one of questioning the President’s policy but of making him unquestioningly aware of an important result of his policy, so that he could proceed with the full knowledge of the implications. So absolute was the military’s conception of the principle of civilian control by 1941, however, that the military leaders evidently regarded even such a warning as an unacceptable breach of the principle, so that instead of risking the appearance of questioning civil policy, the military continued to blur the truth about the fate of the Philippines.

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75 Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 78.
Given the magnitude of the disaster that befell the Philippine garrison, it is difficult to dismiss Weigley’s indictment of Marshall and Stark. However, given the two service chiefs’ experiences in the months leading up to the Japanese attack, the two men may have assumed, with some justification, that any advice or caution they attempted to offer would be disregarded. As noted in Chapter 5, Cordell Hull had refused to formally endorse the recommendations outlined in the Joint Planning Committee’s revision of Stark’s Plan Dog Memorandum, which he labeled merely a “technical military statement.” Nor did Marshall and Stark have reason to believe they could be any more successful engaging with the President in discussions of national strategic priorities. Mark Stoler notes that in June of 1941 Roosevelt “returned ABC-1 and the revised RAINBOW 5 to the JB without specific approval or disapproval.” On his own initiative, the president also ordered a series of actions (including the expansion of naval patrols in the Atlantic and the occupation of Iceland) that had the effect of placing further strain on the resources and manpower of the Army and Navy. Citing Heinrichs’ work, Stoler is careful to note that there was a certain logic underlying Roosevelt’s actions. The President, however, never shared this logic with his military chiefs, and as a result:

> From the military’s perspective...Roosevelt’s moves were provocative, erratic, and unfocused, with most undertaken despite their opposition. This clearly revealed to the armed forces their lack of influence with the president, who they concluded was still under the baneful influence of the State Department.

When the events of the preceding six months are taken into account, Marshall and Stark can perhaps be pardoned for failing to press this point more aggressively. The response to their previous overtures by Hull and Roosevelt appears to have convinced them that the administration

78 Ibid., 45.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
was determined to chart its own course in the formulation of U.S. national policy, and that any input they provided would be promptly disregarded. Such a conclusion by Stark and Marshall would not have been unreasonable given the patterns of behavior that had dominated U.S. civil-military relations for the majority of the interwar period. If this was in fact the case, then the service chiefs may well have concluded that their responsibility in the summer and fall of 1941 was not to participate in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy, but simply to carry out those policies when directed to do so. That the military’s capabilities were inadequate to the task was immaterial. If this characterization of their outlook is correct, it does explain their acquiescence in a decision that was almost certainly at odds with their military judgment.

The 1941 effort to reinforce the garrison of the Philippines was clearly a failure. The units that were deployed to the Philippines (or were en route at the time of the Japanese attacks) required vast amounts of shipping tonnage that the U.S. military desperately needed to meet its rapidly expanding strategic commitments elsewhere in the world. The reinforcement effort involved the transfer of substantial amounts of valuable strategic assets—particularly aircraft—into an exposed, highly vulnerable location. The deterrent effect that the War Department’s leadership hoped to provide with the rapid expansion of the Far East Air Force never materialized. In fact, the bulk of the FEAF was destroyed on the opening day of the war, and with its destruction the Philippine garrison lost any hope of being able to effectively contest Japanese landings. Despite all of the War Department’s efforts, the reinforcement of the Philippines does not appear to have substantially prolonged effective resistance to the Japanese. In fact, the surrender of the Corregidor garrison in May 1942, after slightly less than six months of resistance matched almost exactly the predictions that had been made by Stanley Embick in 1934.
Upon reflection, the fact that the frantic bid to reinforce the Philippine garrison had almost no impact upon the outcome of the campaign should come as little surprise. As the evidence outlined in the preceding chapters demonstrates, the disaster that befell the U.S. military in the Philippines had been decades in the making, and the desperate improvisations undertaken in the waning months of 1941 were powerless to turn back the clock.

This project has sought to trace the roots of the disaster in the Philippines in a way that has not been previously attempted. As noted in Chapter 1, after a prolonged period of neglect dating back to the late 1950s, recent decades have seen a welcome proliferation of scholarly inquiries into the history of the interwar United States. However, as noted in Chapter 1, this literature exhibits many of the same characteristics of the U.S. foreign policymaking process during the period it chronicles—that is to say, works focusing upon interwar military and diplomatic history occupy largely separate spheres, with comparatively little attention devoted to the interactions between them.

The past twenty years have witnessed the production of a number of outstanding works of scholarship focusing upon the experiences of the U.S. armed services during the interwar years. Brian Linn’s *Guardians of Empire* offers an outstanding treatment of the U.S. Army’s experiences in the Pacific during the early twentieth century. It chronicles the development of Hawaii and the Philippines as the U.S.’s two major Pacific outposts, and describes the duties, concerns, and experiences of those servicemen assigned to their defense. Along with Edward Miller’s *War Plan Orange* and Henry Gole’s *The Road to Rainbow, Guardians of Empire* is one of the few works that examines the evolution of war planning in the United States during the interwar period, and it is particularly effective in capturing the growing pessimism that characterized the Army’s thinking with respect to the defensibility of the Philippines. John
Kuehn’s *Agents of Innovation* and Craig Felker’s *Testing American Sea Power* offer insightful treatments of the U.S. Navy during the same time period. Kuehn’s work focuses upon the efforts of the Navy’s General Board to cope with the restrictions imposed upon it by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, while Felker examines the evolution of the Navy’s Fleet Problems, which offer valuable insights into how the service’s senior officers believed future maritime conflicts would unfold. Each of these works addresses important aspects of U.S. military history during the interwar period, and collectively they represent a welcome and long overdue addition to the handful of earlier works that had sought to address this topic. However, because they are focused primarily upon the experiences of the individual services, they pay relatively scant attention to such higher-level issues as civil-military relations and the U.S. foreign policy formulation process. As the evidence marshaled in the preceding chapters has sought to demonstrate, it was at these levels that the decisions that ultimately sealed the fate of the Philippine garrison were made.

These decisions, particularly those made during the interwar naval limitation conferences, have also received considerable attention from historians. A number of works have examined the factors that made the conclusion of major international naval limitation treaties possible, among them Roger Dingman’s *Power in the Pacific* and Robert Kaufman’s *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era*. Stephen Roskill’s *Naval Policy Between the Wars* and Asada Sadao’s *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor* offer insights into the objectives which the British and Japanese governments, respectively, sought to achieve as a result of their participation, and how the treaties produced by these conferences were perceived by political and naval leaders. These

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81 For instance, Louis Morton’s *The Fall of the Philippines*, the U.S. Army’s official history of the defeat, focused almost entirely upon the campaign of 1941-42. While it provided a valuable early narrative of the events that unfolded in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, it paid little attention to how the strategic imbalance confronting the U.S. and Filipino garrison had unfolded over the preceding decades.
works do an excellent job of recounting the events of the conferences themselves. In some cases, most notably Kaufman’s work, they also note the consequences that such agreements had with respect for U.S. strategic planning. At best, however, they offer an incomplete picture regarding why concerns raised throughout this era by military officers so often appear to have gone unheard and unheeded.

The present dissertation builds upon the work in both of these fields of scholarship, by weaving together what have been to this point two largely disparate narratives in order to identify the factors that produced the defeat of the U.S. Philippine garrison. Each of the bodies of literature detailed above offers valuable—indeed, crucial—insights into the history of the U.S. government, its military, and the interwar policymaking process. But with respect to the Philippines, each of them also leaves important parts of the story untold. Where earlier scholarship has treated them largely in isolation, the preceding chapters have assembled the various pieces of the interwar Philippine puzzle into a unified narrative. This narrative demonstrates the ways in which each of a number of factors—U.S. civil-military relations, military planning, the evolving colonial relationship with the islands, and the major political developments of the interwar period—contributed to the catastrophe that befell the garrison in 1941-42. The result is a more comprehensive picture of exactly how the defeat came about than has been offered in previous treatments of the interwar period.

There is little in the documentary records utilized in this project which has not been examined and discussed previously. However, this study attempts to offer a fresh, interdisciplinary approach to the examination of this evidence, blending archival historical research with insights drawn from the field of political science. As outlined in Chapter 2, the “bureaucratic politics” model developed by Graham Allison and Morton Halperin offers a
valuable analytical framework for understanding the processes by which national policies are formulated. In particular, the model is most helpful in explaining why the outcomes of the U.S. policymaking process during the 1920s and 1930s so often appeared bizarre, even irrational. Allison and Halperin have pointed out that such outcomes are often the result of the bargaining processes that occur within governments as individual agencies pursue policies that conform to their own organizational preferences. An excellent example of this behavior can be seen in the inter-service skirmishing between the Army and Navy regarding the direction of U.S. strategic policy in the Pacific during the 1930s. Rather than grappling with the fundamental issues involved, or seeking to identify which of the proposed alternatives most effectively addressed the national interests of the U.S., senior military leaders, acting through the Joint Army-Navy Board, contented themselves with compromises that achieved consensus largely by virtue of their own ambiguity, best exemplified in the negotiations that produced the 1938 Orange Plan.

With respect to U.S. civil-military relations, however, it is Barry Posen’s concept of “disintegration” that appears to hold the key to understanding the situation that developed in the years following the First World War. As this project has illustrated, the fate that befell the Philippine garrison stemmed far more from systemic failures within the U.S. foreign policy-making process than it did from miscalculations on the part of the Army and Navy. The climate of civil-military disintegration that characterized the U.S. for the vast majority of the interwar decades rendered the formulation of a coherent foreign policy difficult, if not impossible. The existence of this civil-military divide has been previously commented upon by scholars such as Ernest May and Mark Stoler. Earlier studies, however, do not explicitly draw the linkage between the existence of this divide and the events that unfolded in the Philippines. The factors that led some U.S. military officers to regard the islands as a potentially matchless strategic asset
(chiefly their geographical location) also left them uniquely vulnerable to the policy paralysis that afflicted the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. While the loss of the islands was a product of many factors, civil-military disintegration was by far the most important among them. In fact, many of the other issues addressed by this project can most effectively be regarded as symptoms stemming from the disintegrated nature of the U.S. policymaking process.

Throughout the interwar period, the U.S. foreign policymaking process was overwhelmingly dominated by the diplomats of the State Department. The extent to which other cabinet departments deferred to the State Department can be seen in Franklin Roosevelt’s 1919 letter to Robert Lansing and Edwin Denby and John Weeks’ 1921 correspondence with Charles Evans Hughes, both recounted in Chapter 5. Because the State Department’s preeminence in this realm was so readily accepted, the major foreign policy developments of the interwar period tended to reflect the ideology and preferences of its personnel. As previously discussed, key State Department officials, including Charles Evans Hughes, Frank Kellogg, and, to a lesser extent, Cordell Hull and Henry Stimson, adhered to the “liberal internationalist” ideology. In the view of the liberal internationalists, the carnage of the First World War had provided a dramatic object lesson in the futility of armed conflict as a means of resolving international disputes. In the postwar era, they devoted their energies to the establishment of a network of international agreements, treaties, and regimes intended to prevent future diplomatic crises from escalating into war. This ideology manifested itself in a number of ways. Liberal internationalists sought to

82 Stimson’s inclusion on this list is somewhat problematic, as he, far more than any of the other interwar Secretaries of State, appears to have recognized the occasional value of military demonstrations as an adjunct to the conduct of diplomacy. Stimson’s freedom of action to engage in such demonstrations, however (as in the months following Japan’s 1931 invasion of Manchuria), was greatly limited by the fact that President Herbert Hoover refused to authorize any action on the part of the United States that might be construed as provocative. See, e.g., Robert Gordon Kaufman, Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era: The United States and Naval Limitation Between the Two World Wars (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 148-50. Thus, while Stimson himself appears to have been less committed to the liberal internationalist worldview than his predecessors Hughes and Kellogg or his successor Hull, the foreign policy behavior of the United States during his tenure continued to unfold along largely liberal internationalist lines.
reduce the size of the military forces that were maintained by the world’s major powers. They believed that such reductions would make it more difficult for nations to undertake offensive wars, thereby diminishing the attractiveness of war as a tool of national policy. This objective was achieved (if only incompletely) in the naval limitation treaties concluded in 1922 and 1930. In addition, liberal internationalists sought to negotiate treaties, such as the Four- and Nine-Power Pacts concluded during the Washington Conference, whose signatories pledged to submit any disputes that arose between them to arbitration. They believed that if the signatory nations adhered to these agreements, over time more and more states would internalize behavioral norms of cooperation and negotiation, and that the use of military force as a means of achieving national objectives would become increasingly delegitimized.

But the strength with which senior State Department officials adhered to the liberal internationalist ideology had some profoundly negative effects. Because they tended to regard war as increasingly anachronistic and unlikely, they saw little reason for consultation with military officers on matters of national policy. Indeed, many, such as Charles Evans Hughes, appear to have regarded efforts on the part of military men to involve themselves in such discussions as illegitimate, and an unwelcome intrusion upon their own department’s prerogatives. The only conversations in which representatives of the military were invited to participate were those that involved narrowly defined technical questions where their specialized knowledge was seen as useful. Further exacerbating this situation was a belief held by many U.S. military officers— noted by Fred Greene, Kerry Irish, Forrest Pogue, Mark Stoler, and Russell Weigley, among others—that the formulation of U.S. foreign policy was the exclusive responsibility of civilian officials.
As a result, the diplomats charged with the negotiation of the interwar arms limitation treaties appear to have paid relatively little attention to strategic considerations, and consistently rebuffed efforts on the part of representatives of the military to initiate conversations in which such issues might be discussed. Military officers frequently complained that State Department officials were too willing to agree to treaty provisions that resulted in the substantial weakening of the United States vis-à-vis its potential rivals, particularly Japan. The most vigorous objections were raised in the aftermath of the Washington Conference. Critics of the naval treaty such as Dudley Knox argued that contrary to the public pronouncements of its authors, the agreement would not end competition in naval armaments, because the tonnage limitations it imposed upon its signatories applied only to capital ships. Many naval officers also feared that the unquestioned sincerity with which U.S. diplomats pursued arms limitations was not shared by the delegates of other nations. The events of the ensuing years seemed to lend credence to this concern, for while the 1920s saw a significant scaling back in U.S. naval construction, Japan pressed ahead with an extensive building program in those classes of ships not subject to the treaty limitations. Many officers also protested that the inclusion of Article XIX in the Washington Naval Treaty would deny the U.S. the western Pacific fleet base it would require in the event of war with Japan, and felt that warnings against granting such a concession had been brushed aside.

This is not to say that the nature of the agreements negotiated at Washington would have been substantially different had U.S. diplomats and military officers collaborated more closely in the months leading up to the conference. Given their dramatically different organizational perspectives, there was almost certain to be a degree of tension between the views of civilian negotiators and military professionals. U.S. diplomats were unlikely to be moved by naval
protests that the absence of fully developed bases in the Philippines would render it impossible for the United States to conduct an offensive war against Japan in the western Pacific. Indeed, from the perspective of the negotiators, the formulation of a treaty that precluded its signatories from mounting successful military operations in one another’s home waters had been precisely the point. Even if such discussions had not produced substantial alterations in the treaty provisions, however, they may have succeeded in educating key State Department officials on the implications that the conclusion of an agreement would have on the U.S. position in East Asia. At a minimum, they would have provided future presidential administrations with a far more comprehensive documentary record of the major concerns affecting U.S. foreign and military policy.

As noted in Chapter 6, another consequence of the climate of civil-military disintegration in the U.S. was that the war planners of the interwar decades were forced to conduct their work in a vacuum. In the absence of meaningful guidance from the nation’s civilian policy-makers, U.S. war plans tended to reflect the preferences of the services, or even of individual planners, rather than the actual strategic priorities of the nation. To cite the most obvious example, throughout the 1920s and 1930s the JPC devoted the majority of its efforts to the task of revising and updating War Plan Orange. This work continued despite frequent assertions by both State Department officials and a succession of interwar presidents that the United States possessed no interests in Asia that would justify a declaration of war. Meaningful attempts to bring together representatives of the U.S. diplomatic and military communities were not begun until the late 1930s. These belated efforts to introduce a degree of inter-agency coordination to the U.S. foreign policy process, however, proved to be too little, too late. The increasingly rapid pace of
international developments that confronted the United States overwhelmed efforts on the part of key decision makers to formulate a coherent response to them.

The consequences of the inability of U.S. civilian and military leaders to adjust to the developments taking place in the international arena might, ironically, have been less keenly felt had the country’s isolationism been more complete. But the imperial relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines complicated the situation greatly. The messianic zeal with which American imperialists had embraced the colonization of the Philippines had waned rather rapidly as the benefits they had envisioned (particularly expanded trade with China) failed to materialize. By the early 1930s a combination of factors—ranging from the emergence of a revitalized Filipino independence movement under the leadership of Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, and Manuel Roxas, to the onset of the Great Depression and the subsequent election of the anti-imperialist Franklin Roosevelt—had created a political climate conducive to the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. Critically, however, the passage of the 1934 legislation did not confer full independence immediately. Instead, it established a Commonwealth government that would remain in existence for ten years. During that period, the United States was charged with responsibility for ensuring the security of the islands. This obligation was looked upon with great distaste by the U.S. Army, whose presence in the Philippines was far more substantial (and far less mobile) than that of the Navy, and upon whom the primary responsibility for the defense of the islands during the transition period would fall. Many Army leaders, most notably Stanley Embick, regarded the Philippine garrison as dangerously exposed, and believed that its continuing presence served as a needless irritant in U.S.-Japanese relations. Moreover, by the mid-1930s a growing number of officers regarded the Philippines as indefensible in the event of war, a conclusion endorsed at least tacitly by the Orange Plans beginning in 1935, the year that
the direct sortie of the fleet to the islands was officially abandoned in favor of the step-by-step advance across the Pacific long advocated by the U.S. Navy’s “cautionaries.” The periodic suggestion raised by officers such as Embick, Upham, and Parker that the United States pursue an international agreement neutralizing the Philippines can be viewed as an effort on the part of the military to escape from the untenable situation in which it found itself as a result of the independence legislation.

All of these various factors came together with disastrous impact in the summer of 1941. In late July, in response to renewed Japanese pressure against the government of French Indo-China, President Roosevelt determined that the time had come to adopt a harder line in ongoing negotiations. As a consequence, he ordered the freezing of Japanese assets in the United States and began to implement what would become a *de facto* oil embargo. But Roosevelt appears to have been concerned that economic measures alone might prove insufficient to deter Japan from further military adventurism. The administration required a location in the western Pacific where the U.S. could establish an expanded military presence. The Philippine Islands were the only realistic option. But this decision was fraught with problems. Since late 1940, senior U.S. military officers had been in general agreement that Europe, not the Pacific, would be the decisive theater of operations in the coming conflict. Rainbow-5, the final war plan produced by the JPC prior to U.S. entry into the Second World War, specifically called for the adoption of a defensive stance in the Pacific in order to avoid a diversion of resources that might endanger success in Europe. Moreover, the administration’s determination to establish a deterrent against Japan in the western Pacific clashed directly with the widespread belief that the Philippines could not be successfully defended. The norms of civil-military relations that had prevailed during the preceding decades, however, made it very difficult for U.S. military officers to bring these issues
to the attention of civilian leaders, and gave them little reason to believe that their concerns would be taken seriously even if such conversations did take place. As a consequence, leaders such as George Marshall found themselves carrying out a reinforcement effort that most likely conflicted with their professional military judgment. For thousands of American and Filipino servicemen, as well as the entire civilian population of the archipelago, the comprehensive failure of interwar U.S. civilian and military authorities to arrive at a satisfactory answer to the “Philippine question” would have tragic consequences in the aftermath of the Japanese invasion.
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