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Theodore Roosevelt: Commander in chief. (Volumes I and II)

Oyos, Matthew Mark, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1993

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT: COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Volume I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

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To My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of this project, I have amassed a debt of gratitude that these few words can hardly begin to repay. First, I wish to thank my adviser, Dr. Allan R. Millett, for his counsel and for sharing with me materials that he had collected in his own research. I would also like to recognize the other members of my dissertation committee for their interest in my work over the years. Among my mentors, Dr. Peter Maslowski, deserves special notice for his continuing support long after my graduation from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The help of many other individuals was also crucial to the completion of this study. I would like to acknowledge in particular the archivists and librarians at the Ohio State University libraries, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives and Records Administration for their assistance. Too numerous to mention here by name, my graduate student colleagues over the years also made an important contribution by providing a sounding board to test ideas, as well as the occasional convivial diversion from intellectual pursuits. Among friends, Jonathan Mertz
warrants a special word of thanks for his hospitality towards an itinerant scholar.

Finally, I want to thank my family for their support. I owe much to the assistance of my parents, as well as to their love for education, both at home and in the world at large. The encouragement and support of my mother-in-law must also not be forgotten. Finally, I owe the greatest debt of all to my wife, Cindy Wilkey, who has shared her husband with Theodore Roosevelt for a number of years. She has offered apt criticisms of the manuscript and showed infinite patience and love throughout the research and writing of this dissertation.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On February 22, 1909, masses of people thronged Hampton Roads, Virginia, anticipating the show of a lifetime. They were not disappointed. That day, the twenty battleships of the Great White Fleet paraded into Hampton Roads, ending a year-long world cruise with a spectacular naval review. The President of the United States was on hand to greet the returning vessels and to receive volley upon volley of twenty-one gun salutes. Clad in top coat and top hat, his square frame prominently in view, he was as much a part of the display as the ships of the fleet.

For Theodore Roosevelt, this day was a supreme achievement. He had worked for almost eight years to make this fleet a reality, and in a little over a week he would surrender the helm of power.\(^2\) The battleships' return provided a fitting capstone for his presidency, for he had focused much of his energy upon military affairs. Roosevelt's interest and efforts had helped make the first years of the twentieth century a dynamic and defining period for the United States military. The modernization of the American military rushed forward during these years and left...
the armed services much better prepared to face potential foes in the remainder of the century.

This study examines Theodore Roosevelt as peacetime commander in chief, stressing the "peacetime" part of that title. Thus, it will not focus on Roosevelt's employment of military forces to advance diplomatic ends or in actual combat situations. Various works already cover the military's involvement in the Philippine Insurrection, the Panamanian Revolution, the Venezuelan Crisis, the Cuban Intervention of 1906-09, and other affairs. This study will explore Roosevelt's peacetime activities as commander in chief and seek to measure how well he performed those duties, as well as the impact of his actions on the institution of the presidency.

Roosevelt strived during nearly eight years in office to prepare the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps for the demands required of the forces of a newly affirmed great power. The Spanish-American War had brought forth an America with far-ranging interests and overseas territorial possessions, and Roosevelt was determined to insure that the United States possessed the military means to speak with a respected voice in the world arena. He would strenuously exert his power and influence as commander in chief to accomplish this goal and left behind an expanded presidency as one result.

Roosevelt's efforts to improve readiness added new depth to the president's peacetime responsibilities and
challenged congressional prerogatives over the military. Throughout the previous century, Congress had wielded great influence over the peacetime military establishment. The local benefits of patronage created strong congressional interest in officer promotions, the location of arsenals and navy yards, weapons contracts, and other similar matters. Inefficiency resulted, but it failed to excite much concern in an America that seemed geographically insulated from European powers and where aboriginal peoples presented the greatest security problem.

By the close of the nineteenth century, attitudes began to shift, especially in military circles. Expanding economic and political interests along with technological improvements created a greater chance of involvement in a great power war and brought calls for a more efficient military establishment. Centered around the office of the president, the executive branch offered the best source of effective leadership, a fact that both military and civilian reformers recognized during the progressive era. Roosevelt was eager to exercise presidential power, especially when military matters were at stake, and he plunged into areas often regarded as congressional territory. He worked to reform officer promotions, alter service missions, determine weapons programs and designs, establish centralized departmental administrations, create new advisory boards, and generate public interest in a strong military, all in
addition to being involved in the daily detail of running the armed services. Roosevelt was not always successful in these endeavors, nor was he entirely original. In several ways, he merely expanded the work of his predecessor, William McKinley. Roosevelt, however, enlarged upon McKinley's precedent and sealed the pattern for executive direction of the armed forces for the twentieth century. Thus he laid the foundation for the present-day role of peacetime commander in chief.

During Roosevelt's presidency, new foreign policy concerns and a heightened sense of national insecurity justified this burst of presidential involvement in the military establishment. In part, such a development occurred naturally as the executive branch possessed constitutional authority to administer day-to-day military affairs, and it could best respond to sudden threats and crises, being the one branch of the federal government where authority centered in an individual. Roosevelt's lively interest in military matters and his driving personality played the other major part in the change in executive style. But increased executive leadership over the military did not surface overnight, and in many ways Roosevelt's tenure represented a transitional period between the nineteenth century role of peacetime commander in chief and the one that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century.
The Rooseveltian pattern of leadership over the armed forces came to full realization only after 1945. Perceptions of a constant foreign threat and the consequent expansion of the armed services brought military concerns to the fore of national priorities. Presidents sought new advisory bodies such as the National Security Council to help guide defense policy. They requested a streamlined military establishment and gradually achieved a centralized Defense Department under a powerful civilian secretary. New administrative procedures such as Robert McNamara's planning-programming-budgeting system and his systems analysis techniques sealed executive initiative over budgetary and procurement processes and even challenged traditional military prerogatives over the employment of forces. Presidents also needed to become versed in matters of technology and strategy, especially in regard to nuclear armaments. Weapons of mass destruction dictated careful consideration of technological capabilities, methods of deployment, deterrence value, and potential use. The possibility of sudden missile attack thrust decisions of war almost wholly into the president's hands. In all, unprecedented authority over defense matters accrued in the executive branch after 1945, certainly at the expense of Congress and sometimes at cost to the military services as well. Presidential power accumulated under claims of
necessity and built closely upon Theodore Roosevelt's earlier example.

Roosevelt has been the subject of numerous biographies and monographs. Biographers focus on Roosevelt the politician: his rise to political prominence, his performance as president, and his later forays into the political arena. More specialized works have dealt with the complexities of Roosevelt and his era. Scholars have examined him as a racial theorist, a conservationist, a diplomat, and an exponent of American culture. But although Roosevelt regarded military affairs as a prime concern throughout his life, no works concentrate on this interest. Scholars who deal with his military concerns do so in a subsidiary manner, often in the broader context of foreign policy. Others discuss the armed forces in this period, but do not examine Roosevelt's relationship to them over any length of time or consider only one dimension of that relationship. None provide a systematic analysis of his actions as peacetime commander in chief and their impact on the institution of the presidency.

Harold Laski, Louis Koenig, David Burton, and Lewis Gould, and other students of the presidency commonly denote Roosevelt as one of the first, if not the first, of the modern presidents, citing his Stewardship Theory of executive leadership. Roosevelt contended that the president "was a steward of the people...bound to do all he
could for the people...." He had the right and the duty "to do anything that the needs of the Nation demanded unless such action was forbidden by the Constitution or by the laws." Roosevelt lived up to this pronouncement by appointing volunteer advisory commissions, cultivating public opinion to overcome congressional opposition, exerting his authority in foreign affairs to the fullest, acting as a legislative broker, mediating between labor and capital, and wielding executive power to withhold public lands from private use.  

Too often, however, scholars have focused on the presidency's increasing power at the turn of the century and have failed to emphasize the weaknesses that remained in the president's position. Although the modernization of the presidency represents a central feature of this study, the presidency was in a transitory stage in the early twentieth century, and Roosevelt was sometimes more rooted in the mid-nineteenth century than in the first years of the twentieth.  

Some attributes associated with the contemporary presidency should help in assessing the modernity of the Roosevelt administration. These characteristics have already been alluded to but warrant more specific treatment. Many modern chief executives have assumed responsibility for initiating and guiding important legislation through Congress and have tried to manipulate public opinion to gain leverage over Capitol Hill. Although different presidents
have achieved varying degrees of success in creating and sustaining public support, most have used the office's high profile to attract positive media attention, generate mass enthusiasm, and seize the political high ground in the popular mind. The modern-day presidency has also gained stature through the creation of new institutions to deal with the complexities of a continental-sized industrial nation. Whether such institutions are commissions, regulatory agencies, Cabinet departments, or other bodies, they enhance executive branch influence in the daily process of government. Increasing presidential reliance on professional expertise represents a related aspect of modern governance. In a society with diverse needs, presidents have had to rely on professional experts to guide their decision-making. Often, such experts are drawn into careers in governmental agencies, while others may serve on a temporary basis. Finally, most twentieth century presidents have claimed primary authority over foreign affairs. They have assumed so much influence that they sometimes virtually exclude Congress from the process of foreign policymaking. The above criteria are, of course, general and would not always apply to chief executives in the past century, but they should provide some perspective on the modernity of Roosevelt's presidency in terms of his actions as commander in chief.
Roosevelt presided during a period of organizational ferment in the War and Navy Departments. Reformers wanted to rationalize departmental administration in the best progressive era fashion. The General Board of the Navy and the War Department General Staff were two products of their labors. Both agencies were charged with providing war plans and military advice to their respective service secretaries, although the General Board existed entirely as an advisory body, while the General Staff possessed vague authority to coordinate War Department bureaus.

President Roosevelt perceived the need for these institutions, having witnessed the War Department's poor performance during the Cuban expedition in 1898. He found the General Board and General Staff good sources of advice, information, and plans but did not always grasp the value of these resources. Presidential directives sometimes burdened the General Staff with trivial assignments instead of encouraging it to concentrate on war planning and asserting itself within the War Department. And Roosevelt showed a lack of enthusiasm for transforming the General Board into a full-fledged naval general staff with authority to coordinate Navy bureaus. He endorsed such an agency but refused to give it high priority for fear that a political backlash would endanger other naval programs.

The President was also ambivalent about military professionalism. Reform-minded Army officers had long
wished their ranks closed to "inspired" amateurs and instead wanted professionals in control of wartime armies. They claimed that the professional officer could best meet the increasingly complex demands of warfare and was most capable of inspiring troops in battle.\(^2\) Roosevelt embraced professionalist goals to the extent of reducing outside political pressures upon promotions and endorsing advancement based on merit for both services. The President, however, had trouble grasping the managerial requirements of modern officership. He stressed the need for younger, more vigorous officers and seemed less aware of the organizational skills required to run large operations. Furthermore, Roosevelt never accepted the exclusion of inspired amateurs like himself from the wartime Army. He felt that such men provided a leavening of physical vitality and fresh thought to the officer corps.

Roosevelt certainly injected vitality and freshness into the public style of the executive branch. He promoted a popular image of brashness and aggressiveness, but actually dealt with Congress deftly and achieved a good measure of success, especially in the first five years of his presidency. In military affairs, he amassed a solid record, securing legislation for the Army General Staff, militia reform, and a battleship building program. Congressional opposition, however, killed naval general staff legislation, promotion reform, alteration of the
Marine Corps' mission, and base consolidation proposals. These schemes threatened areas of the military establishment that members of Congress considered to be their own. Reforms designed to increase military efficiency endangered the existence of numerous army posts, navy yards, and other installations as well as congressional influence over departmental bureaus, promotions, and other aspects of the military. Moreover, some members recoiled at Roosevelt's intense activism in military matters and feared for the status of their institution. Accustomed to their reputation as members of the leading federal branch, they resented the chief executive's efforts to undermine their authority.

Roosevelt's ability to rally the public played an important part in his ability to deal with Congress. He recognized that popular opinion was one of the fountainheads of presidential power. Strong public support could overcome the resistance of the most stubborn Senators and Representatives, who needed to consider their chances for reelection. Roosevelt possessed a gift in his affinity for people and in his natural sense of mass appeal. He often seized upon sentiment that was already rising and made the issue his own but was also a master showman who could dramatize causes by himself. In military matters, he employed the presidency to encourage nationalistic feeling for a larger Navy, an invigorated Army, and a new mission for the Marine Corps. Vessels and troops were ordered to
participate in major expositions, grand reviews, and other events. Roosevelt often attended and even participated in military demonstrations, knowing that his appearance would attract press attention. Indeed, the administration showed great awareness of the press and went out of the way to accommodate the media, hoping for positive coverage.

Roosevelt's ability to manipulate popular opinion presents a potential pitfall to the objective study of the man and his presidency. The fact that he still conjures up colorful images of a strong, exuberant chief executive is a tribute to his success at public relations, and the scholar may feel tempted to analyze only the positive efforts to sway mass sentiment, or worse, fall into something resembling hero worship of the man and his popular techniques. But Roosevelt's appreciation of the power of mass persuasion had another side to it. In general, he feared the destructive effects of uncontrolled agitation as revealed in his famous blast against sensationalistic "muckraking" journalists in April 1906. Roosevelt fretted that muckraking would erode public order, and he clamped down on a group of naval reformers when they employed the same tactics; the President worried that their sensationalism would undermine his battleship program.

Roosevelt was at his most active in insuring the military's technical proficiency. As a keen observer of international politics and a student of past conflicts, he
recognized that events could quickly thrust the nation into war, and he wanted the services trained to their technical best. Roosevelt ordered fleet maneuvers and encouraged the Army to exercise with bigger units, but he devoted special attention to naval gunnery after learning of the fleet's dismal performance in making hits. Throughout his presidency, he undertook a quest to improve naval gunnery and kept close watch over the results of practices and contests.

Roosevelt also served as an agent of technological innovation. He believed that technological prowess could lessen the material and human costs of war, an approach that would become increasingly characteristic of American warfare in the twentieth century. The President worked to overcome bureaucratic conservatism as he pushed new technologies and promoted improvements in existing ones.

Finally, Roosevelt was determined that service missions should be as up to date as possible. In particular, he wanted the Marine Corps to be able to support long-range naval operations through the seizure of advanced fleet bases. Congress blocked his efforts, but the President had pointed out the direction that the Marine Corps would take in the twentieth century.

If Roosevelt's interest seemed lively in the Marine Corps, technology, and technical matters, then his concern for an adequate reserve was relatively restrained. The
National Guard represented the primary wartime reserve for the Army at the turn of the century, but it suffered from a lack of professional standards and from excessive political influence in the appointment of officers. Roosevelt recognized the Guard's shortcomings and supported militia reform legislation. In 1903 and 1908, militia acts passed that increased federal influence over the Guard and erased time and geographic restrictions over Guardsmen's service. On the whole, however, Roosevelt devoted little attention to militia matters. He recognized the necessity of an adequate and trained reserve but saved most of his energy for the regular forces.

Few presidents possessed such in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of the military establishment when they took office. Those executives who had military experience, such as Washington and Grant, were most familiar with only one service, the Army. Roosevelt had acquired intimate knowledge of the Navy through his work as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897-98, and he gained close acquaintance with the Army as Colonel of the First United States Volunteer Cavalry in the Spanish-American War. Moreover, he drew upon a lifelong interest in military affairs that began with his childhood during the Civil War and ceased only with his death in 1919. Although Roosevelt knew both the Army and the Navy, he was most devoted to the seagoing service. He inclined naturally towards naval
affairs and also felt that the Navy was more important to advancing American interests in a world of competitive powers. As a consequence, the story of Roosevelt as peacetime commander in chief was often a naval account, and, in fact, the President acted oftentimes as his own Secretary of the Navy.

Roosevelt's actions as peacetime commander in chief did not occur in isolation. Progressivism informed much of what he undertook: a vigorous exercise of executive power, a desire for greater administrative rationalization, a quest for technical proficiency, and the extension of American institutions and values abroad. Still, much of an earlier America lived on in Roosevelt. He did not always appreciate the need for new administrative structures nor did he always use new institutions wisely. Also, his conception of officership did not entirely match that of military professionals and would have been more appropriate for troop leadership in the Civil War than the management of complicated organizations in the twentieth century.

Together, Roosevelt's progressivism and his adherence to older values illustrates the transitional nature of the first two decades of the twentieth century. So often progressive scholarship has emphasized the modernizing character of the reformers and their times. Such a presentation fails to do justice to the Victorian-era upbringing of American political leaders and reformers.
Although this analysis focuses neither on progressivism nor on nineteenth century values, it reflects the influence of social and cultural history and seeks to view Roosevelt in his proper setting as a turn of the century man. By so doing, it will stress the transitional character of his era.

As commander in chief, Roosevelt reflected the paradox of the early 1900s. He sought overall to transform the armed forces into modern and effective instruments of power but acted out of a desire for lost order and security in American life, and in the world at large. Although his motives and actions sometimes reflected the past, Roosevelt did much to ready the United States military for the burdens it would bear in the twentieth century. In so doing, he left a legacy for later chief executives who would direct forces capable of global reach and unparalleled destructiveness.
NOTES


17. See David B. Danbom, "The World of Hope": Progressives and the Struggle for an Ethical Public Life (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). Danbom argues that historians of the progressive era have slighted the Victorian values that influenced
progressive-era reformers. He claims that in their reforms the progressives were often looking more to the past than to the future. In *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), Robert Crunden develops this same theme much more effectively.

CHAPTER II
THE YEARS OF PREPARATION

President Theodore Roosevelt savored a good battle with Congress, business interests, the press, or any other opponent. Political infighting, public posturing, and the taste of occasional victory made the presidency interesting and even fun for him. Throughout his life, he measured himself through struggle. Whether the challenge was a political fight, physical exertion, an intellectual project, warfare, or some other test, Roosevelt welcomed difficulty. Personal character, he believed, grew from overcoming adversity, facing danger, and taking the hard road. He did not always meet this code, but it still molded his thinking and actions.

This attitude was rooted in Roosevelt's childhood experiences and the intellectual and social climate of the late nineteenth century. His interest in politics, science, international affairs, and history, along with his years as a Dakota rancher, contributed to his outlook. Taken together, these influences stimulated a belief in struggle as one of the basic attributes of life. In turn, that viewpoint brought an appreciation of the importance of force.
in a competitive world, whether at the individual or the national level. He thus gravitated toward things military early in life and maintained an avid interest in them until his death.

Roosevelt schooled himself well to be commander in chief. He read and wrote military history and developed an awareness of America's future as a great power. Contacts with Navy and Army officers put him in touch with the latest in military thinking, while he acquired practical knowledge from his service as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897-98 and from his Army service during the Spanish-American War. He was a quick study and readily learned the business of military affairs and war. His interest remained lively during his brief tenures as Governor of New York and Vice President, so that he was well prepared to assume command in 1901.

The Young Patrician

Theodore Roosevelt entered the world during a turbulent time in the nation's history. He was born in October 1858, just as the Civil War was about to erupt. That conflict exerted a profound influence upon his earliest development. His father, Theodore senior, was a wealthy New York merchant and a robust twenty-nine years old at the outbreak of war, but he did not volunteer for the Union forces. Instead, he hired a substitute. His son apparently never came to terms
with this course, which seemingly ran counter to the elder Roosevelt's strong embrace of President Lincoln and the Republican Party. Theodore junior's passion for war with Spain over thirty years later may well have originated in shame over his father's actions. Theodore senior did set an example of selfless service as an unpaid Allotment Commissioner for the government. He visited military camps and asked soldiers to approve pay deductions for family support, but such service failed to impress his young son, who had imbibed romantic notions of glorious battlefield contests.²

Roosevelt never lost entirely his romantic view of warfare, even after he tasted war's reality in 1898. War represented the ultimate test of manliness to him and provided a proving ground for honor and character. In large measure, his mother's side of the family contributed this part of his makeup. Martha Bulloch Roosevelt was the daughter of Georgia plantation owners and voiced her Confederate sympathies in the privacy of the Roosevelt home. Her mother and her sister, Annie, also lived at the New York house, so Southern patriotism burned brightly when Theodore senior was absent. Annie tutored the children, thrilling them with stories about plantation life and the exploits of Bulloch ancestors in the Revolutionary War. The fact that two Bulloch brothers were fighting for the South lent special poignancy to such tales and reinforced the legendary
quality of warfare for the children. Thus from his earliest years, Roosevelt absorbed the Southern military tradition and learned that participation in a patriotic cause was one of the noblest pursuits.

Beginning with these first lessons, Roosevelt's education benefited from the advantages of his family's wealth. His studies remained private throughout his youth and were not particularly formal, but Roosevelt sought knowledge with a passion. He read voraciously and developed a love for natural science, dreaming of a career in zoology. His family's tours of Europe and the Middle East played a crucial part in the boy's growth, for from them he gained an appreciation of the culture and history of other nations. These experiences helped to cultivate a nascent awareness of America's place in international society. His ideas regarding American involvement in great power affairs would evolve much later, but the foundations for such thought arose during his youth.

Physical frailty, however, threatened to deprive Roosevelt of his full potential. Severe asthma plagued him as a child, so much so that he was often confined indoors and sometimes bedridden. His health grew only worse with age, and at twelve he reportedly became so thin and frail that he resembled a stork in appearance. His eyesight declined at the same time, and he endured the humiliation of relying on his younger brother for protection from other
boys. His father worried about his precarious health and commanded him to "make" his body. Theodore junior responded with determination and commenced a round of strenuous activity that would not slow until his last years.®

Roosevelt more than overcame his physical weakness, and his accomplishment profoundly affected his character. He accentuated physical power and appreciated the effect of force on people. The once scrawny Roosevelt never again yielded to bullying, especially after becoming a formidable lightweight boxer at Harvard. From this experience, Roosevelt decided that strength could win respect and freedom from coercion. He would apply this principle on a national level as an adult when he pushed for military preparedness.

Roosevelt's struggle against physical frailty, however, contained a negative aspect. He displayed intolerance for people who chose not to develop or display their "muscular sides." Such an attitude contributed to rhetorical excesses as he pounded the drum for war in the 1890s and later lambasted President Woodrow Wilson over American preparedness before entry into World War I. In 1896, he disparaged "unintelligent, cowardly chatter for 'peace at any price'...."® And in 1915 he assailed Wilson, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, and their supporters as "shivering apostles of the gospel of national abjectness" for refusing to embrace military readiness.®
By the time he entered college, Roosevelt boasted both a fine body and mind. He profited from Harvard's new elective system of courses and pursued a broad range of interests that included natural science, foreign languages, history, and political economy. He continued to dream of a scientific career but abandoned this idea before graduation and later claimed that his studies had not prepared him for later life. Yet as David Burton has pointed out, Roosevelt slighted the importance of his college years, for he honed his mind at Harvard and launched his avocation as a historian and writer there. As a senior, he commenced research on *The Naval War of 1812*, which he published in 1882, two years after graduation.

*The Naval War of 1812* established Roosevelt as a serious historian and exposed his budding navalism. The book was mostly a narrative of battles, but its precise maps and text demonstrated Roosevelt's regard for research and his desire for an honest accounting of events. He published at a time when America's modern naval revival had just begun, and he could not resist drawing historical lessons to support that renaissance. The book pointed out the value of preparedness in securing American victories in single-ship encounters and warned of the folly of relying on obsolete technology for naval defense. In his summary, Roosevelt also speculated about the impact that a few ships of the line would have had in the contest with Britain, given the
generally capable performance of American frigates and smaller vessels. His observations revealed an appreciation of the power of capital ships and foretold his later advocacy of a large battleship fleet.¹⁰

The Naval War of 1812 also demonstrated an awareness of the relationship between world events, American national interests, and military power. Roosevelt showed that he and other Americans had started to contemplate the Navy’s role in national life and international affairs. Eight years hence they would find their prophet in Captain Alfred T. Mahan, who codified the thoughts of navalists into a full-blown geopolitical formula for achieving national greatness through sea power.¹¹

Roosevelt not only wrote about military affairs in the 1880s but sought to participate in them as well. He joined the National Guard as a way to serve his community and, no doubt, advance his public profile, for he had begun his political career by winning a seat in the New York State Assembly in 1881. For three years, Roosevelt was a captain in the New York Guard. He claimed to have joined because he "did not intend to have to hire somebody else to do my shooting for me," but he never fired a shot in anger as a Guardsman.¹² His most notable action came in July 1885 when he marched in the New York City funeral parade for General Ulysses S. Grant.¹³
Personal tragedy struck in the 1880s and led to an experience that had a powerful effect on Roosevelt's character. His wife of two years, Alice Lee, and his mother died on the same day in February 1884. Roosevelt buried himself in politics for the next few months but found no outlet for his sorrow. In June, he headed to a Dakota cattle ranch to relieve his anguish.

Ranching life imparted a basic lesson about human behavior. The primitive surroundings of the northern Badlands taught Roosevelt the necessity of carrying adequate arms. He had moved to territory that was only partially tamed, and on a variety of occasions he resorted to force. Once he floored a barroom bully with a swift flurry of punches. Another time, he wielded a rifle to hold off five Indians whom he feared might rob and kill him. Roosevelt also served as a deputy sheriff and helped capture three cattle thieves. Later in life, he drew from such experiences to justify a more formidable national military. He projected the frontier environment on to international society and found both to be lawless places. Just as Roosevelt had carried weapons in Dakota, the nation required adequate armaments to insure respect and security.

However much Roosevelt appreciated the West, his heart still lay in the East. He never abandoned completely his life in New York and returned every winter to write and tend political affairs. Roosevelt supported James G. Blaine for
president in 1884, conducted a futile campaign for mayor of New York in 1886, and again worked on behalf of the Republican presidential nominee in 1888. Benjamin Harrison's success at the polls brought an appointment to the United States Civil Service Commission in Washington. Roosevelt served for six years and then returned to New York City to become a police commissioner in 1895. Two years later, he secured the post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy and returned to Washington. He honed his political skills during these years, gained administrative experience, and learned first-hand the pressures of the patronage system. His location at two national centers of social and political life also permitted him to develop personal relationships that would prove important to his career. A number of these contacts were with military officers, which heightened his interest in military matters.

Roosevelt liked to associate with military officers. He found them to be among the best of citizens, individuals who lived honorably, faced adversity with courage, sacrificed for their nation, and endured hardship on the frontier. This image idealized soldiering, but it appealed to Roosevelt, who had witnessed much corruption and influence-brokering in civilian political life. For him, military virtues represented the salvation of the nation, and he often measured himself and others against a military standard.
Contacts with military officers therefore offered the New York patrician an entrée into a world that he regarded as honorable and inviting. He enjoyed spending time with men who shared his outlook on life. While on the New York Police Board, for instance, he enjoyed the company of Captain John J. Pershing for an evening. Avery D. Andrews, Pershing’s West Point roommate and member of the Police Board, introduced the two, and they spent the night trading frontier experiences. Roosevelt impressed Pershing with his knowledge of frontier life and his admiration for the Army’s pacification of the West, a role he had already acknowledged in his four-volume *The Winning of the West*.19

Roosevelt delighted in such social encounters, but he also formed more long-lasting relationships with officers. He developed ties to Francis Vinton Greene, who had gained note for his account of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Greene had resigned from the Army in 1886 and became a businessman in New York, but he maintained ties to military life as a general in the New York National Guard.20 In the late 1890s, Roosevelt proposed a volunteer regiment under Greene’s leadership in case of war with Spain. Nothing came of this particular plan—first proposed in September 1897—but the relationship with Greene endured. Greene went on to become a major general of volunteers during the Spanish conflict, led the second expedition to the Philippines, and presided over the surrender of the Spanish army there.
Roosevelt later pushed Greene's military fortunes after becoming Governor of New York.20

A more significant bond formed with Doctor Leonard Wood. In 1897, Wood was an Army captain and personal physician to President McKinley and First Lady Ida McKinley. He had served with distinction in the campaign against Geronimo in 1886, for which he received the Medal of Honor in 1898.21 Roosevelt met Wood in June 1897 and the two became fast friends. He idolized Wood’s reputation as an Indian fighter and admired the doctor’s capacity for remarkable feats of physical exertion. They soon became regular playmates and scrambled around Washington’s Rock Creek park together to keep in shape and test their bodies. Both found that they also agreed on the necessity of overseas expansion and the liberation of Cuba from Spanish rule. Their similar outlooks and personalities sealed a friendship that proved crucial to their futures.22

Roosevelt’s circle included not only Army officers but Navy officers as well. In 1897, Roosevelt met Commodore George Dewey, although he already knew of Dewey from the Chilean crisis of six years previous. He admired the commodore for voluntarily refueling his ship during the crisis rather than wait for departmental orders, and he began to search for ways to install this man of action in a high sea command. Later that year, Roosevelt fought hard to award Dewey the Asiatic Squadron.23
Roosevelt's links to the Navy included a family tie. His sister, Anna, married Lieutenant Commander William Sheffield Cowles in 1895 and thereafter the brothers-in-law maintained an active correspondence. Roosevelt discussed a variety of topics that ranged from the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895 to the armament of American battleships. These exchanges deepened his knowledge of the Navy and gave vent to his concern for preparedness in light of several foreign complications during the 1890s. After he became assistant secretary, Roosevelt worked on the behalf of Cowles, who eventually rose to the rank of rear admiral.

Roosevelt's naval enthusiasm led to a relationship with one of the Navy's most prominent officers, Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce. Luce possessed one of the most agile minds in the Navy and founded the Naval War College in 1884. He was thus a force for professionalization and would remain an active influence in naval affairs into the early twentieth century, even though retired. Luce admired The Naval War of 1812 and informed Roosevelt that War College students would use the book to study that conflict. At Luce's behest, Roosevelt made the first of many trips to the War College in August 1888 to lecture on "The True Conditions of the War of 1812." The association with Luce was long lasting as Roosevelt turned repeatedly to the sage admiral for advice and assistance throughout his years in official
life and as Luce looked to Roosevelt for help on various administrative reforms. 28

During the 1888 lecture trip, Roosevelt met Captain Mahan, who was soon to become America's foremost apostle of a big navy. The Influence of Sea Power Upon History excited the navalist in Roosevelt to the extreme. He reviewed the book for Atlantic Monthly and lauded Mahan for demonstrating the key role of sea power in forging great nations. 29 In Mahan's writings, Roosevelt saw a vehicle to generate popular support on behalf of a large battleship navy and expansion, and he delivered positive reviews of the captain's subsequent books. He also worked against the attempt of the anti-expansionist Cleveland administration to silence Mahan by assigning him to sea duty. Roosevelt's effort failed, but he acted again as an advocate when the commander of Mahan's squadron, Rear Admiral Henry C. Erben, questioned the captain's fitness. From his civil service post in Washington, Roosevelt coordinated the case in Mahan's behalf and the whole affair soon passed. Later as assistant secretary and then as president, he strived to implement Mahan's theories and continued to exchange ideas with the strategist. 31

Military officers welcomed Roosevelt's friendship not only because they enjoyed his camaraderie but also because they viewed him as a political asset. Throughout the nineteenth century, officers courted politicians to advance
their careers or to promote favorite projects, and the practice remained alive at the century's end. Men such as Wood, Luce, and Dewey were attracted to Roosevelt in part because he had obtained some degree of influence in the highest governmental circles by the late 1880s. Moreover he held future promise as a rising figure in the Republican party. When Luce invited Roosevelt to speak at the Naval War College in 1888, he had the well-being of the college in mind. He had heard of Roosevelt's influence with powerful members of the Republican Party and felt his support could help the struggling institution to survive. In Dewey's case, Roosevelt's acquaintance proved valuable to his career, and Mahan also found a booster in the brash, young politician. The Wood-Roosevelt relationship was the most rewarding of all and helped carry both men to the tops of their respective pursuits.

Roosevelt's association with officers did not divert him from worries about the future in the 1890s. He spent a good share of that decade in angst about his prospects and the destiny of the United States. In 1896, he confessed to his friend Maria Longworth Storer that he feared the end of his political career. He believed that his work on behalf of honest government may have alienated too many powerful people for him to go further in politics. His concern for the future of the country compounded these personal doubts. Like many other thoughtful Americans in the 1890s, he
worried about the state of society, given the upheavals that rose out of the panic of 1893. Economic privation had stirred social, political, and labor unrest and caused many members of Roosevelt's intellectual and economic set to identify an inexorable national decline.\textsuperscript{34}

Roosevelt harbored deep concerns for the nation, but he was not as pessimistic as some. He reviewed Brook Adams's Law of Civilization and Decline, finding it overly bleak. Adams, he felt, erred in asserting that self-serving economic values had completely supplanted self-sacrificing martial behavior. Roosevelt found evidence that such "military" values as honor, courage, duty, and patriotism still existed in Western civilization and pointed to examples in British, German, French, and American history.\textsuperscript{35} He did worry, however, that Adams had identified a disturbing trend in the development of American society.

Roosevelt feared that economic priorities were corrupting the American soul. Individualism, sacrifice, physical fortitude, and a sense of justice, he felt, represented just some of the qualities that had brought America to the verge of industrial and political grandeur. Roosevelt worried that Americans would quit the struggle for national greatness in a quest for material comforts. With the close of the frontier, the United States seemed in danger of falling under the sway of "the glorified huckster or glorified pawn broker type...to whom making money is all
that there is in life." Together with "futile sentimentalists of the international arbitration type" and people who were simply shortsighted, the "moneyed and semi-cultivated classes...would bring this country down to the Chinese level."\(^{36}\)

Having imbibed Social Darwinism, Roosevelt feared Americans had become too consumed with selfish pursuits to meet the challenge of more martial peoples such as the Germans or the Japanese. In a world of strife and competition, individuals, peoples, and nations rose and fell according to their character and their willingness to sacrifice for such causes as democracy, orderly government, justice, and economic opportunity.\(^{37}\) He warned, "if we lead soft and easy lives, concerning ourselves with little things only, we shall occupy but an ignoble place in the great world drama of the centuries that are opening." Greatness, he claimed, came only through continuous struggle, admonishing that "it is only through strife--righteous strife--righteously conducted, but still strife, that we can expect to win to the higher levels where the victors in the struggle are crowned."\(^{38}\)

In this conception, democratic institutions, industrial development, and martial ability were signs of racial superiority. These qualities supposedly reigned supreme among English-speaking peoples, although Roosevelt accepted the capacity of other peoples to attain the same degree of
development. He rated the Japanese highly because they shared many qualities with English-speaking populations, but he felt only contempt for the Turks whom he regarded as a deteriorating people. Americans, he worried, would surrender their place near the pinnacle of civilization if they fell into a single-minded quest for luxury.

The American people required new struggles to preserve their fighting qualities and prevent them from becoming effete. International responsibilities would provide the benefits lost when the frontier vanished. Roosevelt repeatedly rammed this theme home during the 1890s. He felt only good could result from the spread of American values, law, and culture, a mission he deemed a moral imperative. In uplifting other peoples, especially their Latin American neighbors, Americans would preserve the vigor of their society and attain greatness as a leader of the civilized world.

A formidable Navy offered the means for the United States to assume its world mission. Efficient land forces were important to the country's safety, but the Navy represented the long arm of the nation, in addition to being its first line of defense. It served, therefore, as the primary instrument of American greatness by allowing United States involvement in the world. The ensuing struggle to spread "civilization," in turn, would preserve the "fighting qualities" of the American people.
Assistant Secretary of the Navy

Roosevelt’s ideas about national character, foreign involvement, and military power propelled him to seek a position in which he could directly affect naval policy and make the Navy an effective tool of American expansion. His immediate goal was the post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. By 1896, the time seemed ripe for such a move as Roosevelt had worn out his welcome on the New York City police board and the chances appeared solid for a Republican return to the White House. He launched an intensive campaign in summer 1896 to secure the appointment. Roosevelt canvassed for William McKinley in the fall presidential contest and asked friends and acquaintances to lobby the new President on his behalf. McKinley was reluctant to take on the unabashed jingo but eventually acceded. John D. Long became Secretary of the Navy and provided a brake against Roosevelt’s rambunctiousness. A former Massachusetts governor and congressman, Long possessed an even demeanor and opposed Roosevelt’s brand of expansionism, although he took a personal liking to the New Yorker. He was on guard against jingoism and kept his subordinate under tight rein.

Roosevelt’s year as assistant secretary provided excellent preparation for his service as commander in chief. Prior to 1897, he treated naval affairs as an avocation, but
now he gained practical and detailed knowledge of the Navy. He learned the daily functions of the Navy Department's administration and also witnessed its problems. In addition, he also became embroiled in a controversy over personnel policies and familiarized himself with ship design, weaponry, gun targeting, war planning, squadron maneuvers, and the numerous other details involved in running the Navy. Above all else, he pushed to enlarge the fleet and prepare it for war. These efforts gained urgency as war with Spain seemed increasingly certain.48

The Navy Department's administrative system proved to be a clumsy instrument for insuring preparedness. Eight bureaus handled tasks in areas such as construction, repair, pay, and medicine to keep the Navy in operation.49 The bureaus performed their individual functions well, but the system had flaws, as Roosevelt quickly learned. Bureau chiefs were jealous of their authority and often did not coordinate their actions, which led to confusion. Once as acting secretary, Roosevelt ordered the gunboat Newport to proceed from the navy yard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to the Boston navy yard upon recommendation of the Bureau of Navigation. The Bureau of Construction protested that Navigation had not consulted it and that the Newport required further work at Portsmouth. Roosevelt ordered the two bureaus to consult in the future and kept the vessel at
Boston, which he judged better equipped to perform the repairs.47

Despite such incidents, the Assistant Secretary did not feel that the Navy Department required major structural change. Reform-minded naval officers felt differently, but Roosevelt believed the problem lay more in personnel than in the administrative system.48 His attitude presaged his disinterest as president in pushing hard for naval administrative reform.

Roosevelt displayed a penchant as assistant secretary for relying on the views of certain line officers rather than the advice of the naval bureaus. He took particular note of one officer. Lieutenant William S. Sims was naval attaché in Paris and reported to Roosevelt on European improvements in ship design and gunnery. The impressed Assistant Secretary urged an investigation into the comparative deficiencies in American designs and performance, but hostilities with Spain delayed the probe. Contact with Sims, however, resumed in 1901, and the relationship became extremely close.49 Honest voices such as Sims's served a valuable function. They supplied a check upon the Navy's bureaus, which sometimes followed an agenda that placed their well-being before the service's as a whole. Roosevelt continued this practice during his presidency, despite the creation of the General Board of the Navy, which dispensed independent advice.
If Roosevelt approached the naval bureaucracy with some skepticism, he regarded issues of command and promotion with utmost seriousness. He wanted the best possible leadership for United States naval forces. As a consequence, he became deeply involved in personnel reform, heading a board for that purpose. The board examined promotion policy and tried to resolve the bitter rivalry between engineering officers and line officers. This problem had plagued the Navy since the 1860s and centered around the engineers' complaint that line officers belittled them. Line officers indeed felt that "mechanics" did not merit equal status. The Roosevelt board recommended the amalgamation of the line and engineering corps, a solution that aroused much line indignation.\(^{20}\) One officer complained that the proposal injected too much leveling and wanted someone to "kick that...Roosevelt!\(^{[sic]}\)"\(^{21}\) Rear Admiral Thomas Selfridge declared that the engineers just wanted line officers' titles and deemed amalgamation a disservice, as neither line nor engineering officers could perform each others' duties.\(^{22}\) The personnel board also tried to modify the system of seniority promotions and succeeded in establishing a rudimentary system of merit advancement. A system of strict seniority promotions provided the security of advancement, but at the cost of extremely slow promotion in the lower grades and overage officers in the upper ranks. The Roosevelt board recommended the "selection-out"—
retirement--of officers on the basis of fitness rather than allow them to remain in the line of promotion until age 62. The Personnel Act of 1899, which legislators based on the board's proposals, established the principle of selection-out for the grade of captain, a limited reform but a start. The law also sanctioned line-engineering amalgamation, but harmony did not prevail in the naval officer corps and line-staff bickering erupted again during Roosevelt's presidency. 55

The personnel controversy provided another lesson in Roosevelt's ongoing political education. He already possessed a thorough grounding in New York politics and had spent six years in Washington as a civil service commissioner. His year as assistant secretary continued his schooling in national politics as he dealt with intraservice rivalries, congressional patronage, and public opinion. The experience on the Civil Service Commission had already exposed him to congressional demands for appointments and favors. The Navy Department received its full share of pressure, especially as members of the Senate and House Naval Affairs Committees sought to protect their interests in local installations. Once, Roosevelt faced the unpleasant task of explaining to New Hampshire Senator William E. Chandler, a former Navy Secretary, the reasons behind the rejection of a dry dock for the Portsmouth navy yard. Chandler was no doubt irate as Roosevelt's
explanation was detailed and stressed the fairness of the dry-dock board's decision. In contrast, Roosevelt's efforts to cultivate favorable public opinion for the Navy proved a more pleasurable task and provided valuable training for press relations. The Assistant Secretary recognized the difficulty of maintaining a consensus for naval expansion and saw publicity as a potent tool for arousing support behind a big-navy policy. Positive press could build and sustain popular interest in the Navy, which in turn could pressure Congress into fiscal generosity. Roosevelt therefore struggled hard to accommodate news reporters' desire for a story. He made special room for reporters in his arrangements for squadron maneuvers in September 1897. Most captains did not welcome reporters aboard ship, but Roosevelt wanted adequate press representation, worrying about bad publicity if certain papers felt slighted. He chose one reporter to represent newspapers in the Associated Press and one for non-Associated Press papers, trying to select individuals whom he knew would send back favorable reports.

Roosevelt learned more not only about public relations and politics but also about naval technology. The Navy was by nature a technologically oriented service, and during the late nineteenth century a torrent of technological change swept it as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Nearly every year brought new developments in gunnery, armor,
machinery, and design, which made vessels rapidly obsolete. Roosevelt needed to keep abreast on technological questions to advise Secretary Long or function as acting secretary himself. He never felt entirely comfortable in dealing with technological details but did develop enough expertise to make informed choices on new designs and equipment. The Assistant Secretary deliberated, for instance, the armament of new battleships, advocated a private torpedo design over a governmental model, and pushed electrically operated gun turrets. Appraising imagination, Roosevelt gained enough regard for technological possibilities to act as an agent of invention and innovation. He was an early promoter of aviation, a technology more theoretical than practical in 1897. Professor Samuel Langley's flight experiments interested the Assistant Secretary, and he wanted the Navy Department to join the War Department in an investigation of Langley's work. He felt the department should at least consider the military potential of the machine.

Roosevelt realized that more than modern technology, sound personnel policies, and administrative honesty went into wartime proficiency. Without proper war plans the Navy could not function as an effective instrument during hostilities. Roosevelt read existing war plans after taking office and, ever active, provided ideas for new plans or for altering old ones. The Office of Naval Intelligence, the Naval War College, and various special boards composed the
principal parts of the Navy Department's pre-1898 mechanism for war planning.®® In May 1897, Roosevelt suggested that the Naval War College study a war with Japan over Hawaii but was not entirely satisfied with the results. By nature offensive-minded, he objected to the emphasis on seizing and garrisoning Honolulu rather than crushing the Japanese fleet in accordance with Mahanian doctrine. Commander Caspar F. Goodrich defended the plan, which took into account the anticipated weakness of American naval forces in the Pacific.®® Roosevelt also moved to improve existing plans for war with Spain. Again taking an aggressive stance, he wanted the fleet deployed off Cuba no later than forty-eight hours after hostilities commenced and demanded more strength for a flying squadron that was to harass the coast of Spain. He accepted an attack on Manila in the Philippine Islands, a naval blockade of Cuba, and an army expedition to Cuba, which he felt would speed Spanish surrender. He considered the Army's role as subordinate, however, and regarded the Navy as the primary tool for war against Spain.®®

War plans, in turn, were useless unless the Navy was able to implement them. Roosevelt believed that war with Spain was inevitable. He, of course, welcomed a conflict even before the destruction of the battleship Maine. Throughout 1897 and early 1898, he worked to raise the Navy to the highest pitch of readiness. Besides seeking to perfect campaign plans, he pushed Commodore Dewey for
command of the Asiatic Squadron rather than the irresolute John Adams Howell and worked to add more ships to the fleet, especially after the Maine incident. He urged more torpedo boats and torpedo-boat destroyers along with the rapid completion of the Kearsarge, Kentucky, and other new battleships. Roosevelt had long chomped at the bit for war over Cuba, but after the Maine sank on February 15, 1898, he went fairly wild for war. Calling the Maine's destruction "an act of dirty treachery" by Spain, he bombarded the Secretary with so much advice on war preparations that he feared Long regarded him as persona non grata. Later, he could take heart in the fact that his efforts helped the Navy perform fairly well in the conflict. For his part, he wanted desperately to leave Washington in the event of war, join the Army, and get into the fray.

Colonel of the Rough Riders

In 1898, Theodore Roosevelt fulfilled his life-long desire to prove himself in battle. At the Navy Department he had become well-versed in administration and organization; in the Army he would learn how a military institution bore up under the severe test of war. The experience challenged his romantic notions of warfare, as he saw that combat involved more than courage, honor, glorious charges, and the thrill of victory. His confidence in American arms slackened as he found an Army that lacked
planning, organization, leadership, and supplies at the outset of the conflict. The Army’s initial performance provided convincing evidence of the need for major change, and as president, Roosevelt worked to improve the organization, training, and officer corps of the Army. After 1898, he became more responsible about sounding a call to arms, although he still regarded war as the ultimate test of manliness.

Roosevelt declared that American intervention in Cuba was long overdue. In part, he justified involvement as a moral duty, for in its attempts to suppress the Cuban insurrection Spain had "revived the policy and most of the methods of Alva and Torquemada." The liberation of Cuba would also remove a European colony from the hemisphere and eliminate one source of complications with Europe. Moreover, intervention in Cuba would benefit the American people "by giving them something to think of which isn’t material gain" and would test the Army and Navy in actual combat. Roosevelt wanted to see an expeditionary force landed, "if only for the sake of learning from our own blunders." He probably did not anticipate the actual scale of the expedition’s problems when he made this wish.

As war approached in spring 1898, Roosevelt was determined not to miss the opportunity and adventure of a lifetime. His moral code and sense of duty drove him to live up to the jingo doctrines that he had preached in
recent years. He confessed to "a horror of the people who bark but don't bite." In the same vein, his political ambitions dictated that he live up to the policy he advocated. If he failed to act, political opponents could dismiss him as an "armchair and parlor" jingo, damaging his public standing. Roosevelt knew that if he were "to accomplish anything worth doing in politics...it is because I act up to what I preach...." Such forces—along with the possible guilt over his father's course in the Civil War—compelled him to seek an Army appointment.

Roosevelt chose the Army because he could not hope for a combat command in his beloved Navy. He lacked the nautical skills and long years of training required to hold command at sea. He could best serve the Navy by staying in his current post, but a desk job was unacceptable, especially after he rationalized that his most important work as assistant secretary was complete. In peacetime, Roosevelt claimed, he could urge military measures that line officers would feel constrained from recommending. In wartime, he no longer needed to serve as a conduit for military thinking because officers assumed a more important role in the direction of operations. Roosevelt naturally overstated his uselessness. As assistant secretary, he would help mobilize the Navy's bureaus to support operations. Such work was critical to the fleet's success even if it did not involve direct control of forces in
battle. Roosevelt had been a prominent voice for preparedness before the war, and ever irrepressible he doubtless would have attempted to influence operations during wartime. After all, he chaired the Naval War Board, a special body established to guide strategy.\(^21\)

Roosevelt had begun early to seek an Army commission after tensions mounted with Spain. His September 1897 proposal for a volunteer regiment went nowhere, but he continued to look to his home state for assistance. He sounded out New York’s Adjutant General, C. Whitney Tillinghast, about his chances for raising a New York regiment in the event of war. To help his case, Roosevelt reminded the adjutant general that he had served for three years as a National Guard captain.\(^22\)

His efforts in New York proved unrewarding, but Roosevelt’s contacts in Washington bore fruit. In April 1898, Congress authorized three federal volunteer cavalry regiments in addition to President McKinley’s call for 125,000 state volunteers.\(^23\) Immediately after McKinley’s summons, Secretary of War Russell Alger offered Roosevelt the command of a volunteer cavalry regiment. The call-up had specified that frontiersmen would fill the three regiments, and Roosevelt had achieved fame as a cowboy and marksman through his books. Displaying extraordinary restraint and thoughtfulness at this supreme moment, he declined the offer. He lacked experience, and while he
could learn, the delay might keep him from the fighting. Instead, he proposed that Leonard Wood lead the regiment and that he be second in command as lieutenant colonel. Alger agreed and Roosevelt had at last won his chance.\textsuperscript{74}

Roosevelt's commission confirmed his ideas about the nature of officership. This conception would remain ingrained even though increased professionalization was fast making it obsolete. Roosevelt recognized the importance of training and experience in leading troops into battle but felt an industrious individual could learn such skills quickly. He did not feel that field command necessarily demanded long years of education and promotion through the ranks. In his view, an officer need know only basic organizational principles, drill, marching formations, and the charge. These elements, however, remained secondary to the qualities of character that made for sound military leadership: among other things an officer should be aggressive, courageous, honorable, just, and inspiring. Roosevelt believed that he was blessed with an abundance of these qualities. His idea of effective officership would always continue to emphasize character over training and education, even though he was familiar with professionalist developments in the military. In 1898, he could not realize, of course, that the day was almost past when inspired amateurs like him could rise to field commands.
Almost from the start, the war began to lose some of its appeal. Roosevelt grew appalled at the Army’s administrative inefficiency after his regiment moved to the expedition’s embarkation point at Tampa, Florida. On June 10 and June 12, 1898, he wrote Senator Lodge about Army mismanagement at Tampa and the consequent suffering of his unit. He acknowledged that many problems originated with the war’s suddenness and the lack of pre-war preparations but still thought the Army could have avoided much of the confusion. Upon arrival, his regiment received no food for twenty-four hours and nobody showed them where to establish camp. Port Tampa was ten miles away, and a single rail line connected it to the camp. When the Rough Riders deployed to the port, they spent an entire night waiting for a train and then the trip took twelve hours to complete. Mule trains moved faster alongside the track. The regiment arrived at a wharf jammed with troops, trains, and boats—the picture of chaos. No officers met the unit to assign a transport, and Wood and Roosevelt located the depot quartermaster, Colonel C. F. Humphrey, only after some difficulty. He advised that they seize their transport because another regiment, the 71st New York, had received orders for the same vessel. Roosevelt took 400 men and literally raced the 71st for the transport, securing it with "the most vigorous and rather lawless work." Once on board, the men found themselves in cramped, sweltering quarters. Roosevelt likened the lower
holds to the black hole of Calcutta, a situation made more unbearable by a failure to sail for several days. He appealed to Lodge to use his influence to get the expedition moving in view of such conditions. If they were to leave Tampa and get into action promptly and skillfully, he would forgive the early bungling.^^

Problems continued to plague the expedition in Cuba. In July, Roosevelt wrote Lodge and brother-in-law Douglas Robinson that the troops still suffered as a result of administrative problems. They lacked food, their shoes wore out, and their clothes were in tatters. Roosevelt blamed this situation on a deficiency of transportation. The Army had assembled an inadequate number of small craft, wagons, and mule trains to land material from the transports and then carry it to forward units. Hospital care was just as bad. Roosevelt reported that treatment at the hospitals was so poor that men refused to go unless seriously ill or wounded. Some of the Rough Riders spent 48 hours at the hospital before they received food, and they depended on the walking wounded to bring water. Roosevelt's criticisms were not limited strictly to administration as he also registered complaints about the artillery, the engineers, and the expedition's generals; nevertheless, he directed most of his anger at the Army's administrative inadequacies.^^

Roosevelt's exposure to these troubles made him an advocate of War Department reorganization. Compared to the
Navy Department, the War Department had performed poorly at the very outset of war. Roosevelt judged the higher officials and officers of the Army to be of poor quality, lamenting, "oh the difference in the Departments and the men in the higher ranks."

His anger at the War Department was understandable but not fair to the Army's top officials and officers. Roosevelt viewed their performance from the vantage point of a regimental officer, and being conscientious, he placed the welfare of the troops above all else, maintaining little patience for the Army's mobilization problems. From his perspective, these difficulties grew out of incompetent leadership from high military and civilian officials. His natural tendency was to blame individuals first rather than the inadequacies of the institution or past national disinterest with military affairs. Indeed, the War Department's problems lay mostly with a nation that had neglected its Army for decades and then suddenly overtaxed it by requiring a large mobilization, a demand made without adequate political and military consultation about aims and means. The country's lack of preparedness followed historical precedent, and confusion had also plagued past mobilizations. War Department officials required time to learn their new wartime tasks, and they eventually resolved the worst problems through hard work. Roosevelt belonged to the first expedition dispatched overseas, so he witnessed
some of the worst features of the entire wartime mobilization, problems that detracted from later accomplishments. He had always sensed that national unpreparedness would prove debilitating, but still he wanted individual scapegoats after viewing firsthand the practical and personal consequences of the Army's early failures.

The commander of the expedition, Major General William Shafter, provided an easy target for the Rough Rider. His obesity made him an ungainly figure who inspired ridicule rather than respect. The general did not meet Roosevelt's standard of an assertive and energetic commander, and he soon became the object of a private campaign of criticism. By early July 1898, Roosevelt believed that Shafter had brought the expedition to the verge of disaster. He complained to Lodge that "not since the campaign of Crassus against the Parthians has there been so criminally incompetent a General as Shafter...." For example, Roosevelt criticized Shafter for not pressing for adequate supplies and for considering less than the unconditional surrender of Spanish forces. He also found the general useless in battle. He claimed that the engagement at the San Juan Heights had basically fought itself at the brigade and regimental levels and that the highest commanders had little to do with the success. The sweep of his criticism thus extended beyond Shafter. He labeled Major General Joseph Wheeler, a former Confederate commanding the
dismounted cavalry division, an "old dear" and claimed that many of the generals at the division or brigade level were unfit to command.84

The experience in Cuba convinced Roosevelt that the Army required an infusion of youthful, physically fit commanders. Seniority promotions seemed largely to blame, for they elevated officers into the highest commands with little regard for their fitness. Officers reached the uppermost positions too old to provide robust leadership and retired too soon to leave much of an imprint on their units. In 1898, Shafter was 62 years old and would retire in two years. General Wheeler was also of advanced age, and his health failed quickly during the campaign.85 As president, Roosevelt would elevate a number of officers above their seniors in a controversial effort to give the Army leaders in their prime.

Roosevelt's assessment of Shafter showed little concern for the broad nature of the difficulties that confronted the general. Shafter may not have been suited to the demands of his job, but the Army as a whole lacked experience at organizing a large expedition, and Shafter did not have much chance to establish order before the force departed for Cuba.86 He was not the complete military incompetent that Roosevelt suggested. Before 1898, he had won a reputation for aggressiveness and toughness from his work on the frontier. His weight and lack of energy in the tropical
heat were problems, but his irresolution in Cuba stemmed largely from poor intelligence about the state of enemy forces, which were in even worse condition than his own.\(^7\)

Having blasted most aspects of the Army's performance, Roosevelt did not overlook the shortcomings of the National Guard. At the outbreak of hostilities, the Guard had won the right to have prewar units accepted into the volunteer forces that augmented the regular Army.\(^8\) The poor showing of federalized Guardsmen struck Roosevelt as he reported to Lodge that the 71st New York Infantry performed badly in Cuba and that all the Guard regiments in the expedition "were nearly worthless."\(^9\)

The Guard's obsolete weaponry was the main problem. Roosevelt disparaged the black powder rifles of the Guard, claiming that "even old soldiers would be demoralized by such weapons, not to speak of volunteers." He said as much to Secretary Alger in an appeal to have the Rough Riders transferred to the Puerto Rican expedition in July 1898. The colonel (he had gained promotion shortly before the attack at San Juan\(^\text{10}\)) bragged that his unit was "three times as good as any state troops" and claimed that 4,000 cavalry equaled 10,000 Guard soldiers armed with outdated weapons. Alger deflated the brazen boast by responding that the Rough Riders were not better troops only better armed.\(^1\) A month later, Roosevelt explained that he had written in "a spirit
of calculated imprudence" to alert Alger to the poor state of Guard weaponry.22

Roosevelt did not believe that only inferior arms plagued the Guard. After the war, he questioned the leadership of Guard officers because Brigadier General Henry M. Duffield had let trivial resistance stop his Michigan Volunteers during the fight for Santiago.23 Such observations convinced Roosevelt that the Guard suffered major weaknesses, and after the war he worked for militia reform.

The experience in Cuba was not all negative for the Army and especially not for Roosevelt. For all its troubles, the expedition still bested the Spaniards. Eventually, revelations of the Army's failures supplied the political impetus for substantive reform of the War Department, leaving the Army better prepared to meet foreign foes in the future. Roosevelt's exploits made him a hero and gave him national political prospects. After the battles at Santiago, a Roosevelt boom erupted in New York. Although the Rough Rider's reformist record made machine politicians blanche, New York Republicans viewed him as their best hope to retain the governor's chair after the scandal-plagued administration of Frank Black. Roosevelt refused to pursue political advancement while the war continued but never ruled out his gubernatorial ambitions.24
The war, however, meant something deeper to him than fame and political opportunity. He had endured one of the toughest tests of a lifetime and found himself the stronger for it. Even as the tropical climate and disease felled his men, Roosevelt was proclaiming to Lodge that he felt "as strong as a bull moose." The whole experience gave him a sense of self-fulfillment, for he had met the dictates of his conscience by fighting. He expressed happiness at having provided his children with a memory in which they could take pride, and he lobbied hard for the Medal of Honor for his leadership of the assault on Kettle Hill. The medal would have been a tremendous political asset, but Roosevelt apparently craved the award as a tangible symbol of his courage and service.

Controversy deprived Roosevelt of the medal. Ever irrepressible, he assumed a prominent and controversial place in the withdrawal of the expedition after the fighting. At the end of July 1898, Roosevelt worried that disease would soon decimate the troops, more than Spanish bullets had ever done. The yellow fever season was soon upon the Americans, and the disease threatened to kill men "like rotten sheep." Malarial fever had so weakened the command that when "yellow jack" hit, Roosevelt claimed, over half the army would die. He had good reason for concern as disease had devastated Caribbean invaders in the past. Other officers shared this worry, and General Shafter
informed Washington of the danger, asking for permission to relocate to the United States. Roosevelt wrote a strong letter in favor of Shafter's proposal and railed against Secretary Alger's incompetence in exposing the troops to yellow fever. He also helped instigate the famous "Round Robin Letter," which the expedition's division and brigade officers submitted in support of Shafter's plea. Both letters reached the press and made national headlines on August 4, the same day that the administration announced the return of the expedition. These simultaneous events created the impression that McKinley and Alger had neglected the welfare of the victorious troops until anxious commanders had by-passed normal channels to get action. In fact, the President had already decided on the removal based on Shafter's communication and first learned of the Round Robin and Roosevelt's letter in the morning newspapers. The affair embarrassed the administration, which had not yet revealed the poor conditions in Cuba and was engaged in negotiations with Spain. Secretary Alger blamed Roosevelt in particular and thereafter the colonel's chances for a Medal of Honor dropped precipitously. In an act of vengeance, the embittered Secretary published Roosevelt's letter denigrating National Guard volunteers, hoping to arouse feeling against the Rough Rider. The public response was mixed as some papers accused Roosevelt of excessive
egotism while others condemned the Secretary for publishing a private letter.101

Governor and Vice President

The "Round Robin" controversy may have wrecked Roosevelt's chances for a Medal of Honor, but it did not destroy his prospects for the governorship of New York. After a few weeks in camp, Roosevelt mustered out of the Army and hit the campaign trail. His heroic status helped carry all before him. The image of the Rough Riders charging Spanish lines had captured the collective imagination of the country and was fast becoming part of the national patriotic lore, a process that Roosevelt promoted with the publication of the Rough Riders in 1899 (which according to "Mr. Dooley," the popular satirical character of the day, would have been better titled Alone in Cubia [sic]). But Roosevelt's personal presence was his biggest political asset. No matter the weather, large crowds turned out to see the hero-candidate, who left audiences even more enthusiastic upon departure. At Carthage, New York, one observer recorded Roosevelt's impact on a rain-soaked throng. The candidate's words were unremarkable, but his personality electrified all present. Waving handkerchiefs and hats, scores chased the campaign train as it pulled away from the station.102 Such good feeling landed Roosevelt in the governor's chair.
Although he returned to a political career, Roosevelt did not lose interest in military matters. If anything, his interest grew. He viewed the governorship as a platform from which to influence national military policy, and having just departed the Army the ex-Rough Rider felt he had many valuable insights to offer. Because Roosevelt was Governor of New York, the President and the Secretary of War had to extend him a courteous ear. Even before taking office, he had presented his opinions about the Army’s performance to the Dodge Commission, a body probing the War Department’s conduct of the war. From Albany, he pushed National Guard reform and monitored the careers of old comrades, lobbying for their promotion. He also advocated administrative change for the War Department and watched closely the American campaign against Filipino insurgents. The Boer War proved of added interest, for the Governor kept a keen eye on international developments.

In the first year of his governorship, Roosevelt pushed hard for change at the War Department. The problems with supply and organization in 1898 had already convinced him of the need for reform, but public anger made change politically imperative. The popular image remained one of mismanagement even though the department had overcome its worst problems before the war’s end. Blame focused on Alger, and Roosevelt was only one of many Republicans who urged his ouster for the party’s good. He had always
regarded Alger as incompetent and now saw him as a major political liability. "Whether Alger were right or wrong," the Governor wrote, "the enormous majority of the American people [regard] him as a curse, and...his retention is a source of the greatest danger to the administration." Roosevelt sensed personal opportunity in Alger's troubles. While he pushed Francis Greene to replace Alger, he also toyed with the idea of becoming Secretary of War himself in order to reform the Army. President McKinley, however, desired someone with legal experience—and no doubt someone less forceful—to help erect a system of colonial administration. He turned to Elihu Root, a New York lawyer.

At first, Roosevelt thought little of Root's selection. With United States forces engaged in the Philippines and occupying Cuba, he felt that the Army required a military man at its head, not a lawyer. The choice of Root also seemed to dampen the possibility of massive War Department reform; however, Roosevelt predicted that events would force sweeping reforms on the administration. After the new Secretary led the department with ability and took up the reform cause, Roosevelt altered his opinion. He appreciated Root's work and later valued him as one of the most competent men in his own administration.

If political motivations drove Roosevelt's concern about the War Department, they also weighed heavily in his
interest in the Philippines. The Filipino fight against American rule would have attracted his attention in any event, but Roosevelt worried that the administration was not properly handling the problem. McKinley needed to use stronger measures or risk a disaster in colonial policy. Lack of progress against the insurrection or, worse, Filipino successes would constitute such a disaster, which "would shake this administration, and therefore our party, and might produce the most serious and far-reaching effects upon the nation as a whole..." In other words, Roosevelt feared for Republican prospects in the 1900 elections. The Philippines would become a major political liability unless the public perceived firm executive control over the situation. Roosevelt sensed considerable discontent over American colonialism and worried that setbacks might force abandonment of expansionist policies. To prevent that from happening, he proposed that the administration dispatch more forces to the Philippines. Sixty thousand men could have a telling effect at the start of the new campaigning season.

Roosevelt based his opinions upon the views of military officers. He maintained relationships with old comrades and passed along their assessments of the Philippine situation to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State. Roosevelt thus resumed the role of military liaison that he had played as assistant secretary. In his view, he supplied
a much more accurate analysis of the Philippine conflict in hopes that his reports would bring stronger measures against the insurrection. Roosevelt claimed that the commanding general in the Philippines, Major General Elwell S. Otis, was the main obstacle to smashing the insurgents. He found Otis to be a good administrator but contended that the general was "not in any sense a fighter."

Again, an aggressive fighting spirit seemed to be the feature most valued in an officer.

Roosevelt believed that Otis was symptomatic of a larger command problem in the Army and felt his duty lay in pushing "fighting men" for higher rank. He advised John Hay that "we have got to push up our best men, wholly without regard to seniority, just as they were pushed up in the Civil War." At one point, he forwarded the names of thirty-three officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men to Secretary Root, who was also interested in command reform. And he repeatedly pushed particular officers who had impressed him as strong troop leaders. Captain Robert Howze, Lieutenant John H. Parker, and Brigadier General S.B.M. Young were among those who received special endorsements. He also pressed the names of promising men in his publications to generate popular appeal on their behalf. In The Rough Riders Roosevelt was not "alone in Cuba." He peppered the book with praise for many officers.
Roosevelt saved his most extravagant tributes for Leonard Wood. After commanding the Rough Riders, Wood had taken over a brigade in Cuba and then governed the city of Santiago. Roosevelt felt his friend possessed singular qualities of command, organizational skill, and executive ability and spared no effort to promote his fortunes.\textsuperscript{115} The Rough Riders described Wood as "a man of high ideals" who was "by nature a soldier of the highest type" and who "scorned everything mean and base."\textsuperscript{114} Roosevelt also orchestrated a letter-writing campaign on Wood's behalf and lobbied President McKinley and Secretary Root in person. He wanted Wood to become overall commander of Cuba and to receive a regular Army appointment as brigadier general. Desperately concerned with the future of American expansionism, Roosevelt believed that Wood possessed the talents necessary for the successful administration of Cuba. He also wanted Wood's promotion to a permanent brigadier generalship to instill youthful and competent leadership in the Army.\textsuperscript{117}

In praising Wood and the others, Roosevelt recommended individuals much like himself. They were relatively young, physically vigorous, and assertive. He believed that seniority promotions had made the officer corps "wooden" and that younger blood would infuse new life into it. Ever mindful of historical precedent, Roosevelt looked back to the Civil War and concluded that the Union armies had
triumphed only after such men had moved into high command, and his recent experience in Cuba confirmed that notion. He had only to compare the obese Shafter with the young and vital Wood for affirmation. Although Roosevelt appreciated organizational and administrative talents—he said as much in pushing Wood for governor of Cuba—he continued to stress battlefield leadership as the most valued part of officership. He still seemed unwilling to accept that the management of large organizations was increasingly an important part of military command, in war and peace. For him, moreover, good military administration was more a matter of personalities than sound institutions and logical organization. An energetic individual could bring far greater returns, and more quickly, than institutional reforms and programs for advanced officer education. Roosevelt possessed limited patience for such structural change, especially after he identified unfit officers as an immediate problem.

In his eagerness to promote certain favorite officers, Roosevelt defied the Army's developing professional ethos. Ideally, career officers would decide promotions free of outside political influence, with only military considerations in mind. Roosevelt's activities fit with the older habits of the nineteenth century as he exerted political influence unabashedly on behalf of selected officers.118 He was so bent on injecting new vitality into
the officer corps that he did not sense the paradoxical nature of his actions. His political tactics to improve Army officership undercut professionalist efforts towards the same end.

Roosevelt did not feel the same urgency to uplift the naval officer corps or the Navy Department as a whole. Shortly after the war, he confided to John Hay, "I earnestly hope that our people...will now turn their attention to the War Department, and see that it is abreast of the Navy Department. For 15 years the one has galloped ahead while the other has, at best, remained stationary." Unlike the Army, the Navy had not experienced major problems in the initial phase of the war with Spain and had performed well throughout the conflict. In addition, the Personnel Act of 1899, which Roosevelt had helped author, had recently modified the seniority system of promotions. Roosevelt did see a need to do something about the National Guard. As Governor of New York, he headed the largest Guard organization in the country and one that was thoroughly politicized. The New York Guard was a major source of patronage, costing over $1 million per annum. Moreover, the Guard had not performed well in Cuba and resented Roosevelt's disparagement of it to Secretary Alger. Shortly before the 1898 gubernatorial election, Roosevelt predicted that the majority of its members would vote against him.
Relations with the Guard worsened after the Governor intervened in a court martial in December 1898. Several officers of the 71st New York Volunteers faced charges of cowardice and incompetence for their performance in Cuba. Roosevelt viewed the proceedings and felt they resembled more a town meeting than a military trial and thereupon increased the powers of the military court. All of the officers then resigned their commissions but one. A new board convened in May 1899 to try this last man, who appealed to the New York Supreme Court to prevent the trial. An outraged Roosevelt denied the civil court’s right to act and the appeal failed. The Governor acted apparently out of a sense of moral outrage, feeling that cowardice was unmanly and deserved strong punishment. In acting, he established a tougher standard of officership for New York Guard members.

Roosevelt, however, had more ambitious projects in mind regarding the Guard. He wanted a federal initiative on Guard reform that would provide a reliable national reserve and define the exact relationship between federal and state forces. To spur action, Roosevelt contacted Secretary Root, urging him to promote the idea of a report on reserve systems. The report would examine militia forces in other countries, especially in Britain; discuss their principles of organization; and investigate their practical workings. By demonstrating the practices of other nations, such an
investigation could provide legitimacy for reserve reform proposals within the United States and draw public and congressional attention to the need for change. If nothing else came out of the project, it would at least serve as a reference for future reformers. President McKinley agreed to the proposition and appointed Colonel William Cary Sanger to carry out the task. Sanger was the Inspector General of the New York Guard, and his commission recognized the project as a New York initiative. Roosevelt also ordered Sanger to provide the state government with a copy of his findings. The report appeared in late 1900 and helped lay the basis for militia reform during Roosevelt's presidency.126

Roosevelt pushed so hard for military reform because he feared a much more formidable opponent than Spain might soon confront the United States. He viewed Germany with apprehension and would continue to do so as president.127 The Germans wanted colonial possessions as a sign of imperial greatness and had displayed interest in South America. Roosevelt worried that a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine could occur within four to five years and wanted the military prepared for it. If the United States did not prepare, it would "have the pleasure of a disastrous war against...Germany...."128 Such a conflict seemed more likely if Britain suffered defeat in the Boer War. A demoralized Britain might not want to fight for its
interests in the western hemisphere and allow Germany a free
hand there. The United States would then have to act alone
against the Germans or abandon the Monroe Doctrine.\textsuperscript{129}

After March 4, 1901, Roosevelt observed military
affairs from a loftier perch, the vice presidency. He would
have preferred to run again for governor and then perhaps
make a bid for the White House in 1904. But the "Easy Boss"
of New York's Republican machine, Senator Thomas Collier
Platt, had other plans. Although Roosevelt had worked with
Platt, he had proven too reformist for the Senator's
taste.\textsuperscript{130} The vice presidency provided the perfect place to
ease him out of New York politics and insure no further
damage to the party machinery. Roosevelt recognized the
emptiness of the position and protested that he would
"rather be anything...than Vice-President."\textsuperscript{131} He harbored
presidential ambitions and worried that the public would
forget him after four years as a mere presiding officer.\textsuperscript{132}
Under pressure from the party and friends, however,
Roosevelt eventually "took the veil."\textsuperscript{133}

Military affairs provided some relief from the boredom
of the vice presidency. Roosevelt maintained essentially
the same interests in military matters that he had pursued
as governor. The Philippines and Cuba continued to attract
his attention as he still believed that expansionism
depended on the success of the colonial experiments in those
two lands, although the public had endorsed Republican
policies in the 1900 elections. The Boxer Rebellion in China proved of added interest, and Roosevelt sent personal congratulations to Major General Adna R. Chaffee, the commander of the American contingent of the relief expedition, for his efforts in rescuing the legations in Peking. His contacts with old military comrades remained strong, but Roosevelt found himself with little influence to secure favors. The absence of power and influence was one of the most frustrating features of the vice presidency, and military affairs did not provide enough distraction from the tedium of the office. Roosevelt considered the study of law as a diversion and railed that the vice presidency should be abolished.

Conclusion

McKinley's assassination in September 1901 freed him from his prison. Ironically, he did not need to struggle for the presidency in the way that he had striven for so many other goals during his life. Roosevelt was well prepared for the presidency when he assumed office. For twenty years, he had moved in and out of politics, and he knew the "great game" well. As a state legislator, civil service commissioner, and police commissioner, he had learned legislative procedures, the intricacies of machine politics, and the importance of patronage and solid political organization. He also possessed considerable
experience in Washington from his work on the Civil Service Commission and his year as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Moreover, Roosevelt could boast of high-level executive experience from his term as governor of the most populous state in the nation. In September 1901, he was especially well prepared for his duties as commander in chief. He had long pursued an interest in military matters, and his service as assistant secretary and as a volunteer army officer had supplied him with detailed and up-to-date knowledge of both military branches. When he assumed office, Roosevelt was ready and anxious to leave his imprint on the armed services. He was determined to build the forces of a great power.
NOTES


4. Ibid., 40, 44, 49, 53-55, 60.

5. Ibid., 60; Gardner, Departing Glory, 309-10, 384-85, 395-400.


7. As quoted in Gardner, Departing Glory, 326.


15. Turk, Ambiguous Relationship, 14.

17. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry C. Merwin, in Morison, Letters, 1: 412-77; Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 3.


27. Stephen B. Luce, to Theodore Roosevelt, 13 February 1888, series 1, roll 1, Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, microfilm edition, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Henceforth this collection will be cited as Roosevelt Papers.


29. While Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the two men maintained a lively correspondence, as can be found on roll 19 of the microfilm edition of the Luce Papers in the Library of Congress. Their ties remained as active while Roosevelt was president. See the Papers of Stephen B. Luce, microfilm ed., Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


33. His confession grew partially out of a desire to gain the sympathy of Storer, who was a friend of William McKinley. Roosevelt knew McKinley owed Storer political favors, and he wanted to be positioned to become Assistant Secretary of the Navy in case of a Republican presidential victory that November. Political motivations had inspired Roosevelt's confession, but some of his concern was no doubt genuine. Theodore Roosevelt to Bellamy Storer, 10 August 1896, in Morison, Letters, 1: 556; Theodore Roosevelt to Maria Longworth Storer, 5 December 1896, in ibid., 1: 569; Theodore Roosevelt to Maria Longworth Storer, 16 September 1901, series 1, roll 19, Roosevelt Papers; Morris, Rise, 512, 538-44.


46. The system of Navy bureaus will receive closer treatment in a later chapter.


51. Hunter Davis to Stephen B. Luce, 21 March 1898, box 10, roll 9, Luce Papers.


55. Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 5 August 1897, in ibid., 1: 639; Theodore Roosevelt to Paul Dana, 16 August 1897, in ibid., 1: 652; Theodore Roosevelt to Jacob Riis, 2 September 1897, in ibid., 1: 666.

56. Roosevelt also took an active interest in gunnery practice, which involved techniques that were extremely dependent on technological capabilities. Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 22 June 1897, in Morison, *Letters*, 1: 630; Theodore Roosevelt to William Laird Clowes, 3 August 1897, in ibid., 1: 637; Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 4 September 1897, in ibid., 1: 668; Theodore Roosevelt to Arent Crowninshield, 24 November 1897, in ibid., 1: 720; Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 24 November 1897, and William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 6 December 1897, container 96, folder 1, Sims Papers; Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 4 January 1898, in Allen, *Long Papers*, 40-41; W.H. Emory to Frederick Rodgers, 17 January 1898, and Frederick Rodgers to Theodore Roosevelt, 21 January 1898, General Records of the Navy Department, Record Group 80, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, General Correspondence 1897-1915, File 5936-10, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Henceforth all cites from this collection will be referred to as RG 80, General Records, NARA.


In regard to the "other new battleships" Roosevelt was perhaps thinking ahead, anticipating a future contingency such as a longer war since battleships took several years to complete. He recognized the unpredictable nature of war and warfare.

See Morison, Letters, for numerous examples of Roosevelt's excitement over the possibility of war during the winter and spring of 1898. A good example is, Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Cowles, 29 March 1898, 2: 803.

62. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 19 October 1899, in ibid., 2: 1085.

64. Theodore Roosevelt to James Bryce, 31 March 1898, in ibid., 2: 807.

65. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 5 April 1898, in ibid., 2: 813.


67. Theodore Roosevelt to Douglas Robinson, 2 April 1898, in ibid., 2: 809.


69. Theodore Roosevelt to Douglas Robinson, 2 April 1898, in ibid., 2: 809.

70. Theodore Roosevelt to William Sturgis Bigelow, 29 March 1898, in ibid., 2: 801-08; Theodore Roosevelt to Robert Bacon, 5 April 1898, in ibid., 2: 812; Theodore Roosevelt to Paul Dana, 18 April 1898, in ibid., 2: 816-17.


72. Theodore Roosevelt to Francis Vinton Greene, 15 September 1897, in Morison, Letters, 1: 679; Theodore Roosevelt to C. Whitney Tillinghast, 13 January 1898, in ibid., 1: 758; Theodore Roosevelt to C. Whitney Tillinghast, 9 March 1898, in ibid., 1: 792; Theodore
Roosevelt to C. Whitney Tillinghast, 26 March 1898, in ibid., 1: 800.

73. Millett, Common Defense, 272-73.


75. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 10 June 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 837-38; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, in ibid., 2: 840-43.


83. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 5 July 1898, in ibid., 2: 849; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 7 July 1898, in ibid., 2: 850; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 10 July 1898, in ibid., 2: 850.

84. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 5 July 1898, in ibid., 2: 849; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 12 June 1898, in ibid., 2: 842; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 7 July 1898, in ibid., 2: 850; Millett, Common Defense, 278.


86. Millett, Common Defense, 277.

87. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 10 July 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 850-51; Millett, Common Defense, 280.


91. Theodore Roosevelt to Russell A. Alger, 23 July 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 859-60; Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 54, 201.


95. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 10 July 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 850-51.


98. Cosmas, Army for Empire, 257.


101. Cosmas, Army for Empire, 258; Morris, Rise, 660, 703.

102. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 16 October 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 886-86. William T. O'Neil was the observer and his account of the visit to Carthage is included in a footnote to this letter.

103. U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Commission...To Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War with Spain, 8 vols., 56th Cong., 1st sess., Senate Doc. 221, 3: 2255-72.

104. Cosmas, Army for Empire, 303.


106. Theodore Roosevelt to Winthrop Chanler, 18 January 1899, in ibid., 2: 918.

107. Morris, Rise, 705; Cosmas, Army for Empire, 307.


111. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 25 September 1899, in ibid., 2: 1078-79.


118. For example, he openly informed Wood of Senator Lodge's unqualified support for his quest to govern all of Cuba. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 March 1899, in Morison, Letters, 2: 955; Roosevelt's favoritism ran so strong that he did not perceive himself as a tool of these men. For instance, Wood was his main source of information on the situation in Cuba, data that Roosevelt used to press for sounder military government and Wood's own elevation. See, Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 28 August 1899, in Morison, Letters, 2: 1061-62, and Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 28 August 1899, in ibid., 2: 1063.


120. Spector, "Professional Ideology," 183-84; Paullin, Naval Administration, 457-64.


123. The Guard did redeem itself in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, but Roosevelt's impression had been formed earlier. Weigley, U.S. Army, 320; Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 4 November 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 887.

124. Theodore Roosevelt to Thomas C. Platt, 8 May 1899, in ibid., 2: 1006n. A year later, the Guard struck back when Colonel Alexander Bacon, former counsel to the accused officers, tried to blacken Roosevelt's reputation by accusing him of being a "quitter" at the battle before Santiago, saying that he had considered surrender because of his men's fatigue. Roosevelt countered with his letters of recommendation for the medal of honor, and the affair did no significant damage to his political reputation. See, Theodore Roosevelt to Philip Reade, 16 April 1900, in Morison, Letters, 2: 1262-63; and Theodore Roosevelt to William H. Llewellyn, 8 May 1900, in ibid., 2: 1294.
125. Theodore Roosevelt to William Conant Church, 8 May 1899, in ibid., 2: 1003.


127. C. Sigsbee to Secretary of the Navy Long, 25 October 1901, series 1, roll 21, Roosevelt Papers.


129. Theodore Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 2 December 1899, in ibid., 2: 1103-04; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 29 January 1900, in ibid., 2: 1151.

130. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 1 July 1899, in ibid., 2: 1023; Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 17.

131. Theodore Roosevelt to Thomas C. Platt, 7 February 1900, in Morison, Letters, 2: 1174.

132. Theodore Roosevelt to Thomas C. Platt, 1 February 1900, in ibid., 2: 1157.


CHAPTER III
THE STRENUOUS LIFE AND AMERICAN OFFICERSHIP

The invigoration of American officership became one of Theodore Roosevelt’s top priorities as commander in chief. In Cuba, he had doubted the competence of overage and overweight senior officers, and as a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy he knew that the system of naval promotions remained imperfect despite the Personnel Act of 1899. He judged the Army officer corps to be in worse shape; as a consequence he focused on injecting fresh blood into the Army’s leadership. The Navy, however, was not neglected, for Roosevelt also pushed to overhaul its promotion system. He wanted officers, especially generals and admirals, who were younger, more energetic, and more able to withstand the rigors of campaigns. In other words, he wished to inject a dose of the strenuous life into the Army and Navy, desiring senior leaders who were ready to command in wartime and not collapse under the strain of fighting.

Roosevelt was limited in his authority to change personnel practices. In the Army, for example, seniority governed all promotions below the rank of brigadier general.
The President possessed the legal authority to elevate junior officers to brigadier general, but custom dictated that the most senior colonels be rewarded.¹ Roosevelt struggled to scrap seniority promotions and install merit systems that would allow Army and Navy officers to reach the higher grades at a younger age. Congress frustrated this project, so he determined to by-pass Capital Hill and implant new vitality into American officership through the means already available to him. He elevated younger men to brigadier generalships, provided other promising individuals with prized assignments, and insisted on physical fitness. Finally, he struck at the influence of Congress and state politicians upon personnel affairs, hoping to eliminate promotion for purposes of patronage.

Roosevelt placed a premium on personal character in his concept of officership, for he felt that the highest attributes of command could not be learned but were inherent. Gallantry, courage, moral rectitude, honor, and intelligence were among these qualities. Such characteristics lent themselves to battlefield leadership, and indeed Roosevelt believed that an officer's place was in the thick of the fight, regardless of rank. He wrote in November 1901, "it is of enormously greater consequence to get men who have shown the power of command, the power of handling themselves and others in actual work, than it is to have good scholars."²
This idea of officership looked more to the past than to the future. Roosevelt’s focus on personal character was not surprising, given his background. Victorian values stressed individual internal standards of conduct, and his father had impressed upon him the importance of moral living. This belief surfaced during his work in the civil service movement and on the New York Police Board as he labored for public servants who were not only skilled but possessed integrity and public-mindedness. Romanticism also colored his thinking. His ideas about officership conjured up images of dashing, heroic figures leading troops in dramatic charges against an enemy. The experience in Cuba challenged this notion, but Roosevelt’s conception of command never entirely lost its romantic hue. He recognized that technology had made the battlefield more deadly and that field-grade officers required some circumspection to control large formations; however, this awareness did not undermine his view of officership. On the contrary, industrial warfare demanded more reliance on individual initiative and dispersed units rather than on massed formations. Officers needed greater technical knowledge in an industrial age, but Roosevelt felt that technical training was no substitute for daring, coolness under fire, and the ability to take command.

His thinking was somewhat out of step with the approach of professionalist reformers in the Army and Navy. These
officers pushed for younger men in top posts and agreed on the importance of field command abilities. However, while Roosevelt emphasized inherent leadership ability, they stressed educational attainments, technical skill, and merit evaluations as equally valid considerations. The President endorsed these ideas; after all, he had already advocated objective measures of merit as a civil service reformer. Still, his promotion recommendations depended heavily on character judgments and his personal perception of meritorious performance. Consequently, Roosevelt would promote only those persons of whom he had personal knowledge, and the people whom he promoted were often friends or acquaintances. His attempts to improve officership thus smacked of presidential favoritism.

Officership and Promotions before 1901

The Spanish-American War furnished Roosevelt with irrefutable evidence of the decrepit condition of many American officers. The corpulent, gout-ridden William Shafter had weathered the tropics poorly, and Roosevelt blamed the general's lack of vitality as one cause of the suffering in Cuba. Shafter was not on hand to expedite relief when problems occurred with the logistical system. Major General Joseph Wheeler's health was not much better as he was too frail and too aged to take a very active role in the campaign. Wheeler was ill during the battles in the San
Juan Heights and had to relinquish his division to General Samuel S. Sumner. The Navy's commanders were not without their problems. According to Roosevelt, Commodore Winfield Scott Schley received command of the Flying Squadron solely on the basis of seniority, unlike Commodore Dewey who won the Asiatic Squadron over a more senior colleague. Dewey ended up smashing Spanish naval power in Manila Bay, while Schley vacillated during the early days of the Cuban blockade and made questionable decisions during the naval battle off Santiago de Cuba.

The seniority system of promotions was the culprit, and it especially burdened the Army. Before 1890, captains and lieutenants had to wait for a vacancy in their regiment before they could move forward, while majors and above depended upon openings in their combat arm. Promotions were allocated according to combat arms for all ranks after 1890. Officers could look forward to eventual advancement, but it would not come quickly as billets emptied at a snail's pace. The Army did not demand mandatory retirement, except for physical disability, until age sixty-four, and the regular ranks had swelled during the Civil War, which blocked promotions for the postwar generation of officers. Officers spent a long time in each grade and reached the uppermost ranks only near retirement. For example, the average first lieutenant was forty-five years old in 1891 and the average artillery captain was slightly over fifty years of age. It
was no wonder that the most senior officers exhibited physical failings.

For most of the post-Civil War era, the situation was just as bleak in the Navy. The Navy suffered from its own Civil War "hump" of officers, and promotion followed strictly linear lines. Expansion and modernization in the 1890s provided some relief, but advancement was still slow. In 1896, many ensigns had served over fifteen years in their grade.¹

Partisan politics complicated personnel matters in both services. Officers openly sought the aid of politicians and other influential individuals as they scrambled for a favored assignment or for a small number of promotions in the staff departments, administrative agencies where faster advancement was possible. For example, First Lieutenant John J. Pershing aggressively collected political endorsements in 1895 for his transfer from an instructorship at the University of Nebraska to a post in the Commissary or Quartermaster departments. The change would have meant a captaincy for Pershing. Despite his numerous contacts in Lincoln, Nebraska, he was still a lieutenant two years later.¹⁰ Senators, Representatives, governors, and others were ready to oblige officer requests. If they secured a promotion or a choice assignment for an officer of local note, it would demonstrate their effectiveness and influence to constituents. And such favors might someday be
reciprocated by officers in charge of local military facilities or military contracts. Naturally, legislators did not want a promotion system that ended this source of power.

Congress did enact some modest changes in promotions policy before 1901, with the Navy benefiting the most. Legislation in 1882 reduced the size of the naval officer corps but cost numerous midshipmen their commissions upon graduation from the Naval Academy. During the McKinley administration, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt led the commission that drafted the Naval Personnel Act of 1899. The bill aimed mainly at amalgamating line and engineering officers, but it also sped the flow of promotions. It encouraged retirement with generous pensions and allowed the Navy to enforce involuntary separation if voluntary retirements did not produce enough annual vacancies. The Personnel Act set a precedent for promotion by merit even though "selection out" for all ranks was not its governing principle, and it failed to accelerate advancement sufficiently. Naval historian Charles Paullin recorded in 1911 that officers still reached the upper ranks too late in their lives. The Army made even fewer gains. Imposition of a maximum age limit in 1882 helped to clear the top rungs of the promotion ladder. Senior officers had to depart at age sixty-four, a limit that was still two years above the Navy's retirement age. The measure provided little relief
because most Civil War veterans still had eighteen to twenty-three more years of service in 1882. Beyond that no substantive modification occurred in the Army's system of promotions. Pressure did exist for change within the Army; it just never reached fruition. For instance, Captain William Crozier, an ordnance officer, approached Roosevelt in October 1899 with a proposal for merit promotions. He wanted Roosevelt to employ his influence as governor of New York, but the project came to nothing.

President McKinley and Secretary of War Elihu Root recognized the problems with the Army officer corps. Root's first annual report in 1899 called for promotion based on merit. Without such a system, he claimed, "selection has to be made after war has commenced, at the expense always of treasure and of life, and sometimes of temporary failure and humiliation." Congress did not respond, so Root and McKinley used existing executive powers to reward certain officers. Their efforts set a precedent that Roosevelt would build upon once he was commander in chief.

President McKinley broke tradition in 1900 when he appointed Arthur MacArthur, William Ludlow, and Joseph Wheeler to brigadier generalships in the regular Army. Since 1873, general's stars had landed only upon colonels in the regular establishment. But MacArthur and Ludlow held permanent commissions as lieutenant colonels, and Wheeler
was a brigadier general of volunteers. All three were Civil War veterans, and MacArthur and Ludlow were also generals in the volunteers. These facts allowed McKinley to counter opposition from the Senate Military Affairs Committee and Lieutenant General Nelson Miles, the Commanding General of the Army. The committee members and Miles wanted generalships to reward past service and remained wedded to strict seniority promotions. MacArthur's, Ludlow's, and Wheeler's records met concerns about past service; however, the appointments also signaled that seniority alone would no longer govern promotion to brigadier general.

The Army Reorganization Act of 1901 gave McKinley fresh opportunities to appoint generals. The number of major generals in the line of the Army increased from three to six, and brigadier generalships climbed from six to fifteen. In 1903, General Staff legislation pushed this number to sixteen with the new Chief of the Corps of Artillery. Brigadier generalships remained almost unchanged in the War Department staff bureaus. An addition to the Adjutant General's Office raised the number of staff brigadier generals from ten to eleven.

McKinley broke decisively with seniority in his next round of appointments. An able politician, he rewarded some old soldiers to smooth the way for more dramatic selections. The most astounding choices were James Franklin Bell, Frederick Funston, Frederick Dent Grant, and Leonard Wood.
All four were already generals in the volunteers and held important commands in Cuba or the Philippines. For example, Wood was a major general of volunteers and had been military governor of Cuba since 1899, while Funston won fame through the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo, the principal leader of Filipino nationalist forces. Although three of the four wore Medals of Honor, their records did not meet previous seniority requirements. None had seen Civil War service, and Funston possessed no background in the regular service. Grant had served in the Army for only ten years after graduation from the Military Academy, while Bell and Wood merely held permanent captains' commissions, Wood's being with the Medical Department and Bell's in the cavalry. These appointments sent the message that McKinley was prepared to award meritorious service. Bell made the most spectacular leap, jumping over 981 senior officers.

Waiting in the wings as governor of New York and Vice President, Roosevelt exerted little influence in this break with seniority. Among the four promotions, he played a significant part in only one. He was Wood's special advocate for a general's slot, presenting the matter personally to Root and McKinley. His counsel kept Wood's name before the administration, but overall his efforts played a small role in the promotion. Wood's ability spoke for itself in his administration of Santiago de Cuba and through his own talent for self-promotion. Moreover,
Roosevelt's relationship to McKinley and Root was not particularly close at the time, and he never took credit for securing Wood's selection—a rare occurrence for this normally boastful man.20

The promotions provoked considerable resentment among other officers. Understandably, they disliked the fact that less "seasoned" men had skipped so quickly to the top while they had waited years for advancement. The promotions of Grant and Bell aroused less antagonism because they were graduates of West Point, and Bell was a respected student of military affairs.21 Officers, however, denounced Funston's elevation. Because Funston could point to no regular service, his promotion appeared to be due solely to the capture of Aguinaldo, which helped to break the back of Filipino resistance and save McKinley from a tight political spot. Wood's promotion over 530 other officers smelled of favoritism. Reportedly, fellow officers felt that his military experience was too limited to justify the appointment. In their minds, he remained Doctor Wood who owed his rank to two very important patients, William and Ida McKinley. If that were not sufficient influence, then Wood possessed other contacts in lofty places. Besides Roosevelt, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge was a devoted sponsor, Secretary of War Root regarded him highly, and his wife's guardian had been Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field.22
The McKinley administration made a strong case against such criticism. Wood, for example, was more than just a political darling. He exhibited the diplomatic and administrative talents required for the Army’s new colonial responsibilities, a fact that Army critics ignored. The administration also justified the promotions as part of Army tradition. Secretary Root informed Senator Joseph R. Hawley, the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee and a veteran of the Civil War, that the Army had always taken meritorious wartime service into account. The Army was not wedded to strict seniority in such cases and had customarily chosen peacetime leaders from among the best officers in war. Lastly, Root tied the elevation of younger men to his program of Army reform, for which considerable support existed given the problems in the recent conflict with Spain. He would not only improve the promotion system but also establish a war college, a general staff, and regular rotations between staff and line duties.22

**Roosevelt takes Command**

An assassin ended McKinley’s chances for any more appointments, but his successor eagerly took up the work. Roosevelt was determined to build on McKinley’s precedent by pushing legislation to reform promotions in both the Army and Navy and, in the meantime, by installing younger officers in positions of authority. The new President would
also demand certain levels of physical fitness from officers and wanted to sever the link between political influence and promotions. He worked vigorously to gain these objectives.

Roosevelt asked Congress year after year to overhaul promotions policy. Every annual message from 1901 to 1908 requested that Capitol Hill abandon seniority promotions because, "Our men come too old, and stay for too short a time, in the high-command positions." Roosevelt wanted promotions to be based on a merit system of selection. A selection system would elevate able men and would retire officers who had reached a certain age without advancing in rank. Individuals would tend to rise to their level of competence, and ideally the most capable would advance to the highest commands. Merit promotions also promised to move men forward at a younger age because officers could spend limited time in each grade before being forced to retire. The President realized that "good men of mediocre capacity" would object to selection but urged Congress to act for the general welfare and not in the interest of a few individuals.

Congress would not budge. Patriotic appeals aside, few political reasons existed for Capitol Hill to abolish seniority promotions. Ties to military officers remained strong, especially with officers posted in the Army and Navy staff bureaus in Washington. A system of mutual rewards had developed between staff officers and Capitol Hill. The
staff officers looked to Congressmen and Senators, particularly members of the Military and Naval Affairs Committees, to protect their respective bureaus. In return, congressional sponsors received bureau approval of appropriations for often extraneous military projects and facilities in home districts. Merit promotions threatened to break this relationship and conceivably precipitate a general movement to make military administration more efficient and less politically rewarding. Congressional ties to Civil War veterans presented an equally difficult obstacle. Many members were themselves veterans and thus were unsympathetic with reforms that would involve the wholesale retirement of contemporaries who still wore the uniform. Even if a Senator or Representative had not served, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) and other associations were politically potent watchdogs of veterans' interests.

Resistance was also strong because members of Congress recognized that they could be exchanging one system of preferment for another. Nothing guaranteed that internal military politics would not prejudice the selection process and that the officers most astute at currying favor would be advanced, even if they were not the best military leaders. Despite its flaws, the seniority system worked against partiality while the proposed new system seemed to offer much potential for abuse. Congress might reap fewer
benefits, as officers pandered to the men in charge of promotions and to officials in the executive branch. The administration had promised that the process would be free of politics, but the promotions of Wood and Funston suggested otherwise.

Reforms intended to promote military efficiency also set off ideological alarm bells on Capitol Hill. Some members viewed the emphasis on military efficiency as dangerous to American democracy and warned about the peril of "Prussianization." They were not worried about coups and juntas but about an undue elevation of military values in American society. Such values were antithetical to democratic life and could lead to more centralized control and to a military voice in the governance of the nation. Anti-expansionists particularly feared this development, having argued that colonialism would lead the United States to "ape" European monarchies, where military institutions tended to play a greater role in the state.

Roosevelt's Generals

Given congressional reluctance to approve sweeping reforms, Roosevelt wielded his authority as commander in chief to invigorate Army officership. Although contrary to his wishes, he could not reward officers below the rank of colonel with anything less than a brigadier generalship because the law mandated seniority promotions for the lower
grades. He therefore nominated a number of junior officers, even in the face of strong congressional opposition. Roosevelt wanted to impress the principle of merit promotion on the Army with the nominations, but he did not proceed in a systematic manner. He nominated men at his personal discretion, and thus favoritism crept into the promotions. Roosevelt tended to sponsor officers with whom he was acquainted, and he was also partial toward cavalry officers, who were from his former branch of the service. Personal familiarity was important to the President because efficiency reports and reputation were the only other gauges of merit; a well-developed system of peer review was not in place. An individual who had acquired a reputation for performance on the battlefield at one rank may not have possessed the qualities required to succeed at a much higher rank. Roosevelt wanted to be certain that the men he nominated would prove worthy and not become embarrassments.

His promotions extended the precedents set by McKinley. As president, in fact, Roosevelt often picked up McKinley’s work and expanded upon it. In this case, he followed McKinley in nominating younger men and accepted the political necessity of rewarding some senior colonels. Roosevelt’s choices, however, lacked the same credentials for command. McKinley’s appointments had all been generals in the volunteers, and thus they had held high command even
if their permanent rank remained lower. Roosevelt sometimes selected officers who had not been generals in the volunteers and thus faced a much harder task in gaining Senate acceptance.\(^{30}\)

After just two months in office, the President made his first dramatic promotion. He wanted Captain William Crozier to replace the retiring Adelbert Buffington as Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance. The captain was forty-seven years old in November 1901 and had distinguished himself as a designer of heavy artillery, as a coastal defense expert, as a delegate to the Hague Conference of 1899, and as a field officer in the Philippines and China. He was also the officer who had asked Roosevelt in 1899 to lobby for a merit system. Crozier embodied the innovative, intelligent, and younger type of officers that Roosevelt wanted at the head of the Army. His nomination brought an outcry against raising a captain to brigadier general, and the Senate Military Affairs Committee delayed action for three months. Critics also questioned the nominee's health, which offset arguments about the benefits to be derived from Crozier's relative youth. Committee approval came after the three-month delay, and the Senate then gave the President his new brigadier general. Crozier would serve ably as Chief of the Ordnance Bureau until 1918.\(^{31}\)

Two more such extraordinary promotions occurred in 1902. In July, Tasker Bliss and William Harding Carter
accepted commissions as brigadier generals. Neither man was more than fifty years old and both held commissions in the staff departments rather than the Army line, meaning that they had benefited from more rapid promotion in the past. Bliss had directed the Cuban customs service under Leonard Wood and helped to put the new nation on a sound financial basis. His promotion rewarded that accomplishment because he had neither fought on the frontier nor in more recent campaigns. As Collector of Customs, he was a brigadier general in the volunteers with a permanent rank of major in the Commissary Department. Bliss’s promotion jumped him over the heads of 271 seniors, but his advancement aroused less hostility than Crozier’s and certainly less than Wood’s and Funston’s. Unlike Crozier he held a high post, albeit in the volunteers, and unlike Wood and Funston he was a Military Academy graduate. Moreover, he possessed a reputation for his intellect, and Senators realized that his knowledge of Cuba’s economic affairs would be crucial for shaping relations with that republic. Carter’s promotion also raised few eyebrows. He had recently received a colonel’s commission as an Assistant Adjutant General and therefore by-passed only eighty-nine others. Carter was a protégé of Adjutant General Henry Corbin, a respected figure, and he had impressed Secretary Root with his ideas for Army reform. He went on to become one of the architects of the Army General Staff. 32
The Roosevelt administration smoothed the way for the promotions of Bliss and Carter by demonstrating concern for seniority. Five of seven senior colonels obtained a star along with Carter and Bliss. The administration also offered promotion to Civil War veterans if they would retire upon receiving it. Such a measure defused a politically volatile issue by honoring hoary veterans while at the same time removing them from active service. It also created vacancies, which allowed younger officers to advance more quickly. Roosevelt desired legislation to formalize this policy but commenced it on his own authority. Of twenty-five such retirements in 1902, twelve were senior colonels. Roosevelt acted with the blessing of the Senate, which encouraged expansion of the program.\textsuperscript{33

Despite the administration's efforts to soften the blow, the rapid rise of certain officers still provoked hostility. Passed-over men remained resentful, and General Miles claimed that the President and Secretary Root were trying to make the Army into a personal organization. Miles was a product of the Civil War and the frontier Army and disliked the administration's reforms. He especially opposed a general staff, which could threaten or eliminate the post of Commanding General, and looked for ways to attack Roosevelt and Root. He was influential on Capitol Hill, and the administration offered the Civil War retirements in part to offset Miles's hostility. Its
efforts proved to be inadequate, and animosity boiled over during the promotion of Leonard Wood to major general.\textsuperscript{24}

Roosevelt decided to promote Wood in the summer of 1903. The promotion did not represent a big leap because Wood was moving up in his turn this time.\textsuperscript{25} He had performed well as military governor of Cuba and in 1903 became both commander of the Department of Mindanao and governor of the rebellious Moro Province in the Philippines. A major general's stars would place him only six numbers from the rank of lieutenant general, the Army's highest grade, and make him an obvious candidate for Chief of Staff. Despite Wood's ability in colonial affairs, his promotion touched off an explosion as critics seized the opportunity to attack the President's promotion practices and to assail the obviously ambitious Wood.\textsuperscript{26}

Senator Henry Teller, Democrat of Colorado, and Senator Marcus Hanna, an Ohio Republican, were among the strongest critics. They joined in an effort to block the promotion and thereby embarrass the President. Neither man admitted these motives, but Teller's frequent allusions to executive partiality in Wood's nomination and Hanna's status as Roosevelt's apparent rival for the 1904 Republican presidential nomination suggested as much. Both played a leading role in hearings by the Senate Military Affairs Committee that lasted from November 19 to December 15, 1903, and were virtually unprecedented, for the Senate had
contested only one other nomination in the previous thirty years.  

The assault on Wood was fierce. Teller accepted Wood’s promotion to brigadier general as recognition of his civil services in Cuba but felt that further advance was unwarranted. He warned that the promotion set a dangerous precedent because it put a man without formal military education and little field experience into the highest echelons of command. If applied in general, the practice would damage Army morale and could bring wartime disaster. Officers would lose spirit as they watched men by-pass them for no better reason than political "pull." In Wood’s case, promotion had come "by the partiality of the Executive...and not from merit." General James H. Wilson, a highly respected veteran of the Civil War and Spanish-American War, picked up Senator Teller’s refrain in his testimony and raised doubts about Wood’s military performance on the San Juan Heights as an acting brigade commander. Wilson pointed to the lack of precedent for appointing medical officers as general officers of the line and repeated objections to promotions based more on political influence than on military experience in the field. Hanna’s line of attack focused on Wood’s actions as military governor. In particular, Hanna wanted Wood condemned for unlawful interference in the conviction of Estes G. Rathbone for fraud. A friend and constituent of the Senator, Rathbone
had run the Post Office Department in Cuba until Wood had
him arrested and imprisoned for embezzlement. The committee
heard Rathbone's testimony but eventually vindicated Wood.40

Another criticism of Wood's governorship was also hard
to refute. When governor of Santiago, Wood had worked to
undermine the military governor of the island, Major General
John R. Brooke, although Brooke's tepid approach to internal
reform was the fundamental cause of his undoing. The
committee heard charges that Wood was involved in the
writing of a North American Review article from February
1900 that indicted Brooke's administration and praised
Wood's work. Wood denied the allegation, but General Brooke
and the author, James Runcie, offered powerful testimony
against him. However, Ray Stannard Baker, editor of the
North American Review, and other witnesses supported Wood's
version and effectively parried this thrust.41

Roosevelt's merit promotions were one of the causes of
opposition. Many Army officers and members of Congress
regarded these promotions as an injustice that denied
general's stars to men who had endured the trials of war,
frontier life, and the professional doldrums of the post-
Civil War Army. And as Senator Teller suggested, they
worried that such promotions, if continued, would undermine
morale. The current seniority system guaranteed reward,
while a merit system would introduce an element of
uncertainty to military careers as well as threaten
congressional prerogatives. Some officers doubtlessly welcomed the consideration of qualifications other than seniority, but they questioned Roosevelt's motives in elevating his friend Wood, whose promotion violated their sense of professionalism. Their idea of merit involved formal military schooling, years of practical application in the field, successive passage through the ranks, and political neutrality. Wood's promotion demonstrated the potential for abuse if merit promotions were open to outside influence and not regulated from within by military professionals. Roosevelt therefore confronted two levels of opposition within the Army: officers who wanted to preserve seniority promotions, and officers who felt that Wood's promotion violated professionalist principles. In either case, the President could not count upon their support for Wood's second star.

Facing such hostility, Roosevelt left little to chance in marshaling support. The Senate would not vote until late 1903, but Roosevelt sensed trouble as early as May of that year. In July, he instructed Secretary of War Root to collect documents relevant to Wood's services in Cuba and his participation in the expedition against Geronimo in 1886, for which Wood later received the Medal of Honor. Roosevelt wanted to make his case as soon as the Senate met because he anticipated that "the fight will be on from the very beginning." He also plied Wood for information on
anything that could be damaging and instructed him to mobilize his political contacts in Washington. In particular, Roosevelt told Wood to write Senator Francis Cockrell of Missouri, a Democratic friend on the Military Affairs Committee, and suggested that Wood also seek the support of Senator Proctor of Vermont, the former Secretary of War and a Republican member of the committee.  

The President felt confident of Republican solidarity. Republicans held the majority in the Senate, and Roosevelt believed most would support the administration, with Hanna being the significant exception. But to help insure a favorable outcome, Root reportedly informed the Military Affairs Committee that a negative report on Wood would be interpreted as a break with the administration. Roosevelt wrote Wood, "I think most of the Republicans will not want to split off with the President who seems likely to be the candidate for President next year." He knew Republican Senators would not want to weaken their best hope to keep the White House in 1904.

Roosevelt realized, however, that the perception of presidential favoritism would not sit well and repeatedly denied that he was acting out of personal partiality for Wood. He stressed that Wood's turn had come for promotion and that the general had proven his ability, both military and civil, in the war with Spain and during the occupation of Cuba. He rejected rumors of his intention, if elected to
another term, to make Wood the lieutenant general. Such a move would substantiate charges that Roosevelt was making the Army a personal organization, and several Senators based their objections on the rumor. Roosevelt assured them that he had no such plans about the lieutenant general's slot. To soothe anxieties further, he promised that seniority would count in selections to that post, unless a good reason appeared to the contrary. This promise carried little value in the end, for pending legislation soon abolished the lieutenant generalcy. Still, Roosevelt's word helped satisfy the Senate's desire to reward long service.⁴⁸

Well aware of the correlation between popular opinion and congressional votes, Roosevelt closely monitored press and public attitudes on the promotion. He rated the Sun and the Evening Post as particularly virulent among the New York newspapers, with the Sun sensing an opportunity to attack the White House while the Post disliked Wood. Roosevelt also attributed the hostility of Harper's Weekly to distaste for the general. In addition, the G.A.R. disapproved the promotion, but Roosevelt dismissed its criticism as aimed more at him than at Wood. That inveterate foe of the administration's military reform program, General Miles, had whipped up the trouble with the G.A.R.⁴⁹

Roosevelt knew that these attacks could not go unanswered if he wanted to secure the promotion and, more importantly, to insure the continuation of his promotion
policy. He encouraged Wood's supporters to speak out and personally rebutted criticisms that appeared in the press and the Senate hearings. For example, he sent an elaborate seven-page defense of Wood and the administration's promotions policy to Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the Evening Post. Later Roosevelt claimed that only lobbying by himself and Root had brought the New York Tribune, the Philadelphia Press, the Outlook, and the Review of Reviews over to the administration's side.

Roosevelt's efforts belied his denial of a personal stake in the promotion. In support of his claims, he did require Senate confirmation to avoid embarrassment to the administration and to validate his promotion policy, especially after the Wood case had become a major controversy. And during the promotion fight, Roosevelt had declared that he would work as hard for General Bell, if need be, when Bell was up for major general's stars. More than four years later he still insisted that nothing but merit had moved him to act on Wood's behalf. However, the President expended so much energy on Wood's promotion that doubts remained whether he would have worked so hard for anyone but a close friend. He kept an intimate correspondence with Wood on the progress of the confirmation fight and even provided a personal deposition on Wood's military performance in 1898 in response to General Wilson's criticisms. In the end, then, personal sentiment affected
Roosevelt's behavior. He would have doubtlessly fought hard if critics had subjected a different nominee to such harsh attacks, if only to prevent an affront to his administration. Yet he went to special lengths for Wood, even if he would not admit that fact.

Whatever Roosevelt's motivations, his attentiveness paid off. Secretary Root closed the Senate investigation with convincing arguments, and then the Senate Military Affairs Committee voted eight to three to endorse the promotion on January 4, 1904. The entire Senate acted on March 18 and confirmed Wood by a margin of twenty-nine votes. According to Senator Russell Alger of Michigan, Roosevelt was "very, very happy" with the result. Wood remained at his post in the Philippines and went on to command the Philippine Division in 1906. He then became Chief of Staff in 1910 despite smoldering resentment against him.

The Wood controversy sobered the administration. Even as opposition built against Wood, Roosevelt had considered making another unusual elevation during the summer of 1903. He wanted to reward Captain John J. Pershing for a successful pacification campaign on the Philippine island of Mindanao. Pershing had attacked strongholds of the rebellious Moros that spring but had won their allegiance to the United States without a blood bath. His accomplishment later brought him mention in the President's annual message.
Secretary Root, however, thought the time was not ripe for jumping a captain to general. The prospect of Wood's advancement was already causing a brawl, and the administration had expended a good deal of political capital on the recently passed General Staff Act. Root argued that Colonel Thomas H. Barry would be a better choice. At forty-seven, Barry was an Assistant Adjutant General and had graduated the Military Academy nine years before Pershing. Furthermore, he had amassed a good military and administrative record, and his file contained endorsements from general officers while Pershing's contained none. The administration would have a stronger case for the promotion of Barry, who would pass only thirty-six other officers, and it could reward Pershing in 1904 when four vacancies would occur. Root's arguments swayed the President, who had planned to promote Barry soon in any event. The Secretary's advice proved sound because the nomination passed the Senate with ease and thereby kept alive the administration's promotion policy.

Having advanced Barry, Roosevelt advised the new general of his expectations. The President reminded him of the responsibility that came with promotion over senior officers and expressed faith that Barry possessed the qualities of a successful general. "From my association with you I believe you have the energy, the intelligence, the courage, and the power of immediate decision in any
crisis, no less than the willingness to take responsibility, which are vital to welldoing. Interestingly, Roosevelt failed to mention Barry's service record as a part of his qualifications and went on only to note that the general would need more active field service. His decision for Barry evidently hinged on his perception of the man's character.

Although dissuaded from promoting Pershing for the time being, the President pushed his promotion program ahead. Roosevelt was determined to force a lasting break with seniority promotions, even in the face of mounting congressional opposition. At the height of the Wood debate, he nominated Captain Albert L. Mills for brigadier general. Like Barry, Mills had a solid record that made a strong case for his promotion. A cavalry officer, he had served on the frontier and then saw service in Cuba, where he suffered severe wounds and won the Medal of Honor. Mills impressed Roosevelt in the fighting at San Juan, so much that the future president had recommended him for promotion in December 1900. After the war, Mills became Superintendent of the Military Academy and assumed the rank of temporary colonel. Unlike Barry's promotion, Mills's did not sail through Congress. By then the hearings on Wood had hardened attitudes to the point that the Senate Military Affairs Committee decided that the time had come to restrain the White House.
The committee seemed prepared to vote against Mills’s confirmation in March 1904. The Army and Navy Journal reported that the Senators were ready to set a precedent against the promotion of any more junior officers to field ranks. Committee members had decided that these promotions were too harmful to Army morale and that they must make a stand on Mills. They appointed a delegation to request that the President withdraw the nomination or that he retire Mills immediately after promotion. Roosevelt refused both requests but offered the Senators a pledge in return. After Mills’s promotion, he reportedly promised, the administration had no intention of elevating lower ranking officers to generalships. Roosevelt’s exact words were not recorded, but presumably he implied that there were no immediate plans for such promotions. His pledge had the intended effect and assured the majority of the committee, which then endorsed the nomination.

However, Senator Nathan B. Scott, Republican of West Virginia, was not satisfied. A committee member, he had been absent during the committee’s deliberations but returned in time to block the vote in the Senate until the Fifty-eighth Congress adjourned. Roosevelt gave Mills a recess appointment in the interim, which lasted until December 1904 when the Senate granted approval.

The trouble over Mills convinced Roosevelt that he could pursue no more merit promotions for a time. He knew
that he had at last tested the limits of congressional
tolerance and that seniority must receive more
consideration. He did not intend to abandon merit
promotions permanently, but he needed to acknowledge
political realities for the time being. His next brigadier
general would be a colonel or an officer whose seniority
approximated a colonel's. He was not happy about this
retreat and grumbled to Wood "that the public naturally
cannot know who the best officer is, and all the mutton
heads in the army...naturally object to anything resembling
promotion by merit." Roosevelt believed that the
controversy over Wood's confirmation had precipitated the
backlash. The feeling against Wood was much stronger than
ever anticipated, and the confirmation fight "left a very
bitter feeling in the Senate, for which Mills paid the
penalty." If Mills's nomination had come before Wood's,
Roosevelt felt no such trouble would have occurred.

Although stymied on promotions, the administration made
progress on retirements. At the same time that Mills's
confirmation stalled, Congress sanctioned Roosevelt's
practice of retiring Civil War veterans. An amendment to
the Army Appropriations Act of 1904 permitted the President
to promote Civil War veterans one rank upon mandatory
retirement at age sixty-four, upon voluntary retirement at
age sixty-two, or upon voluntary retirement after forty
years of service. The measure also applied to officers
already retired and to former volunteer generals of the Civil War or the Spanish-American War. Overage officers left in droves as a result, with 134 retiring from the active list by 1906. The law affected 115 active and retired colonels and thus lessened pressure to reward long-serving men with general's stars. Overall, the mass retirements helped diminish the tension between the White House and the Senate because officers could expect a reward upon leaving active service.

Roosevelt waited two years before he risked another confrontation. Congress still refused to budge on promotion reform despite the administration's continued appeals. The War Department even agreed to an initiative to limit general officer appointments to colonels if field grade promotions were subject to competitive examinations and physical fitness standards and if Congress allowed one-time promotions for meritorious service. Nothing came of the proposal. With no sign of congressional action and with previous controversy fading, Roosevelt decided that he must resume leavening the upper-most ranks with younger officers. He decided to push forward a man whom he had eyed for some time: Captain John J. Pershing.

For Roosevelt, Pershing represented much more than a vigorous officer who had made a reputation in the Philippines. Perhaps more than the other officers who had been jumped, Pershing embodied the qualities that Roosevelt
wanted to instill in American officership. He was intelligent, energetic, a proven field officer, and relatively young—forty-six years old in 1906. But because he was a captain and had never held a temporary rank above major, promotion to brigadier general seemed destined to reignite controversy. If promoted, he would bypass 862 others.

Roosevelt certainly knew that the promotion would invite trouble, but he may have welcomed it. If he could not obtain reform through direct bargaining with Congress, he would dramatize the problems with Army officership and the current promotion system. Controversy would bring public scrutiny and perhaps build pressure for change. Thus Roosevelt presented Pershing’s leap to brigadier general as the only way to reward distinguished service within the current promotion system. He would have preferred to award a colonelcy, but the seniority rule prevented recognition below the rank of brigadier general.

Controversy surrounded the promotion not only because Pershing jumped hundreds of his peers but because the promotion also seemed to many to be a case of blatant favoritism. In January 1905, the captain married Frances Warren, the daughter of the new head of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, Francis E. Warren of Wyoming. Roosevelt attended the wedding along with most of official Washington, but he claimed years later that he had forgotten Pershing’s
tie to Warren by the time of the promotion. Roosevelt defended the advance on grounds of merit, and no evidence has emerged to suggest a political arrangement between the White House and Warren. Roosevelt was well aware of Pershing's exploits in the Philippines and had already considered promoting him in 1903. Although Root had advised against the promotion, the President had still accorded Pershing the high honor of mention in his annual message.

Nonetheless Roosevelt was guilty of some favoritism. Since their first acquaintance in 1898, Pershing and he had renewed their relationship many times. The captain had also seen action at San Juan Heights and had distinguished himself for coolness under fire. After Pershing's work in the Philippines, Roosevelt summoned him to the White House as an aide and then, of course, attended his wedding. Their meetings did not always occur by chance because Pershing's friends, especially Avery Andrews, continued to thrust his name forward, sometimes after prompting from Pershing himself. These contacts helped Pershing's prospects because Roosevelt took personal measure of him and carried away the impression that he possessed the qualities of a general. Roosevelt required personal assurance if he were to make such a dramatic promotion and risk his own reputation on Pershing.

Reaction to the promotion was mixed. Within the Army, protests arose against the unfairness of the promotion and
the President’s interference in Army affairs. One officer complained that Roosevelt lifted Pershing for no good reason and that such promotions were arbitrary and discouraging. Another informed Pershing that "the principle is bad...d--n bad," but he did not fault Pershing for accepting the promotion when offered. However, many officers, particularly junior ones, welcomed the promotion and hoped it signaled a decisive break with seniority. Captain W.C. Rivers congratulated Pershing, saying that the Army needed generals who could "hustle" to make the rest of the service "hustle" as well. Another, Captain M.C. Butler, wrote that he would be "glad when our Army is rid of some of the old fossils..." as he was "tired of serving under men who have grown so old in the service that they are nothing short of 'block heads'...." Outside the Army, concerns about seniority and favoritism flared, but an allegation of scandal excited more people than the extraordinary leap in rank. Supposedly Pershing had lived with a Filipino woman while in the Philippines and fathered two children by her. The charge caused trouble but was never proved, and Pershing’s father-in-law was able to shepherd the nomination successfully through the Senate. Whether Roosevelt cared to admit it or not, Pershing’s relationship to Senator Warren played an important role in the favorable vote.

Roosevelt gained Pershing’s advance but did not move Congress to revise the system of promotions. If Roosevelt
felt that Pershing's nomination might create just enough controversy to commence movement on reform, then he miscalculated. The appearance of favoritism dampened any support raised on behalf of reform. And the promotion triggered so much backlash that the President put forward only two more merit promotions before departing office. In 1907, he proposed Major James B. Aleshire as Quartermaster General and Lieutenant Colonel W.W. Wotherspoon as a brigadier general of the line. Wotherspoon was acting president of the Army War College at the time and later served on the General Staff. Without a family connection to consider, the Senate registered its disapproval and slowed confirmation of the promotions. Increasingly at loggerheads with Congress on all fronts, Roosevelt nominated only colonels for promotion in 1908. Thus the promotions of Aleshire and Wotherspoon closed this chapter of his involvement with the Army.

Roosevelt achieved limited success with his Army promotions. He leavened the upper ranks with younger officers who could serve years instead of months in command. These promotions provided leaders to the eve of World War I, with Bliss and Pershing going on to earn four and five stars respectively during that conflict. In addition to the eight promotions described in detail above, Roosevelt pushed the elevation of thirty-one other officers who would serve at least a few years as general, if not more in some cases,
before retirement. Congressional acceptance of the President's retirement policy also marked an advance because that policy helped to reduce the number of "honorary" generals and soothed sensitive egos at the same time. Finally, Roosevelt managed to suggest a standard for promotion based on fitness for command, a criterion that stood in distinct contrast to seniority as the sole basis of advancement."

Roosevelt, however, never obtained his primary goal: promotion by selection for all ranks on the basis of merit. Congress grudgingly accepted his nominees for general but refused to break with the seniority system of promotions. Ties were too strong to Army officers who had an understandable interest in protecting the old system, which provided security and increased their chances for promotion, even if it came slowly. Moreover, a merit scheme did not guarantee any improvement and could, in fact, damage the Army. The President's promotions suggested to many that a new system would increase outside political interference in the Army and could cause division, rancor, and diminished morale within the officer corps. This fear was not completely unwarranted for personalism crept into Roosevelt's promotions. In the end, therefore, the President's efforts to make some small improvement in the Army officer corps undercut the larger objective of revamping the entire system of promotions.
Promotions and the Navy

The attention devoted to Army promotions reflected Roosevelt's deep concern about the quality of leadership in that service, but the President did not ignore the problem of overage and unfit naval officers. He did perceive, however, that the shortcomings of the naval officer corps were fewer than the Army's and consequently expended less energy on uplifting naval officership. It was one of the few times that Roosevelt gave more attention to the Army than to the Navy. Naval officers had performed well in comparison to their Army colleagues in Cuba; the Personnel Act of 1899 had already provided for a limited system of selection; and naval expansion had helped speed advancement in the lower grades. Given such evidence, the improvement of naval officership seemed less imperative.

Yet Roosevelt aimed at further reform because all was not well in the naval officer corps. Officers still reached the top grades too late in their careers. The Navy's mandatory retirement age was sixty-two, and in 1906 rear admirals averaged almost sixty-two years of age, captains fifty-eight years, and commanders about fifty-one years. And improvement was not expected any time soon. The likelihood of another officer "hump" provided even more incentive for change. Naval building programs demanded the influx of many junior officers, without a corresponding
increase in the Navy's upper grades. Promotion stagnation threatened on the magnitude of the post-Civil War congestion after the current expansion ended. The Navy required additional reform to prevent the reversal of recent gains in the rate of promotions.

The world cruise of the Great White Fleet in 1907-09 pointedly demonstrated the problem of overage officers and, therefore, Roosevelt's inability to change the rate of naval promotions. The fleet's first two commanders were unable to complete the cruise owing to health problems and retirement restrictions. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, a Civil War veteran, commanded upon departure but was too ill to function effectively. He requested relief before the fleet arrived in San Francisco and relinquished command there. The next senior officer held nominal command for only a week because he could not complete the voyage before retirement. In addition, he suffered from a weak heart, which failed him a few days before the fleet left San Francisco. The third most senior officer, Rear Admiral Charles Sperry, finally assumed command and led the fleet during the remainder of its journey.

Roosevelt had addressed such problems in 1906 when he formed a new Personnel Board and charged it with building upon the Act of 1899. He supported the board's work by denouncing the current system for sacrificing "the good of the service to the interest of individual mediocrity," and
he endorsed reforms that would put men in the upper ranks earlier in their careers. Roosevelt proclaimed, "History, modern and ancient, has invariably shown that an efficient personnel is the greatest factor toward an effective navy. No matter how well equipped in other respects a navy may be...it is grievously handicapped if directed by admirals and captains who lack experience in their duties...." Assistant Secretary Truman Newberry directed the board, and in November 1906 it called for a selection-out system, which would retire officers who failed to make promotion after a certain number of years in grade. The Newberry Board's exertions came to nothing because Capitol Hill opposed such a scheme just as much as it resisted it for the Army. Blocked again by congressional inaction, Roosevelt used his own power to inject vitality into the naval officer corps.

Not surprisingly, the President aimed to push younger men to the fore. He believed not only that younger officers were more physically fit but also that older officers were naturally conservative and less receptive to innovation. The problem seemed especially acute in the Navy Department's staff bureaus, where long-serving bureau chiefs resisted innovations in ship design, administrative practices, and other work. Roosevelt complained that "the unfortunate habit of promotion only by seniority and that at a late age results in making our naval officers of and above the grade of captain usually inferior relatively to those of junior
rank, and I regard it as a mistake not to consult at length the best of the younger officers."

The President's regard for younger men benefited William S. Sims above all others in the Navy. Sims's case provides the most prominent example of Roosevelt's efforts to push forward younger, more dynamic officers. The two men became acquainted when Roosevelt was assistant secretary and Sims was a lieutenant. Sims informed Roosevelt of the Navy's inaccurate gun aiming and flaws in battleship design, but the war with Spain intervened and diverted the Assistant Secretary's energies. Soon after Roosevelt assumed the presidency, Sims took a bold step to force action on his complaints. He ignored formal channels and wrote the President directly about the problems with American gunnery. His arguments impressed Roosevelt, who was concerned about the low percentage of American hits against the Spanish. He also saw in Sims a mirror image of himself, a younger man who was full of energy, ideas, and dedication to duty. The President made Sims Inspector of Target Practice, putting him in charge of all naval gunnery. Sims's improvements impressed Roosevelt, who sought his views on other topics so much that he eventually made Sims a presidential naval aide. Sims moved from the rank of lieutenant to commander during Roosevelt's tenure and received command of the battleship Minnesota before gaining his captain's eagles, an unusual
honor. Once again, Roosevelt was not just rewarding merit but boosting the career of a favorite.

Naval officers reacted like their Army counterparts and split over the advance of junior officers. Some welcomed it as a sign of increased opportunity and the chance to have younger voices heard, but others worried about the long-range implications for the profession and for their careers. Rear Admiral Charles Thomas expressed the frustration and uncertainty of this latter group when he decried "Teddy's insane 'penchant' for pushing younger men to the front." To these officers, the President wanted to change the rules in the middle of their careers and seemingly for the worse with the promotion of favorites.

A Quest for Objective Standards

Roosevelt readily pushed his own men forward, but at the same time he wanted to sever traditional patronage links to promotions. He distinguished his elevation of certain men from the efforts of others to advance their favorites. In his mind, Roosevelt worked for the good of the services, while Senators, Congressman, and others acted out of political self-interest. Even if unable to sense his own partiality, Roosevelt correctly perceived that a new system of advancement would never gain acceptance if political influence continued to play a major role in promotions and assignments. Although seniority promotions had not
precluded officers from courting political aid and made for slow advances, they brought a fairness to the process that a merit system threatened to undermine. Seniority, after all, was a much more objective standard than merit, which might lead to wholesale abuse unless insulated from political pressures.

Roosevelt attacked the use of outside influence from the start of his presidency. He criticized the practice in his first annual message to Congress in December 1901, and then in January 1902 he forbade all officers and government employees from soliciting pay increases or any other benefit except through departmental heads. He made the prohibition specific to the military services in July 1905 when he ordered that officers were not to seek outside influence in requests for promotions or choice assignments. To give the order teeth, Roosevelt commanded that violators would be barred from the post in question and their behavior would be put on their record.

These measures promoted military professionalism and served executive interests at the same time. Although Roosevelt's "jumping" of junior men ran counter to professionalist goals, the curtailment of political influence would allow officers more control over their own ranks. Such self-supervision represented a principal objective of reformers, who deemed that military standards rather than political ones should determine the selection of
commanders, especially in wartime. Roosevelt had military
efficiency in mind when he issued the orders, but the
restrictions promised to benefit the executive branch as
well. If executed to the letter, the orders would wrest
considerable influence from Congress, and the executive
would assume greater control over personnel.
Representatives and Senators exercised a good share of their
influence over the military establishment through personnel
matters, and Roosevelt's orders, in effect, represented an
attempt to usurp that power.

Old habits died hard, however, and Roosevelt's orders
did not cut the tie between politics and promotions. In
fact, continued politicking after the order of January 1902
probably spurred Roosevelt to issue the more specific
command of July 1905; even then, the practice endured.
Officers became more circumspect in courting outside
support, but often an overt appeal was unnecessary as
friends dispatched aid upon hearing of the prospect for
promotion. For example, Avery Andrews, friend to both
Roosevelt and Pershing, lobbied for the latter in 1903 upon
learning of the President's wish to promote the captain. He
arranged for Pershing to meet other influential individuals
and indicated his support directly to the President.
Andrews confessed that others were working for the
promotion, but he denied the existence of a concerted
campaign.
Within the military, Roosevelt's orders did nothing to address the problems that resulted from intra-service politicking. Officers regularly cultivated relationships with superiors, especially with officers attached to staff bureaus in Washington. Often skilled political players, bureau officers could help careers through good assignments and endorsements for promotion. Or they could hurt a career just as easily. Personal politics remained so strong in the military that officers immediately sized up the influence of men whom Roosevelt promoted or with whom he was friends. Pershing, for example, asked Leonard Wood to write a recommendation for him. Wood was a natural choice because he was Pershing’s superior on Mindanao and because he had direct access to the President.

In his effort to break the link between politics and military careers, Roosevelt made it clear that the White House would no longer welcome any appeals on behalf of officers, even from close friends such as Senator Lodge. In 1905, the President reprimanded Senator Proctor for defending state interests in promotions. Roosevelt informed Proctor, "I do not want anything done in the Army or Navy on the ground of State interest, or upon outside recommendations at all.... From the standpoint of the interest of the Army you must want me...to pay no heed whatever to where the man was born or to who his backers are, but only to his past services and to the likelihood of
Roosevelt was determined to establish a standard of promotions based on merit and mentioned that fact repeatedly when denying preferment. These standards suffered, however, when the President's own promotions were at stake. The fight for Leonard Wood's promotion represented a particularly large breach. Roosevelt claimed rightly that Wood's turn for promotion had come, but when Wood came under fire Roosevelt showed no hesitation in telling his friend to rally support on Capitol Hill. Roosevelt approved such maneuvering when failure would embarrass the administration and when he had personal ties to the officer.

In contrast, the President compromised no standards on physical fitness. The physical dilapidation of officers had appalled him during the Spanish-American War, and he blamed many of the problems in Cuba on old and physically unfit senior officers. If General Shafter had been able to inspect the front, Roosevelt believed, his presence would have alleviated the confusion plaguing the expedition. As president, Roosevelt placed a premium on physical capability and held that physical hardiness, the ability to lead, and military effectiveness were closely related. Command was mostly a matter of example and vigorous field leadership to him, and he equated youth with physical vitality, hence his drive to elevate younger officers to the upper ranks. That
equation had angered General Miles, and before he retired in
1903 Miles undertook a ninety-mile ride in the hot July sun
of Oklahoma to prove that old did not equal decrepit. Roosevelt wanted all officers to be able to perform a
similar feat at age sixty-four or to leave the service, so
he instituted an annual physical fitness test for the Army
in December 1907 and established one for the Navy a year
later. Army officers were to travel thirty miles a day for
three successive days under conditions of a forced march,
which meant that they could ride some of the time but at
others they needed to lead their mounts at a run. Naval
officers faced a walk of fifty miles in three days.

The tests were unpopular in both services, although
naval officers felt particularly oppressed. William Sims
recorded that naval officers suffered blistered feet, lost
toenails, and succumbed to other afflictions during the
first tests. But physical discomfort was not the only
source of discontent: officers resented the arbitrary
nature of the standards. The tests made no allowances for
age, and officers in the tropics faced the same requirements
despite the oppressive climate. Moreover, the tests did not
bring a wave of retirements nor precipitate a new dedication
to physical fitness. Many officers viewed the requirement
merely as something to get by each year so that they did not
have to worry about it for another twelve months. The tests
did not inspire them to develop the regular regimen of
physical conditioning that Roosevelt had hoped for when issuing the orders. On retirements, the *Army and Navy Journal* reported in June 1909 that the physical test had not yet caused a single officer to retire from the Navy, and five years later the *Journal* estimated that the test eliminated only one to two officers each year. Preliminary medical examinations caught more, but such examinations could continue without the pretext of a physical test.

The tests remained unmodified longer in the Army than in the Navy. Beginning in 1911 the Navy test became less demanding but increased in frequency. Officers would walk twenty-five miles in two days every three months, with lighter standards at tropical stations. The following year, the naval test became a monthly walk of ten miles in one day because the Taft administration wanted to encourage year-round physical training. Later the test was abandoned altogether. The War Department studied the Navy’s example and considered less rigorous but more frequent testing. Roosevelt’s test ride remained untouched, however, until spring 1917 when the demands of wartime compelled the Army to drop it.

Roosevelt rejected complaints that the tests were too demanding and strove to insure their survival beyond his presidency. He approached the problem of physical fitness with unyielding righteousness: the tests were not an undue hardship, and officers who could not pass were of little
value to the nation. To dramatize the reasonableness of the requirement, Roosevelt decided to complete the Army test himself in one day. He aimed to attract popular attention, shame critics into silence, and thereby make the test harder to abandon. On January 13, 1909, a party of four departed the White House and completed a round-trip of 104 miles to Warrenton, Virginia, despite poor roads and blinding sleet. The ride was one of Roosevelt's final opportunities to make a statement about officership; fittingly it emphasized the strenuous life.

Conclusion

For Theodore Roosevelt, character was more vital to good officership than professional education and years of experience. Roosevelt acknowledged the importance of learning and training, and he elevated men who displayed a talent for administration as well as field command. But in making promotions, he looked first for the attributes of courage, diligence, honor, and intelligence. Roosevelt was not unwise in stressing such qualities. Officers still needed to inspire their troops and remain conspicuous in the field, although command, especially at the highest levels, was fast becoming a managerial task due to the increasing size and complexity of military institutions. Roosevelt's insistence on these qualities, however, went beyond a recognition of desirable leadership traits and embraced a
romanticized conception of officership. This notion evoked images of officers dashing to and fro in the thick of battle rather than military professionals who spent much of their time directing large staffs behind the fighting. Roosevelt’s own experience in battle reinforced this perception, which looked more to the past than to a future of organized mass warfare.

Roosevelt tended to believe that individuals were more important to sound leadership than institutions. He endorsed institutional changes in the military but did not attach the highest priority to such reforms. Roosevelt sought to overhaul the promotion systems of the Army and Navy but never made an all-out fight to win acceptance, certainly not to the degree that he fought for individual appointments. On the one hand, congressional opposition was so strong that single appointments were perhaps all that he could hope for, but on the other hand those individual promotions provoked such resistance as to preclude any chance for the wholesale reform of promotions. In any event, the President turned first to certain personalities in the belief that they would inspire others through vigorous leadership.

Above all, Roosevelt wanted men of relative youth in the upper ranks. He associated youth with vigorous leadership but also wanted younger men so that top commanders would have many years to exercise their craft.
Not all of the President's younger generals were prime physical specimens: Carter, Bliss, and Bell, for example, could not keep up on one of the President's famous hikes, and their fatigue was so evident that Roosevelt questioned their ability to perform in the field. Despite the failings of his own appointees, Roosevelt did establish the principle that officership demanded a certain level of physical fitness, a fact that the services had neglected in the past.

Roosevelt's efforts to improve officership did not match the aims of military reformers. His promotions violated the desire of military professionals to establish and maintain their own standards of entry and advancement, free of outside political considerations. Roosevelt chose men whom he felt assured would perform well, and thus he selected men with whom he was familiar. As a consequence, he left himself open to the charge of favoritism.

There was insight in Roosevelt's choices because he promoted officers who would distinguish themselves during World War I. Most notably, John J. Pershing commanded the American Expeditionary Forces and was appointed General of the Armies after the war. Admiral William Sims directed American naval forces in European waters, while Tasker Bliss became Army Chief of Staff and then represented the United States on the Supreme War Council and at the Paris Peace Conference.
Although these men reached the pinnacle of their careers in World War I, the war eliminated the "jumping" type of promotions that originally thrust them into prominent positions. Before the war, officials of the Taft and Wilson administrations tried to institute ad hoc systems of merit advancement. In July 1912, Secretary of War Henry Stimson proposed a board of general officers to consider candidates for brigadier general with merit as the first criterion. The following year, Secretary Lindley Garrison wanted confidential opinions from general officers before making recommendations.\(^{105}\) The proximity of war in 1916 brought legislative change as the National Defense Act limited permanent brigadier general promotions in the combat arms to colonels. Wartime law then established merit as the principal gauge for promotion for all ranks.\(^{106}\)

Ironically the triumph of professionalism during World War I frustrated Roosevelt's own military ambitions. The former colonel hoped to ride once more, except on a much grander scale than he had in 1898. Friends in Congress authorized four volunteer divisions, with Roosevelt presumably in command of one or all. The ex-president did not recognize that a new age of warfare and officership had dawned, even though he had helped to foster its development. The Wilson administration chose to ignore the authorization and, understandably, was unwilling to award a prominent command to one of its most outspoken and politically potent
critics. It was also unwilling to reward Roosevelt’s friend, General Wood, who sat out the fighting stateside. More than just political considerations influenced the administration’s actions. Secretary of War Newton Baker sincerely attempted to enforce professional standards in officer appointments. In unprecedented numbers, the highest Army commands went to career officers, many of whom were West Point graduates. Entry into the officer corps had to come at the bottom where men with less than one year’s service became lieutenants and captains.107

Although the victory of professionalism brought personal disappointment, Roosevelt could draw comfort from the fact that he had helped to improve the caliber of American officership and at the same time promoted the powers of the presidency. His promotions represented one step in his efforts to reduce congressional influence and enhance the executive’s authority over the armed forces. He acted in the name of preparedness because he believed that the world position of the United States demanded a much more efficient and ready military. The central position of commander in chief would provide the leadership needed for the new century, which fit with Roosevelt’s general conception of a vigorous presidency. Congress bowed reluctantly to his wishes and often fought him to a standstill. Still, a trend emerged as Roosevelt repeatedly used overseas interests, the potential for great power war,
and the need for military preparedness as reasons to enlarge executive powers.
NOTES


2. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 15 November 1901, Box 162, Folder 5, Elihu Root Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


Pershing, Avery Andrews, noted that a captain and two lieutenants led his artillery battery in 1886. Both lieutenants had over twenty years of service at that rank. One was a Civil War veteran and the other had graduated from the Military Academy in 1866. Such records must have discouraged Andrews, who had just graduated. See Avery Delano Andrews, Pershing, 47-48.


10. John Pershing, Letters Received by the Appointment, Commission, and Personnel Branch, Adjutant General’s Office, 1871-1894, National Archives Microfiche Publication M-1395, File 3849 ACP 1886, Fiche 5, Record Group 94, Adjutant General’s Office, National Archives and Records Administration. Henceforth citations from these records will be cited by the microfilm publication number, the file number, the record group. The National Archives and Records Administration will henceforth be abbreviated NARA. The Adjutant General records of S.B.M. Young’s career also contain some good examples of political influence at work in the promotion process and the assignment of officers. For instance, the records relate the efforts made in 1897 to have Young remain at his post in Yellowstone Park. See, J.H. Meldrum to Senator F.E. Warren, 21 June 1897, File 1324 ACP 1881, Record Group 94, Series 25, Adjutant General’s Office, NARA; and C.B. Penrose to Boies Penrose, 22 June 1897, ibid.

11. John Lejeune to Augustine Lejeune, 27 April 1885, John Lejeune Papers, roll 1, microfilm edition, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Lejeune illustrates the drastic nature of the attempt to lower the size of the naval officer corps. In 1885 of sixty-six eligible midshipmen, only about seventeen percent of them would receive commissions. The rest would receive honorable discharges.

12. The Evening Post (New York), 5 July 1906, Luce Papers, box 17, roll 14; William Crozier to Theodore Roosevelt, October 1899, File 6251, Series 60, Record Group 107, Office of the Secretary of War, NARA. Henceforth this collection will be cited as RG 107, SecWar, NARA. In this correspondence, Crozier discusses the Navy’s recent personnel legislation and hopes to achieve something similar for the Army. Karsten, "Armed Progressives," 200-203; Paulin, Naval Administration, 461-64.

14. William Crozier to Theodore Roosevelt, October 1899, File 6251, RG 107, SecWar, NARA.

15. Elihu Root, "Report of the Secretary of War (1899)," in Annual Reports of the War Department, 48.

16. Allan R. Millett, "Theodore Roosevelt and His Generals," 4-5. A letter in the Leonard Wood papers in the Library of Congress lists the number of regular officers senior to them that MacArthur and Ludlow jumped. MacArthur passed ninety-three and Ludlow eighty-seven. No figures are available for Wheeler as he moved directly from the volunteers and not the Regular Army. He retired in September 1900 after receiving his commission in June 1900. See S.B.M. Young to R.A. Alger, 29 December 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4.

17. This act followed an expansion of the Army in 1899. After hostilities with Spain ceased, the Army returned to a peacetime basis, mustering out 34,834 regulars, 110,202 volunteers, and almost all 5,216 volunteer officers. The Philippine Insurrection spurred the growth of the Army again. On March 2, 1899, legislation authorized a Regular Army no larger than 65,000 enlisted and a volunteer force of no more than 35,000 troops. By the close of 1899, the Regular Army contained 61,999 enlisted and 2,248 officers with the volunteers at a strength of 33,050 enlisted and 1,524 officers. For this information, see, "Report of the Secretary of War (1899)," 3-4.


volunteers raised since 1898. See, Grenville Dodge to Leonard Wood, 9 November 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 3.


25. Ibid., 360.

26. Ibid., 476-77.

27. Army and Navy Journal, 7 May 1904, 941. This particular piece derides critics who pointed to rising military expenditures and found them to be militaristic.

28. Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation", 196-97; Roosevelt, State Papers, 142-43; Theodore Roosevelt to John J. Pershing, 12 December 1898, Box 177, Folder 13, John J. Pershing Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Colonel J. Kerr, General Staff Memorandum, 8 May 1906, Subject File "General officers," Box 15, Series 3, War Department General and Special Staff, Record Group 165, National Archives and Research Administration, Washington, D.C. This memorandum notes an imbalance in the appointment of general officers in relation to the branches of the service. Henceforth the War Department General Staff
will be abbreviated as WDGS; Office of the Chief of Staff, 1913, File 10196, Series 5, RG 165, WDGS, NARA. This document provides data on promotions to brigadier general, dating from April 22, 1906. Although it provides statistics for a time after Roosevelt made most of his appointments, it still indicates an ongoing trend in which the cavalry received more than its share of brigadier general promotions.

29. In February 1902, Roosevelt commended a number of lower ranking officers who had done well in Cuba to General Arthur MacArthur. Roosevelt used terms like "gallant" and "towers of strength" to describe these men suggesting that their battlefield performance was due solely to the strength of their character. See, Theodore Roosevelt to Major General Arthur MacArthur, 2 Feb. 1902, File 419413, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA.


31. Ibid., 297; William Crozier to Theodore Roosevelt, October 1899, File 6251, RG 107, SecWar, NARA; Army and Navy Journal, 29 November 1902, 296; Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 7.

32. Frederick Palmer, Bliss, Peacemaker: The Life and Letters of General Tasker Howard Bliss (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1934), 77-79; Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S. Army, 1789-1903 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903; reprinted 1965), 225, 228; S.B.M. Young to R.A. Alger, 29 December 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4; Leonard Wood to Theodore Roosevelt, 4 January 1902, Roosevelt Papers, series 1, roll 23; List of Ages, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 3; John J. Pershing to Burkett, 21 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Child, Register of Graduates, 296.

33. Leonard Wood to B.K. Roberts, 8 September 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4; Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 7; As part of his research on Roosevelt's generals, Allan R. Millett accumulated much of the raw data utilized in this paragraph and shared it with the author. The Army Register is published annually and provides data on promotions and retirements. Also the following provides a concise list of the promotions during Roosevelt's presidency. See, Lists of Promotion
of line and staff officers to general officers, 13 April 1909, File 10343, Series 5, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.

34. Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 7.


36. William H. Taft to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 March 1903, Roosevelt Papers, series 1, roll 33; News Clipping, Savannah Morning News, 16 November 1903, Wood Papers, Box 33, Folder 4; Richard Meixsel, "United States Army Policy in the Philippine Islands, 1902-1922," M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1988, p. 47; Lane, Armed Progressive, pp. 118-120; Millett, "Roosevelt and his Generals," 7; Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 8 June 1904, in Morison, Letters, 4: 827. In this letter, Roosevelt relates the surprisingly widespread nature of the opposition to Wood, who was already in the Philippines during the confirmation fight. Also, the record of the Senate hearings over the Wood's promotion contain several hundred pages of criticism. See the previously cited Nomination of Wood.

37. Nomination of Leonard Wood, 2. Neither Teller nor Hanna was a member of the committee but they were able to question witnesses at the hearings by the invitation of the committee.


39. Nomination of Leonard Wood, 523, 529, 530-32; News Clipping, Savannah Morning News, 16 November 1903, Wood Papers, Box 33, Folder 4; J.H. Dorst to S.B.M. Young, 26 December 1903, 27 December 1903, William Harding Carter Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. These two letters paint a less than complimentary performance by Wood when he did have a chance to command a brigade in 1898. In contrast, a Wood partisan in the army ranks, Robert Howze, felt that the General’s opponents in the Army were "a lot of soreheads" who resented his success; Robert Howze to Leonard Wood, Wood Papers, Box 34, Folder 3.

40. Estes G. Rathbone to Elihu Root, 19 March 1903, with enclosure, ibid., Box 32, Folder 5; Leonard Wood to J.O. Skinner, 7 January 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 1; Richard P. Hallowell to Leonard Wood, 13 November 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 2; G.H. Burton to Leonard Wood, 14 November 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 4; Leonard Wood to Elihu Root, 21 March 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 6;
T.S. Wylly to Leonard Wood, 2 December 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 4; Chauncy Baker to Leonard Wood, 16 September 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 3; F. Steinhart to Leonard Wood, 20 December 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 3; Letter to S.B.M. Young, 18 December 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 5; Tasker Bliss to Mrs. Leonard Wood, 19 March 1904, ibid., Box 34, Folder 1; Letter from Elihu Root, 23 March 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 6. Root's letter states that the War Department never intended to act on Rathbone's charges as the department had fully supported Wood's prosecution of the postal cases; Nomination of Leonard Wood, 3-4; Lane, Armed Progressive, 97-98, 125-26.

41. J.E. Runcie, "American Misgovernment of Cuba," North American Review, 170 (February 1900): 284-94; Nomination of Leonard Wood, 192; Chauncey Baker to Leonard Wood, 22 June 1903, Wood Papers, Box 33, Folder 5; R.A. Alger to Leonard Wood, 10 November 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 4; J.H. Weston to Leonard Wood, 17 November 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 2; Leonard Wood to Ray Stannard Baker, 29 July 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 5; S.L. Beckwith to Mrs. Leonard Wood, 14 November 1903, ibid., Box 33, Folder 5; Leonard Wood to James R. Garfield, 20 January 1904, ibid., Box 34, Folder 1; Leonard Wood to William C. Gorgas, 20 January 1904, ibid., Box 34, Folder 1; James R. Garfield to Leonard Wood, 7 December 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 2; Millett, Politics of Intervention, 29-36; Lane, Armed Progressive, 89-90. Wood was also attacked for his close association with E.G. Bellairs who was an Associated Press agent in Havana. Accusations were leveled that Bellairs had lived a rather sordid past, having served a prison sentence in Florida. Wood doubted the veracity of the allegations but felt that, if true, Bellairs had tried to live a lawful life in Cuba. See, Statement by Frank S. Cairns, as dictated by Henry Allen, 13 January 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 5; and Leonard Wood to Mr. Fletcher, 12 May 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 5.

42. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 December 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 2; Chauncey Baker to Leonard Wood, ibid., Box 34, Folder 1; Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, 17 July 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 14; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 12 December 1903, ibid., Box 162, Folder 19. About five years after the confirmation fight, Roosevelt's military aide, Archie Butt, reflected on army opinion about the promotion. Butt claimed that the army was universally opposed to the promotion at the time. See, Archie Butt to Clara Butt, 12 November 1908, The

43. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 13 May 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 7.

44. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 21 July 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 14. An account of Wood's experiences during the Geronimo expedition is contained in Chapter 1 of Lane, Armed Progressive.

45. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 August 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 7.

46. Manuscript, 1912 c.a., Carter Papers, Box 1, Folder 3. Written several years after the fact, Carter is the apparent writer and he tells that Root had told him of this pronouncement as late as December 1911. The following letter suggests that the administration may indeed have been thinking along such lines.


48. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 August 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 7; Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 23 September 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 7; Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 December 1903, ibid., Box 32, Folder 2; Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 4 January 1904, ibid., Box 33, Folder 1; Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, 17 July 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 14.


51. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 12 September 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 7; Archie Butt to Clara Archie Butt, Letters of Archie Butt, 177.

52. Elihu Root to Theodore Roosevelt, 12 December 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 19; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 12 December 1903 [two letters], ibid., Box
53. Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 8 June 1904, in Morison, Letters, 4: 827; R.A. Alger to Leonard Wood, 17 December 1903, Wood Papers, Box 33, Folder 4; According to Senator Alger, a number of Republicans were absent as they expected the vote to come on March 19 rather than March 18. R.A. Alger to Leonard Wood, 19 March 1904, Wood Papers, Box 34, Folder 3; The final tally on Wood’s confirmation was forty-five yeas and sixteen nays. Record of Senate Vote, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, in Frederick C. Ainsworth Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

54. Lane, Armed Progressive, 130-32, 154. Materials in the first four folders of the box of the Carter Papers provide an indication of Army feelings towards Wood in his later career.

55. An account of Pershing’s exploits around Lake Lanao is contained in, Donald Smythe, Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 94-110; Roosevelt, State Papers, 233; Newspaper Clipping, Chicago Tribune, 10 March 1903, in Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 2.

56. Memorandum from Henry C. Corbin, 8 July 1903, File 514783, Series 25, RG 94, AG’s Office, NARA. A handwritten note in the margin of this document relates the President’s plans for upcoming promotions; Elihu Root to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 July 1903, File 938273, Series 25, RG 94, AG’s Office, NARA; Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, 17 July 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 14; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 17 July 1903, in Morison, Letters, 3: 519; Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, 25 July 1903, in ibid., 3: 513. Generals’ endorsements would be forthcoming when Pershing’s turn came up. See, for example, George W. Davis to the Secretary of War, 10 March 1906, Microform No. M-1395, File 3849 ACP 1886, RG 94, NARA.

57. S.B.M. Young, 29 December 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4; Millett, "Roosevelt and his Generals," B.


60. Army and Navy Journal, 26 March 1904, 779; ibid., 16 April 1904, 867; ibid., 23 April 1904, 887; ibid., 7 May 1904, 951-52; ibid., 30 April 1904, 922.

61. A.L. Mills to Frederick Ainsworth, Military Secretary, 7 May 1904, File 526630, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; A.L. Mills to Frederick Ainsworth, Military Secretary, 29 December 1904, File 958332, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Army and Navy Journal, 17 December 1904, 403.


64. Ibid.


66. Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 8-9. Senator Joseph Hawley of Connecticut, the chair of the Senate Military Affairs Committee until 1905, was included in the law as a former volunteer general.

67. Ibid., 9.


70. Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 118; "Brigadier General Pershing," *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 September 1906, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 4; "The Pershing Incident," *Baltimore Evening Star*, 30 May 1912, ibid., Box 281, Folder 7; Theodore Roosevelt to Francis Warren, 19 November 1910, ibid., Box 177, Folder 13. In the margin of this letter, Roosevelt wrote in his own hand the following. "To promote a man because he marries a Senator's daughter would be an infamy; and to refuse him promotion for the same reason would be an equal infamy."

71. S.W. Fountain to George Davis, 18 June 1902, Roosevelt Papers, series 1, roll 27; William Loeb to Elihu Root, 25 November 1903, RG 94, Microform No. 1395, File 3849 ACP 1886, NARA; Theodore Roosevelt to Avery D. Andrews, 17 November 1903, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 3; A. Landor to John J. Pershing, 7 December 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Rowland Thomas to John J. Pershing, 12 January 1904, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3.

72. Leonard Wood to the U.S. Army Adjutant General, 30 July 1898, and Orders No. 60, 24 October 1903, and William Loeb to Elihu Root, 25 November 1903, Microform No. M-1395, File 3849 ACP 1886, RG 94, NARA; Avery Andrews to Charles Nagel, 23 October 1903, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 3; Avery D. Andrews to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Theodore Roosevelt to Avery D. Andrews to Theodore Roosevelt, 17 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; James Canfield to John J. Pershing, 9 December 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Recommendations for Brigadier General, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; John J. Pershing to Elmer J. Burkett, 21 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Elmer J. Burkett to Theodore Roosevelt, 1 December 1903, Microform No. M-1395, File 3849 ACP 1886, RG 94, NARA; Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 52-59. In 1903, Pershing wrote General Wood: "If the administration adheres to this principle [merit promotions] I intend when the proper time comes to invite attention to my own work and with that end in view I shall be glad to have you, at an early date, write me a letter of recommendation...." See, John J. Pershing to Leonard Wood, 8 September 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4.

73. George G. Dorsett to Frederick Ainsworth, 30 November 1907, RG 94, Series 25, File 1309504, NARA; Letcher Hardenman to John J. Pershing, 17 September 1906, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 4.
74. W.C. Rivers to John J. Pershing, 29 September 1906, ibid., Box 281, Folder 4; M.C. Butler to John J. Pershing, 21 September 1906, ibid., Box 281, Folder 4.


76. Record of Service, 16 July 1912, Carter Papers, Box 1, Folder 3; Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 11.

77. Ibid., 11–12; Professor Allan R. Millett supplied the figures about Roosevelt's other promotions to general officer.


82. Ibid., 4–8; Theodore Roosevelt to Albert L. Key, 1 January 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 535.

83. Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 28 August 1908, in ibid., 6: 1199.
84. Marine Corps officers were subject to the same concerns, and in 1906 Major John Lejeune questioned the wisdom of pushing younger men to the upper ranks without age limits for each grade. Without such restrictions, these officers could become a barrier to promotions as they held their rank for many years and prevented vacancies that would allow others to advance. See, John Lejeune to the Commandant of the Corps, 6 September 1906, Lejeune Papers.

85. As quoted in Reckner, Great White Fleet, p. 54.

86. Roosevelt, State Papers, 143-44; Executive Order, 7 July 1905, File 13734, RG 80, General Records, NARA; The history of these orders is relayed in, Acting Secretary of War to the President, 3 July 1905, Subject Files, "Executive Order," RG 165, WDGS, Box 14, NARA; William Howard Taft to G.K. Waldo, 12 May 1906, roll 488, The Papers of William Howard Taft, microfilm ed., Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

87. In November 1908, Captain Archie Butt commented on the relationship between political "pull" and preferment for certain officers, noting that "the system is one which has to be taken into consideration whenever an officer figures on his future." Archie Butt to Clara Butt, 24 November 1908, Letters of Archie Butt, 189—90; Meixsel, "Army Policy," 10, 18, 83. Meixsel mentions that Senator Warren complained to Secretary of War Henry Stimson about officers seeking Congressional help to avoid service in the Philippines; Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Bullard, "The Teddy Buck: His Getting in Cuba and Journey to the White House," Sports Afield (June 1910), 510-14, Robert L. Bullard Papers, Box 6, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

88. Acting Secretary of War to the President, 3 July 1905, Subject Files, "Executive Order, Box 14, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Avery D. Andrews to John J. Pershing, 23 October 1903, Pershing Papers, Box 281, Folder 3; Avery D. Andrews to Charles Nagel, 23 October 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; Avery D. Andrews to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; John J. Pershing, 21 November 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3; James H. Canfield to John J. Pershing, 9 December 1903, ibid., Box 281, Folder 3.

89. Two letters in the William F. Fullam Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress contain very revealing descriptions of the workings of military
politics in Washington. The letters concern attempts by Bureau of Navigation officers to protect their own careers at Captain Fullam's expense. Fullam's correspondent feels tempted to call on the help of some members of Congress in order to help the Captain's case. See, J. McKean to William F. Fullam, 10 July 1909, and J. McKean to William F. Fullam, 14 July 1909 in Box 3, Folder 2 of the Fullam Papers. In Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet, James Reckner notes Rear Admiral Charles Sperry's maneuvering to assume command of the fleet in San Francisco. See page 54.

90. Millett, "Roosevelt and His Generals," 8; John J. Pershing to Leonard Wood, 8 September 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 4.

91. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 16 November 1904, in Morison, Letters, 4: 1032-33;


93. William Loeb to Elihu Root, 2 March 1903, File 469873, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 21 February 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 9. In this last letter, Roosevelt decreed a rather humorous response to Senator Frye's concern about his influence in regard to officer appointments. Roosevelt wrote Root:

This is austerely called to your attention by the President, who would like a full and detailed explanation, if possible with interjectional musical accompaniment, about the iniquity of making a promotion for the senior Senator from Maine and refusing to make one for the junior Senator. Especial attention is directed to the pathos of the concluding sentence of the junior Senator's letter. An early and inaccurate report is requested.... P.S. Where does "merit" come in on this transaction!

94. Archie Butt to Mrs. Butt, 1 July 1908, Letters of Archie Butt, 56; Theodore Roosevelt to Leonard Wood, 1 August 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 7.


97. Army and Navy Journal, 7 December 1907, 351, 355; William S. Sims, Notes on "An Endurance Test for Admirals," Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 6; Williams S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 November 1908, ibid., Box 97, Folder 7; William S. Sims, Memorandum to Theodore Roosevelt, 27 November 1908, ibid., Box 97, Folder 7.

98. William S. Sims, Notes on letter to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 November 1908, ibid., Box 97, Folder 7; "Naval Physical Test," Army and Navy Register, 17 January 1914, clipping in ibid., Box 82, Folder 4; William S. Sims, Comment on letter of 25 January 1916, ibid., Box 82, Folder 4.


100. Ibid., 26 June 1909, 1223; ibid., 27 June 1914, 1367.


102. Army and Navy Journal, 19 June 1915, 1337; ibid., 3 July 1915, 1393; ibid., 16 October 1915, 209; ibid., 2 June 1917, 1304.


104. For details see, The Letters of Archie Butt, especially pp. 119-20, 168-69.

105. Henry L. Stimson to the Chief of Staff, 26 July 1912, File 9683, Series 5, RG 165, WDGS, NARA. Stimson wanted Generals Wood, Carter, Mills, Garlington, and Wotherspoon to form the board—all promoted by Roosevelt—presumably because they would make merit the chief standard for their recommendations; Lindley Garrison to Woodrow Wilson, 16 May 1913, File 10196, Series 5, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRESIDENT AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF COMMAND:
THE WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF

Theodore Roosevelt's "busy" months in 1898 had shown him that more was wrong with the United States Army than poor officership. The chaos at Port Tampa and the problems in Cuba made Roosevelt an ardent advocate of War Department reform. In the heat of the moment he had expressed a desire for "a thorough shaking up," a removal of incompetents, the installation of men "of push and intelligence," and strict accountability for individuals with responsibility. He pushed after the war for an overhaul of the Army and soon became a fan of Secretary Elihu Root's proposed reforms. Roosevelt realized that the Army's institutions of command required modernization if the United States were to uphold new international responsibilities and act as a great power. The next enemy was likely to be Germany or Japan, certainly not a power as impotent as Spain, so in the future the United States would not easily escape the consequences of military unpreparedness.

Root proposed a general staff as one answer to the Army's problems. Standing near the pinnacle of the military
hierarchy, a general staff would assume much of the responsibility for pre-war preparedness by drawing up war plans and insuring that the Army was ready to implement them. The idea of a staff was not new. The Prussian Great General Staff had gained fame during the wars of German unification, and other European countries had imitated the Germans' example during the late nineteenth century. In the United States, Colonel Emory Upton called for a general staff along Prussian lines about twenty years before the Spanish-American War. He words went unheeded, and he later silenced his own voice through suicide. Nevertheless, adherents in the Army, like Colonel William Harding Carter and Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin, kept Upton's ideas alive and introduced them to Elihu Root when he became secretary in 1899. After Root endorsed a general staff, Roosevelt embraced it as one solution to the problems of 1898.

Roosevelt's relationship to the War Department General Staff was two-fold in nature. He faced first the task of securing legislation to establish the staff. Secretary Root earned the lion's share of credit for winning congressional approval, for he prepared the political groundwork well before Roosevelt became chief executive, and he led the campaign in Congress. But Roosevelt played a significant role in lobbying for the legislation. His efforts were particularly important after the defeat of the measure in
1902. Further work brought success in 1903, so Roosevelt then held overall responsibility for overseeing the development of the General Staff and for using it to insure military preparedness. He appreciated the importance of the institution and understood the principles of command and organization that lay behind it. He did not, however, always use the General Staff wisely, nor did he comprehend the problems that it confronted within the War Department.

Roosevelt may have helped to establish the General Staff, but he left it underdeveloped as an institution. This neglect is somewhat surprising given his interest in military affairs and his activism as chief executive. He was a politician, however, and the intricacies of modern bureaucracies fell beyond his ken. Moreover, he tended to blame people first rather than institutions when government failed, a reflection of the influence of Victorian morality and frontier individualism upon him. Thus when the General Staff faced difficulty asserting itself over the long-established bureaus of the War Department, Roosevelt did not render assistance. He also failed to provide the General Staff with the direction necessary to develop an institutional identity, which would have helped it to assert authority within the War Department. In the first years of operations, members were unsure of their exact duties and their role in the Army's bureaucracy, and Roosevelt's contradictory signals did not help matters. Sometimes he
encouraged them to pursue planning and preparedness for war; at other times, he burdened them with trivial assignments that diverted attention from their main mission.

Despite shortcomings, Roosevelt's record on the General Staff was successful on the whole. His administration established the General Staff, and that accomplishment alone was a major contribution to the modernization of the Army. He had helped to install a command structure that would eventually guide the Army through two world wars. He also instituted an instrument for firmer executive control over the military and an agency that would improve the ability of policymakers to render informed military decisions. Roosevelt did fail, however, to advance the General Staff's position within the War Department. He could set only so many priorities, and the bureaucratic development of the General Staff was too esoteric for his taste. Issues of materiel, training, leadership, and national power attracted him the most because they were areas that he could master easily and in which he could achieve results quickly. But the failure to promote the General Staff did not rest entirely on his shoulders. The institution was new and other officials were also uncertain about its functions. Like a living entity, the General Staff required time to grow and gain its bearings before asserting itself within the War Department.
The problems with the Army's system of organization and command dated back well before the Spanish-American War. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the department operated under an organization that discouraged efficient mobilization at the outbreak of hostilities. Nineteenth century America harbored a deep distrust of central authority, and the organization of the War Department reflected that sentiment. A system of permanent staff bureaus administered areas such as pay, subsistence, supplies, and medicine, with only the Secretary of War to coordinate their activities. Secretaries were frequently not up to the job as they were more often appointed to reward services in the last presidential campaign or to balance the Cabinet geographically than for their knowledge of military affairs. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun added the post of Commanding General in 1821 in an attempt to focus the Army on peacetime preparations, but this officer possessed no authority to coordinate the bureaus, and he depended on the Secretary to follow his advice. With no real power, the Commanding General was an anomalous part of the War Department, and the office left its occupants frustrated.5

An opportunity opened after 1898 to overhaul the War Department. The performance of the department in the recent
war had upset the public, embarrassed the McKinley administration, and led to worries about a backlash against Republicans—a particular concern of Roosevelt's. McKinley responded to the pressure by calling a commission under General Grenville Dodge to investigate the conduct of the war. The voluminous report of the Dodge Commission reinforced the perception of serious problems and added legitimacy to attempts at reform. With the commission report in hand, Secretary Root informed Congress that the administration of the War Department required less autonomy and greater executive control to prevent future breakdowns.

Root's first annual report, issued in November 1899, contained astute observations about the purpose and character of the United States Army and laid the theoretical foundation for reform. The Secretary started from two basic propositions about the Army. First, the Army existed for the purpose of providing for war, and second, the United States would never fight a war with the regular establishment alone. He then called for "a great improvement...[to conform] the organization and training of the Army to its true purpose" and went on to lay out a general program of reform. He proposed realistic training exercises with large bodies of troops, a system of merit promotion, the timely preparation of military technology, and the "systematic study by responsible officers of plans for action..." This latter item was the closest he came
to mentioning a general staff by name, although Root later proposed a war college that would continue officer education and perform such tasks as writing contingency plans, studying questions of war preparation, and advising the President on military questions. The remainder of the report focused on personnel reforms and the creation of an effective system of reserves. Although he never actually called for a general staff in 1899, Root had begun to prepare the ground for such a request in the future.

The Army traveled far down the road of modernization during the next four years. Root did not obtain a general staff until 1903 but amassed an impressive record in other areas in the meantime. He convinced Congress to authorize expansion of the regular forces in the Reorganization Act of February 1901, and he ended permanent appointment of officers to bureau duties, a move intended to eliminate the isolation of the bureaus from the rest of the service. Although this reform did not affect men already in permanent slots or those assigned to more technical duties, it promised to reduce the influence of entrenched bureau officers as retirements took a toll. The creation of a coherent system of officer education was one of Root’s most important achievements. A number of garrison schools and specialized schools already existed to teach engineering, cavalry tactics, artillery, and other topics, but the schools had no relationship to each other. With the aid of
Colonel Carter, Root established a systematic program of post-graduate education. Garrison schools taught such basic skills as drill and firing regulations to new officers, and the specialized service schools remained to expand upon these skills. In 1902, the General Service and Staff College opened at Leavenworth, Kansas, to teach promising officers to handle large units and to conduct staff planning. To cap this system, Root founded the Army War College, where he wanted "the best men...to study and confer upon the great problems of national defense, of military science, and of responsible command." A war college helped to pave the way for a general staff. Although the actual college did not come into being until 1903, Root established a War College Board in November 1901. The board had fewer tasks than the Secretary had originally envisioned for a war college in 1899. It aimed to educate officers and study broader questions of military policy, but it would neither advise the commander in chief nor conduct planning in the manner of a general staff. The War College Board was nevertheless a forerunner of the Army General Staff. Major General Samuel B. M. Young, who would later become the first Chief of Staff, served as president, and Colonel Carter was a member. The board studied complex problems such as the organization and equipment of armies of 25,000 or more and helped demonstrate the value of a permanent planning agency.
By the time Root created the War College Board, the White House had warmed to the idea of a general staff. McKinley had found the project to be too controversial, but Roosevelt was president by November 1901, and he backed Root's efforts without reservation. Roosevelt's personal affection for Root made this support easier to grant. Root had been a friend of his father's and had backed Roosevelt when he first ran for the New York Assembly. Root had also saved Roosevelt's candidacy for the New York governorship when questions arose about his residency. The two men enjoyed a warm relationship that went beyond mutual admiration of their abilities, for they frequently exchanged jokes with each other. When the Secretary left office in 1904, Roosevelt found him so indispensable that he soon asked Root to return as Secretary of State.¹⁰

Roosevelt's service in the Navy Department also made him appreciate a central planning and advisory body. The President recognized that the Navy had been much better prepared for war in 1898 because it possessed contingency plans for a conflict with Spain, "and beyond that there [was] absolutely nothing."¹¹ The Naval War College had long focused naval officers on strategic problem-solving as part of its curriculum, and Roosevelt was familiar with the operations of the college as a guest lecturer and as assistant secretary. His membership on the ad-hoc Naval War Board of 1898 may have reinforced his feelings about the
necessity of a military advisory body, although his service was brief before he departed for the Army.\textsuperscript{12}

With Roosevelt behind him, Root decided to press Congress for general staff legislation. He had approached the issue gingerly since 1899, never calling for a general staff by name in any of his annual reports and carefully avoiding the appearance of a fully functional general staff with the War College Board. He did not want to arouse opposition until after he had a chance to propose legislation to Congress. The likelihood of resistance was indeed great because bureau officers and Commanding General Nelson Miles would view the proposal as an assault on their positions and seek protection from congressional allies. Some members of Congress would also reject a general staff as a sign of creeping militarism in the councils of government. To them, it represented a strong military influence that would undercut civilian control of the War Department. Despite the likelihood of trouble, the chances of obtaining legislation had never before been so favorable. The President had taken a definite stance in his first annual message, stating simply and boldly, "A general staff should be created."\textsuperscript{13} Many military officers stood behind the Secretary as well. Perhaps most importantly, the troubles of the recent war were still fresh in the public mind, which added to the incentive for change.
Root moved in February 1902, but his careful preparations failed to bring success. The General Staff bill was too ambitious and encountered fierce opposition from the War Department bureaus, General Miles, and anti-imperialists in Congress. Bureau officers resisted because a general staff would have the power to coordinate their activities and thereby reduce their autonomy. More importantly, the measure threatened the existence of some bureaus. Root proposed to eliminate the Inspector General’s Department and to create a unitary Department of Supply from the Quartermaster’s Department, the Subsistence Department, and the Pay Department. General Miles objected because the bill would abolish the post of Commanding General and replace it with a Chief of the General Staff, who was clearly subordinate to the Secretary of War and who would have unchallenged authority over only the General Staff Corps.¹⁴ Miles lambasted the measure before the Senate Military Affairs Committee on March 20, 1902, calling it "an effort to adopt and foster...a system peculiarly adapted to monarchies having immense standing armies.... It would seem to Germanize and Russianize the small Army of the United States."¹⁵ His words helped convince anti-imperialist members that this bill would degrade American democracy and thus represented another harmful consequence of overseas expansion.
Miles was already causing trouble before he testified against the General Staff bill. Theatrical and egotistical, he had long sought to turn his status as Commanding General into a political asset. In fact, he had approached Roosevelt in 1899 about becoming his running mate in the presidential race of 1900. Roosevelt declined but worried about the general’s loyalty to President McKinley. Supposedly Miles was counting on the failure of the Army in the Philippines to undermine McKinley and leave an opening for him. Miles also tried to gain political standing by capitalizing on reports of "embalmed" beef supplies in the war against Spain. His testimony before the Dodge Commission about chemically treated beef created a sensation, but he exaggerated the problem at the cost of embarrassing the McKinley administration. Then in 1901 Miles openly criticized the naval court of inquiry investigating Commodore Winfield Scott Schley’s conduct at the sea battle off Santiago in 1898. His statement violated regulations, so Roosevelt and Root promptly and publicly censured him. The mutual antagonism increased when the administration brusquely refused Miles’s request to command in the Philippines and the general made accusations of Army cruelties against the Filipinos. He exacted more revenge when he testified against the General Staff bill. By then Roosevelt’s patience was gone. He complained to Root on March 7, 1902, "General Miles has made it abundantly evident
by his actions that he has not the slightest desire to improve or benefit the army, and...his actions can bear only the construction that his desire is purely to gratify his selfish ambition, his vanity, or his spite." Two weeks later the President seemed ready to dismiss the general declaring, "General Miles' usefulness is at an end and he must go."  

Roosevelt was angry, but concern for the Army reforms prevented him from relieving Miles. A direct attack on the Commanding General risked a political storm in Congress that could sink the General Staff bill or any other proposed Army reform. Miles had many friends in Congress, and Roosevelt knew to proceed carefully. Even in the heat of his anger over Miles's testimony, the President did not summarily dismiss the general but instead considered asking two or three leading members of Congress whether action against Miles would complicate the passage of an Army bill.  

Roosevelt left the general alone in the end. The administration, however, aimed to prevent Miles from sabotaging a new reform bill by sending him far from Washington. Roosevelt and Root granted his wish to go to the Philippines, but they did not send him to command. They dispatched Miles on an inspection tour that took him to the Philippines, Guam, Japan, and other places in East Asia. Miles raised questions about American cruelty in the Philippines, but he was out of the country when the
administration resumed the campaign for a general staff in late 1902 and early 1903. Root made the new bill less ambitious to increase the chance of passage. The legislation would not threaten General Miles's personal position because it would not take effect until he retired in August 1903. At that time, the office of Commanding General would expire, and the post of Chief of Staff would commence. Unlike the first bill, the new measure did not attempt to overhaul the bureaus of the War Department; it aimed solely at authorizing a general staff. Congressional allies of the bureaus, therefore, had less reason to oppose the bill. Despite the improved odds, the administration still needed to work hard for the legislation.

Although Root led the campaign for the General Staff bill and proved masterful at building a consensus in Congress, he needed the President’s talents as a lobbyist. Root turned to Roosevelt, for example, after Representative John Hull of Iowa, head of the House Committee on Military Affairs, warned the Secretary of a possible danger to the bill. Other members intended to attach amendments to support personal interests, and these additions could make the bill unacceptable to the House, although no party opposition existed to the core proposition of a general staff. Root wanted Roosevelt to approach Democrat James Richardson of Tennessee, a member of the House Committee on
Rules, for his support in preventing personal amendments. Such intervention paid off, as did Roosevelt's annual message of 1902, in which he renewed his appeal for a general staff, this time citing the urgent need for the reform. With intense lobbying from the administration, the streamlining of the original legislation and the removal of General Miles from Washington, the General Staff bill became law after relatively little debate in February 1903. After the performance of 1898 most members of Congress knew that they had to do something.

Secretary Root had worked for this reform for four years, and it was the last major accomplishment of his tenure. He would tender his resignation in August 1903 and leave office in early 1904. For his part, Roosevelt had played a peripheral role in the campaign for a General Staff. Although he had long advocated War Department reform and his presence in the White House had boosted Root's efforts, he had come to the campaign in its latter stages. He spoke on behalf of reform and used his influence when Root called upon him, but the credit belonged to the Secretary of War.

Organization and the First Chiefs of Staff

Roosevelt's role would increase after Root's exit and after the General Staff commenced operations. The new Secretary, William Howard Taft, had less interest in reform.
and departmental administration and more concern for
insuring the success of the colonial experiment in the
Philippines. Taft had been governor of the archipelago, so
the office of Secretary of War appealed to him because he
could continue to oversee Philippine affairs. Roosevelt was
not his own Secretary of War in the same way that he acted
as Secretary of the Navy, but he still maintained a
significant degree of involvement with the General Staff.

At its inception, the General Staff was a small and
simple organization. The Chief of Staff directed the forty-
five officers composing the staff corps, most of whom held
assignments outside Washington in the headquarters of the
Army's geographic departments where they assisted with the
administration of military duties. The General Staff was
organized into three major divisions, and each division was
split into sections according to function. The first
division handled the practical military preparation of the
Army. Its three sections dealt with areas such as
organization, equipment, armament, and training;
administration and discipline; transportation and
communication; and military posts and supplies. The second
division handled military intelligence, while the third
contained the Army War College, which drafted war plans and
prepared field maneuvers as part of its duties. This basic
structure remained throughout the Roosevelt
administration.29
The Chief of Staff was directly responsible for the performance of the General Staff. Roosevelt could readily discharge him if he failed to meet expectations and could elevate any other general officer to the post. The General Staff Act stated explicitly the subordination of the Chief of Staff to the President and the Secretary of War, and thus it eliminated the confusion that had existed over the Commanding General's position. A four-year term helped insure that the Chief of Staff remained responsible to the administration and could not build an independent base of power. Loyalty was further insured by a stipulation that cancelled the Chief of Staff's term whenever an administration ended. A chief who dared behave in the same way as Nelson Miles would be liable to speedy dismissal. As William Carter stressed, quoting the Dodge Commission, "Neither the President nor the Secretary of War should have in command of the Army an officer who is not working in harmony with him."

In theory, the Chief of Staff occupied the third most important spot in the Army hierarchy, but in reality the position fell short of that status in its earliest years. The General Staff Act and Army regulations charged the Chief of Staff with implementing the President's military policies, dispensing military advice, supervising field forces, and directing the departmental bureaus. But granting powers and actually wielding them were two
different matters. The supervision of the bureaus never materialized in the way that Elihu Root had envisioned. Politically well-connected bureau chiefs resisted subordination, and neither the early Chiefs of Staff nor Secretary Taft were interested in enforcing the authority of the General Staff.

The President did not help matters much. He failed at first to pick officers who would work to develop the Chief of Staff's office to its fullest potential. Admittedly, he did select lieutenant generals, the highest ranking officer, for his first three appointments to Chief of Staff. Thus the chief held a good deal of authority, even if that power derived from a source other than the position itself. The choice of lieutenant generals, however, raised a problem. These officers were near the end of their careers, and they lacked the time or interest to assert the authority of the General Staff within the War Department. Younger individuals would have been more likely to view the development of the General Staff as an investment in their careers and would have had more years to devote to the task.

Roosevelt also chose lieutenant generals because he wanted to reward men at the close of distinguished careers. Not surprisingly, he elevated officers who had reputations as fighters. Samuel B.M. Young was the first Chief of Staff. Like so many others, his career began during the Civil War, in which he distinguished himself in the cavalry
and emerged as a boy colonel. Roosevelt knew Young well because the general had commanded the brigade to which the Rough Riders belonged, and he had led the first attack against Spanish forces at Las Guásimas. In *The Rough Riders*, Roosevelt wrote that "General Young was—and is—as fine a type of the American fighting soldier as a man can hope to see" and went on to portray Young as a courageous combat leader. Young fought next in the Philippines and then chaired the War College Board before moving into his duties on the General Staff. Given Roosevelt's fondness for Young and given the general's seniority and his experience at the War College Board, his selection as the first Chief of Staff was not unexpected. However, Young's age made for a short tenure. Even counting his service as head of the Provisional General Staff, he served less than a year before retiring in January 1904.

The next two Chiefs of Staff fit the same mold as Young. Both Adna R. Chaffee and John C. Bates started out in the Civil War (Chaffee in the cavalry and Bates in the infantry), became brigadier generals after the outbreak of war with Spain, and went on to assume temporary command of divisions. They also joined Roosevelt in signing the Round Robin letter to have the expedition withdrawn from Cuba. Chaffee gained special distinction after the war when he led the American component of the Chinese relief expedition and then commanded in the Philippines, where he waged a tough
campaign against remaining Filipino resistance. He was a fighter, a "soldier through and through," as Taft described him to Roosevelt. Neither Chaffee nor Bates occupied the Chief of Staff's chair for a four-year term: Chaffee stayed for nearly two years, while Bates lingered for only two months.

In Bates's case, Roosevelt treated the post as an honorific. He planned initially to have Bates and Major General Henry C. Corbin, the former Adjutant General, retire with the rank of lieutenant general. Because both Young and Chaffee had simultaneously served as lieutenant general and Chief of Staff, it seemed only natural to award Bates and Corbin with both titles. Chaffee would retire in early 1906, and Roosevelt wanted both Bates and Corbin to succeed Chaffee, in turn, before they also retired later that same year. The President then planned to pick another officer who could give the office the benefit of longer service. Corbin, however, backed out in the best interests of the Army. He indicated his willingness to become lieutenant general but asserted that the architects of the General Staff Act had never intended that the lieutenant general automatically become Chief of Staff. "On the contrary," Corbin claimed, "it was considered exceptional that he would be." Corbin felt that the position should go to a less senior officer who could devote at least four years to the job. Bates took his turn as Chief of Staff, and then...
Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, assumed the post in 1906 and held it until 1910. Roosevelt's plans for Bates and Corbin were ironic given his distaste for seniority promotions. He had pushed for promotion by merit but was unwilling to make a conspicuous example of the highest post in the Army. To be sure, Bates and Corbin had meritorious careers and would not serve long before Bell assumed the duty, but Roosevelt showed little concern for precedent and was operating mainly on the principle of seniority, the practice that he was working against in the advancement of other officers. Politics also played a role. Members of Congress wanted to see favorites honored, and Roosevelt made his choices carefully so that he would not alienate Capitol Hill. His partisanship and his personal regard for Corbin and Bates recalled the favoritism evident in his promotions to brigadier general.

Corbin's self-sacrificing gesture provided an alternative that met Roosevelt's desire to reward good service yet strengthened the post of Chief of Staff. The lieutenant generalcy alone was a high honor; Roosevelt did not need to couple it with the office of Chief of Staff. As Corbin advised, he needed to install a chief who could devote many years to the job. For the first three years of the staff, Roosevelt did not seem to realize that the
General Staff required vigorous and consistent leadership to assert supervision over the bureaus of the War Department. Bell was the first effective Chief of Staff, but his selection came by default. After Corbin had removed himself, Bell had expected that General Arthur MacArthur would get the nod. But MacArthur had clashed with the Secretary of War in the Philippines, when Taft was governor and he was military commander. If not for the dispute, the next Chief of Staff would have departed before the end of his four-year term, for MacArthur was within three years of retirement. Other candidates were politically unacceptable as well. Leonard Wood would have been an unwise choice given the strength of opposition to his recent promotion to major general, and the President would not consider Brigadier General Frederick Grant, who had opposed Roosevelt when both were members of the New York City Police Board in the 1890s. Bell, however, was well suited for the assignment. He was relatively young and had most recently presided over the Command and General Staff College, where he had developed the curriculum of that institution. That work helped him to live down a reputation as the "Butcher of Batangas," a label earned for his furious measures against Filipino resistance in early 1902. His scorched earth strategy had defeated the native forces but brought charges of cruelty against him. Bell’s actions in Batangas did not disqualify him for Chief of Staff in the President’s mind;
in fact Bell's conduct probably confirmed for Roosevelt that the man was a fighter.

As Chief of Staff, Bell found an organization absorbed in petty administration at the expense of military planning. The General Staff, for example, devoted time to minor matters such as the distribution of annual reports, the design of cook wagons, or the proper use of belts on military evening wear. Such activities were familiar to officers who at the outset were not sure how a general staff should operate. On the one hand, the performance of administrative duties would help establish the General Staff's position vis à vis the bureaus and acquaint it with the details of equipping and supplying the Army. But on the other hand, too much routine administration proved distracting, and Bell did not want the General Staff to neglect the functions of strategic planning and intelligence gathering. Because Bell remained in place after Taft became President, the Chief of Staff had four years to insure that the General Staff followed his guidelines.41

The Early Work of the War Department General Staff

Bell's work was cut out for him. His predecessors had not stressed the function of preparing for war, nor had they asserted the General Staff's authority within the Department. The situation amounted somewhat to a return to the days of the Commanding General, when the bureaus and the
Secretary decided departmental business and the general was largely an irrelevancy. The architects of the General Staff wanted to interpose that body between the Secretary and the bureaus, requiring that bureau officers consult the Chief of Staff before a matter reached the Secretary for decision. Such an arrangement would keep the Chief of Staff well informed about departmental affairs and allow him to give sound military advice to the Secretary. The new system would work if the Secretary refused independent contacts from the bureaus, and if the Chief of Staff asserted his authority to hear bureau business. Taft showed little interest in such administrative issues, and Chaffee was content to leave the bureaus alone. In sum, the General Staff Corps had drifted into high-level isolation.\(^{42}\)

President Roosevelt did little to lift the General Staff out of that state in the first years of its existence. The task rightly belonged to the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff, but Roosevelt might have been expected to intervene in light of his avid interest in military affairs. He did direct a large amount of business to the War Department and even sent some items straight to the General Staff, bypassing the Secretary. But too often, Roosevelt dispatched work that reinforced the tendency of the General Staff Corps to focus on administrative trivia or on military tactics rather than on its place in the Army bureaucracy or on the higher levels of war planning. The President
attempted on occasion to remind the General Staff of its proper function, but his messages proved contradictory. His actions reflected his low appreciation of bureaucratic problems and the fact that the press of his presidential duties permitted little time to master them.

In the General Staff's early years, Roosevelt often recommended projects that betrayed both a fascination of military minutiae and a sense of authoritativeness based upon his brief service in the cavalry. This special interest in the cavalry surfaced in Roosevelt's first contacts with the General Staff. In August 1903, he suggested to General Young that cavalry training should be more realistic. He wanted to know whether "it [would] not be practicable to arrange a row of dummies so that at the culminating moment of the charge the cavalry could actually ride home and hit the dummies?" He had long felt that halting or shying off at the last moment of the practice charge was a "positive disadvantage" and asked Young to "see if this dummy idea cannot be worked up." Two years later, Roosevelt's attention centered on weaponry. He suggested a sword for officers to "cut or thrust with" but did not see much use for the bayonet in the cavalry, "even though the modern cavalry man is nine times out of ten on foot." Roosevelt still thought that a sword would be much more useful to men on foot. The President's inquiries demonstrated his concern for preparedness but kept the
energies of the General Staff channeled on relatively small matters of war preparation.

The Russo-Japanese War had stimulated Roosevelt’s interest in small arms. Accounts of trench warfare and hand-to-hand combat provoked Roosevelt’s concern about the sword and the bayonet. Besides rejecting the bayonet as a cavalry weapon, he felt that the ramrod bayonet was “about as poor an invention as [he] ever saw” and favored instead a short triangular design. He wished also that all officers would carry rifles and wanted thorough tests conducted of the twenty-four inch and thirty-inch versions of the new Springfield rifle. The General Staff formed a special committee in response to the President’s letter. On the question of the sword alone, the committee deliberated throughout 1905 and produced extensive reports before finally settling on definitive models. It also delivered reports on the rifle and bayonet. Although such matters were important to battlefield performance, they need not have consumed so much of the time of the General Staff’s limited personnel. The Bureau of Ordnance could have conducted the investigation, and the General Staff could have considered the findings and then accepted or rejected them.

Roosevelt did make limited attempts to put the General Staff on the right course. For example, he warned General Chaffee about blindly imitating the Japanese after their
success over Russia, just as the fashion had once been to copy all German practices after the Franco-Prussian War. He cautioned, "Not all of the things they have done have been wise, and some of the wise things they have done are not wise for us." In other words, the General Staff should apply only those lessons from the Russo-Japanese War that fit with American military tradition. But rather than leave the General Staff with this lofty principle to guide war planning, Roosevelt returned to the subject of the bayonet in the same communication and, in fact, allocated a good share of the letter to it. He thereby weakened the force of his advice to Chaffee by diluting it with a matter of comparatively small significance. Besides failing to lift the General Staff's sights, Roosevelt and members of his administration belabored it with political work. They treated the General Staff as a clearing house for numerous inquiries, which often had little relevance to military affairs and more to do with placating constituents and members of Congress. Such assignments also diverted the attention of the General Staff to areas outside the main mission of military preparedness. Upon the President's request, for example, the First Division of the General Staff considered the proper disposal of a Confederate flag in October 1903. The flag had belonged to a G.A.R. post, and the General Staff determined that it should go to the museum at West Point upon
certification of authenticity.” In a matter that was a bit weightier, Roosevelt asked the General Staff in 1904 to consider the case of Major Joseph Wham, a retired officer for whom the G.A.R. wanted relief. After a review of Wham’s circumstances, Lieutenant Colonel J.F. Kerr, the Acting Chief of the First Division, recommended against helping the major. Such matters may not have required much effort from the General Staff on an individual basis, but cumulatively they were time-consuming and distracted the General Staff from its more important military duties.

Despite the burdens of political work and the lure of routine administration, war planning did occur during the first years of the General Staff. The Army War College, which came under the Third Division of the General Staff, engaged in planning along with academics. Students considered a war with Mexico, a deployment to Cuba, the system of recruitment for regular and volunteer forces, and general American preparedness for war. The study of a return to Cuba proved to be especially fortuitous when the Army had to mobilize an expedition to the island in 1906. These studies helped to compensate for the focus of the General Staff Corps on administration, although the War College produced most schemes to meet immediate problems and operational requirements. Plans for a clash with other great powers remained neglected.
The planning and observation of maneuvers also absorbed some of the General Staff's time. President Roosevelt promoted maneuvers designed to give commanders experience with larger formations, and General Staff officers played an important role in organizing and then reporting on the exercises, beginning with the maneuvers at West Point, Kentucky, and Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1903. This activity continued in succeeding years as maneuvers were maintained and grew in scale. Roosevelt also suggested exercises to the General Staff and sent its officers to view European maneuvers. 

The Second Intervention in Cuba

The lack of a major foreign threat or crisis may have contributed to the General Staff's institutional shortcomings. From 1903 to 1906, the United States enjoyed a respite from the foreign problems that had drawn its interest abroad in the late 1890s. Cuba had gained independence, and most United States troops had evacuated the country. The Army had broken Filipino resistance to American rule, and the pacification of the Moros on Mindanao was the only fighting of any consequence that still occurred. A direct European challenge to the Monroe Doctrine receded in early 1903 with the agreement of the German, British, and Italian governments to arbitrate financial claims against Venezuela. The Russo-Japanese War
flared during this period, but the conflict was distant, and Roosevelt mediated a peace that provided for a regional balance of power, thereby preventing one belligerent from gaining dominance and threatening the Open Door Policy in China. American worries about Santo Domingo's foreign debt did prompt a fiscal protectorate over the island but not a major mobilization of troops. The absence of a crisis offered General Staff officers the chance for thoughtful reflection on strategy and an opportunity to write long-range plans, but the inexperienced planners apparently viewed administrative pursuits as that much more important during this period of tranquility. The short-sighted focus on administration threatened to squander one of the advantages of having a General Staff in the first place.

International events turned 1906 into a momentous year for the General Staff. More than ever before, the General Staff's value as a planning and coordinating agency became evident. A renewal of tensions in East Asia and the deterioration of conditions in the Caribbean and South America brought presidential directives that utilized the General Staff for its intended function. Disturbances in China caused Roosevelt to request a report on possible operations against Canton (Guangzhou). A Chinese boycott of American goods had led to riots and attacks against American merchants and missionaries. Roosevelt wanted to be able to mount an expedition of up to twenty thousand troops to back
up demands for redress. He believed that the Chinese army was more formidable than it had been during the Boxer Rebellion, and thus he wanted a large contingent available. "We ought not to take any chances. We cannot afford a disaster." Before pushing such a policy, he needed to ascertain whether the War Department could deliver the forces. Force was unnecessary in the end because the boycott ended and the Chinese met claims for damages. At about the same time, friction with Venezuela led Roosevelt to ask the General Staff about plans for a campaign against that republic. Just as it had resisted European claims in 1902-03, the government of Cipriano Castro refused to settle debts with Americans. The proposed military expedition never materialized, but Roosevelt's query again steered the General Staff more toward war planning. In the end, the Chinese and Venezuelan problems amounted to exercises in planning; the renewal of trouble in Cuba put the General Staff to a much sterner test.

In August 1906, a long smoldering feud between the government of Tomás Estrada Palma and its Liberal opponents burst into open insurrection and threatened a second American intervention in Cuba under terms of the Platt Amendment. From the onset of the crisis, Roosevelt relied heavily upon the General Staff. The Army War College had examined the possibility of a Cuban intervention in 1905, and the General Staff had studied exercises for the
deployment of a large-scale expedition that same year. As a result, General Bell could ably advise the President in August 1906 about the execution of an intervention. Bell also drew upon his knowledge of the fighting in the Philippines to counsel Roosevelt about the difficulty of confronting insurgent forces. Bell's testimony and the advice of Brigadier General Frederick Funston, another old hand at battling insurgents, apparently convinced the President to request more mobile forces—cavalry—in proposals for an expeditionary force. By mid-September 1906, the General Staff had completed plans for intervention, which Roosevelt approved after insisting on more cavalry.

The crisis was a boon to the General Staff. It proved to be one of the contingencies for which the General Staff was prepared and thus supplied an opportunity to demonstrate the staff corps's true potential. A sudden flare-up with another great power would have been much more taxing and might have led to far different results for the reputation of the General Staff.

The prospect of fighting insurgent forces in Cuba and a long occupation propelled Roosevelt to seek a peaceful settlement. A conflict could involve a major commitment of troops, fierce anti-guerrilla operations, and a political storm at home. Roosevelt simply loathed the idea of returning to Cuba and "assuming any control over the island
such as we have over Porto Rico and the Philippines. While a peace mission negotiated in Havana, the General Staff continued planning and preparations. It drafted orders for the bureaus and told the Quartermaster General and the Chief of the Ordnance Department to begin assembling supplies for an expedition. The peace mission, however, averted a war. An American provisional administration would assume control of Cuba until elections were held, and an Army expeditionary force would support its authority. With this settlement, the reception of the expedition promised to be a peaceful one.^

The General Staff not only planned the intervention but executed it. A General Staff representative directed the assembly and embarkation of the troops, and General Bell served for a time as commanding general in Cuba before another General Staff officer succeeded him. Brigadier General Barry followed Bell, after having served as Acting Chief of Staff during Bell's absence. A General Staff officer also acted as chief of staff to the commander of the Army of Cuban Pacification throughout the occupation, while other members of the General Staff served in the Provisional Government. Troop commanders confirmed the importance of the General Staff to the success of the enterprise. They did not resent its activities but instead felt that the General Staff could have exerted more influence, especially in the launching and landing of the expedition.^^
President Roosevelt was also delighted with the General Staff's performance. In early September 1906, he complimented General Bell for his sound advice, proclaiming that "the propositions that you make represent the kind of proposition which makes it worth while to have a Chief of Staff." He later lauded the General Staff in his annual message of 1906, describing the intervention as "a fine demonstration of the value and efficiency of the general staff." Roosevelt must have been particularly gratified at the fact that the General Staff was demonstrating its usefulness in another intervention in Cuba. The conduct of the second expedition contrasted markedly with that of the first and made the General Staff's achievement seem that much greater.

The General Staff reacted well to the Cuban crisis, but its performance was not flawless. As field commanders had suggested, it had not controlled closely enough the embarkation of the expedition and its debarkation in Havana. Orders were issued too late and lacked detail; the result was confusion, but nothing near the chaos of 1898. The deficiency demonstrated that the General Staff was not yet ready for war with a first-class enemy. The second Cuban intervention provided valuable experience, but it showed that members of the General Staff corps had not achieved the proper mind-set as war planners. Besides a fixation on administration, they tended to deal more with operations...
than with military strategy, and they had not executed the Cuban operation as well as General Bell would have liked. A conflict with a great power would demand more than operational expertise; it would also place a premium on strategic forethought. Operational and tactical ability could be wasted—with tragic results—if the overall strategy was flawed.

Lasting from 1906 to 1909, the second occupation of Cuba demonstrated the usefulness of the General Staff but did not elevate it to predominance within the War Department. The experience gained from the intervention doubtlessly heightened the institutional esprit of the General Staff, for its members had performed work that represented their reason for being a distinct corps. The extent of the General Staff's authority over the War Department bureaus, however, remained unresolved. After Roosevelt left office, Major General Wood, Bell's successor as Chief of Staff in 1910, asserted authority over the bureaus, with the support of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. Stimson was a member of Elihu Root's New York law firm before joining President Taft's Cabinet, and he admired Root's work in the War Department. Together Wood and Stimson attempted to exert greater executive control by improving the organization of the General Staff, proposing a consolidation of Army field units, and attacking the most powerful bureau chief, Adjutant General Frederick Ainsworth.
Wood and Ainsworth clashed directly in 1912 over the Chief of Staff's recommendation to abolish muster rolls, and Ainsworth's response was so heated that it precipitated his retirement. 

The triumph was short-lived. Ainsworth struck back from retirement, and with the help of congressional allies he sought to emasculate the General Staff. Legislation cut the size of the War Department General Staff to thirty-six in 1912, and the National Defense Act of 1916 slashed it even more. The Defense Act did raise the overall size of the General Staff to fifty-four officers, but it attached strict limits to the number assigned to Washington. In April 1917, nineteen General Staff officers worked in the War Department. The National Defense Act also forbade administrative and supervisory activities and restricted the General Staff to war planning. Despite the assault, the General Staff had remained active, and its planning, for example, proved valuable when the United States mobilized troops to the Mexican border in 1916. It was still weak, however, upon American entry into World War I, and its pre-war debility contributed to the mobilization problems that plagued the war effort. Nevertheless, the General Staff's pre-1917 war planning and its performance during the war cemented its place in the War Department. A serious challenge to its position never returned after the First World War.
Conclusion

Although the General Staff still faced many struggles, its prospects were rising when Roosevelt departed office. This state of affairs did not result so much from presidential initiative as from the efforts of officers such as General Bell and from the increasingly apparent need for a planning agency, a point hammered home by the second intervention in Cuba. Roosevelt did use the General Staff well during the developing crisis over Cuba in 1906, seeking its advice and approving its plans. His actions set precedents about the usefulness of the General Staff in the formulation of policy. In the case of Cuba, General Bell's advice helped convince him to push a peaceful settlement before committing American troops. Roosevelt had always envisioned this role for the General Staff. In a time of crisis or impending war, it would draw on prepared plans to advise the commander in chief and to prepare the Army for all contingencies. Roosevelt's own experience in Cuba had convinced him of the necessity of such an agency, and when another emergency occurred in Cuba he knew exactly the General Staff's function.

Roosevelt performed less well with the General Staff in more tranquil times. War and the preparation for war gave the General Staff relevance, but the President failed to appreciate the institutional and attitudinal changes needed
if the General Staff were to perform its mission with complete effectiveness. He ignored the resistance of War Department bureaus to the General Staff's authority, and when inexperienced members of the General Staff concentrated too heavily on administrative minutiae, Roosevelt did little to remind them of their major mission. Rather, he reinforced the tendency by making requests that distracted from high-level war planning. He could not, of course, master all details of War Department administration and still perform his other duties as president, but his failure seems surprising for an individual with such an intense interest in military affairs.

Although a man of much energy and many pursuits, Roosevelt did not exhibit deep concern for the problems of modern bureaucracy. He did enlarge the scope of federal activity largely through the creation or expansion of executive branch departments and regulatory agencies. He also sponsored efforts to make the bureaucracy more efficient. However, Roosevelt was foremost a politician with a nineteenth century upbringing. His appreciation of bureaucracies was limited, and he gravitated first towards individuals to solve problems rather than institutional changes. Roosevelt sensed the increasing complexity of life in an urban and industrial America, but he could not have known at the time the extent to which organizations would come to dominate government and society in the twentieth
century. He had reached adulthood in an era of relative organizational simplicity, so his insensitivity to the General Staff's plight was not altogether astonishing.

Roosevelt's pre-presidential military experience also skewed his perspective. His service as a volunteer cavalry colonel was often his first point of reference for Army affairs. In other words, he first wanted to solve operational and tactical problems of the type that he had noted in the field. As a consequence, he may have missed some larger issues such as the status of the General Staff in favor of smaller ones that had once frustrated him as a colonel.

Although Roosevelt's record was mixed on the General Staff, its very existence represented a substantial achievement. His desire for War Department reform had helped turn the tide in favor of Elihu Root's long campaign for the General Staff. Difficulties beset the new agency during Roosevelt's presidency and long after he departed office, but his administration did succeed in establishing an instrument for greater executive authority over the Army. This control was not cemented during Roosevelt's time, but the General Staff's eventual ascendance over the bureaus marked an executive branch victory over congressional influence. A strong General Staff would help the commander in chief to formulate and implement military policies with less interference from Capitol Hill, which exerted influence
through the War Department bureaus. Roosevelt's efforts helped lay the foundation for this expansion of executive authority over the War Department and the Army. An overpowering desire for military preparedness motivated him, and an expanded presidency was one of the ultimate results.
NOTES

1. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 12 June 1898, in Morison, Letters, 2: 842; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 19 October 1899, in ibid., 2: 1085. In this letter to Root, Roosevelt writes about his conviction of the need for Army reorganization. His five months in the Army convinced him of this fact, for he claimed that experience was so intense that one could learn much more in five months of war than in five years of peace.


5. U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Commission to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War with Spain, 8 Vols., 56th Cong., 1st sess., Senate doc. 221; Hewes, From Root, 6-7.


12. Roosevelt did not see the Naval War College as a budding naval general staff. He viewed it as a pedagogical institution but realized that it could help solve problems of war planning as part of the exercises demanded of officers. Theodore Roosevelt to William W. Kimball, 17 December 1897, in Morison, *Letters*, 1: 743; Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 4 April 1898, in Allen, *Long Papers*, 84.


15. *Efficiency of the Army*, 34.

16. Finley Peter Dunne took delight in lampooning the general’s well-known penchant for self-display. In the article "On War Preparations," Dunne’s Mr. Dooley commented on Miles’s arrival in Tampa during the Spanish-American War and his preparations for battle: "His uniforms ar-re comin’ down in specyal steel
protected bullyon trains fr'm th' mint, where they've been kept f'r a year. He has oreddar out th' gold resarve f'r to equip his staff, numberin' eight thousan' men, many iv whom ar-re clubmen; an', as soon as he can have his pitchers took, he will cr'rush th' Spanish with wan blow. See, Finley Peter Dunne, Mr. Dooley on Ivrything and Ivrybody, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), 4.

17. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 7 March 1902, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 6.

18. Grenville Dodge to H.V. Boynton, 23 March 1899, H.C. Corbin Papers, Box 1, Folder 1; Report, n.d., Carter Papers, Box 1, Folder 2; Nelson A. Miles to Grenville Dodge, 19 January 1899, Roll 15, RG 108, Headquarters, NARA. Miles's own inquiry into the "embalmed" beef is recorded in the previously cited collection. A series of letters on the subject appears between the dates of 25 February and 20 March 1899.


21. Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, 22 March 1902, ibid., 3: 247. The following letters reveal the deterioration of relations between Miles and the administration before his testimony: Nelson Miles to Elihu Root, 17 February 1902, Roosevelt Papers, series 1, roll 24; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 18 February 1902, 7 March 1902, 19 March 1902, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 6.


23. William Howard Taft to Elihu Root, 22 November 1902, Root Papers, Box 164, Folder 23; William Howard Taft to Elihu Root, 15 June 1903, ibid., Box 167, Folder 6; Nelson Miles to Elihu Root, 9 December 1902, RG 108, Headquarters, NARA, Roll 15; Nelson Miles to George W. Davis, 9 November 1902, in ibid.; Marion Maus to the Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines, 28 November 1902, in ibid.

25. On Root's lobbying effort, see, for example, the "Report of the Secretary of War (1902)," Annual Report of the War Department, 42-49, in which the Secretary spent seven pages making the case for a "directing brain" of the Army. His military mentor on the general staff helped in the lobbying effort. In the North American Review for October 1902 William Carter published "A General Staff for the Army," pp. 558-65.

26. Elihu Root to Theodore Roosevelt, 5 January 1903, Roosevelt Papers, series 1, roll 32; Roosevelt, State Papers, 182.

27. Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 2nd sess., 502-08, 1502, 1633.

28. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 24 August 1903, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 15. Roosevelt accepted Root's resignation with difficulty. He regretted losing such a good man from the Cabinet and he mourned the nation's loss of such a fine public servant. After John Hay's death, Root rejoined the Cabinet as Secretary of State.

29. Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 502; Draft of General Orders for 14 August 1903, File 495145, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Benjamin Alvord, Memorandum, 16 June 1904, Pershing Papers, Box 279, Folder 10; Roberts, "Reform and Revitalization," 214; Millett, Common Defense, 311.


32. Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 2nd sess., 502; Draft of General Orders for 14 August 1903, File 495145, Series 25, RG 94, NARA.

33. J.T. Kerr, Memorandum Report of the First Division General Staff, 7 October 1905, Subject Files "Chief of Staff," Box 9, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Robert Shaw Oliver, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 25 October 1905, in ibid.

34. Roosevelt, Rough Riders, 48-54; Theodore Roosevelt to S.B.M. Young, 18 September 1899, in Morison, Letters, 2: 1075-76; Theodore Roosevelt to William McKinley, 29 January 1900, in ibid., 2: 1150-51. Young and Roosevelt had also shared a common interest in nature preservation before the war, when Young had held command in Yellowstone National Park and Roosevelt had presided over the Boone and Crockett Club.


37. Henry C. Corbin to William Howard Taft, 12 August 1905, Corbin Papers, Box 1, Folder 12.

38. William Howard Taft to Mrs. H.C. Corbin, 9 June 1905, ibid., Box 1, Folder 6; William Howard Taft to H.C. Corbin, 17 June 1905, ibid., Box 1, Folder 12; William Loeb to J.B. Foraker, 24 June 1905, ibid., Box 1, Folder 9; H.C. Corbin, 12 August 1905, ibid., Box 1, Folder 12; William S. Seekeudon to H.C. Corbin, 5 September 1905, ibid., Box 1-A, Folder 3; William Howard Taft to H.C. Corbin, 1 December 1905, ibid., Box 1, Folder 12; F.W. Carpenter to the Military Secretary, 1 February 1906, File 1096335, Series 25, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Edgar F. Raines, Jr., "Major General J. Franklin Bell and Military Reform: The Chief of Staff Years, 1906-10," Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1976, 1-2.

39. J.B. Foraker to Theodore Roosevelt, Corbin Papers, Box 1, Folder 9; John McCook, 8 February 1906, ibid., Box 1, Folder 11; Raines, "Bell," 1.


41. File 14192, Box 61, Series 60, RG 107, SecWar, NARA; Subject Files "Cook Wagon," Box 10, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA. The files in this series of the General Staff's records contains numerous examples of concern for administrative trivia; Nenninger, "The Army Enters the Twentieth Century," 223-24.

42. William H. Carter to Elihu Root, 30 October 1903, Subject File "General Staff," Box 16, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; War Department Orders, 30 December 1903,
43. He had displayed this penchant even before the creation of the General Staff. Less than a month after becoming President, he criticized the snugness of the service blouse and the dark blue coloring of the army shirt, and in October 1902 he recommended to Secretary Root that cavalry troops wear smaller spurs to ease walking. See, Theodore Roosevelt to William Cary Sanger, 8 October 1901, in Morison, Letters, 3: 163; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 2 October 1902, in ibid., 3: 335.

44. Theodore Roosevelt to Samuel B.M. Young, 8 August 1903, in ibid., 3: 546.

45. Ibid.

46. Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, 4 January 1905, in ibid., 4: 1090-91; Subject Files "Sword, The," Box 29, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.


48. Ibid.

49. Subject Files "Sword, The," Box 29, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Subject Files "Rifle, Model of 1903," Box 26, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.


51. Ibid.

52. Subject Files, "Flag U.S.," Box 14, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.

53. Subject Files "Wham, Joseph, W.," Box 31, Series 3, "RG 165, WDGS, NARA.

54. Subject Files "Army War College," Box 3B, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Subject Files, "Transportation of Troops By Rail in Time of War," Box 30, Series 3, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Allan R. Millett, "The General Staff and the Cuban Intervention of 1906," Military Affairs, 32 (Fall 1967): 114; Hewes, From Root, 12.

Ibid.

Theodore Roosevelt to the General Staff, War Department, 22 January 1906, in ibid., 5: 135.


Millett, "General Staff," 114-15; William Howard Taft to Theodore Roosevelt, 15 September and 16 September 1906, Taft Papers, roll 488; The General Staff planned a mock expedition in summer 1905 at the President's behest. The history of this scheme is contained in, Theodore Roosevelt to Adna R. Chaffee, 3 July 1905, in Morison, Letters, 4: 1260-62; and Subject File, "Expeditionary Force," Box 14, RG 165, WDGS, NARA. This plan is discussed at greater length in chapter 7.

Theodore Roosevelt to George Otto Trevelyan, 9 September 1906, in Morison, Letters, 5: 401.

Ibid., 115-16.

Ibid., 117-18.

Millett, "General Staff," 117-19; Theodore Roosevelt to James F. Bell, 1 September 1906, in Morison, Letters, 5: 391.

Roosevelt, State Papers, 478-79.
66. Millett, "General Staff," 118.


THEODORE ROOSEVELT: COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Volume II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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CHAPTER V

THE PRESIDENT AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF COMMAND:
THE GENERAL BOARD OF THE NAVY AND THE CAMPAIGN
FOR A NAVAL GENERAL STAFF

The Navy's system for planning and policymaking was in better shape than the Army's when Roosevelt assumed office in 1901. Since March 1900 the General Board of the Navy had advised the Secretary of the Navy on war planning, ship designs, the location of naval bases, personnel policies, and other matters related to naval preparedness. The General Board, however, was not a full-blown general staff, and Navy reformers rejoiced when the new President echoed their cries for a naval staff. Roosevelt's efforts for a naval staff were more vigorous than his quest for the War Department General Staff, but he ultimately disappointed naval reformers with the strength of his commitment. More than once, he failed to put the full force of his office and his political talent behind proposals for a naval staff. His interest in institutional reform was never as strong as his desire for new battleships or his enthusiasm for fleet operations, but he did value the General Board and often turned to it for advice.
Roosevelt ran the Navy himself. Six secretaries of the Navy came and went during his tenure, and only one provided inspired leadership that lasted more than a few months. Past experience as assistant secretary, a fascination for the military, and a desire to assert American influence abroad all inspired Roosevelt to be his own Navy Secretary. In this role he expanded the peacetime work of the commander in chief. He not only decided overall naval policies but took interest in detailed questions of gunnery, battleship designs, maneuvers, naval reviews, and other similar matters. His natural inclinations led him to devote more attention to the technological and operational sides of the Navy, and he displayed less concern for more mundane administrative questions. He deemed administrative efficiency important but made it a lesser priority than the strengthening and training of the battleship fleet. Although faulty administration could undermine the strongest force in wartime, battleships formed the front line of naval fighting power, so the President chose to lavish his time upon them.

Roosevelt relied heavily on the General Board for making informed decisions. He did not always accept the board's advice but asked for its opinion frequently. His appreciation of the General Board was high because his involvement in naval affairs was much deeper than in Army matters. With the trusted Root and Taft at the War
Department, Roosevelt could afford just to dabble in Army affairs—at times seeming more like a colonel than a president. Besides, the Navy seemed more immediately vital to American security, and Roosevelt was, of course, intimately familiar with the running of the Navy. His year as assistant secretary had impressed upon him the importance of pre-war planning, and the General Board filled an institutional void in the Navy Department by offering high-level advice to the Secretary and the President. Its role, however, was strictly advisory. It could conceive war plans, advise, and debate naval policy; however, it lacked the authority of a general staff to make the rest of the Navy Department follow its directives.

Roosevelt was reluctant to campaign wholeheartedly for a naval general staff. The General Board’s competence made the need for reform seem less than pressing to a President who was more interested in expanding and commanding the fleet than in redesigning the Navy’s administrative architecture. Although popular pressure was strong at times for naval administrative reform, the failure to produce substantive change never threatened Republican political prospects. Public calls for reform hardly matched the recent clamor against the War Department because the Navy’s mobilization in 1898 had been comparatively smooth. Lacking a strong incentive to force action, Roosevelt avoided a confrontation with Congress. Many Senators and
Representatives, especially members of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, recoiled at a naval general staff as an executive intrusion into traditional congressional territory. Local Navy facilities represented an important source of patronage, and a cliental system existed between certain members and the Navy Department bureaus that had authority over the shore establishment. A naval general staff could imperil this arrangement by demanding that military needs, rather than political ones, be the sole criterion governing the location and work of shore facilities. Roosevelt apparently decided that a hard fight for a naval staff would alienate too many people on Capitol Hill, and they might retaliate against a part of his naval program that he held even dearer—the battleship fleet.

Roosevelt’s attitude about a naval staff and his dealings with the General Board revealed further the level of his appreciation of modern military institutions. His actions also serve as a window for viewing a wide range of involvement with the Navy. Roosevelt’s dealings with the General Board involved strategy-making, fleet operations and maneuvers, overseas bases, vessel designs, the size of the fleet, and personnel policy. Proposals for a naval general staff drew his attention to administrative issues and led to tensions with Congress. Finally, the debate over a naval staff involved concerns about the size of the Navy’s budget and the rapid growth of the battleship fleet, both in the
number and quality of the vessels. The General Board's role and the naval staff issue are therefore rich subjects for understanding Roosevelt's direction of his favorite service.

The General Board

The General Board was the direct product of the American naval renaissance that began in the early 1880s. Modernization involved more than just armored ships and rifled ordnance; civilian and military reformers knew the Navy must improve the quality of enlisted personnel, officers, war planning, and administration if it hoped to stand a chance against other naval powers. Such ferment had led to the establishment of the Naval War College in 1884 and the Personnel Act of 1899. The founder of the war college, Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, hoped that the institution would make naval officers into specialists in the conduct of war.¹ Luce inspired other officers to fight for improvement of the Navy, and he remained the intellectual godfather of naval reform throughout Roosevelt's presidency.

One of Luce's protégés, Captain Henry C. Taylor, played a crucial role in the creation of the General Board. Taylor lectured at the Naval War College after its inception and became its president in the 1890s. A thoughtful man, he was one of the Navy's most capable officers and one of its most personable and politically astute.² The war with Spain
impressed Taylor with the need for a body dedicated to planning and preparation for war. Although the Navy's mobilization went much smoother than the Army's, problems still hampered naval preparations in 1898. There was too little smokeless powder, the quality of coal was inferior, the fleet lacked auxiliary vessels, and a shortage of personnel existed. The Navy possessed four plans for war against Spain, but they were the product of different offices and lacked consistency in assumptions and strategy.³ Secretary John D. Long agreed that a naval general staff required consideration and commissioned Taylor to report on the topic.⁴

Taylor proposed two boards that together would form a naval general staff. One body would draft war plans and present them to a nine-member general board, which would meet at least one month each year and rule on the work of the planning board. The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation would present the boards' work to the rest of the Navy Department and thus would act as the Secretary's chief military adviser. In effect, he would be the naval chief of staff.⁵

Secretary Long accepted a much reduced version of Taylor's scheme. He desired professional advice but was not prepared to see the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation gain so much power, nor was he willing to establish a permanent naval board. Instead, he decided to institute a board
strictly on a trial basis. The General Board of the Navy came into being on March 13, 1900, but it existed at the Secretary's pleasure and could be abolished at the stroke of a pen. Long wanted to avoid a body of officers that might someday usurp the civilian secretary's influence in the department. The General Board would offer advice only and possessed no powers to enforce its decisions upon the rest of the Navy. Thus the new board fell short of the general staff that Taylor advocated.

Still, the General Board was an important first step towards a naval staff. Although Long limited the board to an advisory role, he justified it as necessary "to insure [the] efficient preparation of the fleet in case of war and...the naval defense of the coast." This mandate licensed the board to examine a broad range of topics and suggested that its counsel would carry weight in the management of naval affairs. The board consisted of nine members: the Admiral of the Navy, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, the President of the Naval War College and his assistant, the Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence and his assistant, and three other officers who ranked no lower than lieutenant commander. As senior officer, Admiral of the Navy George Dewey presided over board meetings. His presence was especially beneficial, for it added prestige and made the General Board harder to ignore or abolish. Although Taylor and other naval reformers had
hoped for more, the General Board was a good start and could become the foundation for something greater.

The General Board was not the chief executive's sole source of advice on naval policy. Other voices supplied insight and provided a check on the board's opinions. Roosevelt often consulted individual bureau chiefs and other officers, in addition to the General Board, for their expertise on particular questions.

Nevertheless, the General Board provided great assistance to the President in decisions on ship types and ship characteristics. For example, Roosevelt drew on the board when faced with a pivotal choice regarding battleship design midway through his presidency. Older models carried a balance of small, medium, and large caliber guns, but by 1904 naval opinion at home and abroad began to hold that only the largest calibers would be effective in battle.

Target practices and the sea engagements of the Russo-Japanese War tended to support this sentiment. Development of the all-big-gun ship and other technological topics will be explored more fully in the following chapter, but basically the President needed to decide whether the United States should switch to the new class or adhere to previous models. After consulting with the General Board and Commander William S. Sims, he chose the all-big-gun ship.

Roosevelt also looked to the General Board on other technological questions. In one case in late 1907, Sims
reported a problem with the Navy's torpedoes. The commander had discovered that the torpedo stocks of the Atlantic Fleet were dangerously depleted; twenty-six torpedoes were available when there should have been 200. Moreover, most of these weapons were outdated. Sims asserted that American manufacturers could not alleviate the shortage quickly and claimed that the Navy needed to purchase torpedoes from Great Britain. Roosevelt presented Sims's information to the General Board and asked for its reaction. The board confirmed Sims's findings. American manufacturers were indeed taxed to the limit, and torpedoes were such an important weapon that foreign purchases were warranted. The board recommended that the Navy should order at least 200 torpedoes from abroad. Roosevelt read the General Board's report and ordered Secretary of the Navy Victor Howard Metcalf to begin purchases.¹⁰

The President was less able to implement the General Board's advice on the composition of the fleet. In 1903 Board members determined that the United States required forty-eight first-class battleships to defend its interests. They called for the yearly authorization of four battleships along with a proper proportion of lesser vessels until the forty-eight ship standard was achieved. The General Board soon abandoned this ambitious rate, for under it the fleet would outgrow the projected pool of trained personnel, but board members held steadfast to the ultimate goal of a
forty-eight battleship navy. Roosevelt would have happily built such a fleet, but political realities dictated otherwise. Neither Congress nor the public would tolerate the expense of such a force when the country faced no immediate threat. The process of annual appropriations, moreover, made a long-range program virtually impossible. Roosevelt had to set priorities, and he chose to emphasize battleships over other vessels. As he put it, "No fight was ever won yet except by hitting; and the one unforgivable offense...is to hit soft. Don't hit at all if it can possibly be avoided; but if you do hit, hit as hard as you know how." Consequently, the numbers of cruisers, destroyers, and support vessels never matched the General Board's wishes.

Roosevelt, not Congress, controlled the distribution of existing ships, and he worked with the General Board to build a true fleet organization. When Roosevelt took office, nineteenth century naval policy still governed the distribution of ships. That policy stressed the protection abroad of American commerce and citizens and led to the scattering of naval units around the globe. Mahan's doctrine of sea power attacked this system of distribution late in the century and supplied a rationale for the organization of large fleet formations. A fleet alone could secure command of the sea in wartime and thereby protect the economic sinews essential to national power and growth. At
best, the Navy trained in squadrons when Roosevelt became president; in case of war it would form into untested fleet units. Roosevelt desired as much realistic "blue water" training as possible because naval officers would be unable to meet future crises unless they had "practised steadily on the high seas until each ship can do its best...alone or in conjunction with others in fleet formation." The General Board obliged the President by helping to plan fleet maneuvers.

The Navy's first fleet maneuvers illustrated the usefulness of the General Board. Although the board lacked executive authority within the Navy Department, it coordinated preparations through its advice and thus reduced the complications involved in such a complex undertaking. The maneuvers were scheduled to commence in December 1902, and well before then the General Board labored to prepare the participants. For example, in July 1902 it recommended the dispatch of battle formations to the European and South Atlantic squadrons so they could practice in advance. The board also sent details of the maneuvers to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, bureau chiefs, and the other principals involved in organizing and executing the exercise. Except for the fact that its communications were recommendations and not orders, the General Board was performing all the functions of a general staff and
continued to do so in the future. The success of the maneuvers reinforced the evident value of the board.

Fleet exercises were important, but the location of the fleet carried greater strategic consequences. The General Board provided advice on where the administration should best deploy American naval resources. Difficult choices were required because Mahanian notions of sea power dictated the concentration of the battleship fleet, although the Navy needed to protect widely separated coastlines, distant overseas possessions, and a number of international political and economic interests. The General Board argued for an Atlantic deployment, and the administration agreed, although it was not able to complete the task until 1906. The nation's wealth and urban population centered on the Atlantic coast, and the large European navies, in combination with European ambitions in Latin America, represented the greatest potential threat that the Navy needed to counter, especially in the first half of Roosevelt's presidency. The General Board clung to an Atlantic deployment even after Japan began to threaten in the Pacific following 1905 and even after the Anglo-German naval rivalry reduced the danger of European adventures in the western hemisphere. The Roosevelt administration concurred but wanted to do something about the tensions with Japan. With the European threat declining, the fleet was available for temporary use in the Pacific.
A desire to heighten the Navy's domestic popularity influenced Roosevelt's decision in 1907 for a fleet cruise to the Pacific, but he also wanted to practice an ocean-to-ocean transfer and to impress Japan with American naval might. In their role as members of the Joint Army-Navy Board, representatives of the General Board had united with members of the Army General Staff in June 1907 to recommend that the battleship fleet deploy to the Pacific. Their advice followed a presidential query about plans for hostilities with Japan.  

After the President decided on the cruise, the General Board made arrangements for the force that would go to the Pacific. It proposed to send sixteen battleships and a number of armored cruisers. Roosevelt objected vehemently to this proposal because it appeared to divide the fleet, repeating the same mistake that the Russians had recently made in splitting their forces between the Baltic and the Pacific. The President sent his planners back to the drawing board, pointedly telling them, "I do not intend to run the slightest risk of any such disaster." He believed that the General Board intended to retain six battleships in the Atlantic along with the majority of armored cruisers. Roosevelt wished for a maximum concentration and was not about to "leave in one ocean a considerable fragment of the fleet, not enough to stand by itself, but enough to greatly weaken by its absence the remainder of the fleet." He
wanted at least twenty American battleships and ten armored cruisers to make the journey.\textsuperscript{21}

Roosevelt endorsed the General Board’s scheme after he heard a better explanation of it. Some battleships would stay behind because they were under repair, not yet complete, obsolete, or on special service. Several cruisers were in similar condition. The General Board was thinking less about defending the Atlantic coast with these ships and more about the problem of sending them on a long journey. Roosevelt was also "perfectly content" after hearing that the battleships \textit{Nebraska} and \textit{Wisconsin} might be able to join the fleet at San Francisco along with a strong force of armored cruisers.\textsuperscript{22} With this clarification, the President could rest assured that the General Board had not precipitously abandoned one of the elemental naval precepts of the day.

Although the planning for the world cruise consumed great amounts of time, it did not compare to the years-long work of crafting a policy for overseas bases. The problem of locating and then developing overseas naval bases vexed the General Board from its inception through the end of Roosevelt’s presidency. These bases would allow American ships to fuel and repair in such distant locations as the Philippines or the eastern Caribbean and would help to insure peak performance against an enemy in those waters. Without overseas bases, the Navy would have to rely on
foreign facilities, an uncertain proposition in wartime. The General Board thought at first that the Navy required numerous overseas bases to protect American interests in the Caribbean, Central America, the western Pacific, and East Asia. Economic and strategic realities soon took hold, and the board admitted that the Navy could not afford or protect an extended network of bases. With improved techniques for refueling at sea, the General Board emphasized one major base in the Caribbean and one in the western Pacific, plus facilities for the defense of the isthmian canal.

The General Board picked Guantanamo Bay in southeastern Cuba as the site for the chief United States naval base in the Caribbean. Roosevelt accepted the board's recommendation and approved a lease in October 1903 of land at the bay and at Bahia Honda, where the Navy reserved an option to build a coaling station. Guantanamo Bay would admit large ships, was easily defended, and was impossible for an enemy to obstruct. It sat astride the Windward Passage, the main avenue of trade through the Caribbean, and thus guarded the approaches to an isthmian canal. The location would enable naval operations as far as the western coast of Central America and the northern reaches of South America.
The site of a Western Pacific base was not decided so easily. In December 1903, the Joint Army-Navy Board* ratified previous recommendations of the General Board and chose Olongapo, which lay along Subig Bay in the Philippines. Many other naval officers agreed on the location, and the President also concurred. The bay lay sixty miles from Manila, the key to the island of Luzon, which in turn represented the key to the entire Philippine archipelago. At Olongapo, the Navy could intercept a seaborne enemy on the way to attack the capital. Narrow channels made the bay defensible, and its big harbor would accommodate the largest ships, was well protected from storms, and was ideally suited for a dockyard. Fresh water supplies and satisfactory hygienic conditions made the location even more attractive.®

Controversy, nevertheless, attended the selection. Partisans of Manila argued that the base should be at nearby Cavite in Manila Bay. General Leonard Wood was one of the most prominent supporters of Manila, and he had direct access to the President. In 1904, Wood claimed that the government should pour all available resources into making Manila impregnable. After all, control of Manila meant

* The Joint Board was involved because the Navy would use the bases but the Army would defend them on land. Representatives of the Army General Staff and the General Board sat on the Joint Board. It was an institution established to coordinate policy between the two services.
control of the Philippines, and any naval units remaining there could hunker down under the defenses of Manila Bay and assist the Army in protecting the city. Spanish forces had held the city for months in 1898 after Dewey destroyed their fleet. Wood stated his case forcefully enough to place doubts in the President's mind. Roosevelt did not overturn any decisions and prudently sought the reaction of the General Board to Wood's assessment. The board dismissed Wood's views, responding "that the best site for the principal naval base... in the Philippines is Subig Bay, and that Manila Bay is one of the worst." The board went on to cite the tactical and strategic advantages of Subig Bay and to point out that Dewey's victory in 1898 had cut off Manila from all hope of relief and doomed Spanish forces there to defeat. Americans could suffer the same fate if the administration followed Wood's advice.

Roosevelt found the General Board's report to be persuasive and cast aside any doubts about Subig Bay. He wrote candidly to Wood that he agreed entirely with the Joint Board. Roosevelt explained, "If we are ever reduced in the Philippines to a condition when the fleet is of use only in assisting the army to repel an attack upon Manila, I think that the end of our possession of the Philippines is in sight."

Three years later, the President expressed betrayal and anger at his military boards for their recommendation of
Subig Bay. The Joint Board reversed its appraisal in 1907 in light of the Japanese capture of Port Arthur two years earlier. Army opinion held that Subig Bay was similar in configuration to Port Arthur and equally vulnerable to land attack. The Army lacked sufficient forces to protect both Subig Bay and Manila from a land assault, and therefore it recommended that defenses must focus on Manila, the ultimate prize at stake in any assault on the Philippines. Roosevelt exploded. He felt that the flip-flop humiliated him and weakened his hand in military matters, for the administration had confidently advised Congress to develop Subig Bay for several years. Now Capitol Hill had "a right to complain of the Executive Department..." and might prove more reluctant to provide funds for any Pacific naval base.

Despite his angry reaction, Roosevelt identified a fundamental problem with the system of advisory boards as a result of the reversal on Subig Bay. The perspective of the various military boards was overly prejudiced towards the concerns of each service. In the case of Subig Bay, naval considerations alone had determined the General Board's choice. The board had not sought the Army's advice on defending the bay before making the selection, although the Army was charged with the land defense of the base. The Joint Board seemed equally guilty of one-sided consideration. Members of the Joint Board accepted the
Navy's decision for Subig Bay without question, feeling that the matter was a naval affair that involved the Army only to the extent of providing troops and guns to defend the site. Roosevelt condemned such narrow vision, claiming that Army and Navy officers "justify their most trenchant critics when they act in such manner." He went on, saying, "No naval officer has a right to advise the fortification of Subig Bay without putting in the most careful proviso that the advice is only to be considered in case the military [army] authorities report the scheme as satisfactory." The problem over Subig Bay made the President question the actual decision-making process of the military boards. He wondered about the degree to which the General Board and the Joint Board had deliberated the Subig Bay question in both 1903 and 1907. He ordered a full report and demanded "to know whether the successive and widely varying conclusions reached are due to original and careful study by the members of the general boards and joint boards, or whether they have resulted from the perfunctory ratification of the views of some subordinate officer...." Roosevelt was worried about the quality of advice coming out of the two boards and about the damage that the Subig Bay matter had done to the recently instituted system of military advice. Lay people depended on the expertise of the boards, and if the advice appeared to be untrustworthy, support for the new military advisory agencies would decline. Roosevelt
stressed the need for competence by claiming that "a great many Senators and Congressmen have said [sic] to me that they disbelieved in the general staff for either army or navy because of the curious attitude of the Joint Board in this Philippine defense matter."^34

Before the controversy over Subig Bay, Roosevelt had apparently assumed that the system of advice represented by the General Board of the Navy, the Joint Army-Navy Board, and the Army General Staff was operating smoothly and required little fine-tuning from him. He was correct at one level because the individual agencies provided sound advice in most cases. At a higher level, however, Roosevelt failed to recognize until 1907 that communications between the services were still inadequate despite the formation of the Joint Board. The Joint Board facilitated coordination but only in areas such as overseas bases or combined operations where the duties of the services intersected, and even then cooperation was not always guaranteed. Stronger cooperative institutions would not be established until the two world wars led to the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unification of the defense establishment. The problem of interservice cooperation might have been lessened during Roosevelt's time if a formal mechanism had existed to formulate and then communicate policy to the service departments; they were often left to anticipate foreign or military policies. But an institution such as the National
Security Council gained acceptance only as a result of the same international pressures that led to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and defense unification.

In the end, the trouble over Subig Bay did not doom the prospects for a major naval base in the Pacific. After rejecting Subig Bay, the Joint Board abandoned the Philippines as a potential location and instead endorsed Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian islands. Before going to Congress, the President wanted "careful consideration given to...the defense of Hawaii by both army and navy and a report made...thereon." He wished to avoid another embarrassment, which might ruin the chances for an overseas base in the Pacific, undermine the general staff concept, and expose him to attack from a Congress that increasingly resented his expansive use of executive influence. His work paid off when he obtained an authorization of one million dollars to begin the development of Pearl Harbor.

Finally, the General Board performed the important task of preparing naval war plans. The board worked with the Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence in discharging this duty, and it was the first point of contact when the President or Secretary requested plans. War planning represented the General Board's raison d'être, and it developed schemes, for example, for descents into Latin American, for the coastal defense of the United States, for the seizure of advanced bases in distant naval campaigns,
and for battles with other naval powers, namely Germany and Japan. 

Given enough time, the General Board could produce a well-developed set of plans, but it did not cope well with sudden emergencies. The board’s planning staff was small: a committee of three drafted plans of campaign during the first ten years of the board’s existence, while the Navy grew three-fold during the same period. Thus a long lead time was essential for effective planning. For example, Germany had been an obvious potential enemy since Admiral Otto von Diederich’s provocation of Commodore Dewey at Manila in 1898. The General Board had plenty of time to work up a plan—Plan Black—to counter the High Seas Fleet, and the Navy tested its assumptions in the Caribbean maneuvers that began in December 1902, a naval presence that coincidentally strengthened the President’s hand in the Venezuelan crisis of 1902-03. In contrast, the General Board was caught unprepared when tensions rocked relations with Japan in 1906. Japan was a friend, even a protégé, of the United States before that time, so the General Board had not worked out a detailed plan of campaign. In October 1906, the President wanted to be ready for all contingencies and inquired whether the board was studying plans for a war with Japan. Admiral Dewey answered that the General Board had already examined the problem and that plans were set for operations against the Japanese. Dewey’s response was
misleading because the plans to which he referred were hastily drawn and sketchy; the General Board did not complete the portfolio for war with Japan until December 1906.41 If hostilities had occurred in the interim, Roosevelt's confidence in his naval board may have been severely shaken.

The Campaign For a Naval General Staff

If Roosevelt had devoted more energy to winning the General Board legal standing as a general staff, the board may have been able to expand its planning capabilities. As Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and a member of the General Board, Rear Admiral Taylor was already working towards that goal during the first three years of Roosevelt's presidency. Taylor believed in an evolutionary approach for securing a naval general staff. Adroit at politics, he recognized that Congress would not readily sanction a move from the General Board to a full-blown naval general staff. Sensitivities were too high in some quarters about creeping militarism, overseas expansion, and executive aggressiveness. The fact that the Navy had won glory in the late war also reduced the incentive for change. Taylor stressed that the General Board needed to show its value as a war planning agency. If it produced "solid, well studied, authoritative plans of war, 'all things' as the Bible says 'will be added unto us...."42 First Taylor wanted the
current board sanctioned by law, for "a change of
administration may easily wipe us off the slate." Then he
hoped to move gradually towards authorization of a naval
staff with power to enforce its will on departmental
bureaus. The fight would not be easy and required
presidential support. He received Roosevelt's endorsement
but not much more.

Doubtlessly the President's aloofness stemmed in part
from his overall satisfaction with the General Board's
performance. Although the board exhibited shortcomings, it
acted already as the brain of the Navy, guiding policy
through high-level advice on strategy, fleet composition,
ship characteristics, base locations, and other such
matters. Roosevelt, for example, praised the General Board
just as much as the War Department General Staff for the
successful intervention in Cuba, claiming, "that the general
staff of the army and the general board of the navy were
among the most efficient causes in bringing about this
result." All in all, the General Board provided an
instrument for Roosevelt to exert his will more effectively
over the Navy. He could act more confidently when
requesting appropriations, recommending ship designs,
soliciting fleet expansion, and deciding myriad other
questions.

The General Board therefore put Roosevelt in a stronger
position to challenge the influence of the Senate Committee
on Naval Affairs. The Senate Naval Affairs Committee had a greater stake in the Navy than its House counterpart because Speaker Joseph Cannon had refused to appoint members with navy yard interests to the House Naval Affairs Committee. In the Senate, eight of ten members had navy yards to consider. While presidents came and went, long lasting committee members remained, gained expertise, and came to feel that naval affairs were more their province than the executive branch's. For example, the longtime chair of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Eugene Hale of Maine, regarded naval affairs as his personal fief, and any attempt to strengthen the hand of an already active chief executive was bound to provoke a negative reaction from him and other members.

Hale was, in fact, the chief congressional antagonist of the administration's naval program. He had been a sponsor of the new steel Navy in the 1880s and 1890s, but American expansion overseas had disillusioned him. In his view, imperialism corroded the democratic virtue of the nation and lowered it to the debased condition of European monarchies. Hale especially disliked Roosevelt's aggressive style of governance, the President's big-navy policy, and his desire to thrust the United States deep into the arena of world politics. Roosevelt emphasized military considerations and military values too much to suit Hale's taste, and a naval general staff would erode American
democracy further. Hale's opposition represented a formidable obstacle because he was one of the most powerful members of the Senate. He not only headed the Senate Naval Affairs Committee but also served on the Appropriations Committee and sat on the Steering Committee. As George Kibbe Turner of McClure's Magazine put it, Hale had "his hands on two-thirds of the financial patronage that goes out of Congress."^7

Despite Senator Hale, Admiral Taylor was determined to produce change. He could count on the support of many other officers, two of the most famous being Rear Admirals Luce and Mahan. Although retired, these two men remained among the Navy's most prominent figures, and Mahan maintained an active correspondence with Roosevelt. The Mahan-Roosevelt relationship played a notable role in reform efforts, for the admiral added an august voice to those calling for reform and he helped to prod Roosevelt into action from time to time. Because future presidents might not prove so solicitous of naval preparedness as Roosevelt, Taylor and the other reformers decided to act while they had a friend in the White House.^8

They recruited the new Secretary of the Navy, William H. Moody, to their cause. Roosevelt replaced John D. Long, who had remained Navy Secretary in McKinley's second administration. He liked Long, but differences in temperament, age, and ideas of sea power prevented him from
retaining his former boss. Roosevelt wanted someone who shared his vision of a large powerful Navy, and Moody fit the bill as a dedicated navalist. The two men had been acquainted for several years, and Henry Cabot Lodge pushed Moody for Secretary because the appointment would preserve a Cabinet seat for Massachusetts and because it would open up Moody's seat in the U.S. House for Lodge's son-in-law.46

One of the most active and able of Roosevelt's Secretaries of the Navy, Moody figured large in both drives for a naval general staff during the Roosevelt administration. He was Navy Secretary for only the first drive, but he would be called into service for the second, although he had gone on to become Attorney General—his top choice for a Cabinet seat—and then a Supreme Court justice.

Roosevelt maintained his distance from the first campaign for naval reform in 1903-04. He took the same approach that he had followed earlier in the fight for an Army General Staff. He provided endorsements but let his subordinates lead the actual campaign on Capitol Hill.50

Prompted in part by a letter from Admiral Mahan, Roosevelt decided to make a strong appeal for a naval general staff in his annual message for 1903.51 He asked Admiral Taylor to write a paragraph on a general staff bill, declaring that "I shall push for it all I know how."52 That December, the President's message rang with a call for a general staff, citing the need to insure "proper readiness for
emergencies." After the message, however, Roosevelt did not campaign for a naval general staff bill with all his might. He stood on the sidelines and let Admiral Taylor and Secretary Moody lead the charge.

Roosevelt never explained his behavior. His statement to Admiral Taylor implied that he would go beyond a powerful message in his annual report. He may have felt that his actions were sufficient. Moody and Taylor were an able team, and they required only a clear sign of executive support to launch their bid. Yet other interests were just more important to Roosevelt. He may, for example, have tested the political winds and decided that the opposition was too strong at a time when he wanted to focus all of his energies on winning the presidency in his own right.

Roosevelt also did not need to risk marring his record of success regarding the Navy. He could evoke national pride by pointing to the fleet expansion during his watch, having won authorization of ten battleships from 1901 to 1904. Congress might not embrace his shipbuilding program so readily in the future if he campaigned for a measure that threatened congressional interests. Any attempt at serious naval administrative reform would raise fears that extraneous, but politically rewarding, navy yards and stations might be closed for reasons of military efficiency by a preparedness-minded naval staff. Moreover, if Roosevelt were closely associated with an important naval
reform bill and it failed, he would be handing his opponents ammunition to take shots at his Navy record in the coming presidential campaign. The bill faced a stiff battle, so Roosevelt's cautious stance seemed the most prudent course. He could claim credit if it passed, and if it failed he had not invested much personal political capital in it.

The advocates of naval reform knew that the congressional current was running against them. Although the President had called for a naval general staff, a request that Secretary Moody had echoed in his annual report, such an ambitious proposal stood no chance of passing. Secretary Moody forwarded, instead, a bill that followed the evolutionary approach and asked for the legislative sanction of the General Board. The board would remain an advisory body, but the bill would give it a head who resembled a chief of staff in all but name. With this official in place, the General Board would be a little closer to being a general staff.

The naval reform bill encountered stiff ideological opposition in the House Naval Affairs Committee. Secretary Moody, Admiral Taylor, Admiral Dewey, and others appeared before the committee in April 1904, but their testimony was in vain. Members of the committee expressed skepticism, worrying that the bill would give military men too much influence in the conduct of naval affairs. John Rixey, Democrat of Virginia, feared that a General Board sanctioned
by law might act independently and compete with the Secretary's authority. Adolph Meyer, Democrat of Louisiana, seconded Rixey's concern about undue military influence, wondering whether an ignorant or lazy Secretary would rely excessively on the board. 

Opponents from within the Navy Department echoed these same views, and their statements issued a coup de grace to the reform bill. They spoke with Secretary Moody's full knowledge because he wanted a free airing of all opinions. Assistant Secretary Charles Darling, for example, lambasted the legislation, claiming that it would reduce the Secretary to a figurehead and that it smelled of European militarism. Several bureau chiefs reinforced Darling's testimony and worried that a newly reconstituted General Board would make a grab at executive powers. Combined with congressional reluctance, these protests stopped the bill in committee. After the hearings, the Naval Affairs Committee went into executive session and could not find a consensus to report the bill to the rest of the House. The first drive for a naval general staff had failed.

Roosevelt shared some of the blame for the setback. He possessed considerable powers of persuasion and, as president, the position to popularize issues, but he refused to weigh into the contest, other than helping to launch the campaign with his annual message. He may indeed have sensed that opposition was too strong from the outset and decided
not to waste himself in a futile fight; after all, he regarded politics as the art of the possible. Still, of all the bill’s supporters, Roosevelt possessed the most resources to create better conditions for passage, but apparently he was unwilling to endure the cost.

The cause of a naval general staff languished for the next few years. Reformers suffered a major blow when two of their foremost advocates departed the scene soon after the defeat of 1904. Admiral Taylor died unexpectedly in July 1904, and Secretary Moody left to become Attorney General. Admiral Luce kept the flame alive and used his many contacts in Washington to lobby for reform, but Moody’s successors did not respond with much interest. Paul Morton viewed his job as a stepping stone to the Treasury; Charles Bonaparte looked forward to following Moody as Attorney General; and Victor Howard Metcalf wanted simply to be left alone. Reformers kept hoping that the President would restart the drive for a naval staff, perhaps through the appointment of a reform-minded Secretary. Instead, Roosevelt kept appointing men like Morton, whom one officer referred to as “a bag of cold mush.” The President avoided taking up naval reform, despite the fact that he had buried his opponent in the 1904 election and seemed politically stronger than ever.

A younger generation of naval officers revived the reform effort in the last year of Roosevelt’s presidency.
Commander Sims and Commander Albert L. Key led the second drive for naval reform, and both men possessed ties to the chief executive. Key was a former naval aide to the President, while Sims served in that capacity in 1908. Sims had already impressed Roosevelt with his work on naval gunnery and had ingratiated himself at the White House through his wit, intelligence, and burning desire to improve the Navy. He could count on ready access to the President, and in fact Roosevelt set aside time just to talk to naval officers. Sims recorded that Roosevelt sometimes held special conferences with officers after dinner in his library. "They were free and open. He invited criticism. In fact, he distrusted those who did not criticise, even some of his own actions." Roosevelt especially welcomed Sims's opinions as a check on official reports from the Navy Department.

Sims and Key abandoned the evolutionary strategy of Admiral Taylor in favor of a much more dramatic approach. They drew their inspiration from the so-called muckrakers, reform-minded individuals who employed large-circulation magazines to alert the public to corruption, unsafe products, unfair business practices, and other problems of modern life. Muckrakers attempted to excite moral outrage in hopes of creating a consensus for overturning various wrongs. Naval reformers intended to use the same method to secure a general staff. They needed an issue that would
catch the public eye and force the President and Congress to act on a naval staff; they found one in allegations of grave defects in the design of American battleships.

An article entitled "The Needs of Our Navy" appeared in the January 1908 issue of McClure's Magazine and broadcast claims about dangerous flaws in American battleships. Henry Reuterdahl, a marine artist and American editor of Jane's Fighting Ships, penned the piece, but Sims had supplied much of his information. The article charged that mixed-caliber American battleships suffered, among other things, from potentially fatal flaws in the placement of protective armor belts, the design of ammunition hoists and turrets, and the inadequacy of armor around secondary gun batteries. Reuterdahl placed the blame for these problems on the Navy Department's system of administration. Uncoordinated bureaus had caused the flaws but refused to fix them because it would reflect poorly on the judgment of bureau officers. Reuterdahl hinted at a naval general staff as a remedy because such an agency could represent the views of sea-going officers and instruct the bureaus on the military requirements of warships.

Roosevelt was not ready to exploit the outcry sparked by the Reuterdahl article and to push reform of the Navy Department. After having ordered a slowdown in battleship building in 1905, he decided in 1907 that international conditions required an acceleration of construction.
Tensions with Japan motivated him as did the competition to build all-big-gun battleships after Britain's launch of the Dreadnought in 1906. He told Senator Hale and Representative George Foss, head of the House Naval Affairs Committee, "We cannot afford to fall behind, and we shall fall behind if we fail to build first-class battleships ourselves." By 1908, however, Roosevelt was not about to gain anything from Capitol Hill with ease because his political position had deteriorated. Business interests disliked his regulatory policies, and many members of Congress wished to put the domineering chief executive in his place. The fact that Roosevelt was nearing the end of his second term—a politically weak position for any president—did not help matters. Nor did a financial panic in October 1907, for which many blamed him.

Given these conditions, Roosevelt was not well disposed toward a new drive for a naval general staff. He wanted a naval staff but not at the expense of capital ships, which he wanted even more. Although a general staff could increase naval efficiency, battleships were something tangible that he could put to direct use guarding the nation and advancing American foreign policy. They were not an abstract concept but real objects that symbolized the power, the resourcefulness, and the accomplishments of the nation and its commander in chief. In light of the mood on Capitol Hill, Roosevelt did not wish to jeopardize his chances for
battleships by pushing an issue that threatened to anger key Senators and Representatives.\textsuperscript{73}

The President, however, did not completely abandon the naval reformers. They were the type of dynamic younger officers that he wanted to lead the armed services, but they had become too brash in this case. When Secretary Metcalf began to seek out the sources of Reuterdahl's information, Roosevelt protected the reformers from disciplinary action. After all, one of his favorites, Sims, was largely responsible for the controversy. Sims, in fact, took advantage of his position as a naval aide and went to the President when Metcalf's probe began. Roosevelt held initially that Sims had been insubordinate, but he soon backed down after the resourceful commander reminded him of the Round Robin letter in 1898. After a hearty laugh, Roosevelt agreed to halt Metcalf's investigation.\textsuperscript{74}

In the meantime, the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs launched an investigation into the charges of battleship defects. As head of the committee, Senator Hale aimed to deal solely with the question of defects and demonstrate the exaggerated nature of the charges. He hoped that this approach would satisfy the country, prevent any tampering with the Navy Department, and discredit the reformers. Hale was determined to halt any movement towards a naval general staff. In his view, such a body not only threatened civilian control of the Navy, but it might eventually call
for the closure of the navy yard at Kittery in his home state of Maine because the yard no longer served any vital military purpose.\(^75\)

After the hearings convened on February 25, 1908, committee members made every effort to discourage reformers and to accommodate witnesses who would defend existing battleship designs. The Senators permitted no testimony on the problems of naval administration and allowed the Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, Rear Admiral Washington Capps, to cross-examine witnesses who were critical of present designs. When charges of a whitewash began to appear, the committee abruptly ended the hearings before popular agitation forced it to consider administrative issues.\(^76\)

Roosevelt's concentration on capital ships paid off in part: Congress authorized two of the four proposed battleships on April 27, 1908. The President's decision to defer on naval reform helped to smooth the way for this success. If he had pushed naval reform along with four battleships, he may have provoked Capitol Hill to the point that it would have given him nothing. After the vote, Roosevelt claimed that he had never expected to get the entire program but asserted, "I knew I would not get thru two...unless I made a violent fight for four."\(^77\) He also exalted that "as a result of the fight" Congress had
"announced as a steady policy that of building two ships a year—a great gain."[79]

Discouraged but undefeated, Sims and Key felt they could still force progress towards a naval general staff. With the November elections in sight, the country reacted against the general do-nothing attitude of Congress, while the President’s popularity soared, adding to his leverage on Capitol Hill. [79] The reformers viewed the President as their best hope, despite his recent lack of support. His political talent and his interest in the Navy made him an important asset, if the reformers could only goad him to act on their behalf.

Sims and Key followed a familiar course to prompt the President: they pointed out flaws in the design of American battleships. This time, however, they aimed their fire at the newest ships, the first American dreadnoughts, and avoided a public exposé of the problem. Commander Key informed the Navy Department of serious design flaws in the battleship North Dakota, which he had personally inspected at its construction site. [80] Key’s criticisms brought no response from the Navy Department, so Commander Sims laid the matter directly in the President’s lap in June 1908. Roosevelt reacted immediately and agreed to call a conference of the General Board, the Naval War College staff, selected line officers, and members of the shipbuilding bureaus to consider battleship designs. They
were to meet at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, beginning on July 22, 1908. For the reformers, a confirmation of defects in the North Dakota would validate their charges about problems with the Navy's administrative organization.

The Newport Conference did not live up to the reformers' expectations. The conferees backed the overall design of the North Dakota and proclaimed that the next two battleships, the Florida and the Utah, would employ the same characteristics. Criticism of the bureaus was thus deflected, and the meeting did not generate fresh momentum for a naval staff.

After the Newport Conference, Roosevelt acknowledged problems in the Navy Department, but he refused to move on a naval general staff as the last months of his term ticked away. The naval reformers, nonetheless, kept urging him to act. Sims and then Key sent letters in August and September 1908, asking him to propose a commission on naval administrative reform. Roosevelt endorsed the idea but did nothing. He had the election of his successor to worry about, and he had the authorization of new battleships on his mind again. He aimed to secure another set of battleships before departing office in March 1909.

Consequently, Roosevelt sought again to avoid issues that would upset Congress and provoke a reaction against his building proposals. Toward that end, he strove in autumn
1908 to quash controversy over reform within the Navy. After Rear Admiral Capps attacked the reformers in a Chicago speech, Roosevelt ordered that officers could not discuss any aspect of the Newport Conference in public without authorization from himself or the Secretary of the Navy. A second attack by Capps in his annual report for 1908 sent charges flying between the admiral and Commander Key, which led the President to condemn Capps's actions as "gravely reprehensible," to strip the admiral of his duties as acting Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering, and to threaten court martial proceedings against both men.

The increasing level of back-biting over a naval staff indicated that the issue required some type of resolution to restore harmony in the service. Roosevelt needed to act on a naval staff, but in such a way that he did not upset Congress before it had reviewed his latest proposal for four more battleships. His new Secretary of the Navy, Truman H. Newberry, handed him the opportunity. Newberry had long been assistant secretary and replaced the ailing Victor Howard Metcalf for the last months of Roosevelt's presidency. He quickly issued a plan to improve the service. Newberry's scheme emphasized efficiency in the navy yards but also proposed to resolve the problem of a naval staff. The Secretary hoped to enlarge the General Board to include representatives of the departmental bureaus. This arrangement would supposedly improve
coordination of departmental activities while avoiding a formal general staff. Moreover, Newberry's proposals for both the yards and the General Board could be accomplished on the executive branch's authority to assign duties. Thus the administration could by-pass Congress to achieve limited change.\textsuperscript{57}

Reformist officers rejected Newberry's scheme, but the President seized on it as a useful expedient. Reformers complained that Newberry was simply rearranging an awkward system and that his plan would ruin the existing General Board as an advisory body because the addition of bureau officers would bog it down in administrative detail.\textsuperscript{58} Roosevelt, nevertheless, accepted the plan as part of his strategy to secure more battleships. To most observers, the President would appear to be acting on departmental reform, and he would thereby shore up confidence in the naval establishment. He would also be issuing, however, a veiled threat to Congress that the executive branch was now prepared to go after their local interests in the navy yards by making the yards more efficient. His message was subtle enough to avoid a collision, but he had signaled that he might make an all-out bid for change unless members gave him more battleships. To signify this intention and, at the same time, to defuse complaints about naval administration, he called a meeting on departmental reform on the day that the House Naval Affairs Committee was scheduled to report
the Navy bill. The so-called Washington Naval Conference consisted of former Secretaries, retired senior officers, and active rear admirals—or as one commentator later quipped, "a fine array of ancient mariners"—who merely endorsed the Newberry plan.\textsuperscript{22}

Roosevelt's maneuvering helped secure two more battleships, a repeat of the authorizations of 1908. He combined the initiative on naval reform with reminders about tensions in Europe and the possibility of renewed friction with Japan. Public interest in the world cruise also helped to ease passage. Opposition in the House was stiff as Representatives denounced even two battleships as expensive, unnecessary, provocative, and militaristic. One protested that Americans should not "become with our navy the swaggering bullies of the sea."\textsuperscript{23} In the end, arguments about preparedness, international tension, national respect, and the protection of overseas interests won the day, and the House voted for two battleships on January 22. Senator Hale was ready to acquiesce to two ships, contending that because of the world cruise "the whole country is convulsed with a fury and fever in favor of the navy...."\textsuperscript{24}

The President turned his attention to a naval staff once he was assured of his battleships. He had reservations about Newberry's scheme for the General Board, and in January 1909 a letter from Admiral Mahan persuaded him to take further action.\textsuperscript{25} Five days after the House vote,
Roosevelt established the Naval Reorganization Commission and charged it with creating a plan to improve the current system of departmental administration, noting that the commission should consider the question of military advisers in its deliberations. Former Secretary Moody, by then on the Supreme Court, headed the panel, which became publicly known as the Moody Commission. Many distinguished personalities joined him. For additional civilian members, Roosevelt drew upon former Secretary Morton and Judge Alston G. Dayton, a past member of the House Naval Affairs Committee. To represent the Navy, the President chose Rear Admirals Luce; Mahan; William Folger, a former bureau chief; William Cowles, a past bureau chief and the President's brother-in-law; and Robley D. Evans, the commander of the first leg of the world cruise.  

Although its work had no realistic chance of gaining congressional approval before Roosevelt’s presidency expired in March 1909, the Moody Commission diligently attacked its task and completed it with dispatch. Commission members produced two reports before the end of February 1909. Dated February 20 and sent to Congress five days later, the first report articulated the principles behind a naval general staff and helped pave the way for the commission’s specific proposals, which Roosevelt dispatched to Capitol Hill on February 26 with a strong endorsement. The commission proposed a thorough overhaul of the departmental
organization. It preserved the bureaus but grouped them by function under five divisions, along with the other parts of the Navy Department such as the Marine Corps and the Naval Observatory. The heads of the five divisions would sit on a General Council and would presumably provide advice on naval policy, while a smaller Military Council would tend to the particulars of preparing the Navy for war. Together these two bodies would perform the functions of a general staff, with the chief of the Division of Naval Operations serving as the Secretary's principal military adviser.

Why did Roosevelt proceed with the Moody Commission when he knew that Congress would likely ignore its work? He may have been attempting to clear his "historical skirts." If a major war erupted in the near future and the existing system of naval administration broke under the strain, Roosevelt could evade blame by pointing to the Moody Commission as an example of his efforts to reform the Navy Department. He may also have been hoping to start momentum that the next administration could carry forward to success. After all, his friend and protégé, William Howard Taft, would succeed him, and Roosevelt expected that his policies would continue for the next four years.

The work of the Moody Commission was not wasted because it provided the outlines for change in the future. Taft's Navy Secretary, George von Lengerke Meyer, determined to build upon the legacy of the Roosevelt administration. He
refined Newberry's reforms in the navy yards and attempted to alter the departmental system of command as far as his authority would allow. Meyer instituted a system of naval aids based upon the recommendations of the Moody Commission and his own creation, the Swift Board. Each naval aid was responsible for advising the Secretary on one of four broad areas of the Navy Department: operations, personnel, material, and inspections. They possessed no executive authority, but their advice allowed the Secretary to coordinate bureau activities much more effectively. Together with the General Board, the naval aids formed a de facto general staff. Meyer's successor in the Wilson administration, Josephus Daniels, let the aid system languish because he distrusted military men and their advice. In 1915, however, rising worries about the war in Europe and American preparedness finally forced this staunch advocate of civilian control to accept a Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), who was charged with conducting fleet operations and preparing war plans. Nearly thirty years later in the midst of another world war, the Navy would have a single officer responsible for the coordination of the bureaus, command of all naval vessels, and advising the President on naval matters. The combined office of Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet and CNO was not the

* He used the word "aid" rather than "aide" throughout his tenure.
general staff that the reformers of Roosevelt's day had envisioned, but it fulfilled their basic aspirations.

**Conclusion**

Roosevelt's record on the Navy's institutions of command was mixed. He employed the General Board often and in accord with its intended purpose, a contrast to the way that he sometimes burdened the General Staff with comparatively unimportant assignments. The difference perhaps lay in the fact that the Navy was the President's first interest, the first line of American defense, and a key element in his approach to international relations. Roosevelt may not have pushed harder for a naval general staff in part because the General Board appeared to function well enough, meeting his needs for advice on war plans, the location of bases, the composition of the fleet, and the other essentials of naval policy. But institutional matters lost out with the President anyway when the material development of the fleet was at stake. He opted for more battleships when his political choices narrowed; after all, a general staff could not meet an opposing fleet in battle, stand as a symbol of national grandeur, or go on parade to popularize the Navy and its commander in chief.

Whether Roosevelt was fighting for more battleships or conferring with the General Board, the presidency benefited in standing and influence. The General Board facilitated
the chief executive’s ability to direct policy and operations within the Navy and to challenge the traditional influence of Congress in naval affairs. It was the beginning of a process of executive encroachment that would culminate in the 1960s when Robert McNamara’s planning-programing-budgeting system virtually closed Congress out of the making of military policy.* Although Roosevelt’s campaign for battleships reduced the chance of a naval general staff, he won tough fights and reasserted himself as a legislative leader at a time when the rest of his program had ground to a halt in Congress. His victories signaled that the executive branch would play a much more assertive role in deciding the type and quantity of weapons that America would build in the twentieth century. In his pursuit of military readiness, Roosevelt was determined that the United States should lead the world in technological attainment.
NOTES


2. Ibid., 47, 64, 88-95; "Henry C. Taylor, U.S. Navy," Box 1, Folder 19, Henry C. Taylor Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Rear Admiral George Belknap sung Taylor's praises to the Secretary of the Navy in 1891. He described Taylor as a "most excellent and able officer" who was "eminently fitted for command." Taylor's "active brain [was] ever at work," and he displayed "the happy results that lie in the clever grasp of the iron hand in the velvet glove." Belknap's comments are contained in, George Belknap to the Secretary of the Navy, 24 May 1891, Taylor Papers.


7. General Order 544, 13 March 1900, Letters of the General Board of the Navy, Letterbook 1, Box 1, Record
Group 80, NARA. Henceforth this collection will be cited as, RG 80, General Board.

8. Ibid.


11. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 9 February 1903, File 8857-36, RG 80, General Records, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 17 October 1903, Letterbook 2, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 October 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 October 1905, Letterbook 4, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 2 October 1906, Letterbook 4, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 26 September 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 October 1908, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.


15. Rear Admiral H.C. Taylor to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 July 1902, Letterbook 2, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Rear Admiral H.C. Taylor to the President of the Naval War College, 8 July 1902, in ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 22 July 1902, in ibid.
16. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 19 April 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.


20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.; Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 10 August 1907, in Morison, *Letters*, 5: 745; General Board of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy, 15 August 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, RG 80, General Board, NARA. Specifically, the board planned for a force of eighteen modern battleships, one older battleship, eight armored cruisers, two monitors, and a total of 13 first-, second-, and third-class cruisers to be available in the Pacific.

23. Lieutenant Command E.B. Underwood to Admiral George Dewey, 28 May 1901, Dewey Papers, Box 56, Folder 1; Report of the General Board, 25 June 1901, in ibid.; Minutes of General Board meeting, September 1901, in ibid; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, undated (ca. 1-27 June 1903), Box 15, Folder, in ibid.

24. Spencer Miller to Admiral George Dewey, 17 September 1902, in ibid., Box 14, Folder 1; Admiral George Dewey to Spencer Miller, 24 September 1902, in ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 29 September 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 20 December 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, in ibid.; Costello, "General Board," 185, 188.
25. Lease to the United States by the Government of Cuba, File 13948-65, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

26. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 1 February 1905, G.B. 406, Letterbooks, RG 80, General Board, NARA.

27. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 15 June 1903, Letterbook 2, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to Theodore Roosevelt, 4 August 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, in ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, undated (ca. 1-27 June 1903), Dewey Papers, Box 15, Folder 4; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 5 March 1908, File 13669, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

28. Admiral George Dewey to Theodore Roosevelt, 4 August 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA.

29. Ibid.


31. Major General J.F. Bell to the Secretary of War, 21 December 1907, File 398406, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 5 March 1908, File 13669, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

32. Theodore Roosevelt to Victor Howard Metcalf, 11 February 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 937-39. The same letter was sent to the Secretary of War: Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, 11 February 1908, File 13669, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

33. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 5 March 1908, File 13669, ibid.


35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid; Reckner, White Fleet, 8.
39. H. Wood to the Senior Officer of the U.S. naval force in Venezuelan Waters, 9 July 1902, Letterbook 2, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 November 1906, Letterbook 4, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 December 1906, ibid.; The General Board to the President of the War College, 28 April 1908, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.; Proclamation Establishing Defensive Sea Areas (Draft), File 20123-8, RG 80, General Records, NARA; "Naval Districts," Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 6; John Seiser Muckle to Charles H. Darling, 29 May 1903, ibid., Box 15, Folder 3; A Bill, To Provide for the Organization of a United States Auxiliary Naval Force, ibid; Costello, "General Board," 107-10. The board's war portfolios included such titles as "Yangtze River Plan," "Strategical Review of Harbors on the West Coast of South America," "...Map of the Republic of Panama," and "Strategic and Tactical Review of Japanese Harbors."


42. H.C. Taylor to George Dewey, 22 June 1901, Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 1.

43. Ibid.

44. Taylor took a very long view regarding general staff reform. He stressed that "The Germans took fifty years to perfect their General Staff; we will not probably achieve it in less than twenty-five years." See, Taylor, "Memorandum on General Staff," p. 441.


47. Ibid.

48. H.C. Taylor to S.B. Luce, 8 April 1902, Luce Papers, Container 11, Roll 10.

50. Roosevelt had exhibited similar behavior as Assistant Secretary. Taylor had attempted to exploit Roosevelt's enthusiastic navalism in May 1897 and submitted a general staff plan to the assistant secretary. Roosevelt merely endorsed the scheme and forwarded it to Secretary Long's office, where it stood no chance of acceptance. The Assistant Secretary was more absorbed with preparing the fleet for trouble with Spain and had little time for Taylor's proposal. See, Theodore Roosevelt to Henry C. Taylor, 24 May 1897, in Morison, *Letters*, 1: 617; Costello, "General Board," 15-16.


55. "Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1903)," in *Annual Reports of the Navy Department*, 3-6.


57. U.S. Congress, H.R. 15403 *Hearings*, 920-22, 945

58. Ibid., 927, 935, 946-47, 954-56, 962-65, 981.


60. Park Benjamin to S.B. Luce, 25 April 1905, Luce Papers, Box 12, Roll 11; S.B. Luce to George Dewey [Memorandum], 25 March 1905, in ibid.; W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 15 February 1906, in ibid.; "Henry Clay

61. W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 19 May 1905, Luce Papers, Box 12, Roll 11; W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 15 October 1905, in ibid.; W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 15 December 1905, in ibid.; W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 15 February 1906, in ibid.; S.B. Luce to Herbert Satterlee, 15 November 1907, Box 12, Roll 11.

62. W.J. Barnette to S.B. Luce, 19 May 1905, Luce Papers, Box 12, Roll 11.

63. William S. Sims, Note attached to letter from Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 22 September 1904, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1.


68. Ibid., p. 262.


73. Roosevelt, State Papers, 554.

74. Navy Department to Captain Sims, 15 February 1908, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 7.


78. Ibid.

79. Hatch, Big Stick, pp. 72-73.
80. Albert L. Key to Victor H. Metcalf, 9 June 1908, Roosevelt Papers, Series 1.


83. Ibid.

84. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 10 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6; Albert L. Key to Theodore Roosevelt, 18 September 1908, Roosevelt Papers, Series 1; Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 13 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1171. The idea of a commission was a brainchild of Admiral Luce. Stephen B. Luce to W.S. Sims, 1 August 1908, Luce Papers, Box 12, Roll 12.


87. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Methods of Conducting Business and Departmental Changes in the Navy Department, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Doc. 693, pp. 4, 15, 26 29; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Reorganization of the Navy Department, February 6, 1909, No. 60, Senate Library, vol. 47, pp. 879–80. Henceforth cited as Reorganization, No. 60; Paul T. Heffron, Truman H.
Newberry, 1 December 1908-5 March 1909, in American Secretaries, 1: 490.


89. Reorganization, No. 60, pp. 862; Theodore Roosevelt to Truman Newberry, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1456-57; The quotation is from, Park Benjamin, "The Reorganization of the Navy Department," Independent, 67 (December 1909): 1385.

90. Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., (22 January 1909), 43: 1303-06, 1308.

91. Ibid., (15 February 1909) 43: 2380.


CHAPTER VI
ROOSEVELT AND THE IMPLEMENTS OF WAR

President Roosevelt strode boldly into the twentieth century in his search for new and improved military technology. If not fully appreciating bureaucratic institutions or military professionalism, he understood the importance of modern technology, weaponry, and equipment. Roosevelt saw a correlation between technological leadership and national power, and consequently he pushed aggressively for new military technologies or the perfection of existing ones. The Army and Navy required up-to-date materiel if they were to remain credible instruments of national power in an age of great power rivalries and industrial warfare. Roosevelt's dedication to technological advance would thrust the presidency on to ground untrod by previous chief executives.¹

Roosevelt was the first president to grasp fully the implications of industrialized warfare for the peacetime military readiness of the United States. The Industrial Revolution had made the engines of war extremely complex, especially in the realm of naval warfare, and Roosevelt attempted to assimilate an immense amount of technological
knowledge. His inquiries ranged from the design of bayonets and spurs to the improvement of coast defenses and the design of battleships. He drew heavily upon experts but also acquired extensive personal knowledge of technological matters. Among elected officials, his grasp of military technology rivaled that of longtime members of the congressional committees on military and naval affairs. As a result, Roosevelt was better able to impose his ideas on the design and production of American armaments and thereby challenge committee members in a realm where they had enjoyed much influence, sometimes greater than that of the executive branch.

Roosevelt showed an interest in technology that circumstances increasingly forced on later presidents. A certain amount of boyish fascination inspired him, but a concern for military preparedness was also a motivation. He recognized that a link existed between the modernity and quality of technology and the level of military preparedness, a connection that grew only stronger as the twentieth century progressed. As aircraft, missiles, satellites, and other sophisticated devices shrunk the world, presidents required familiarity with the capabilities of a wide range of weaponry and other equipment if they were to uphold national security. For example, the effectiveness of one particularly potent technology—the nuclear bomb—and its various delivery systems became a cornerstone of
American defense after World War II. Chief executives required technological knowledge to set defense policy, convince Congress and the public to purchase expensive armaments, conduct arms control negotiations, and integrate American defenses into a system of international alliances. National or even global armageddon was the potential cost of failure. Roosevelt did not have to worry about such dire consequences, but even for him American security increasingly hinged on the right technological choices.

Roosevelt focused on improving naval technology, an interest in keeping with his overall concern for Navy affairs. He did not neglect the Army entirely, but the Navy was more technologically dependent, the first line of American defense, and the chief guardian of the new great power status of the United States. Moreover, Roosevelt's personal exposure to the Army had come at a lower level than with the Navy. He therefore aimed at minor improvements in Army materiel and, with one or two exceptions, did not go beyond pushing changes in small arms, uniforms, bladed weapons, and other similar items. For the Navy, Roosevelt concentrated his energies on the battle line, although he also displayed interest in other facets of naval technology. He worked hard at speeding the construction of battleships, installing more powerful weaponry, enhancing ship designs, and increasing endurance. His thinking was so advanced, in fact, that he proposed the modern all-big-gun battleship at
a time when the H.M.S. Dreadnought was still a gleam in the eye of British naval planners.

Roosevelt's interest in military technology reflected American culture, for technological progress had become intertwined with the national identity. Americans viewed technological achievement as evidence of the superiority of their political and economic institutions. For example, they celebrated the nation's centennial with an industrial exposition. Technological accomplishments helped to strengthen American institutions by supplying an abundance of products and wealth to a relatively large portion of the population and by providing the means to realize the nation's "manifest destiny" on the North American continent.2 Roosevelt joined other Americans in viewing technological leadership as synonymous with national fitness, a sign of the exceptional excellence of American thought, character, and institutions. Given such a strong cultural impetus, his support for technological innovation was not surprising, although the degree of his involvement in various projects was exceptional, given the burdens of his office.

Army Technology

Roosevelt devoted little attention to Army materiel in his first years as president. He may have pushed more major innovations but for the fact that the Industrial Revolution
had not yet hit the Army with full force. Inventors were still working out the potential of the internal combustion engine, and the conquest of the air was more theory than reality. For his part, Roosevelt lacked knowledge of the most technologically intensive branch of the Army, the artillery, so his contributions aimed at correcting deficiencies that he had noted as a volunteer cavalry officer. He suggested a smaller spur to reduce interference with walking, but uniforms were higher on his list of priorities, in part because of a change in weaponry. He laid out his ideas to Assistant Secretary of War William Cary Sanger soon after taking office. The blue shirt, he argued, was obsolete with the passing of the black powder musket, for "dark blue is one of the worst possible colors for actual campaign use"; a neutral hue such as gray or brown would provide a less obvious target. Roosevelt's claims were valid, and in fact the Army entered World War I with uniforms of earth colors. Along with disliking the color of shirts, he felt that the service blouse was too restrictive, especially the collar. The War Department produced a blouse to Roosevelt's satisfaction, but only after he overruled a departmental decision against the looser collar.

Midway through Roosevelt's presidency, the Russo-Japanese War inspired White House inquiries about Army weaponry and equipment. Roosevelt was determined that the
Army learn "correct" lessons from this great power conflict. As a consequence, he entered War Department debates over the adaptability of Japanese weapons and tactics. Japanese night assaults had revived interest in swords and bayonets, so Roosevelt directed the War Department in January 1905 to design improved bayonets for the troops and swords for officers. He was particularly dissatisfied with the current bayonet, which "broke short off as soon as hit with even moderate violence," and recommended a smaller triangular bayonet as an improvement. Roosevelt would have preferred that officers carry rifles, but if they were to carry a sword it should be one "that they can cut or thrust with." Special committees of the General Staff deliberated designs for the two weapons, discarded the existing bayonet in favor of the knife bayonet, and split over the length of the sword. The President's triangular bayonet failed to pass tests for stress.

Roosevelt's interest in swords and bayonets receded by mid-1905, and instead he cautioned against slavishly imitating the Japanese. As citizen-soldiers and not samurai, American troops came from a different tradition and would do better at repulsing attacks at close quarters with rifles than with bayonets, if properly trained. After all, "a really good man with a loaded rifle who has no bayonet will at close quarters normally beat a really good man who relies on the bayonet."
Roosevelt became more enthusiastic about a War Department plan to develop and issue entrenching tools in 1905. Although the idea had circulated in the Army for years, the Russo-Japanese War probably prompted departmental officials to act, for the conflict had settled down into siege warfare. Soldiers needed equipment with which to dig in quickly if they were to survive on the modern battlefield. The main problem lay in making the shovels, picks, and other implements efficient, yet small and light. After samples of the tools came out, Roosevelt inspected them, found them "to be just right," and asked to keep them. General Chaffee, however, put off the eager chief executive, explaining that the Ordnance Department required the tools as models for large-scale production. He promised to send Roosevelt a pair as soon as a new set was struck.10

Soldiers needed tools to dig in quickly given the ongoing perfection of the machine gun. Roosevelt was introduced to this technology on the San Juan Heights in 1898. After his famous charge up Kettle Hill, he thrilled to hear a unit of Gatling guns open fire in support of the American attack on nearby San Juan Hill. The peculiar drumming noise of the guns was the only sound that Roosevelt ever heard the Rough Riders cheer in battle.11 Lieutenant John Henry Parker commanded the Gatlings, and Roosevelt repeatedly saw Parker's unit in action until the fighting ended. The two men formed a lasting friendship. Parker,
for instance, administered the oath when Roosevelt took his commission as a colonel, and in the Rough Riders Roosevelt lauded the lieutenant, proclaiming, "I think Parker deserved rather more credit than any other man in the entire campaign." Despite the impression made by Parker, Roosevelt's advocacy of machine guns did not resume until late in his presidency. He did write an introduction in 1898 to one of Parker's books, but he made no other moves to promote the technology until October 1908. The President weighed into a debate about the proper deployment of machine guns in battle. These weapons were obviously deadly—the Maxim machine gun could produce "a leaden hail of 600 rifle bullets a minute"—but Army officers were unsure about the best way to integrate machine gun units into the fighting line. Parker wanted a separate machine gun corps to promote expert use of this complicated mechanism, while War Department officials and members of the General Staff favored incorporation of machine gun detachments into existing cavalry and infantry outfits. They wanted to insure the availability of this weapon to the largest number of units. The War Department had almost ruled against Parker when Roosevelt intervened. The enterprising Parker, by then a colonel, had by-passed official channels and presented his case directly to his old comrade.
Roosevelt grasped the heart of both arguments and offered a middle way. He accepted the wisdom of attaching machine gun troops to infantry and cavalry regiments and ordered experiments to begin immediately through the creation of a machine gun outfit in one cavalry regiment. But the President did not believe that much progress was possible without the help of expert officers, "whose special duty it is to supervise and work the companies up." He proposed to meet Parker's demands for specialists if Congress approved the necessary increase in officers. Congress did not respond, and the organization of a machine gun service never occurred. 

Although unsuccessful in creating a separate service, Roosevelt had acted as a force for innovation. In this case, he sought to remove all obstacles that blocked the deployment of a promising technology. He wanted debate to end and practical tests to begin, for that was "the best and quickest way of determining such modifications as ought to be made." The Army could be caught unprepared on future battlefields unless it worked out all potential problems with machine guns in peacetime. Roosevelt knew that this weapon merited serious attention, but he could not have guessed its impact on the next war: along with artillery, the machine gun ruled the battlefield in World War I and soaked Europe in the blood of millions.
Roosevelt promoted another technology that was destined to have a great impact upon the fighting in World War I. He pushed the War Department to consider the military potential of airplanes during his second term, after officials ignored the Wright brothers' work for several years. In 1898, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he had promoted interest in Professor Samuel Langley's aviation experiments but had not been involved in air development since that time.\(^\text{19}\)

The Army was unlikely to act without prompting because it habitually treated new technologies with caution. It was particularly reluctant to test aircraft. The War Department had put $50 thousand behind Langley's flight experiments but was embarrassed when the professor's "aerodrome" plowed twice into the mud of the Potomac River in 1903. Congress refused any more support for aviation development after the failures. Official interest remained flat for the next few years until a promotional group, the Aero Club of America, organized in 1906 and championed the cause of aeronautical development. The club lobbied the President, who in turn made the War Department take a new look at heavier-than-air flying craft. Roosevelt bypassed Congress for funding and allocated money from a discretionary appropriation for national defense, which Capitol Hill had approved years earlier.\(^\text{20}\)

The War Department opened competitive bidding for three prototypes in December 1907. The Wrights won a contract and
were the only ones to deliver a craft for flight trials at Fort Myer, Virginia, in September 1908. Orville Wright's preliminary flights broke world records, brought out Cabinet members and heads of Army bureaus, and led to predictions that the perfection of the airplane would relegate "the $8,000,000 battleship to the national junk heap."\(^{21}\)

But a golden age of flight had not yet dawned. A few days after his triumphal flights, Wright crashed, severely injuring himself and killing his passenger, an army lieutenant. Thereafter, military aviation developed slowly in the United States until World War I. It lacked a major constituency, given the enduring peace, the size of the Navy, and the weakness of neighboring nations. Even as the War Department awarded contracts in February 1908, the House Committee on Military Affairs rejected any more purchases of airplanes for the immediate future. Earlier in September 1907, the General Board had rejected an aeronautical division for the Navy Department, claiming that the science of aviation was not advanced enough to be of concern.\(^{22}\)

Roosevelt's connection with aviation had not yet ended, although his next foray into aeronautics came after he left office. Curious and ever-adventurous, he took a brief flight in 1910, soaring above a Missouri crowd gathered for an air meet. The ex-president waved at the spectators, who gaped in awed silence, but his exploit did not spark renewed official interest in aviation.\(^{23}\)
Roosevelt's intervention on behalf of military aviation put him again in the role of technological innovator. His knowledge of Army technology did not go particularly deep once he got beyond the level of spurs and bayonets. But if he did not understand the exact workings of a mechanism, he could recognize its potential importance to the battlefield and the need to push development and experimentation. Thus he was always ready to order conservative bureaucrats into action and possessed little tolerance for complacency.

Roosevelt the innovator also supported a program to improve the coastal defense system. An Army responsibility, the coast defenses guarded important military sites, ports, and cities, and supposedly freed the fleet to meet an enemy in a climactic naval battle on the open sea. Immediately after Roosevelt assumed office in September 1901, he asked Secretary of War Elihu Root to inspect some of the existing coastal fortifications. The President suggested, with some jocularity, that Root "look at any blessed fortification you choose from one end of the coast-line to the other, and if you insist upon it, you shall go through the Straits of Magellan and visit the Pacific Slope as the isthmian canal will not be ready for several months yet." Root's tour was to be part of a holiday, but the trip was not frivolous because the President had a genuine interest in the coastal works.
This concern materialized in a review of the coastal defense system in 1905. Roosevelt ordered the creation of the National Coast Defense Board in February 1905 and charged it with recommending changes in coast defense policy. A previous body, the Endicott Board, had outlined the current coast defense program in 1886, but Roosevelt recognized that "so many conditions then existing have been materially modified, and the engines or implements of war have been so greatly improved, and others, untried or unknown, ... developed," that harbor defenses could be completed for much less cost than originally estimated. Secretary of War William Howard Taft headed the new board, which came to bear his name. The board was to recommend the armaments and other defensive appliances that would complete the coast defense system most economically.

The Taft Board reported to the President in February 1906. It prefaced its recommendations by noting that the nation's military situation had changed dramatically since the Endicott Board's report. The United States had developed a powerful navy and taken possession of overseas holdings that required protection. Thirty-eight ports at home and abroad were commercially and strategically important enough to merit defenses, up from the twenty-two in the Endicott Board report, which had looked exclusively at continental sites. Thus the Taft Board's estimates were bound to be higher than its predecessor's. Board members
recommended few changes in armaments because considerable modifications had already been adopted in the years since 1886. Technological improvements had reduced the number of guns and their caliber and had eliminated the need for expensive turrets, armored casements, and gun lifts. The board suggested the addition of fourteen-inch guns and called attention to the importance of wireless telegraphy, cable communications with the new possessions, and electrical appliances such as searchlights. Overall, the Taft Board estimated that the government could complete the current coastal defense system for about fifty million dollars. Although expenses would rise because of the expansion of the system, a comparison of costs of the harbor defenses common to both reports showed a savings of over twenty-two million dollars, exclusive of ammunition and land purchases.  

Roosevelt approved the Taft Board’s report, reviewing it with great interest. The report not only provided a detailed analysis of coast defense technology but outlined a policy for completing the system. Roosevelt and Taft hoped that it would guide appropriations just as the Endicott Board’s findings had helped frame congressional planning, although funding had not always been forthcoming. Money was not abundant for the Taft Board’s program either; only World War I loosened the purse strings for coastal defenses, and then for just a short time.
Naval Technology: Submarines and Torpedoes

As a complement to coastal defenses on land, submarine torpedo boats were coming into their own during Roosevelt's presidency. The idea of a submerged warship was old, but the technology became reliable only around the turn of the twentieth century. Proponents presented the vessels as a relatively cheap mechanism for defending against blockades, landing forces, or for off-shore bombardments. The submarine had many supporters in Congress and was especially popular with members opposed to the emphasis on building battleships. Within the Navy, the reception was less warm. Prejudice ran in favor of large surface combatants, and the submarine service represented a professional backwater to most officers.

Not all line officers slighted submarines. The General Board promoted submarine development enthusiastically, and Admiral Dewey threw his personal prestige behind the technology. The board incorporated submarines into its annual building program, while Dewey lobbied Congress for support. In April 1900, the Admiral testified to the House Naval Affairs Committee that Spanish submarines would have prevented him from holding his position in Manila Bay in 1898 after destroying enemy surface units. Four years later, Dewey informed Representative Ernest Roberts of the House Naval Affairs Committee that submarines have "amply demonstrated their effectiveness and usefulness as component
parts of a strong Navy" and went on to argue for an increase in submarine authorizations.\textsuperscript{31}

Roosevelt took interest in submarines in 1905 and decided to see one in operation. Curiosity about the new technology motivated him, and the fortunes of the underseas service rose in the Navy as a result. In late August 1905, the Navy dispatched the \textit{Plunger} to Oyster Bay in Long Island Sound where the President, his family, and friends could observe from the presidential yacht, the \textit{Sylph}. Roosevelt could not resist the urge to ride aboard the craft. After receiving assurances of his safety from the vessel's commander, he stole away from Sagamore Hill without the knowledge of his family or staff on August 25 and boarded the \textit{Plunger}. He received a tour and then watched as the crew took the ship through dives and a variety of other exercises. The operations of the vessel enthralled him, and after witnessing an exercise in complete darkness, he exclaimed, "I have never seen anything quite so remarkable."\textsuperscript{32} At one point the eager chief executive took over the controls and maneuvered the vessel until he was thoroughly familiar with the instruments. He spent a total of fifty-five minutes underwater and after his ride lauded the performance of the crew and ship. The next day he viewed more maneuvers from the deck of the \textit{Sylph}.\textsuperscript{33}

Roosevelt's voyage had the earmark of a schoolboy's jaunt, but it also showed submarines to be increasingly safe
and helped to lift the submariners' status in the Navy. Although newspapers decried the President's risk-taking, the venture popularized submarine technology and helped allay concerns about the reliability of the vessels. Some news accounts repeated claims that the trip was as safe as a subway ride and noted the precautions taken to ensure the President's well-being. And if he was not already supportive of the submarine service, Roosevelt became a strong proponent after his adventure, a fact that he confirmed a few days later. During his contact with the submariners, he had discovered that the Navy discriminated against them. The Navy Department did not consider submariners to be on sea duty despite the fact that they incurred certain risks in coastal waters that personnel on ocean-going vessels did not. Sea duty carried benefits regarding pay and promotion, and Roosevelt directed Secretary of the Navy Charles Bonaparte to rectify the situation and reward enlisted men in particular. The President also ordered adequate quarters for officers serving on submarines, as they had none aboard or ashore.

Roosevelt saw himself acting as a force for innovation with these measures. He ordered more equitable treatment for submariners because certain "old-style naval officers" in Washington did not recognize the potential value of submarines and impeded "the development of the submarine boat in every way." The President never envisioned
submarines as a substitute for surface craft, only as a supplement to other vessels. Indeed, they required many more years of experimentation before longer range missions were possible; their full potential began to become evident only in World War I.

Roosevelt was not only interested in submarines but also in their weaponry. Torpedoes were an important part of the naval arsenal because battleships, destroyers, and other vessels also carried them. The President marveled at the torpedo mechanism abroad the Plunger and later wondered if newer ships offered adequate protection against the devices. He was reacting to experiments with a recently developed torpedo, which, he felt, could "prove to be a very dangerous implement of warfare." Lieutenant Commander Cleland Davis had invented a torpedo that did not detonate until it penetrated the hull of a ship, and the President was aware of the destructive implications. If the mechanism proved workable, then Roosevelt recommended that "we should at once take measures in the design of our new ships as well as in those building to provide better protection...." If the Navy had already considered this question, then he wished to know what actions it had taken to meet the problem. He was intent on insuring that the Navy Department kept abreast of the latest developments.
Naval Technology: The All-Big-Gun Battleship

Roosevelt was especially determined that the Navy remain current on battleship technology. Battleships represented his principal technological interest and were the focus of many inquiries and initiatives from the White House. They were the core of naval power and therefore were central to American security. More than any other military technology, battleships lent weight to the nation’s foreign policy and supported its standing as a great power. They also symbolized the nation’s cultural and industrial dynamism. Not that long before, the United States had lagged badly in naval technology, but by Roosevelt’s presidency the country boasted some of the most powerful vessels afloat. Roosevelt’s zest for sea power and for deploying fleets raised the ongoing naval revolution to new heights in the United States. He sponsored a new type of battleship and forced changes in the process of ship design while constantly monitoring the technological condition of the battleship fleet.

Among Roosevelt’s technological interests, battleships contained the greatest potential for conflict with Congress. Capital ships cost millions of dollars and inflated the naval budget as ships became larger, especially near the close of Roosevelt’s presidency. The Connecticut cost about $7.5 million in 1902, but the North Dakota, authorized in 1907, cost more than $8.5 million and the Florida,
authorized in 1908, over $10 million. Naval appropriations in general grew from $85 million in 1901 to $118 million in 1905, and the increases continued to mount in succeeding years.  

But more than funding was at stake. Members of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee exerted considerable influence over the design of vessels and sometimes shaped them to suit their own ideas and interests. In 1903, for example, Senator Eugene Hale of Maine pushed through authorization of the 13,000 ton Idaho and Mississippi, which were already obsolete upon launch in 1907. They were too small, too slow, and lacked firepower, but they conformed better to Hale's ideas about sea power and a much more limited role for the United States in the world. The Idaho and Mississippi also fit the channel to the navy yard at Kittery, Maine, while larger vessels could not. Some observers looked at this fact and thought that Hale had wanted to send some business to his constituents. Roosevelt curbed such practices with his drive for all-big-gun battleships and the reform of the design process. Thereafter, agencies of the executive branch held more of the initiative for ship design, leaving Congress the task of questioning administration proposals and debating funding but not imposing its own ideas on ship designs to such a great extent.
The all-big-gun battleship represented the greatest technological initiative of the Roosevelt administration apart from the construction of the Panama Canal. Before 1906, battleships carried a mixed battery of four big guns (eleven inches to thirteen inches) and a larger number of medium-sized guns (eight inches to nine inches), along with an abundance of smaller rapid-fire weapons to fight off torpedo boats. The battery of the all-big-gun ship would consist of ten or more large guns and eliminate medium-sized ordnance, but it would retain the rapid-fire guns. Ships had to be bigger to support more powerful artillery, but larger ships theoretically meant advantages in speed, protection, and freeboard over previous designs. Roosevelt had to determine which type to pursue, a decision in essence about the nature of sea battles that the Navy would most likely fight in the future. Mixed battery vessels could close within sight of the enemy and supposedly fire at a quicker rate, while the all-big-gun models could fire a more powerful broadside from a much greater distance.

Although the Navy did not adopt a true all-big-gun design until after the British launched the Dreadnought in 1906, the idea for such a vessel had circulated in the service for years. The Bureau of Construction and Repair had submitted sketch designs of such a ship to the department's Board on Construction in 1902, but the board
had rejected the proposal. The General Board broached the subject again in January 1904 when it suggested that the Bureau of Construction and Repair prepare tentative plans for a battleship with a main battery of twelve guns of ten-inch caliber or greater. The project did not proceed quickly because the bureau became busy with the task of designing ships authorized later that year. It promised to provide something when its current obligations were completed.

The President entered the picture after the decision to delay designs for an all-big-gun ship. He wanted to explore the concept for himself and on October 5, 1904, asked Commander William Sims if "we ought to have on our battleships merely big twelve-inch guns and fourteen-pounders, with nothing between." Sims responded immediately with a forceful argument on behalf of the new design. As a gunnery expert, he hammered home the great advantage in firepower over older types. He estimated that an all-big-gun ship would be twice as powerful as the Connecticut class, a design representing the bulk of battleship construction under Roosevelt. A ship armed with twelve eleven-inch guns could "pierce the armor of any battleship in the world at long ranges" and thus easily wipe out the medium batteries of mixed-caliber vessels. This argument contained the implicit conclusion that the United
States must adopt the new design or other powers would soon outclass it at sea.

The commander moved Roosevelt to action when he criticized plans for the recently authorized New Hampshire. Sims mentioned naval discontent with the announcement that the New Hampshire would follow the mixed-caliber pattern; many had hoped that it would be the first all-big-gun vessel. He went on to disparage the medium battery planned for the ship and claimed that misapprehension about the accuracy of large guns had blocked progress. Upon reading Sims’s letter, Roosevelt informed Secretary Paul Morton of his disappointment with plans for the New Hampshire. He wrote, "I am sorry that the New Hampshire is to have 12-inch, 8-inch and 7-inch guns. It seems to me that her armament should be composed simply of 12- or 11-inch guns...." The President then demanded a full report on the subject. Roosevelt’s intervention, however, did not lead to a drastic revision of plans. Rear Admiral Washington Capps, the Chief Constructor, responded that the New Hampshire already carried "the most powerful battery of any vessel built or building" and that nothing had occurred during the previous year to necessitate radical changes. He clinched the case by pointing out that the all-big-gun ship had not yet received careful study and that a departure away from previous configurations would be rash and premature. Capps promised, however, that the proposition
would come under consideration once current work was completed.\(^{52}\)

Irrefutable evidence was not available in October 1904 in favor of the all-big-gun ship, and powerful voices supported the other side of the question. Some argued that mechanical difficulties would not allow a realistic displacement or that large guns exhibited poorer shooting qualities. Commander Sims discounted such claims, but Admiral Capps contended that the entire subject needed closer study.\(^{53}\) Rear Admiral Mahan supplied the most prestigious voice, and he had long argued against the growth in size of battleships. Mahan appealed to Roosevelt as early as 1902 in favor of a standard type of battleship by arguing that hitting power and speed did not increase proportionately with the size of vessel. His claims may have rung true for mixed-caliber ships, but they made little impression on the President, who was not likely to impose limits on the size of American battleships unless other powers followed suit.\(^{54}\) Mahan, however, remained an advocate of a standard mixed-caliber type and continued to press his views upon the President and the public.

The Russo-Japanese War did not provide conclusive evidence for either side, at least not at first glance. Japan's victory at Tsushima in May 1905 decimated Russia's Baltic Fleet and dazzled observers. The President scrambled to learn the lessons of the sea fight and turned to Sims for
an assessment. He was particularly interested in evidence "that the 8-inch and even the 6-inch guns did very great damage," results that contradicted the commander's arguments for all-big-gun vessels. Sims's immediate rebuttal is unavailable because he answered the President during a luncheon, but shortly thereafter he supplied written responses to accounts of the battle. Sims projected the superiority of the all-big-gun ship given the conditions at Tsushima. He contended that such a vessel, without the added weight of eight-inch, seven-inch, or six-inch guns, could carry much heavier armor and thus could easily withstand the blows of all but the biggest guns. He also emphasized the importance of speed, in which a large ship held an advantage, and discounted the desirability of standard ship types for performing uniform maneuvers. These arguments apparently swayed Roosevelt but only for a time; the following year he again questioned the all-big-gun design.

Admiral Mahan had not changed his mind on mixed-caliber ships and presented his own lessons about Tsushima in an article in the June 1906 Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute. His article revived the case of the mixed-caliber ship and made Roosevelt rethink the reliance on big guns. The President was unsure about abandoning five-inch and six-inch guns because of their destructive effect on personnel. He asked the General Board to analyze
the question and turned again to Sims for his views. Sims delivered an elaborate and decisive rebuttal that later appeared in the Proceedings. Roosevelt gave Mahan the opportunity to respond, but by then it was apparent that the Admiral was out of touch with technological realities. The Sims-Mahan exchange proved decisive, and Roosevelt never again questioned the new design.

The concept of the all-big-gun ship did not originate with the President, but he played an instrumental role in its adoption. Roosevelt recognized the importance of the design and pushed the Navy Department to consider it, putting pressure on the often deliberate naval bureaus. He did not rush the decision, however, but weighed various views and looked closely at the evidence available from actual warfare. Once decided, Roosevelt fought vigorously for the new type in the halls of Congress when he asked in January 1907 for the immediate construction of one dreadnought and the funding of another. He stressed the need "to build and maintain a first-class fighting fleet" if the United States was not to "abandon every effort to keep the position which we now hold." He employed many of Sims's technical arguments to make his case.

Roosevelt's intense interest in battleships compelled him to learn the technical details of the all-big-gun issue. He never acquired the expertise of a naval engineer, but for a busy chief executive--even for one who was a former
Assistant Secretary of the Navy—his ability to digest and then repeat data and principles of ship design was astounding. For example, he was mediating an end to the Russo-Japanese War at the same time that he asked Sims about the lessons of Tsushima in the summer of 1905. His energy, appetite for reading, and mental acuity helped him to perform a variety of tasks to the amazement of contemporaries. Sims later commented that he would have difficulty imagining "any other president asking information concerning a technical subject."

**Naval Technology: Battleship Design Defects**

Roosevelt's involvement in battleship design did not end with the settlement of the all-big-gun question. The publication of Henry Reuterdahl's "The Needs of Our Navy" in December 1907 ignited the controversy over battleship design defects that would trouble Roosevelt for much of 1908. As already noted, the controversy revolved around charges that a whole generation of American battleships suffered from dangerous deficiencies and that a faulty system of administration was to blame. Naval reformers hoped to use the controversy to force changes in naval administration and won only grudging and belated support from the President. Their ploy, however, raised a whole range of technological questions and compelled Roosevelt to examine battleship design even more closely. As a result, he worked to improve
the process of design and make it more responsive to the opinions of seagoing officers.

Roosevelt tried to reassure the public and Congress after the story appeared. He had just appealed for four dreadnoughts in his 1907 annual message and did not want the controversy to supply ammunition to congressional foes of naval expansion, although the ships under fire were of the older mixed-caliber vintage. He therefore ordered Rear Admiral George Converse, a recent Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, to report on the charges. Converse was not unsympathetic with naval administrative reform but nevertheless provided a staunch defense of the designs in question. Roosevelt praised Converse's work and ordered its immediate publication in an effort to rebuild public confidence.

Although Roosevelt refuted the seriousness of the defects in public, he assumed a more measured stance in private. He weighed the views of both sides just as he had the question of the all-big-gun ship. After receiving criticism of Converse's report in February 1908, he asked the Admiral to respond. Converse returned a lengthy discourse on topics such as the design of gun turrets, the placement of the protective armor belt, freeboard, and the draft of vessels. When the new Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Rear Admiral J.E. Pillsbury, played down the danger of open ammunition handling rooms, one of the most
serious of the defects charges, Roosevelt asked Commander Sims for a reaction. Sims delivered an elaborate response that charged Pillsbury with poor evidence and error. \(^{67}\) In the end, Roosevelt concluded that problems existed but that the reformers "sometimes exaggerate the defects" and that "discussion is more or less academic as regards our new vessels, which are well protected in either event."\(^{48}\)

The controversy over battleship design did not, of course, die easily. In spring 1908 the two ringleaders of reform, Sims and Commander Albert L. Key, revived the issue with Key’s criticisms of the battleship North Dakota, one of America’s first dreadnoughts and thus a prototype for subsequent vessels. Although aimed at provoking reform of the Navy Department, Sims and Key’s initiative drew the President even more intimately into the process of ship design. He would end up working to change that procedure to prevent problems in the future.

Key documented a variety of flaws in the North Dakota and reported them to the Navy Department. He found the armor around the five-inch guns to be insufficient and a potential source of splinters. An exchange might end with the guns destroyed and the smoke pipes riddled and leaking. Key also claimed that this battery sat too low and suggested that the department move it to a higher deck. Turning to the main battery, he identified a problem with the location of the number-three turret and the general firepower of the
North Dakota. The twelve-inch guns were inferior to foreign counterparts, and the number-three turret was positioned so that steam, feed, and exhaust pipes surrounded its powder magazine. Heat from these conduits would alter the ballistic quality of the powder. Finally, Key claimed that the protective armor belt rode too low in the water and exposed the sides of the vessel to enemy shell fire.  

Key’s letter went no farther than a pigeonhole in the Navy Department, so Sims took the matter to Roosevelt. He summarized Key’s complaints in a letter on June 23, 1908, and lambasted members of the Board on Construction, which reviewed ship designs. Roosevelt worried about flaws in the new generation of battleships and followed up Key’s criticisms with an immediate investigation. On June 24, he ordered Assistant Secretary Truman Newberry to send him the plans of the North Dakota and to collect the views of the General Board, commanders of battleships, and younger officers with experience on battleships. He wanted Newberry to act quickly, for he believed that the North Dakota’s designs were not yet completed. He was mistaken; plans for the North Dakota had been finished for over a year and the ship was soon ready to be launched. Roosevelt was not deterred and still aimed to verify Key’s charges, make changes that were yet possible, and prevent defects in later ships. In acting, he admitted that he had dismissed the earlier defects charges too hastily. Roosevelt confessed,
"Last year, while I became convinced that Sims, Key,...and the other junior officers had greatly exaggerated the defects of which they complained, I was left with the very uncomfortable feeling that there might be some real defects, and I want if possible to avoid any slip-up." 

Worries about Congress doubtlessly affected Roosevelt's thinking. He had secured two battleships in the past winter but only after a stiff fight. The controversy over older battleships had weakened his hand, although economic concerns and objections to arms races and expansionist foreign policies had figured most prominently in the arguments of opponents. The current criticism of the North Dakota, however, attacked the quality of American dreadnoughts and suggested that problems remained with ship designs. This situation would complicate Roosevelt's efforts to win more battleships in the coming winter because congressional opponents would be in an even stronger position if Navy officers had serious reservations about the newest ships.

The Newport Conference of July and August 1908 was Roosevelt's answer to the latest crisis of confidence in American battleship designs. The meeting would demonstrate that the administration was attempting a serious and honest review of battleship designs. If the conference found major faults with the North Dakota, it could at least propose remedies that would allow public and congressional faith in
succeeding designs. The attendance of selected seagoing officers underscored Roosevelt's desire for a candid assessment and not a whitewash. At Sims's prompting, he included younger officers, and in fact the commander was one of the conferees. These men were present to insure that military considerations received a fair hearing and to prevent officers of the shipbuilding bureaus from dominating the proceedings. The bureau officers represented a powerful bloc at the conference, having expertise in ship designs and a personal incentive to validate existing models.  

The inclusion of younger line officers pointed to a change that Roosevelt wanted to make in the process of ship design. In order to obtain the best results, he wanted the Navy Department to consult officers with recent sea experience before fixing plans. Supposedly such officers were the most knowledgeable about the military characteristics desirable for new vessels. But Roosevelt did not believe that any officer straight from the sea would do and stressed the need for younger officers rather than senior sea commanders. These were relatively young men like Sims who were actually working with the weaponry and other implements of the ship and were better able to judge capability and effectiveness. To the President, younger men seemed more open to innovative ideas and more likely to push their implementation.  

Taking a cue from American
culture, he associated oldness with the status quo and youth with vigor and freshness.

Roosevelt kept a close watch on the proceedings at Newport through Commander Sims, who acted as a conduit of information and sent detailed reports. The President thus heard a version colored by reformist attitudes, but this source helped him to intervene promptly when the conference threatened to ignore more progressive viewpoints. He sided with Sims on technological matters because the commander advocated the most advanced and powerful designs, ones that would be "the best of their kind" and would "lead other nations."?

The conference dealt first with the *North Dakota* before considering future ships. Sims reported that changes were recommended, but they were few in number. Construction was simply too advanced for major alterations. The conference suggested remedies for two of Key's criticisms, recommending the refrigeration of powder magazines and the installation of more armor around the uptake and ventilator pipes to protect against splinters. The conference majority acknowledged the validity of the other charges but approved only more cosmetic improvements. In fact, a resolution passed that praised the excellence of the *North Dakota* 's overall design and labeled any defects as minor. This resolution contended that errors in detailed features of the
North Dakota should not be taken as criticism of the ship's design as a whole.\textsuperscript{79}

The conference's action was misleading because Key's criticisms were not about insignificant features of the North Dakota. But reputations were at stake, and protection of the conferees' honor stood high on the agenda, especially after the bureaus increased their representation in the midst of the proceedings and thus formed a nearly unstoppable force in favor of the status quo. The resolution tossed progressive officers a bone by acknowledging errors, although minimizing their importance. These men decided to take more of a stand on future battleships because little could be done for a ship so close to launch. The resolution saved bureau officers from embarrassment and helped to insulate their agencies from the threat of administrative reform. It also gave the President something, even if it did not honestly assess the technology. In the upcoming fight for more battleships, he could point to the resolution and deflate critics who were not about to pay millions for flawed goods. He could claim to have the best in American naval opinion behind him.

Factionalism continued to rent the conference throughout August 1908 as it considered designs for the successors to the North Dakota. As Sims described the debate, reformist and non-bureau officers aimed to correct all defects in future models, while bureau partisans wanted
to pattern the next two battleships, the Florida and Utah, after the North Dakota. Drastic revisions in the Florida and Utah would reflect poorly on the bureaus’ previous work and would strengthen the case for a naval general staff. With a majority likely to back the bureaus’ position, Sims appealed once again for presidential assistance.

Sims knew how to touch a chord with the President, who acted swiftly after receiving the commander’s letter. Roosevelt complained to Assistant Secretary Newberry on August 10, "We have been following and not leading, as we ought to be, in battleship construction, and I want now to step ahead of all other nations." Specifically Roosevelt wished to abandon the twelve-inch guns planned for the main battery of the Utah and Florida, and to substitute fourteen-inch guns along with heavier armor. He did not want to alter general measurements and tactical features so that the new vessels could form an integrated division with the North Dakota class. His proposal duplicated the case of the officers at Newport who hoped to improve upon the design of the North Dakota.

After it became clear that bureau representatives were not going to budge, Roosevelt intervened decisively in the conference. Opponents of revision argued that drastic changes would require a lengthy delay in the construction of the ships, while proponents held that any delay would be short and justified by the superior quality of the final
product. Acting again at Sims's prompting, Roosevelt ordered the conference to prepare two plans on August 15. One plan would correct all the flaws identified in the North Dakota and install fourteen-inch guns, and the other would allow for almost no delay. The President intended to study the plans and render a final judgment.\(^3\)

Roosevelt reluctantly chose the scheme that involved little delay. The conference had presented him with plans that stalled construction for either fifteen months or for two months. Roosevelt could not accept a lag of fifteen months, which would set the United States behind in the international dreadnought competition and feed congressional opponents with arguments about the cost and time involved in building American battleships. He selected the two-month option, even though Sims had ascertained independently that the delay for complete revision might actually be much shorter than projected. The commander learned that Bethlehem Steel could supply fourteen-inch guns and their mounts long before the Florida and Utah could be finished; the drafting of new plans would cause some delay, but it would be a setback of only about four months. Despite Sims's advice and his own knowledge of ships, Roosevelt was still a layman, and he could not easily ignore the advice of the conference that he had called. The potential for political embarrassment alone may have proven persuasive.\(^4\)
Roosevelt did not deliver his judgment without a blast at the Navy Department's procedures for ship design. He was disappointed about the Florida and Utah and fumed "that if the officials responsible for the plans had been willing...to try to get the opinions of...the younger officers of the type represented at the Newport Conference, the Utah and Florida would be much more formidable vessels...." Roosevelt attributed this failure to a lack of initiative and flexibility, "a certain woodenness" in the administration of the Navy Department. He felt that the advanced age of officers in top positions "results in making our naval officers of and above the grade of captain usually inferior relatively to those of junior rank, and...[regarded] it as a mistake not to consult at length the best of the younger officers."

Although frustrated on the Florida and Utah, Roosevelt aimed to make fourteen-inch guns a standard feature and to have younger line officers participate in designing the ships upon which they served. Soon after the close of the Newport Conference, he ordered Secretary of the Navy Victor Howard Metcalf to prepare tentative plans for battleships with fourteen-inch guns. Another conference of officers would study the plans, and Roosevelt wanted in attendance "some young officers of the stamp of those taking part in the conference at Newport." He was determined to pry open the departmental process for reviewing designs and found
conferences to be the most useful device. Conferences could be organized rapidly on presidential authority, circumvented time-consuming standard procedures, and diluted bureaucratic habits and perspectives with fresh ideas. Such gatherings, however, did not bring the permanent institutional change necessary to insure that younger officers would continue to have a voice after Roosevelt left office.

Secretary Metcalf responded on September 17 that the Navy Department had already ordered preliminary plans for battleships with fourteen-inch guns. He hoped that the plans would be ready for a conference in December and shared some initial ideas about the technical specifications of such a vessel. One version contemplated a ship with eight fourteen-inch guns, heavier armor than previous models, and a displacement of about 24,000 tons at sea trials. Another outlined a larger vessel of about 27,000 tons with a main battery of ten fourteen-inch guns. Roosevelt considered these options and declared himself in favor of the larger version. 

The effort reaped no reward in the end. Congress authorized two dreadnoughts in early 1909 with batteries composed of twelve-inch guns, not fourteen-inch guns. Officials of the ship-building bureaus delayed innovation and simply plowed ahead with older models. The views of more progressive officers were ignored, and the Navy had to wait until 1910 for the authorization of vessels with
fourteen-inch guns; by then foreign competitors had already introduced the type.∞

Naval Technology: Battleships, Some Final Details

Battleship design consumed much of Roosevelt’s time, but he also displayed interest in more detailed features of the great ships. They were, after all, one of the prides of his presidency, the main index of naval power, and a linchpin in his foreign policy. Moreover, his restless temperament would not let him stop with simply setting general characteristics and compelled him to explore much finer technological questions.

A trip to Panama in 1906 gave Roosevelt the opportunity to study a modern battleship in action for an extended period of time. He traveled aboard the recently commissioned Louisiana to inspect progress on the Panama Canal. Roosevelt paid particular attention to the welfare of the crew and other personnel matters but also noticed some technical problems. Fuel was an especially important topic, and the President complained to Secretary of the Navy Bonaparte that bad coal supplies were plaguing the Navy. After the Louisiana received one poor supply, Roosevelt noticed a substantial drop in speed, so he examined the problem and found that substandard coal was a chronic difficulty. A report revealed that the Louisiana had received two poor supplies of coal in the six months prior
to November 1906 and two others of fair quality. Upon hearing that the *Louisiana* was not an isolated case, Roosevelt ordered a report on supplies for all other large ships, recommended better inspection of coal, and suggested punitive action against companies guilty of providing low quality coal.\(^1\)

Roosevelt called attention to another problem that involved lubricating oils and brasses, the soft metal lining for ball bearings. The chief engineer of the *Louisiana* reported that the premature wear of brasses was a problem on his ship. Roosevelt learned that the condition also affected the cruisers *West Virginia*, *Tennessee*, and *Maryland*, and he suspected that it afflicted other ships as well. The Navy needed to change worn brasses; otherwise "it would have been a very dangerous, and possibly fatal, experiment, to have sent them (at once)... into active service against an enemy...."\(^2\) Roosevelt wanted the Navy Department to investigate and report to him about the brasses and also to look into purchases of lubricating oils because lower quality oils contributed to premature wear. The President wished the report to contain three things in particular: statements from the chief engineers of all battleships and armored cruisers, specifications of the oils used on large steamships, and a list of the oils used by contractors when ships underwent sea trials. He suspected that some suppliers were not furnishing the best oils and
intended to limit purchases to reliable businesses until others agreed to meet the highest standards."

Roosevelt also concerned himself with the power plant of dreadnoughts. In 1908, he learned that a recently developed American-made turbine, the Curtis, had performed well and advised Secretary Newberry against importing British Parsons turbines for the Florida and Utah. Commander Key undoubtedly supplied Roosevelt with the information, for he was not only Sims's partner in naval reform and a former presidential naval aide but his scout cruiser, the Salem, was the first navy vessel to operate with Curtis turbines. Secretary Newberry, however, provided convincing reasons against speedy adoption of the Curtis engines. Among them, the new turbines were relatively untested compared to the Parsons, the manufacturer of the Curtis had never before built turbines of the size proposed, and the Navy manufactured the Parsons under license in its own yards. The Navy would have to purchase the Curtis turbines from an outside contractor, and Newberry preferred that the yard crews learn about the turbines firsthand because they would have to service them once the ship was in operation. Roosevelt agreed with Newberry's rationale but wanted the Secretary to suggest to Capitol Hill the possibility of purchasing American-made turbines."

Finally, Roosevelt fretted about the time required to construct American battleships. British yards could produce
ships within two to three years after authorization, but American yards needed four to five years from authorization to commissioning when Roosevelt took office in 1901. In a time of increasing international naval competition, the United States was at a disadvantage, and American warships were closer to obsolescence upon launch owing to rapid changes in naval architecture. For example, Congress authorized the Illinois in 1896, but the ship was not commissioned until 1901, and larger warships with heavier armor and armament soon outclassed it. Roosevelt inquired about the building time of battleships less than two months after becoming president. He wanted battleship construction speeded, and the Navy Department delivered results. When Roosevelt departed office, the Navy was completing battleships within three years from the time of authorization.

Conclusion

The modernization of military technology leapt ahead during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, and Roosevelt helped to drive the process despite the burdens of his office. An intense desire for American military readiness motivated him along with a fascination for military implements. Moreover, he was the product of an American culture that treated technological progress as a symbol of national superiority. Roosevelt recognized that war had become industrialized and
that a nation could not protect its interests in the world or its security at home without technologically advanced armaments. During his tenure, the Navy adopted a more powerful type of battleship, the submarine gained a firmer footing in the naval arsenal, the Army gave serious consideration to the airplane, and plans for coastal fortifications were reviewed and updated. This list is hardly complete; however, it does recount some of the projects in which Roosevelt had a hand and indicates the range and depth of his interest in technological matters.

Roosevelt's involvement in technological affairs expanded the scope of presidential activity. His knowledge of modern military technology was far-ranging but did not run deep; rather, he acted as a catalyst for innovation. He fastened on to worthwhile projects and thrust them before officials of the War and Navy Departments, whom Roosevelt believed were too conservative in their thinking and were too unwilling to pursue the dynamic pace of change that he expected.

His involvement in technological questions also affected executive-congressional relations. The influence of Congress, specifically that of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, extended traditionally over broad areas of the naval establishment. Roosevelt attempted to curtail some of that influence and seize more of the initiative for the executive branch. For example, his efforts to have more
consultation of seagoing officers on ship designs gave Senators such as Eugene Hale less opportunity to impose their own ideas. Still, Congress retained considerable influence over military technology, especially in procurement and oversight of executive decisions.

But Roosevelt's technological initiatives involved less a seizure of influence from Congress and more a thrusting of the presidency into areas untrod or barely trod. It was a sign of the growing complexity of warfare and the need for the commander in chief to be aware of the capabilities of various technologies. Roosevelt's deep involvement in technological questions may have been somewhat unusual, especially for a peacetime president, but it pointed to the direction that presidents would have to look in the future. During the Cold War, peacetime readiness assumed a new urgency, and a perception of presidential failure to provide for the latest military technology became a political liability at times, perhaps the most notable being the supposed "missile gap" at the end of the Eisenhower administration. Although Roosevelt did not face the same pressure in his era, he sought to avoid national embarrassment by making sure that American forces possessed the best implements of war and were trained to use them against the potential foes of the day.
NOTES

1. Abraham Lincoln was perhaps the exception. Both Lincoln and Roosevelt showed a remarkable degree of personal fascination for military technology, but Lincoln was responding ad-hoc to a national crisis of monumental proportions while Roosevelt demonstrated a consistent vision of the technological requirements for the new age of mass war. For Lincoln’s role as a force for technological innovation, see, Robert Bruce, Lincoln and the Tools of War (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956).


3. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 2 October 1902, in Morison, Letters, 3: 335.


8. Report of Special Committee of the General Staff...January 25 1905, Part II, Subject Files "Sword, The," Box 29, in ibid.; Report of the Special Committee of the General Staff...January 25, 1905, Subject Files, "Rifle, model of 1903," Box 26, in ibid. The General Staff would continue to deliberate a proper sword design long after Roosevelt left office. In fact, George S. Patton, Jr., employed his expertise on swords to call attention to himself while serving as on the General Staff in 1913, four years after graduating from the Military Academy. He designed a straight saber that would be effective for cutting and thrusting, and he pushed proper swordsmanship as well. See, Martin Blumenson, The Patton Papers, 1885-1940, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1972), 234, 240, 244-46, 248-51, 256-259. See also, Army and Navy Journal, 11 January 1913, 569.


13. Ibid., 120.


22. Gross, "George Owen Squier," 286-87; *Army and Navy Journal*, 15 February 1908, 628; ibid., 19 September 1908, 70-71; Report of the General Board, 26 September 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, RG 80, General Board, NARA.


24. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 28 November 1901, Root Papers, Box 162, Folder 5.

25. *War Department General Orders*, No. 20, 9 February 1905, File 8565, RG 107, SecWar, NARA.

26. Ibid.


30. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 October 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 28 October 1905, Letterbook 4, Box 1, in ibid; H.C. Loudenslager to George Dewey, 13 May 1902, Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 9. Loudenslager recites Dewey's testimony back to him in this letter. The Admiral's endorsement of submarines evidently made a deep impression on Representative Loudenslager.


36. Ibid.


41. Sprout, Naval Power, 260-261, 264, 269. The cost of battleships actually dropped when the Rooseveltian building program hit its height but rose when the United States began building behemoths of 20,000 ton displacement and more. For example, while the 16,000 ton Connecticut (1902) cost about $7.5 million, the 16,000 ton Kansas (1903) ran about $7.3 million and the 16,000 ton New Hampshire (1904) about $7 million. The 16,000 ton Michigan (1905) cost approximately $6.6 million.

42. Unpublished Interview with Theodore Roosevelt, ca. 1908-9, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 5; Sprout, Naval Power, 315; Morison, Admiral Sims, 181.

43. Sprout, Naval Power, 263.

44. Turk, Ambiguous Relationship, 58.

45. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 26 January 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Rear Admiral Washington L. Capps, Memorandum, 8 October 1904, File 18711, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

46. Ibid.

47. Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 5 October 1904, in Morison, Letters, 4: 973.

48. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 6 October 1904, File 18711, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

49. Ibid.

50. Theodore Roosevelt to Paul Morton, 6 October 1904, in Morison, Letters, 4: 974. Roosevelt also recommended that a secondary battery of 3-inch guns be included, but wanted 1-pound, 3-pound, and 7- and 8-inch guns discarded.

51. Rear Admiral Washington L. Capps, Memorandum, 8 October 1904, File 18711, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

52. Ibid.
53. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 6 October 1908, File 18711, RG 80 General Records, NARA; Rear Admiral Washington L. Capps, Memorandum, 8 October 1904, in ibid.


56. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 1 September 1905, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 4; William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt (Memorandum), undated, in ibid.


59. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 4 September 1906, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 5; William S. Sims, "The Inherent Tactical Qualities of All-Big-Gun, One-Caliber Battleships of High Speed, Large Displacement and Gun-Power, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (1906): 1337-66.

60. Turk, Ambiguous Relationship, 104.


62. Ibid., 545-49.

63. William S. Sims, Notation on correspondence file, 1905, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 4.

64. Theodore Roosevelt to Victor Howard Metcalf, 2 January 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 891-93.

66. George A. Converse to Theodore Roosevelt, 3 March 1908, File 26000, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

67. J.E. Pillsbury to Theodore Roosevelt, ca. 15 February 1908, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 7; William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 17 February 1908, in ibid.

68. Theodore Roosevelt to Albert L. Key, 26 March 1908, in Morison, *Letters*, 6: 982. See also, Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 1 July 1908, in ibid., 6: 1102.

69. Albert L. Key to Victor H. Metcalf, 9 June 1908, Roosevelt Papers, Series 1, Roll 83.

70. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 23 June 1908, Roosevelt Papers, Series 1, Roll 83.


75. Sims suggested as much to the President on July 10, 1908:

"younger officers necessarily have a much more intimate acquaintance with the rapidly developing problems of naval marksmanship and fire-control...[and] these problems are very intimately related to the questions of the disposition of both heavy guns and torpedo-defense guns, military masts, fire-control stations, probable battle ranges, etc.; and that all these will influence tactical considerations and general features of design."
76. Roosevelt suggested as much a year earlier. Sims had criticized the Army's system of fire control with coastal defense guns, and the President asked whether an expert among the younger men of the Army should examine the question. Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 14 August 1907, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 3; Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 28 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1199.

77. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 8 August 1908, 10 August 1908, 13 August 1908, 22 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6.

78. Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 28 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1199.

79. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 8 August 1908, 13 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6; Truman H. Newberry to Theodore Roosevelt, 26 August 1908, File 26887-3, RG 80, General Records, NARA; Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1908), 16.

80. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 8 August 1908, 13 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6.

81. Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 10 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1166.

82. Ibid.

83. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 13 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6; Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 15 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1174.

84. Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 28 August 1908, in ibid., 6: 1199-1200; William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 22 August 1908, Box 97, Folder 6; Morison, Admiral Sims, 210-11.


86. Ibid.


89. Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 18 August 1908, in Morison, Letters, 6: 1199.

90. Sprout, Naval Power, 291. In fact, Sims informed Roosevelt in August 1908 that the British were already testing 13.5-inch guns and that ships already building in British yards would outclass vessels like the North Dakota at any rate. William Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 8 August 1908, Sims Papers, Box 97, Folder 6.

91. Theodore Roosevelt to Charles J. Bonaparte, 28 November 1906, in Morison, Letters, 5: 511-16. Earlier Roosevelt had complained about the system for supplying coal to the Louisiana. He wanted arrangements made so that coal could be delivered directly from the ship's upper decks to its bunkers. Theodore Roosevelt to Charles J. Bonaparte, 12 November 1906, in ibid., 5: 496.


93. Ibid., 5: 511-16.


95. Sprout, Naval Power, 270.

CHAPTER VII
"ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS,"
ROOSEVELT AND PEACETIME OPERATIONS:
MANEUVERS, MISSIONS, AND TRAINING

Implements of war did little good if soldiers and sailors did not know how to use them. President Roosevelt issued a clarion call for intensified training and large-scale military exercises in his first annual message. His support helped to make fleet maneuvers, improved naval gunnery, expanded army and militia exercises, combined Army-Navy operations, and a new Marine Corps mission military hallmarks of his administration. In September 1901, Roosevelt had inherited military forces organized, distributed, and trained to uphold the security of mid-nineteenth century America rather than the interests of a budding world power. The Navy consisted of scattered squadrons instead of an integrated fleet, and Army units were dispersed in isolated posts at home and in the new possessions. The Army formations were a match for lightly armed Native Americans and Filipinos but not for the forces of another great power. By 1909, this situation had changed dramatically. The American Navy sailed in fleets and, for a
time, was second only to the British Royal Navy in striking power. The Army had farther to go but was making strides towards the concentration of units and was undertaking larger scale exercises. The Marine Corps was also reorganizing for the new century by preparing, somewhat reluctantly, for the mission of seizing advanced navy bases, a role that the administration encouraged by stripping the Corps of outdated security duties aboard ship.

Roosevelt showed a lively interest in training and maneuvers throughout his presidency and assumed a pronounced role in promoting such activities. Besides pushing for fleet maneuvers and large-scale land exercises, the President made a personal project of improved naval gunnery and suggested more realistic training exercises for the infantry and cavalry. He witnessed demonstrations in order to see improvements firsthand and to draw attention to the enhanced effectiveness of American arms. Such actions helped to expand the commander in chief's peacetime role beyond the distant oversight of military training. Foreign threats were increasing after about a century of "free security," and Roosevelt viewed the actual preparation of forces as an important responsibility for the chief executive.

This chapter discusses peacetime operations, but it should neither be forgotten that Roosevelt had to deal with combat operations as president nor that he often employed
the armed services to support American foreign policy. American military forces played no small role, for example, during the intervention in the Panamanian revolt of 1903, the establishment of a fiscal protectorate over Santo Domingo, and, of course, the second intervention in Cuba. In the Philippines, American troops continued to fight insurgents when Roosevelt took office, and the President followed the progress of those forces as best he could from half a world away. The extreme distance, however, dictated the delegation of most of his military and civil authority to officials on the scene. Moreover, the Army had broken the back of the insurrection by the time Roosevelt took office, so that he could declare the war ended in July 1902, even though fighting continued in isolated locations. These diplomatic and combat deployments, however, receive coverage in other works and at any rate fall outside the scope of a study that concentrates on the executive's efforts to promote peacetime preparedness.

Roosevelt approached peacetime military operations in the same way that he handled physical exercise: the more strenuous the better. Just as the prize fighter needed to work out to prepare for a bout, the Army and Navy had to train or they would be unready for the strain of a major contest. Using language that dripped with physicality, Roosevelt spoke of "decisive blows," coming as the result of "long years of practice" and "special training applied to
men of exceptional physique and morale." He wanted the Army and Navy in top shape as fighting institutions to ready them for whatever challenges lay ahead in the twentieth century.

Army Maneuvers

The idea of large-scale army maneuvers was not new, but many obstacles blocked regular exercises before the war with Spain. In the late nineteenth century, Army units were widely dispersed among various coastal forts and scattered frontier outposts. Numbering under 30,000 men until 1898, the Army rarely assembled the companies of a regiment, much less conducted regular maneuvers with larger units. Regimental exercises took place on occasion beginning in the 1880s, and Brigadier General Wesley Merritt organized brigade-sized maneuvers in 1889, but efforts to organize such undertakings more often than not went begging in the years before 1898. With the Native American threat crushed and no immediate foreign foe looming on the horizon, the country attached no urgent interest to enlarging the Army, concentrating its units, or pouring resources into mock combat.

The Army's problems in 1898 paved the way for Elihu Root's far-reaching reforms, but they did not generate immediate improvements in peacetime training. Root upgraded the militia system, improved the army educational system,
created the General Staff, commenced line and staff rotation among officers, and enlarged the authorized Army to over 88,000 in 1901. As part of this program, he called in 1899 for "the exercise and training of the officers and men of the Army in the movements of large bodies of troops by brigade, division, and corps under conditions approaching as nearly as possible those to be anticipated in...war." Large-scale maneuvers, however, had still not taken place when Roosevelt echoed Root's appeal two years later.

Roosevelt linked better training with improvement of the officer corps. His experience in Cuba had convinced him that American field officers were a sorry lot, and in fact he wrote that it was "a blessing that fighting in open order...resulted in the company officers getting out of touch with their battalion and regimental commanders!" Reports of German military maneuvers impressed him, and he especially wanted to encourage individual initiative and hold the Army to the "most exacting standard of efficiency," which in his mind involved rigorous, realistic training.

Roosevelt believed that Europeans had much to teach Americans about the conduct of maneuvers. In July 1902, he confided to Hermann Speck von Sternberg, a friend and later German ambassador to the United States, that he hoped to begin maneuvers in the United States and wanted some U.S. Army officers to witness the German army at work. The precedent already existed for dispatching officers to
foreign shores. Lieutenant General Philip Sheridan had observed the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and as recently as 1897 Lieutenant General Nelson Miles had viewed fighting in the Greco-Turkish War of that year and then reviewed troops from Russia to Britain. At the time that Roosevelt wrote Sternberg, he had already solicited and received an invitation for German maneuvers, and American observers returned to Germany more than once during the remainder of his presidency. Also at least once, in 1905, a delegation of officers witnessed French maneuvers. These missions were not minor affairs and sometimes contained the highest ranking American officers. The American observers of French maneuvers in 1905 included Lieutenant General Adna R. Chaffee, the Chief of the General Staff; Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, commandant of the General Service and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth; and Brigadier General William Crozier, Chief of Ordnance. In 1906 and 1907, the president of the Army War College, Brigadier General Thomas Barry, headed the American delegation to German maneuvers.

The first major Army maneuvers under Roosevelt commenced at Fort Riley, Kansas, in late September 1902. Three regiments of infantry, five batteries of artillery, a regiment of cavalry, a battalion of engineers, and detachments of the Signal Corps and Hospital Corps joined with state infantry and artillery to practice field operations. Less than ten thousand troops gathered, a small
beginning but a start nonetheless. Depending on the unit, operations lasted from five days to two weeks and involved exercises ranging from outpost and patrol duties to the maneuvering of brigades and divisions. Secretary of War Root touted the experience as a grand success, especially because it helped break down "jealousy, superciliousness, ...and bad feeling between regular and volunteer officers...."

The success of the Fort Riley maneuvers led the War Department to increase the number of exercises conducted each year. In 1903 about 9,000 troops gathered at Fort Riley and an additional 10,000 assembled at West Point, Kentucky. The chief umpire of these maneuvers, Colonel Arthur L. Wagner of the General Staff, recommended afterwards that the War Department hold annual maneuvers for the regulars and militia in each of the Army's geographical divisions* and that regular troops be allowed to spend a longer period of time in encampment. The War Department followed up in 1904 with maneuvers at Camp Atascadero, California; American Lake, Washington; and Manassas, Virginia. At Manassas, more than 26,000 troops took part in the operations. A lack of appropriations prevented maneuvers in 1905, but they resumed in 1906 with seven major joint exercises involving a total of nearly 50,000 men—

* These divisions were administrative departments only and were not field commands.
about 20,000 of them were regulars and the rest were militia. Two years later, the Army conducted eight major maneuvers.\textsuperscript{13}

Roosevelt worked to assure the continuation and expansion of these exercises. Every annual message from 1901 to 1907 emphasized maneuvers as an essential part of Army preparedness. In 1902, for example, the President told Congress, "Without such manoevres it is folly to expect that in the event of hostilities with any serious foe even a small army corps could be handled to advantage. Both our officers and enlisted men are such that we can take hearty pride in them.... But they must be thoroughly trained, both as individuals and in the mass."\textsuperscript{14} In 1903 he praised the benefits of field maneuvers and asked that camp sites be established in various parts of the country so that the largest number of regulars and National Guardsmen could profit from the exercises.\textsuperscript{15} Secretary of War Root and General Chaffee proposed locations that could receive troops from all regions of the country, and by 1906 maneuvers took place in seven states.\textsuperscript{16}

Roosevelt paid particular attention to the advantages of maneuvers for the National Guard. He stressed the benefits of exercising the Guard because he was genuinely concerned about the reliability of reserve forces, given the problems he had witnessed with state forces in 1898 and given the fact that any major conflict meant reliance on
volunteer units. Roosevelt pushed militia reform early in his presidency, but, as with other War Department reforms, let Secretary Root sell the legislation to Congress. Just as he did with the General Staff bill, Root had already prepared much of the groundwork when Roosevelt took office. The resulting Militia Act of 1903 traded federal dollars and equipment for increased federal control of the National Guard's organization and training. Roosevelt's messages to Congress were part of the effort to implement the act, which not only aimed at heightening Guard readiness but also at funding maneuvers for the Army without inviting charges of militarism.

The President went beyond messages, however, on the training of the National Guard. In 1904, for example, he requested that Texas either be a site for maneuvers that year or that Texas troops at least have the opportunity to practice elsewhere. He felt strongly that "the South should have one set of maneuvers." General Chaffee could not oblige with maneuvers in Texas but did recommend that Texas militia be ordered to attend operations planned for the Pacific division.

Roosevelt was not interested merely in land operations but also wanted the services ready to meet attacks from the sea. If a great power launched a strike against the United States, it would most likely attempt a coastal assault to seize an important city or port as a bargaining chip. The
Army and Navy planned a joint maneuver for the New England coast in September 1902, and Roosevelt received a copy of the operational plan. Mock assaults in Narragansett Bay, the eastern end of Long Island Sound, and at New Bedford would teach the Navy about attacking forts and batteries, while the Army would learn about defending coastal sites, communications, supply, the use of armaments, fire control, spotting an enemy, and other practical matters. After the operation, Secretary Root praised the value of combined exercises, and Roosevelt indicated that joint Army-Navy maneuvers would occur annually. Such simulations exposed weaknesses in shore defenses, encouraged interservice cooperation, and helped in general to keep military efficiency at a peak. 

The President had more grandiose plans for future combined maneuvers. He wanted to practice the embarkation, transport, and landing of a substantial expeditionary force along the coast of the United States. He had the experience of 1898 in mind again, for he realized that the United States would likely need to mount a large expedition again owing to its geographic position and the far-flung nature of its interests. Specifically, Roosevelt told General Chaffee in July 1905 that he wanted the General Staff to plan for deploying a division, or at least a brigade, and suggested that the expedition depart at Galveston and land somewhere in Florida. He stressed that only exercises "conducted
under actual war conditions,...could test what is designed to be used in war."  

The mock expedition never left port, but Roosevelt's conception proved to be sound. A lack of available transports compelled General Chaffee to abandon the operation but not before the General Staff had gained valuable experience planning a large-scale operation. The General Staff aimed to concentrate a force of about 3,000 at Newport News, Virginia, transport them to the Maine coast, land them near Portland, and march them about 250 miles to Fort Ethan Allen in Vermont. The experience of planning the mobilization and transportation of a large force did not go to waste, however, because the Army faced the problem of dispatching a major expedition only a year later when Roosevelt launched the second intervention into Cuba.  

Plans for an expedition doubtlessly proved helpful, as did other large-scale exercises, but a golden age of peacetime maneuvers had not dawned. Money was never in abundance, which limited the size of exercises and at least once---in 1905---prevented them altogether. Secretary Root commented in 1902 that a lack of funds prevented many Guard troops from attending the Fort Riley maneuvers of that year. The Militia Act of 1903 facilitated Guard attendance, but funding remained problematic as demonstrated by the failure to secure funding in 1905. Available manpower was also a problem. Never large in peacetime, the
Army remained understaffed during most of Roosevelt's presidency, standing at around 45,000 men in the field army in 1909. And with a sizable portion of the Army stationed overseas in places like the Philippines, manpower was simply not abundant enough to allow maneuvers on the scale of European armies. The continued scattering of units in small posts added to this difficulty, although the Roosevelt administration issued plans to eliminate minor posts and to establish a series of brigade posts. Roosevelt called for brigade posts as well as division garrisons in his annual messages for 1905 and 1906, but local political interests proved to be a powerful counterweight to such schemes.  

Despite these problems, the Army and the National Guard reaped rewards from the exercises. Officers gained practical experience with larger formations and also contended with fatigue, hunger, and weather—factors that military schools could not address in the classroom. At maneuvers, Guardsmen received much-needed training and first-hand exposure to Army officers and their methods. Although mutual disdain sometimes resulted from such contact, Army-Guard maneuvers bred associations between state forces and their regular counterparts that lasted for years, helped break down prejudices, and encouraged Army officers to provide training at summer Guard encampments. The maneuvers were open to charges of being unrealistic, for they were relatively small and concentrated on battlefield
tactics at the expense of logistics, but they were better than nothing.  

Finally, Roosevelt’s interest in Army training went beyond large-scale maneuvers to include smaller tactical exercises. His initiatives reflected his Rough Rider experience and came mostly in the first half of his presidency, when memories of the Santiago campaign were still most vivid. Roosevelt particularly wanted more realistic tactical training for the cavalry and infantry. In August 1903, he suggested to General S.B.M. Young, the Chief of Staff, that the cavalry should adopt more realistic training methods for charges. Nearly a year later, he encouraged General Chaffee to conduct practice infantry marches and encampments under war conditions to determine the amount of equipment that troops could carry. In the same message, Roosevelt argued the superiority of the rifle over the bayonet on the modern battlefield, if troops were properly trained to handle rifles in close quarters. He contended that a "bayonet man will only win against...a man with a loaded firearm who gets rattled."

On the whole, Roosevelt’s advocacy of improved tactical training and large-scale maneuvers played a significant role in the modernization of the Army for the twentieth century. His prime contribution lay in his sustained interest in improving the peacetime training of the Army. In other words, he was not heavily involved in planning and executing
the exercises—responsibility for those tasks lay with Army officers—but acted again as a force for innovation. His annual messages and other utterances established maneuvers and tactical exercises as a priority, to which the War Department and Congress responded. Funding was problematic despite presidential pronouncements but likely would have been less without Roosevelt's efforts. Perhaps he could have done more to promote training by pushing harder for larger Army posts. But attacking local interests risked a congressional explosion, and if Roosevelt were to hazard congressional antagonism it would likely be on behalf of the Navy, his favorite service, rather than the Army. Nevertheless, Roosevelt helped to propel the Army in the right direction. Conflict with a great power seemed a distinct possibility, one the nation certainly could not afford to ignore and still maintain its political standing and economic interests. The Army had a long road to travel in 1909 before it would be ready for such a challenge—it still had a long way to go in 1917—but it was much readier than when Roosevelt took office in 1901.

Fleet Formation and Naval Maneuvers

The training of the Navy received more attention from Roosevelt, for the Navy would likely be the first point of contact in any major conflict. The technological modernization of the Navy had already gone far before
Roosevelt's administration, and the Navy had performed well in the war with Spain. Despite that victory, the Navy was not yet ready for a contest with a first-rate power. The change from wood to steel and from sail to steam had not affected the distribution of the fleet nor its ability to score hits on the enemy. Roosevelt had attempted to correct defects in the Navy as assistant secretary, and he strove as President to extend that work. Acting as his own Navy Secretary, he left behind a fleet in size and performance that would give pause to any potential challengers.

Although Alfred T. Mahan had popularized sea power theory over a decade before, in 1901 the distribution of the U.S. Navy did not conform to navalist ideas of a concentrated fleet. Rather, dispersed squadrons remained the standard deployment, although the most powerful vessels were stationed in the North Atlantic and in Asiatic waters. The scattering of squadrons had been the rule throughout the previous century as the Navy dispatched vessels to various parts of the globe to explore, demonstrate a national presence, and protect American access to overseas markets. Mahan argued that only a concentrated fleet could seize and secure control of the sea and thereby maintain access to markets in wartime. Hastily assembled squadrons could not perform effectively against an opponent that had trained together for many years. Fully alert to
this fact, Roosevelt made a concentrated fleet one of his top goals.

Naval professionals were ready for the change. With a fleet in fact as well as in name, they could practice for their primary military mission by honing the tactical and operational skills demanded of warships sailing in unison. They were particularly eager because in the past most had endured endless cruises broken only by port calls and occasional gunnery practices. The country was ready at the turn of the century to supply the material necessary for a battleship fleet, although opponents of expansionism and a big navy hurled powerful arguments against naval increases. A number of large warships already existed from before the Spanish-American War and more were on the way in the aftermath of that conflict. Roosevelt's persuasiveness, the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-3, and the commitment to an isthmian canal supplied additional stimulus, and Congress authorized eighteen battleships between 1898 and 1905.

Consolidation of naval units began in 1902 with the designation of the North Atlantic Fleet and the Asiatic Fleet. These commands were to be the focus of American naval power in the Atlantic and Pacific, and American battleships were divided between them. The Navy aimed ultimately to concentrate all battleships in the Atlantic because the large European fleets, especially the German High Seas Fleet, posed the greatest potential danger. In 1902,
however, Admiral Henry Taylor, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, was reluctant to remove all battleships from the Pacific given the commitment to the Philippines, other American interests in the region, and the brewing trouble between Russia and Japan. Secretary William Moody concurred and letters from Rear Admiral Stephen Luce and Rear Admiral Mahan confirmed the decision to retain battleships in those waters. Japan's victory and sudden emergence as a rival prompted the Navy Department to remove all battleships from Asiatic station in 1906 and to replace them with armored cruisers. The faster armored cruisers stood a better chance of escaping a Japanese naval descent, while the battleships could be preserved for a unified thrust from the Atlantic to the Pacific. By 1907, the process of fleet formation was complete. All operational battleships were attached to the Atlantic Fleet, and the Asiatic Fleet and Pacific Squadron were consolidated to form the Pacific Fleet. Roosevelt then tested the transfer of the Atlantic Fleet to the Pacific with the world cruise.

The President promoted the process of fleet formation at every opportunity. His annual messages, for example, regularly reminded Congress and the country of the importance of a unified fleet. At a more personal level, Roosevelt espoused the principle of concentrated force with almost religious fervor. It was one of the most important factors shaping his naval policies. Thus Roosevelt was
miffed in January 1907 when Admiral Mahan cautioned him against dividing the battleship fleet. The admiral was reacting to reports that the Navy might dispatch four battleships to the Pacific in response to tensions with Japan. An insulted and irritated Roosevelt shot back that Mahan should not put too much faith in newspapers, and he informed the admiral that he was "quite incapable of such an act of utter folly...." He entertained no more notion of such a scheme than he had "of going thither in a rowboat [himself]." To the end of his presidency, Roosevelt remained wedded to the principle of concentration, and it was the one piece of specific advice that he gave to President-elect William Howard Taft shortly before leaving office: "Under no circumstances divide the battleship fleet between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans prior to the finishing of the Panama Canal."

Roosevelt was just as interested in training naval units as in assembling them. He exerted constant pressure for training exercises that were as close as possible to actual warfare, and he initiated the first fleet maneuvers for the new steel Navy. A few officers had pushed for large-scale naval maneuvers during the previous twenty years, but Roosevelt was the first chief executive to answer their appeal, and in fact claimed primary credit for the inaugural set of exercises: "The plan was not Admiral Taylor's--it was mine." Under his orders, the General
Board planned the operation during the summer of 1902, and the exercises were to commence in December of that year. The North Atlantic Fleet and the European and South Atlantic Squadrons would assemble at Culebra, off Puerto Rico, and practice battle formations and search problems, remaining there into early 1903.\textsuperscript{40} Unbeknownst to planners, the maneuvers would coincide with the second Venezuelan crisis, and the presence of so many American warships in the Caribbean strengthened the President's hand in dealing with the German, British, and Italian effort to collect delinquent debts with force.\textsuperscript{41}

The success of the maneuvers received the highest priority from Roosevelt. Secretary Moody stressed that fact in a letter to Admiral Taylor, the Assistant Secretary, the chiefs of all the bureaus, and the heads of selected naval stations, for he wanted to insure their full cooperation.\textsuperscript{42} For his part, Roosevelt acted to smooth the political path for the maneuvers. When Senator Thomas Platt of New York objected that the exercises might prevent Rear Admiral Arent Crowninshield from assuming command of the European squadron, the President reassured him that Crowninshield would indeed take command of the squadron and that it would return to its Mediterranean station following the exercises. He guessed that Crowninshield, as a good sailor, would "jump at the chance of seeing the American fleet gathered together to maneuver at Culebra."\textsuperscript{43} Later that year, Senator Matthew
Quay of Pennsylvania suggested cancelling the maneuvers because of the anthracite coal strike and the resulting coal shortage. Roosevelt responded that he had considered that step but was reluctant to cancel the maneuvers unless the circumstances were dire. The President wrote, "For six months great trouble and some expense have been incurred in making ready all the plans for these maneuvers, and they are essential for the proper development of the navy. I do not believe that the amount of coal saved would be proportionate to the great damage done, and I am confident that it would mean serious demoralization in the navy to stop the maneuvers."

Roosevelt also eased the way for the operation by securing Admiral Dewey as fleet commander. The hero of Manila Bay would lend prestige and attract attention to the maneuvers, which could pay dividends in Congress during appropriations time. Roosevelt wrote Dewey that his direction of the fleet "will be a good thing from the professional standpoint; and what is more, your standing, not merely in this nation but abroad, is such that the effect of your presence will be very beneficial outside of the service also." Dewey could hardly decline, especially considering the debt of gratitude he owed Roosevelt for securing him command of the Asiatic Squadron in 1897, which had brought him such fame the following year.
The maneuvers were a success, both diplomatically and institutionally. Dewey claimed that the Navy had achieved a higher state of development now that it had practiced for a fleet engagement. Officers and sailors had performed efficiently so that the exercises concluded without "a hitch of any kind, not an accident of any description, and [with] the most enthusiastic morale in the entire fleet...." Dewey declared that the maneuvers had increased the reputation of the Navy and the nation. The United States had demonstrated that it could mobilize a fleet 1,500 miles from its shores, and the naval presence in the Caribbean had inhibited other powers during the crisis over Venezuela.

Despite the Navy's accomplishment, fleet maneuvers remained the exception and not the rule for the remainder of Roosevelt's presidency. Operations for a fleet engagement were not practiced on the same scale again until the world cruise of 1907-09. In fact, Commander Albert Key informed the Senate Naval Affairs Committee in March 1908 that the Navy could count only nine days of actual rehearsal for a fleet engagement, whether practiced by squadrons or a fleet. Key meant that ships had not sufficiently performed the formations and tactics required for a major sea engagement. The Navy, however, was not resting complacently and ignoring the President's appeals during the years between the first fleet maneuvers and the world cruise. On the contrary, it was a bee hive of training
activity. Rather than fleet maneuvers, the Navy emphasized the exercise of squadrons, which were later replaced by battleship divisions under the new fleet structure. These operations may not have met Key's standard for fleet maneuvers, but they were an advance over past practices, when naval officers thought more about the operations of individual ships than the work of squadrons.

**Naval Gunnery**

The Navy had to learn how to hit an enemy before battle formations would be of much use. When Roosevelt took office, the Navy had an abysmal gunnery record, and upon learning of this condition Roosevelt made gunnery practice a priority throughout his years in office. In fact, naval gunnery practice became one of his pet military interests, and his intervention into gunnery matters provided a prime example of how deep he was willing to take his prerogative of commander in chief into the conduct of military affairs.

Roosevelt's interest in naval gunnery long preceded his entry into the White House. The Naval War of 1812 credited superior gunnery as a key factor in the few victories that the puny American Navy scored against Great Britain, a point that Roosevelt, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, repeated in 1898 to Navy Secretary John D. Long. Roosevelt had learned the previous year that naval marksmanship no longer
matched the traditions of 1812, so he launched a personal crusade to improve the accuracy of naval gunfire, although the war with Spain soon aborted this effort.  

William Sims was the one who awakened Roosevelt to the state of naval gunnery in 1897. As Roosevelt recalled in 1904, Sims "took a most pessimist view of our marksmanship," and at the time Roosevelt thought him to be an alarmist. The Assistant Secretary still saw enough merit in Sims’s claims to prompt him to act, especially in view of the tensions with Spain. First he sought information about American gunnery performance, and his quest inspired him to attend squadron maneuvers off Hampton Roads in September 1897. Roosevelt led an entourage of officers and reporters and for three days viewed battleships and armored cruisers maneuvering and firing. He broadened his experience the following month aboard the Dolphin by stepping behind the sights himself and blazing away with a rapid fire six-pound gun. Roosevelt discovered in the process some techniques of naval shooting and the principle that "the number of hits is what counts," not the rapidity of fire. Seeking more objective data, he instructed Rear Admiral Montgomery Sicard to report on gunnery during the September maneuvers and wanted to know results for both large and rapid-fire guns, as well as the efficiency of turrets. Foreign data was also of interest, and Roosevelt studied the reports of American naval attachés and examined information on foreign gun
practice collected by the bureaus of Navigation and Ordnance.57

Armed with knowledge, the Assistant Secretary proposed improvements in American naval gunnery. He planned a special gun practice with Admiral Sicard's squadron in which the best trained gun crews would test four-, five-, six-, and eight-inch guns. Presumably such a test would establish a high standard from which to measure the performance of other vessels. Roosevelt also proposed a board of inspectors that would visit both the Navy's gunnery ship and Sicard's squadron to observe gun practice. Composed of experts, the board could combine knowledge of foreign methods with the results of American practices and suggest improvements in marksmanship. Finally, Roosevelt recommended that competition between ships might produce results. Prizes for the best gun crews would recognize accomplishment and spur others to achieve the same level of excellence.58 Hostilities with Spain, however, soon ended this program. The Assistant Secretary became a Rough Rider, and the victories at Manila and Santiago overshadowed the fact that American gunners actually scored a low percentage of hits. Spanish forces had simply been in much poorer shape.59

Sims reignited interest in gunnery in November 1901. Complacency had set in after the easy victory over Spain, and Sims could not convince departmental officials to resume
the program of gunnery reform begun in 1897. A lieutenant
at the time, he decided upon the bold move of going straight
to the top. He dispatched a personal letter to Roosevelt in
November 1901 in hopes that the new president would excuse
his disregard of proper channels, recognize the continuing
problems with American gunnery, and rejuvenate gunnery
reform.  

Sims's letter rammed home American inferiority in
gunnery. The lieutenant reminded Roosevelt of his earlier
attempt to improve marksmanship and then went on to describe
American gunnery as "crushingly inferior" to that of
possible enemies. Humiliating defeat was inevitable if
American warships squared off against their foreign
equivalents, and Sims wrote to sound a warning before
disaster occurred. He recognized the seriousness of his
charges but supported them by pointing to his long study of
the subject, numerous reports to the Navy Department, and
the results of a special target practice. The North
Atlantic Squadron had recently demonstrated poorer
marksmanship than Sims had thought possible. Five ships had
each fired for five minutes at a target 2,800 yards distant.
They made only two hits altogether.  

Sims's letter did not cause Roosevelt to sound the
alarm. He thanked Sims for his comments and encouraged him
to write in the future, in "criticism, or suggestion," but
told the lieutenant that his letter was "unduly
pessimistic," believing that Sims overstated his case.\footnote{30}
The naval triumphs in the recent war notwithstanding,
Roosevelt was concerned enough to seek the views of certain
trusted officers. He asked brother-in-law Captain William
Cowles for comments on Sims's correspondence and then had
Admiral Taylor go over it as well. Roosevelt wanted Taylor
to draft a plan for improving marksmanship and to comment on
other statements by Sims regarding the material inferiority
of American battleships, although the President felt that
the deficiencies would make little difference in battle.\footnote{31}

Taylor provided a measured response. He informed
Roosevelt that the General Board had sent a plan for the
West Indies Squadron to test. The scheme involved
progressive instruction according to which lieutenants would
improve the performance of their gun divisions every week,
captains would improve the results for their ships every
month, and admirals would show improvement for their
squadron every quarter. The Navy Department would inspect
the West Indies Squadron on May 1, 1902, to gauge the
results.\footnote{32}

With a temperament as restless as Roosevelt's, Sims was
not inclined to make his point and then drop it. He
addressed another letter to the President on March 11, 1902,
and underlined at length the defects in naval gunnery and
the Navy's complacency regarding target practice. For
example, Sims compared British and American target practices
and found that American vessels performed abysmally. The British battleship Majestic fired twice as fast as the New York and outclassed the American ship in rapidity of hitting by much larger margins. Such statistics convinced Roosevelt of the true gravity of the problem, and thereafter the President gave naval gunnery the highest priority. He assumed his role as an agent of innovation, providing the force necessary "to overcome the inertia of bureau chiefs, especially of the elderly men...reluctant to adopt new ideas." Roosevelt turned again to Admiral Taylor, saying how much Sims's letters had impressed him. He wanted Taylor to prepare a memorandum that embodied all of Sims's arguments and also wished to go over the details of the subject in person with the Admiral. Roosevelt was ready for decisive action, telling Taylor that "we must take all possible measure for correction."

A vigorous program of gunnery reform ensued. The Navy Department disseminated the memorandum summarizing Sims's views throughout the service. Competition for gunnery prizes also commenced and became a major force for improvement as crews vied for the prestige of the awards. Perhaps the greatest stroke came in October 1902 when Admiral Taylor, as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, brought Sims back from China Station and made him Inspector of Target Practice. From this post, Sims taught continuous-
aim firing, which was a much more accurate aiming technique borrowed from the British. Roosevelt kept close watch over the progress in gunnery. He eagerly awaited the results of target practices and thoroughly consumed the reports when they arrived. Sometimes he hungered for even more details and pressed Sims or other officials for them. For example, Roosevelt asked Admiral Taylor for a comparison with German gunnery in September 1903, and in April 1904 he questioned whether the Navy Department had taken steps to improve marksmanship on cruisers as well as on battleships. He also wanted to know if battleships on Asiatic station performed as well as ships elsewhere. In October 1907, he queried Sims about the possible difference in hits between eight-inch guns mounted in superimposed turrets and those positioned elsewhere on ships.

Roosevelt was not content, however, merely to read reports. He wanted to see results firsthand and attended target practices during his presidency. For example, he boarded the Mayflower on August 6, 1902, to observe gunners at work. The Mayflower often served as a presidential yacht, but it also carried ten six-pound guns and two one-pound guns. Roosevelt watched from the bridge as each of the twelve gun crews fired for two minutes upon an oblong canvas target 1,000 to 2,000 feet distant. He applauded hits and looked distraught at missed shots. After the first
gun crew missed the target entirely, Roosevelt shouted advice, "Your elevation was excellent, but you shot to the left and did not count. It's the shots that hit that count." He awarded a prize to the best gun crew and then said some words about the need for improvement, teamwork, and expert gun pointers. His message was not aimed just at the Mayflower crew but at the entire Navy and indicated the standard that he wanted all ships to achieve.

Thus, Roosevelt was more than just a spectator once the gunnery renaissance was underway but instead pushed refinements in training. Early on he promoted rewards for outstanding gunnery, proposing that main battery crews receive a small prize and certificate for an excellent performance and that the gun pointer of the winning vessel get a certificate and a larger prize. Later Roosevelt suggested that superior gun pointers receive an advance in pay. Pay advances and increases in rate were eventually implemented for gun pointers, but the main incentive remained ship-to-ship competition, the winners of which received trophies. The day after viewing the Mayflower demonstration, Roosevelt proposed that the ship be employed as an experimental vessel for marksmanship. It would serve as an instrument for ascertaining the best system of gunnery and would supply examples of marksmanship for other ships to emulate. The Mayflower, however, continued to function as a presidential yacht. Finally, Roosevelt decided that the
accuracy of Army artillery could likely stand improvement if the Navy’s performance had risen so markedly since 1902. After reading a comparison of Army and Navy accuracy, he told Secretary of War Taft in August 1907 that he wanted improvements in Army artillery and ordered Taft to send the report to the General Staff for study, the results of which he wanted to see. War Department officials subsequently called attention to artillery improvements since 1900 but also declared the need for better fire-control equipment.\(^7^9\)

Roosevelt also intervened when the naval gunnery program ran into obstacles. Improvement could go only so far without better equipment, in particular gun sights. The advent of continuous-aim firing had caught the Bureau of Ordnance by surprise, and at first officials could not provide equipment that was fast enough or good enough. But the bureau did not act as quickly as it could have, and not nearly as fast as the impatient Sims desired. The issue came to a head in 1904 after Sims presented a report to Roosevelt on the problem. After hearing both sides (the Navy Department said it required seven years to install new sights), Roosevelt instructed the department to find money for the best possible sights or he would seek it from Congress, telling Capitol Hill that the current material put out by the bureaus was obsolete and inefficient. The President’s intervention worked, and the entire fleet received new sights within two years.\(^7^4\)
The gunnery program suffered its greatest crisis in April 1904 after an accident during target practice. A turret explosion aboard the Missouri claimed thirty-four lives, and some observers in the press and the Navy Department blamed the tragedy on the new system of gunnery, condemning in particular the demand for rapid fire. Suddenly all of Sims's work seemed in danger, for rapid firing did involve some risk. Sims countered by placing the blame on defects in the design of turrets, but he required help from higher places to weather the storm.

Roosevelt weighed in decisively on the side of Sims and the new system of gunnery. Word reached Sims soon after the accident "that the President...while insisting upon every safeguard, will not sanction nor order any measure that will tend to check our advance in efficiency." Roosevelt himself declared his unqualified commitment to rapid firing in a letter to Secretary Moody on May 10. The President declared, "There must of course be no decrease in the practice for rapidity of fire. We cannot do well in battle unless we practice in peace. The test is not the number of ill-aimed shots, nor the percentage of hits among shots fired slowly, but the number of shots that hit in a given time." Roosevelt went on to praise the conduct of the Missouri's officers and crew in the aftermath of the accident and to state his appreciation for the speedy resumption of target practice. Such strong statements ended
the threat to Sims's system of gunnery. A few years later, the Missouri accident provided Sims and other reformers with ammunition about battleship design defects. Roosevelt's stand indicated the importance that he attached to accurate shooting and also showed how well he understood the technical principles behind the new program. That program had brought results, and recognition of that fact sustained it in the long-term, beyond Roosevelt's tenure. The President estimated in 1907 that marksmanship had become five times better since the start of reform in 1902.

Although Sims and Roosevelt were leading figures in the fight for improved gunnery, they were not, of course, the only individuals responsible for its success. Admiral Taylor was an influential supporter within the Navy Department, and a host of others from the enthusiastic gun crews to the Bureau of Ordnance played crucial roles in implementing the new system. Sims remained the guiding spirit, however, the one who introduced the new system and had the drive to push for it. For his part, Roosevelt had the vision to accept Sims's criticisms, endorse change, and stand by the reformer when the sailing became rough.

Roosevelt was in his element as commander in chief when dealing with naval gunnery. Few budgetary or political fetters bound his efforts to improve this basic part of naval preparedness, and he could measure progress easily
through the results of target practices. He embraced the project with a zest seen in few Secretaries of the Navy, much less Presidents. Roosevelt endorsed a new operational policy, learned its technical outlines, and kept a close watch over its implementation, to the point of reading target practice regulations, studying the results of firing exercises, and personally reviewing gunnery practices.\textsuperscript{53}

Such energy, technical knowledge, and depth of involvement would be hard for other chief executives to duplicate, but Roosevelt’s intervention in operational matters signaled again that an activist age had dawned for the presidency, in part because of the demands of national security. After Roosevelt, few occupants of the office could afford to ignore that role. Technology was drawing the rest of the world closer to America, and within a few decades presidents could not escape involvement in the detail of military affairs, especially after developments in aircraft, ship, missile, and space technology virtually eliminated America’s oceanic moat.

The Marines and the Advance Base Force Mission

The increased American involvement in international affairs had a far-reaching effect upon the operational mission of the U.S. Marine Corps. Prior to 1898, the Corps supplied security guards on shore and aboard ships, troops for landing parties, and gun crews for warships. The need
to protect overseas possessions and interests gave the Corps a new role: the seizure of advanced bases so that the fleet could meet an enemy far from home ports. During Roosevelt's presidency the Marine Corps began to retool itself as an amphibious assault force, which became its major operational function later in the twentieth century. Roosevelt's role in this transformation was peripheral until near the end of his administration, but when he acted, controversy erupted.

The Marine Corps had come under heavy fire before the Spanish-American War, and Roosevelt had stood in the chorus of critics. A group of younger naval officers campaigned in the 1890s for the removal of Marines from the battleships of the new Navy. Lieutenant William F. Fullam was the most outspoken of this group, and he argued in 1890 that the presence of Marine security guards gave ships the atmosphere of a penal colony and hindered the Navy's efforts to improve the training, education, and motivation of crews. Moreover, sailors could assume full responsibility for landing parties and could readily replace Marines at secondary gun batteries. Assistant Secretary Roosevelt took up the Corps's status in 1897 during hearings of the Personnel Board, which he chaired. The board contemplated the removal of Marine guards from ships and the amalgamation of the Marine Corps with the naval line. Roosevelt favored amalgamation and told Senator Eugene Hale as much in early
1898. Hale himself had already proposed such a course of action in 1894. The Colonel Commandant of the Marine Corps, Charles Heywood, countered with a spirited defense, invoking the Marines' past glories and the necessity of ships guards. In the end, the Navy Department decided not to include the Corps in the resulting bill, and preparations for hostilities with Spain soon stifled further discussion. But Roosevelt's opposition to a separate Marine Corps was on record, and it would resurface during his presidency.

In the interim, the stock of the Marine Corps rose. Marine exploits during the Spanish–American War covered the Corps with glory in the press and reinforced its reputation for readiness. In fact, Huntington's Battalion, the Marine unit that seized Guantanamo Bay as a staging area, attracted more publicity than any other unit in Cuba, except for the Rough Riders. Expanded American interests led to more frequent use of the Corps abroad after the war, and the forces employed for interventions were bigger and stayed longer than before 1898. Marines, for example, landed in Panama four times from 1901 to 1904, and their forces there reached brigade size in early 1904, remaining at battalion strength until 1914. The General Board, however, wanted the Marines for more than just colonial infantry and envisioned a key role for the Corps in a naval war with another power: Marine expeditionary battalions would seize and defend anchorages that would allow the fleet to
undertake campaigns in distant waters. From 1900 onward, the General Board struggled to turn this concept into reality. It aimed to secure funding, men, and equipment for two expeditionary battalions, one for the Atlantic and one for Asiatic waters. Roadblocks frustrated the board at every turn, with Congress, the naval bureaus, and the Marine Corps reluctant to lend support. Marine Corps headquarters remained wedded to the security mission, which had sustained the Corps for a century, and many Marines worried that separation from the fleet spelled the beginning of the end of the Corps as a distinct service.

Roosevelt reentered the picture in 1906. The Bureau of Navigation revived the idea of removing Marine guards from warships that year, and the President proposed a new Personnel Board that would examine the relationship of the Marine Corps with the rest of the Navy as part of its duties. He asked the board to propose better ways to integrate the Corps with the Navy. Nothing came of the Personnel Board's work, but Roosevelt's instructions implied that his feelings about the Corps had not changed since he was assistant secretary.

Navy officers sought to exploit Roosevelt's attitude and revive the campaign against the ships guards in 1908. These reformers had since moved into positions of considerable power in the Navy: William Fullam was now a commander and a member of the Navy's policymaking circles;
Commander William S. Sims, Fullam's friend, had close ties to the President; and Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans enjoyed high standing as a commander of the world cruise and a reputation as an opponent of Marine guards. They did not wish the destruction of the Corps but believed its separation from ships would elevate the quality of sailors' lives and supply troops for expeditionary battalions. Action to displace Marines commenced in autumn 1908 when Rear Admiral J.E. Pillsbury, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, recommended the removal of Marines aboard ships, the organization of expeditionary forces, and the attachment of expeditionary units to the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.*

Roosevelt enacted Pillsbury's recommendation with an executive order on November 12, 1908. He reassigned the duties of the Marine Corps, omitting any mention of the role of ships guards. Instead he maintained the Marines' assignment as security forces for naval facilities ashore, and he assigned the Corps to the first-line, mobile defense of extra-continental bases and stations. He also ordered the Marines to garrison the Canal Zone and "to furnish such garrisons and expeditionary forces for duties beyond the seas as may be necessary in time of peace."** The order affected approximately 2,000 Marines. Within a week of the order, the Pacific Fleet had landed its Marine guards, and the commander of the Atlantic Fleet reported that his Marines would depart within a month."
Although Roosevelt had sanctioned the new expeditionary mission, he personally wanted another future for the Corps. He wished to abolish it! He wrote Leonard Wood in late November 1908 that he really wanted to amalgamate the Marines Corps with the Army, an even more radical step than integration with the naval line. Roosevelt's position had hardened during his presidency apparently because he had tired of the Corps' constant politicking in Washington. His army aide, Captain Archie Butt, quoted Roosevelt as saying that the Marines "have gained by pandering to every political influence, [and that] has given them such an abnormal position for the size of their corps that they have simply invited their own destruction." Continuing his blast, the President proclaimed, "I do not hesitate to say that they should be absorbed into the army and no vestige of their organization should be allowed to remain. They cannot get along with the navy, and as a separate command with the army the conditions would be intolerable."

These words were strong, but Roosevelt did not act impetuously upon them. The Corps's political influence in Congress, the cause of his displeasure, was reason enough to move cautiously. As usual, the President considered advice from various sources and then followed a course of action that would increase naval efficiency and at the same time reduce the Marine Corps a notch or two. His Victorian core was showing in his desire to destroy the Corps, for he
wished, self-righteously, to punish the Marines for the sin of excessive politicking, which harmed military efficiency. Destruction of the Corps would be a grand lesson to all that service to the nation had to come before selfish institutional interests. In his comments to Wood and Butt, Roosevelt was probably just venting frustration at the fact that members of his own military repeatedly thwarted his efforts at reform by turning to political allies outside of the executive branch. He surely knew that abolition was impossible at that point, especially considering the short time that he had left in office, so he set aside his private inclinations and pursued a much more moderate course.

Roosevelt's personal sentiments were not unknown and worked against development of an advanced base mission. Some members of Congress suspected that the removal of Marines from ships was the first gun in the abolition of the Corps, and Roosevelt's attitude fed such worries. With mutual antagonism running high between the lame-duck President and Capitol Hill, Congress decided to hand Roosevelt a reversal and protect the Marine Corps. A House subcommittee conducted hearings on the status of the Corps that were clearly biased in favor of retaining Marine guards on ships. In fact, the head of the subcommittee was Thomas Butler, who had a son destined to become one of the leading lights of the Marine Corps. Smedley D. Butler was a captain in 1908-09, but he later became a major general; commanded
American forces in Haiti, Nicaragua, and China; won two Medals of Honor; and gained a reputation as one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the Corps. Naval officers in favor of the reform repeated arguments about improved efficiency and expeditionary forces, but the committee also heard from officers, mostly retired, who were opposed to the removal of ships guards. The committee allowed members of the Marine Corps Headquarters staff to supply questions and to badger witnesses; moreover, a Marine captain served as secretary to the committee. The Marine officers testified in emotional terms about the blow struck to the Corps's honor, the Marines' continued usefulness aboard ship, and the Corps's value as a ready elite force.

When all was done, the House Naval Affairs Committee attached a rider to the naval appropriations bill stating that the Marine guards must return to their vessels or there would be no funding for the Corps. The full House balked at this measure and delayed action, but the Senate prompted it to act, voting overwhelmingly to return the Marines to their ships. House members then passed the Naval Appropriations Act with the rider. Roosevelt signed, for the act authorized two battleships, which he wanted above all else.

The defeat did not weigh heavily on the President. He wrote George Foss, chair of the House Naval Affairs Committee, that restoration of the Marine guards was
regrettable but not particularly harmful. Roosevelt claimed that the Marines' shipboard presence was detrimental and the removal had been made solely to bolster expeditionary battalions, but he thought the congressional action did the most damage by "creating the belief that the marines are kept aboard ship for nonmilitary reasons." In the end, Roosevelt simply did not care enough about the issue to shed blood over it. His first concern was more battleships, and whether Marines were aboard them or not was hardly critical to the Navy's preparedness. He need not, however, have undercut the advocates of advanced base forces with his outright hostility to the Marine Corps, for his feelings were no secret in Washington. Reformers wanted to develop a Marine Corps mission more in line with the needs of the current century, and Roosevelt's criticisms served only as ammunition for their foes.

Conclusion

The struggle over the Marine Corps's mission illuminated the limits on Roosevelt as peacetime commander in chief. He had a great deal of room to maneuver when dealing with training operations, but Congress did not hesitate to assert its prerogatives when he moved outside those bounds. The definition of a mission fell under the constitutional authority of Congress to make rules for regulating the Army and Navy, and during this era Congress
was still seeded with members who had entered political life when the legislative branch asserted its superiority over the executive branch. No grave foreign or domestic threat loomed to justify the passing of the initiative in military affairs to the executive, as would happen later in the century.

Within strictly operational matters, however, Roosevelt was in his element. He kept close watch over the training of the armed services, suggested improvements in exercises, and was quick to praise good performances. His top priority was military preparedness, but his boyish side was in evidence as well. Roosevelt took sheer delight in maneuvering warships, firing their guns, following the details of training, and then boasting of the results as a reflection of his own prowess. He may be excused for such exuberance because he left behind a military establishment much better prepared for war than when he found it. The Navy gained experience at working as a fleet, and the accuracy of naval gunners increased dramatically. The Army and National Guard also began to exercise with large formations and stressed more realistic training, work that would pay off in a few years in World War I. Roosevelt’s heart was not really in reforming the Marines, but his administration still pointed the Corps in the direction of expeditionary forces, a mission that ultimately showered the Marine Corps with fame in World War II. All of these
accomplishments lay more with the work of dedicated officers and their men; however, Roosevelt remained a key to their success, defending their efforts, cheering them on, and above all providing a voice for innovation that could not be ignored.

It is hard to imagine later presidents duplicating Roosevelt's level of involvement in peacetime military operations; the responsibilities of the office simply grew to be too large, or they lacked the same degree of interest. Yet presidents had to pay more heed to the readiness of the armed forces as the increasing sophistication of warfare brought potential enemies closer to American shores and American forces took up new overseas stations after 1945. The vigor with which Roosevelt exercised his operational prerogatives also portended the actions of later chief executives. For example, he foreshadowed the future when he handed Congress a de facto situation in 1907 by moving the battleship fleet to the Pacific without enough coal. Congress either had to authorize the additional fuel or strand the fleet on the Pacific coast. Popular pressure would not permit such an action. Future Congresses faced much graver choices after presidents had thrust the armed forces into harms way in Korea in 1950, South Vietnam in 1965, and, most recently, the Persian Gulf in 1990-91.
NOTES

1. Roosevelt, *State Papers*, 137, 139, 144.

2. See notes 2 and 6 in the first chapter of this study for citation of the relevant works.


8. Ibid.


10. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, 15 March 1902, in Morison, *Letters*, 3: 243; Theodore Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternberg, 19 July 1901, in ibid., 3: 297; Robert Shaw Oliver to Adna R. Chaffee, 29 July 1905, Subject Files "French Maneuvers, Box 14, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Memorandum for the Military Secretary, 22 June 1906, Subject Files "German maneuvers," Box 15, in ibid.; Adjutant General's Office to Thomas Barry, 11 June 1907, File 1129860, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Elihu Root to William Howard Taft, 27 November 1905, File 2118 ACP 1894, M-1395, in ibid.

11. "Annual Report of the Secretary of War (1902)," 40-41; Adna R. Chaffee to the Secretary of War, 16 January 1904, Subject Files "Maneuvers, Box 22, RG 165, WDGS, NARA."
12. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff from Arthur L. Wagner, 25 July 1904, Subject Files "Maneuvers," Box 21, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Adna R. Chaffee to the Secretary of War, 16 January 1904, Subject Files "Maneuvers," Box 22, in ibid.; "Annual Report of the Secretary of War (1903)," 26-27.


15. Ibid., 232.

16. Adna R. Chaffee to the Secretary of War, 16 January 1904, Subject files "Maneuvers," Box 22, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; "Annual Report of the Secretary of War (1903)," 27; "Annual Report of the Secretary of War (1906)," 47.


19. Theodore Roosevelt to the Secretary of War, with attached note from Adna R. Chaffee, 1 February 1904, Subject files "Maneuvers," Box 22, RG 165, WDGS, NARA.

20. Ibid.


24. Adna R. Chaffee to Theodore Roosevelt, 15 August 1905, Subject Files, "Expeditionary Force," Box 14, RG 165, WDGS, NARA. Plans for this force are contained in the same file. Roosevelt did not abandon the idea immediately but called again for such an exercise in his annual message for 1905. See, Roosevelt, State Papers, 359; Millett, "General Staff," 114.

26. William Howard Taft to J.F. Bell, 7 March 1906, Taft Papers, Roll 487; H.P. McCain to the Secretary of War, ca. 1916, File 2395732, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; J.F. Bell to the Secretary of War, 4 June 1906, Subject Files "Militia," Box 20, RG 165, WDGS, NARA; Memorandum, 20 December 1905, Subject Files "Brigade Posts," Box 7, ibid.; Memorandum of Views of the Secretary of War Regarding the Establishment of Brigade Posts, June 1906, ibid.; Robert Shaw Oliver to the Secretary of War, 6 March 1906, Subject Files "Regimental Posts," Box 26, ibid; Roosevelt, State Papers, 359—60, 478.

27. Nenninger, "Twentieth Century Army," 221-22; The story would not be complete without some mention of activities overseas, for there forces were striding forward in terms of larger unit training while splintered deployments hindered efforts at home. The Philippines became a seedbed of training activity once the insurrection was quelled. Concentration of posts moved quicker than at home as there were no congressional representatives to interfere with the designs of colonial officials. The Army established its first brigade posts in the Philippines at Fort McKinley and at Camp Stotsenburg. Camp Stotsenburg was eight times the size of Fort Riley, Kansas, which was the next largest Army post at 20,000 acres of land. In the Philippines, Leonard Wood was a leading exponent of a rigorous training program, and he informed Roosevelt of as much as early as 1903. He argued for the future for five brigade posts, which would reduce administrative costs, give general officers actual practice at field commands, and assemble adequate troops "at one point to carry out valuable instruction in field maneuvers and exercises." Wood pushed a rigorous training program as commander of the Philippines Division in 1906 and attempted to put forth a model of war preparedness for the entire Army to emulate. He was not alone in this effort. At Fort McKinley, Brigadier General Pershing pushed to make his brigade a school of practical application and launched it on a set of maneuvers designed to protect Manila from an enemy landing. For information on this work, see, Meixsel, "United States Army Policy," 4, 51, 107-8; Leonard Wood to Theodore Roosevelt, ca. 1903, Wood Papers, Box 32, Folder 7; William Duvall to Robert Shaw Oliver, 4 December 1907, File 1308249, RG 94, AG's Office, NARA; Report of Maneuvers and Field Exercises, Fort McKinley Brigade, 20-25 May 1907, Pershing Papers, Box 321, Folder 2; A Synopsis of the Field Exercises.
and Maneuvers of the Troops Stationed at Fort William McKinley, Rizal, P.I., From June 12, 1907 to July 16, 1907, ibid., Folder 3.


30. Sprout, Naval Power, 246-47.

31. Marine John Lejeune described cruising with the Atlantic Squadron in 1897. He found it an essentially boring existence as time passed slowly in the course of a two-year cruise. Target practice was the only activity that broke the tedium. Lejeune's comments are found in a letter to Augustine Lejeune, 19 November 1897, Lejeune Papers, Roll 1.


36. Theodore Roosevelt to Alfred T. Mahan, 12 January 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 550-51. In August 1907, Roosevelt again demonstrated his dedication to a concentrated battle fleet. The General Board had set forth plans for the ships that would cruise to the Pacific and those that would remain on the eastern
seaboard. Roosevelt construed the plan to mean that the Board recommended a division of the battleship fleet and reminded the Board of the lesson Russia had learned in its late war about dividing naval power between two far-flung positions. The Board corrected the misunderstanding by pointing out that the ships that would stay on the Atlantic coast were not yet complete, under repair, or obsolete. This exchange is recorded in, Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 6 August 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 743-44; Theodore Roosevelt to Truman H. Newberry, 10 August 1907, ibid., 5: 745; General Board of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy, 15 August 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, RG 80, General Board, NARA.


38. Roosevelt, State Papers, 233-34, 304, 363-64, 475-76, 555-56.


40. Henry C. Taylor to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 July 1902, Letterbook 2, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; H. Wood to Commander in Chief of the European Squadron, 3 July 1902, ibid.; Henry C. Taylor Ensor Chadwick, 8 July 1902, ibid.; George Dewey to the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, 17 July 1902, ibid.; George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 17 July 1902, ibid.; George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 22 July 1902, ibid.

41. See Seward Livermore's previously cited article for more details on the role of the U.S. Navy in this crisis.

42. Memorandum from Secretary of the Navy William Moody to Henry C. Taylor, 24 July 1902, Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 12. This memorandum was also sent to the Assistant Secretary, the bureau chiefs, and the heads of naval stations.

43. Theodore Roosevelt to Thomas C. Platt, 28 June 1902, in Morison, Letters, 3: 283.

44. Theodore Roosevelt to Matthew Quay, 27 October 1902, ibid., 3: 368-69. Roosevelt was also concerned that the cancellation might have a "bad effect" on foreign powers. He apparently feared that they would read it as a sign of American military unpreparedness.

46. Journal of the Commander in Chief, 6 January 1903, pp. 87, 91, Dewey Papers, Box 2.

47. Ibid.

48. Albert L. Key to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, 21 March 1908, File 26000-10, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

49. For example, Admiral Taylor reported to Secretary Moody about squadron maneuvers off Guantanamo in February 1904. There a squadron of battleships practiced evolutions with a squadron of cruisers, each side attempting to train their broadsides on one another or to break out of the situation. Taylor claimed that the results were not brilliant as both groups tended to limit themselves to useless wheelings and countermarches. Still, he carried away hope for improvement in the future. This report is contained in, Henry C. Taylor to William H. Moody, 29 February 1904, Moody Papers, vol. 11.

   A division centered around four battleships. Admiral Taylor proposed the move away from squadrons in his report as Admiral Dewey's chief of staff during the 1902-1903 maneuvers. See, Report, Henry C. Taylor to George Dewey, 15 January 1903, Journal of the Commander in Chief, Dewey Papers, Box 2.

50. Roosevelt for his part repeatedly stressed the value of squadron maneuvers. Roosevelt, State Papers, 139-40, 234, 304, 475-76.

51. Previously cited, Elting Morison's biography of William Sims tells much of this story. Sims made his reputation and gained personal introduction to Roosevelt through his criticisms of American naval gunnery and his solutions to gunnery shortcomings. Some recounting is warranted, however, for Morison naturally emphasizes Sims's viewpoint, not the White House perspective, and the President's energy and amazing grasp of technical detail shone forth on issues of naval gunnery.

52. Roosevelt, 1812, 50; Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 4 January 1898, in Allen, Long Papers, 40.


56. Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Bigelow, 29 October 1897, ibid., 702.

57. Theodore Roosevelt to Arent Crowninshield, 24 November 1897, ibid., 1: 720; Theodore Roosevelt to John D. Long, 4 January 1898, in Allen, Long Papers, 40; Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 24 November 1897, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1; William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 6 December 1897, ibid. At this time, Sims was the American naval attaché in Paris.


60. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 November 1901, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1.

61. Ibid.

62. Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Sims, 27 December 1901, in Morison, Letters, 3: 212. There were other voices in Washington arguing at great length that Sims had greatly overstated the danger. For example, in April 1902 the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Rear Admiral Charles O'Neil, provided an elaborate rebuttal to Sims's criticism about inadequate gun mounts, telescopic sights, and other materials required for accuracy. O'Neil claimed that the human element was the only variable that could still be substantially improved. Technology could only do so much, and accurate hitting ultimately depended on the skill of the gun crew. O'Neil, however, was later proved wrong. His comments are contained in a report dated April 22, 1902, and contained in the Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1.

63. Theodore Roosevelt to William S. Cowles, 12 December 1901, in Morison, Letters, 3: 206-07; Theodore
Roosevelt to Henry C. Taylor, 27 December 1901, ibid., 3: 212.

64. Henry C. Taylor to Theodore Roosevelt, 1 January 1902, Roosevelt Papers, Roll 23.

65. William S. Sims to Theodore Roosevelt, 11 March 1902, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1.

66. Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, 21 August 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 760. Roosevelt was recollecting in this letter.


72. Ibid.


74. Theodore Roosevelt to Albert Gleaves, 7 August 1902, ibid., 3: 310.

75. Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, 21 August 1907, ibid., 5: 760.

77. Ibid., 138-41.

78. B. Belknap to William S. Sims, 15 April 1904, Sims Papers, Box 96, Folder 1. Belknap was a lieutenant and an aide to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Admiral Taylor.


80. Ibid. The President also noted the excellent results coming out of the practice; Morison, Admiral Sims, 141.


84. Cited in full previously, Allan R. Millett's *Semper Fidelis*, now in a revised and expanded second edition, is the single best volume on the Marine Corps. The justification for Marine ships guards lay in nature of individuals who crewed Navy ships throughout much of the nineteenth century. Foreign nationals represented a large portion of ships complements, and the Navy suspected their allegiance to the United States and American captains. And whether or not the members of a crew were Americans or not, they were often of questionable character, and that fact again made their loyalty suspect to naval officials. Frederick S. Harrod reports in, *Manning the New Navy: The Development of a Modern Naval Enlisted Force, 1899-1940* (Westport: Greenwood, 1978), that the number of foreign nationals was doubtlessly exaggerated at the time as observers used "noncitizen" and "foreign born" with differentiation. See pages, 11-12 and 15-17; The papers of John Lejeune as previously cited provide a firsthand look at life in the Marine Corps during this period of time. For example, Lejeune recorded in 1899 that he had sixty marines under his command aboard the Massachusetts. They operated a significant portion of the ship's battery, having responsibility for four six-inch guns and two six-pound guns. Lejeune reported this information in a letter to Augustine Lejeune, 19 February 1899, Lejeune Papers, Roll 1.

officers were behind his efforts, and they were forthright in telling Fullam as much. Others were very explicit in their support. Examples of both positions are found in, Stephen B. Luce to William F. Fullam, 24 November 1890, Fullam Papers, Box 1, Folder 1; H. Glass to William F. Fullam, 7 December 1890, ibid.; W. Wise to William F. Fullam, 18 April 1896, ibid.; C.H. Davis to William F. Fullam, 22 April 1896, ibid.; B. Buckingham to William F. Fullam, 20 April 1896, ibid.


87. Ibid., 128-34.

88. The need for larger numbers of Marines also grew from the fact that forces in less industrialized lands were becoming tougher opponents owing to the influx of European weapons and the introduction of some element of military discipline. As a result, small contingents of ships guards were becoming irrelevant to foreign interventions as well. See, Millett, Semper Fidelis, 138.

89. Ibid., 135, 149, 164-68.

90. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 6 October 1900, Letterbook 1, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 August 1906, Letterbook 4, Box 1, ibid.; John D. Long to Theodore Roosevelt, 11 January 1902, Roosevelt Papers, Series 1, Roll 24. This last letter points to the fact that the armed forces were forced to think about the issue of temporary forward bases, as the liabilities of too many permanent bases became apparent.

91. Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 6 October 1900, Letterbook 1, Box 1, RG 80, General Board, NARA; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 1 November 1901, ibid.; General Board to the Secretary of the Navy, 1 November 1901, ibid.; Memorandum from the General Board, 17 September 1903, Letterbook 2, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 26 September 1903, ibid.; Memorandum from Admiral George Dewey, 29 December 1903, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 20 February 1904, Letterbook 3, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 20 February
1904, Letterbook 3, ibid.; Admiral Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 February 1905, ibid.; General Board to the Secretary of the Navy, 21 June 1905, ibid.; Admiral Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 16 February 1906, Letterbook 4, Box 1, ibid.; Admiral Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 3 August 1906, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 13 August 1906, ibid.; Admiral Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.; Admiral George Dewey to the Secretary of the Navy, 17 June 1907, Letterbook 5, Box 2, ibid.; Costello, "General Board," 120-21; Millett, Semper Fidelis, 137.

92. Theodore Roosevelt to Joseph G. Cannon, 24 January 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 563-64n; U.S. Congress, Senate, Personnel of the Navy, 59th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Doc. 142. Assistant Secretary Truman Newberry chaired the Personnel Board. Secretary Bonaparte chose not to recommend the board's work on the Marine Corps and Staff Corps because officers of the affected Corps criticized its work too strongly and no consensus of support emerged. See pages 9 and 10 of the above report for Bonaparte's comments.


94. Executive Order Defining the Duties of the United States Marine Corps (No. 969), 12 November 1908, in ibid.

95. J.E. Pillsbury to Victor Howard Metcalf, 16 October 1908, in ibid.; Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy, 10 November 1908, in ibid.; Millett, Semper Fidelis, 140.

96. Archie Butt to Clara Butt, 19 November 1908, Butt Letters, 184-85.

97. Ibid.


99. Ibid., 143.
CHAPTER VIII

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMY, NAVY, AND THE PRESS

Theodore Roosevelt was a dazzling public performer. Wherever he went or whatever he said, the President was the event, stealing the show and the headlines. Journalists loved a good story, and Roosevelt consistently provided them with a spectacle. The flashing smile, the good humor, and the slashingly aggressive speeches all made for good copy. Roosevelt loved to perform, and in so doing he latched on to one of the most potent sources of presidential power in the twentieth century: the appeal to the public. Roosevelt often turned to the citizenry to pry legislation out of Congress, and this tactic was essential to the advancement of his military reforms.

The media and the presidency became increasingly linked over the course of the twentieth century. Roosevelt entered office at a time when national magazines and mass-circulation newspapers had come into their own. They were the vehicles through which he reached a wide audience. Since then, radio and television have enhanced the chief executive's ability to make public appeals to the point that the presidential image and voice can instantaneously appear
in citizens' homes. This development has not been entirely positive for the presidency, for concurrent with the power of the press to influence was its power to destroy. Americans could view their presidents celebrating political victories or twisting in the winds of controversy. Roosevelt attracted his share of bad press, but when he departed office the public decided that it had enjoyed the ride. His ability to grab headlines and cultivate popularity set a standard that his successors did not match until Franklin Roosevelt.

Roosevelt turned his considerable talents toward lifting the public profile of the military. He praised the services, especially the Navy, in speech after speech, and drew attention to military reviews and other events by personal appearances. Whether in attendance or not, he encouraged military exercises that would simultaneously popularize the services and prepare them for war. The two goals were mutually reinforcing in Roosevelt's mind because he believed that the popularity of the military was essential to American preparedness. He recognized that a strong anti-military strain ran throughout the national culture, and he feared a return to the nineteenth century pattern of peacetime demobilization and chaotic remobilization upon the outbreak of hostilities. Roosevelt rejected such practices as outmoded in an age of industrial warfare and mass armies, which required years for nations to
outfit and to train their armed forces properly. Thus he worked hard to insure that Americans continued to show a high regard for military preparedness even after their enthusiasm for imperialism had receded. His efforts added another facet to the job of commander in chief, that of chief military propagandist.

An astute politician, Roosevelt estimated well the political requirements necessary for sustaining an enlarged military. He recognized that a strong military could be a source of national pride and that he was in a pivotal spot to affect popular attitudes. The White House supplied him with the perfect forum—a "bully pulpit," as he called it—from which to rally public sentiment and gain the leverage needed to sustain congressional support of his military policy. He encouraged displays of American military prowess with public consumption in mind, in recognition of the fact that such events might well increase the willingness of the American people to direct more money towards the armed services. Roosevelt also shrewdly recognized the political benefits to be derived from his close association with a strong defense, both for the services and for himself. His personal popularity would add lustre to the image of the armed forces, while national pride in a strong military would enhance his reputation and extend his popularity.
Roosevelt was well equipped to generate publicity for the military. Besides his infectious smile, good humor, and boundless energy, he was irrepressibly gregarious and loved to be the center of attention. As one of his sons reportedly quipped, "Father always wanted to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral." His genteel upbringing instilled in him a confidence that put him at ease in dealing with people, and reporters delighted in his informal style. He possessed a flare for the dramatic and could act the *enfant terrible* to great effect, but he also had the discretion to know when events demanded an image of responsible and dignified leadership. Most of all, Roosevelt could sense what was on people's minds and what approach would most appeal to them. In short, he possessed charisma.

Roosevelt honed his skills at advocacy and self-promotion during the 1890s. He advanced navalism through his promotion of Captain Alfred T. Mahan's writings and career, offering numerous reviews of Mahan's works and striving to prevent sea duty from halting the captain's literary labors. His own books and articles played on nostalgia for the lost frontier and advanced an image of himself as a hardy rancher, hunter, and soldier, in distinct contrast to his wealthy urban roots. Concerned about the country's development without a frontier, Roosevelt urged
men to adopt "fighting values" and exhorted the nation as a whole to embrace expansionist foreign policies. One of his most famous speeches, "The Strenuous Life," made an appeal in 1899 for expansionism, and with it an enlarged Navy, a reformed Army, and men (like Roosevelt) with "those virile qualities necessary to win in the stern strife of actual life."

As assistant secretary, Roosevelt cultivated favorable publicity for the Navy. He arranged for reporters to accompany him on maneuvers of the North Atlantic Squadron in September 1897, seeking men who could reach the widest possible audience and who could give a positive portrayal of the maneuvers and Republican naval policy. Thus he wanted a representative of the Associated Press to insure large circulation and another man from a "safe" paper to provide good coverage. For the latter, he asked Paul Dana, editor of the Republican New York Sun, to enlist one of his reporters. Shortly before the maneuvers began, Roosevelt also sought the services of Jacob Riis, a New York reporter, friend, and compatriot in urban reform. Riis would later publish a campaign biography of Roosevelt in 1904. Besides courting the press, Roosevelt submitted his own work to propagandize navalism. He pieced together an article that reviewed what every president from Washington to McKinley had said about building up the Navy. He offered to let Dana make use of it because he worried that too many people had
begun to believe that the size of the Navy was sufficient. The article appeared in 1897 in the *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, although only after Navy Secretary John D. Long told Roosevelt to temper his language.  

As president, Roosevelt continued to curry the favor of reporters. He encouraged coverage by establishing the first White House press room and by conducting frequent news conferences and interviews. In these exchanges, he could charm reporters and cast a favorable light on his policies. If Roosevelt were not present, then his secretary, William Loeb, Jr., fulfilled the same function of a present-day press secretary. Beyond facilitating accessibility to the President, the White House sought to mold images of the chief executive by pointing out stories to reporters and punishing them for falsehoods. For example, the White House welcomed coverage of the President’s hikes and hunts because such activities reinforced an image of ruggedness and vigor. Depictions of Roosevelt in tennis attire, however, were forbidden, as they seemed less than manly. When the *Boston Herald* ran an article accusing the Roosevelt children of tormenting an animal in November 1904, the President forbade the paper access to all executive departments until further notice. Loeb commented that the Herald piece had culminated a string of falsehoods.
Roosevelt cultivated the media beyond White House meetings, presidential excursions, and other such activities. Possessed of a restless intellect, he took advantage of his office to meet or correspond with a variety of prominent writers, editors, artists, and thinkers. Among members of the publishing world, Paul Dana, Lyman Abbott of the Outlook, syndicated satirist Finley Peter Dunne, and journalists Joseph B. Bishop and Ray Stannard Baker were some of his correspondents or guests, either at the White House or at the family home on Oyster Bay, Long Island.

Roosevelt used such contacts to push support for his policies or to launch trial balloons, an innovation in the conduct of presidential affairs. For example, when he wanted to make the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" the national hymn, he decided first to contact Joel Chandler Harris to start the drive in the Atlanta Constitution; once the movement had started in the South he planned to enlist help from the West.

Heightened public interest in military matters aided Roosevelt's efforts to popularize the armed services. The victory over Spain thrust the Army and Navy into the limelight, and new international responsibilities helped to keep them there. The Navy benefited in particular, receiving only praise for its performances in the battles at Manila Bay and Santiago. George Dewey became a naval hero to a generation, and he thereafter provided a prestigious
presence that the administration could use to validate naval expansion programs and other proposals. The intense nationalism of the period also helped to sustain pro-military sentiment and was evident not only in America but in Europe and Japan, where strong military forces were also signs of national power and cultural superiority. Military parades, fleet reviews, and other demonstrations were major events in the United States because of the pageantry and because they also recalled past glories and the fighting spirit of the American people. In sum, the President was preaching to a receptive audience.

Roosevelt was not alone in his efforts to propagandize the military. Captain Mahan showed what publicity could do for the cause of navalism, and Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce was an energetic promoter of the Navy well before Roosevelt rose to prominence. Secretary of the Navy William Moody, Commander William S. Sims, and Admiral Dewey were other boosters of the Navy. For the Army, Secretary of War Elihu Root was a vigorous advocate, as were Generals William Carter and Leonard Wood among others, although Wood’s motives often included self-promotion.11 Outside of military circles, the Navy League formed in 1903 "to advance the interests of the Navy in every practicable way, and to keep the public informed regarding its needs and its accomplishments."12 League members published a journal, but the organization’s influence remained limited during
Roosevelt's administration despite support from the President and the Navy Department. Roosevelt and naval-minded members of Congress were more responsible for the Navy expansion of those years.¹³

The field, however, was not left entirely to Roosevelt and other proponents of the armed forces. Many members of Congress rejected the President's policies as militaristic, expensive, and undemocratic. An active peace movement occupied the moral high ground against military expansion, arguing that international arbitration represented a more enlightened way to settle disputes. Some of the most well-known Americans stood in the ranks of the peace movement, including Carl Schurz, Andrew Carnegie, Washington Gladden, David Starr Jordan, Jane Addams, Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Booker T. Washington. Administration officials were not set against the peace movement. Admiral Dewey endorsed arbitration; Elihu Root later headed the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and Roosevelt accepted the honorary presidency of The Practical Peace League in 1908. They found international arbitration an acceptable goal but only if the nation had adequate armaments to protect against aggression.¹⁴ As Roosevelt told Carl Schurz in 1905, "Hitherto peace has often come only because some strong and on the whole just power has by armed force, or the threat of armed force, put a stop to disorder."¹⁵
Finally, Roosevelt did not always display genius in public relations. He made a big misstep near the close of his administration when he decided to make one last strike against Congress, which by then had become extremely hostile. His attack would accomplish nothing productive and posed a threat to his plans to secure four more battleships before leaving office. Roosevelt's annual message of 1908 appealed for authority to use the Secret Service to investigate members of Congress, for Roosevelt did not "believe that it is in the public interest to protect criminals in any branch of the public service...." This statement enraged Congress, led to Roosevelt's censure in the Senate, strained relations with even Henry Cabot Lodge, and made the public wish for the combative President's early departure. In the end, Roosevelt received two of the four battleships, but despite, rather than because of, his attack on Congress.  

Selling the Army and Navy

Theodore Roosevelt was not a front-porch president. He took his message directly to the people through the press and through nation-wide tours. For example, in April, May, and June 1903, he traveled the West in preparation for the 1904 campaign and made no less than 100 speeches or public appearances. He spoke on a variety of themes but promotion of the Army and Navy figured large in his presentations.
With this tour, Roosevelt exploited his prominent position to fortify his political standing and to attract support for his policies. He made the presidency itself news, and the press, driven by its need for stories, obligingly covered his every word and action.  

Roosevelt was especially eager to appear at military celebrations because such events gave him a ready-made forum for spreading his message. Military ceremonies allowed him to invoke the nation's martial past to arouse support for modern-day forces. For example, while dedicating a monument at Antietam battlefield in September 1903, Roosevelt recalled the sacrifices made during the Civil War and the War for Independence. He then went on to advocate deeds of good citizenship like the feats of military valor shown in the past, taking advantage of the moment to remind his listeners about present-day troops overseas. Roosevelt elaborated on this theme the following month when unveiling a statue of General William T. Sherman in Washington. Amid pageantry and thousands of spectators, he proclaimed, "No man is warranted in feeling pride in the deeds of the army and navy of the past if he does not back up the army and navy of the present." Roosevelt then proceeded to call for expansion of the Navy and for making the Army an effective nucleus of much larger wartime forces. His message received extensive coverage in the Washington Post,
which splashed the ceremony across the front page and recorded the President's comments in full.\textsuperscript{22}

On at least one occasion, Roosevelt's involvement with military ceremonies went beyond merely delivering speeches. He helped to plan an event designed specifically to encourage pride in the Navy. From the first year of its existence, the Navy League wanted to stage an extravaganza around the removal of the body of Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones from France and its reburial at Annapolis. Roosevelt directed the Navy Department to consider the feasibility of the project in October 1903, and then pushed the scheme forward after verifying the location of Jones's remains. Two years later, the plan was nearing completion, and Roosevelt queried Secretary Charles Bonaparte about the exact date of the event. He was thinking about ways to make the celebration as grand as possible, for he discussed the visit of a French naval squadron and the entertainment of the visiting French officers. He also inquired about the training schedule of the Academy midshipmen because he hoped to have large numbers of them in the audience.\textsuperscript{23}

When the ceremony occurred in April 1906, Roosevelt played a prominent role. He appeared at Annapolis with Mrs. Roosevelt, the Cabinet, and the French ambassador, and they were met with crowds that "the ancient capital of Maryland has not known for many years."\textsuperscript{24} The visitors were also greeted by a twenty-one gun salute, a Marine battalion, and
a major naval display that included three French cruisers and three American battleships standing within sight of the Naval Academy. The President loaded his speech with praise not only for Jones but also for naval heroes in other American wars. Because this event was intended to promote the Navy, Roosevelt made a lengthy appeal on behalf of a strong seagoing force. He cautioned the audience to avoid being blinded by the glorious feats of individuals and to remember that Americans had consistently ignored building strong defenses until war was already upon them. He directed the patriotic spotlight in particular upon the public officials in attendance and sounded the refrain that they had no right to share "in the glory and honor and renown of the navy's past" unless they were willing to participate "in building up the navy of the present...." Again, newspapers devoted their columns to the President's remarks and the pageantry of the day.

Judging from the news coverage, Roosevelt's appearance made the Jones's ceremony a truly major celebration, which it might not have been otherwise. No doubt the proceedings would have attracted considerable notice on their own merits, but Roosevelt made them a happening of the first order. Crowds turned out to see the colorful chief executive wherever he went, and the media was sure to be there along with the crowds. No matter the occasion, Roosevelt became the center of attention and dominated the
news stories that followed, a fact that he exploited to good advantage in his speeches. His policies benefited as a result, although the memory of those being honored may have suffered somewhat in the excitement over the President.

Roosevelt did not save all his comments on preparedness for military events, and references to the armed services crept into speeches delivered for far different occasions. In celebration of Washington's birthday in 1905, Roosevelt pushed naval expansion, even though reference to the Army's heritage might have been more appropriate given the subject. Naval expansion cropped up two years later in an even less likely setting when Roosevelt spoke on the topics of athletics, scholarship, and public service at the Harvard Union before a room filled to more than twice the seating capacity. The speech, in fact, moved from a discourse on college-related activities to a defense of his naval policies, and he made sure to acknowledge the Navy as the "surest safeguard of peace and of national honor." If he did not discuss his military policies directly, then Roosevelt might invoke the nation's martial history to make his point. For example, he delivered a speech about reunification of the North and South at the Charleston Exposition in 1902, and he made liberal use of military references in his presentation, which the enthusiastic throng "cheered to the echo." (More people turned out for the President's visit than on any previous occasion in
Charleston history, even though South Carolina was solidly Democratic. Roosevelt opened with Charleston’s role as an outpost against Spain in colonial days and went on to discuss the city’s experience in the Revolution and the Civil War, as well as the sectional unity witnessed in the recent conflict with Spain. Such illustrations were not used to promote the Army or Navy outright, but the patriotic sentiment that they aroused doubtlessly benefited the services.

Roosevelt’s remarks often contained a higher message beyond advocating military preparedness. He aimed to inspire his audience to a greater sense of duty as American citizens, so he frequently held up the commitment and personal sacrifice of military personnel as an example. Roosevelt wanted Americans to dedicate their labors to improving national and international life, for he was worried that they were becoming self-satisfied just when industrial and urban problems demanded solutions and an unsettled world could benefit from the stabilizing effect of American influence. At Sea Girt, New Jersey, site of a major rifle range, Roosevelt visited a National Guard encampment in July 1902 and while there made a statement about citizenship. He praised the Guardsmen for their volunteer service and reminded them that "the same qualities that make a man a success, that make him do his duty decently and honestly in a National Guard regiment, are
fundamentally the qualities he needs to make him a good
citizen in private life."

Roosevelt appeared at Sea Girt not only to influence
attitudes but also because he enjoyed inspections, military
reviews, and gunnery practices. Attendance at such
functions was perhaps his favorite activity as commander in
chief. He could view the Army and Navy at work and at the
same time associate himself more closely with their
improvement and expansion in the public mind. As president,
Roosevelt attended at least eleven such events, and he had
two additional opportunities to observe naval vessels at
work when he cruised from New Orleans to Washington on the
West Virginia in October 1905 and to Panama on the Louisiana
in November 1906, a trip he made to inspect work on the new
canal.

He reveled particularly in naval reviews, for there he
could celebrate the Navy in a most dramatic fashion,
demonstrating to the public the value of a large fleet. He
participated in four grand reviews, two of which were
connected with the departure and return of the Atlantic
fleet on the world cruise. A review in Long Island Sound
in September 1906 was representative. Twelve battleships,
eight cruisers, and a host of lesser vessels—forty-five
ships in all—gathered in three long columns within sight of
shore. While 100,000 spectators watched, the President
sailed amidst the fleet aboard the yacht Mayflower. Members
of the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees accompanied him, as did representatives of the media. After the review, Roosevelt descended from the bridge of the Mayflower, joyously wrapped his arms around the shoulders of several congressmen, and proclaimed that the mighty fleet was their handiwork. By giving Congress credit in such an emotional atmosphere, the President built support for the Navy at a time when enthusiasm for naval expansion was waning. An evening light show capped off the review, and the New York Times proclaimed, "A prouder fleet could not have been assembled by any [other] nation." Roosevelt could not have hoped for a better response and later boasted, "I defy anyone with a spark of national pride...not to feel moved at such a sight."

The President recognized that military demonstrations helped to build a consensus favorable to administration policies, and he exploited reviews and other events to the greatest extent. However, after the spectators and press went home, he still needed to sell specific programs to Congress. Much politicking occurred in private, but Roosevelt often presented his case in public as part of an orchestrated effort to convince Capitol Hill. He was effective at such campaigning, although subordinates like Elihu Root or William Moody performed much of the detailed work of lobbying and Roosevelt more often provided the
rallying cry, a role that fit best with his function as a prompter of action and innovation.

Still, presidential pronouncements were frequently leavened with specific proposals for increasing preparedness. For example, Roosevelt used the Guard encampment at Sea Girt not only to promote good citizenship but also to call attention to militia reform, telling the audience that the bill had already passed the House and that he expected Senate approval in the next session. The bill passed in January 1903, and shortly thereafter Roosevelt used the cornerstone-laying ceremony at the Army War College to inform Army officers that they held ultimate responsibility for implementation of the Militia Act.\textsuperscript{40} In another case, Roosevelt pitched improvements for coastal defenses in his speech to the Newport Conference in July 1908. This plea came within a larger call for naval preparedness, as the battle fleet could not be "footloose" to meet an opponent if it was tied to protection of the coastline.\textsuperscript{41}

Roosevelt had a particular desire to upgrade marksmanship among soldiers and the general populace. He believed "that the great body of our citizens shoot less and less as time goes on" and that this situation was dangerous for a nation that relied so heavily upon citizen-soldiers in wartime.\textsuperscript{42} In collaboration with the National Rifle Association, the President supported legislation in 1903
that established the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. This body would sponsor national rifle and pistol matches, and it would encourage military personnel and the public to practice the use of firearms. Although pleased with the National Rifle Board, Roosevelt wanted more from Congress, urging Capitol Hill in 1906 to "establish shooting-galleries in all the large public and military schools, ... maintain national target ranges in different parts of the country, and ... in every way encourage the formation of rifle-clubs throughout all parts of the land." To popularize this program, Roosevelt became a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association. His first concern was preparedness, and the rifle program would advance that goal not only through a better trained citizenry but also through a population that was excited about competitive shooting. Having shown interest in military arms, Americans would be more likely to endorse other preparedness programs.

Among major policies, Roosevelt defended the Army's colonial role in the Philippines and Cuba during his first term. He worried about a repudiation of expansionism and felt compelled to defend the Army as an executor of that policy. In speeches, he stressed American accomplishment in Cuba and heaped praise on Leonard Wood for his efforts to improve living conditions on the island and to install effective political and judicial systems. The Philippines
were not handled so easily. Filipino insurgents continued their struggle, and American rule was not scheduled to end quickly, as in Cuba. In the course of the conflict, the Army had employed stern measures, and some Americans had committed atrocities. Roosevelt defended the Army's performance in response to the backlash that resulted from revelations of misconduct. During his western tour of 1903, he admitted that small detachments had committed misdeeds but asserted that such offenses were rare. Roosevelt explained to a crowd in Fargo, North Dakota, that "the circumstances of the war made it one of peculiar difficulties...." The foe was "very treacherous and very cruel" while the environment—dense tropical jungle—was inhospitable, and thus, he claimed, occasional wrongdoing was inevitable "among a hundred thousand hot-blooded and powerful young men...."

Still, he reminded the audience, good Americans regretted and deplored such violence, and the War Department was moving to punish the offenders and to prevent repetition of the offenses.

The Philippines was a difficult problem in public relations but one that lessened as fighting in the islands subsided. In contrast, Roosevelt campaigned continually for more battleships, and this quest provides the best example of a struggle for a specific policy objective. In Roosevelt's first years in office, he delivered a barrage of speeches that emphasized a large navy and the international
duties of the United States. Many talks were general
appeals for naval preparedness, but he spelled out the
reasons for building warships in peacetime on at least two
occasions. In Haverhill, Massachusetts, the hometown of
Navy Secretary Moody, he explained in August 1902 that
modern warships were complex mechanisms that were ever—
changing and hard to use. Sailors needed extensive training
on them in peacetime to be effective against an enemy in
wartime. Roosevelt repeated the same argument to a crowd in
Chicago in April 1903, except that he also stressed the many
years required to construct a battleship.® His efforts to
build a consensus were rewarded with ten battleship
authorizations from 1901 to 1905. Congressional fears about
a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine eased his job, as did
widespread support for a larger American role in the world.

Battleship authorizations became much more difficult to
obtain in the later years of Roosevelt's presidency.
Earlier support had fallen as naval appropriations mounted,
the ardor cooled for international involvement, and critics
fretted that a large Navy might foster war rather than
preserve peace. Roosevelt had slowed the pace of building
in 1905 when he imposed a policy of one battleship per year
—one ship seemed sufficient at the time to keep the fleet
up to strength. The policy formed a precedent that would be
difficult to break and came before the H.M.S. Dreadnought,
an all-big-gun monster, launched a new round in the
international naval competition. After only two years, Roosevelt decided to discard the one-ship policy before the Navy fell hopelessly behind in the dreadnought competition. Tensions with Japan contributed to his decision, as did the failure of the Second Hague Conference to impose battleship limitations. The President knew that he faced a tough fight, so he commenced the work of creating a consensus months before formally asking Congress to abandon the one-ship program.\textsuperscript{31}

Roosevelt signaled his intention to start a major building effort in early October 1907. In a series of three speeches on waterway development he asserted that the Navy was not currently large enough and preached, "The stronger the navy, the kinder the feeling of other nations towards us; a strong navy is provocative of peace."\textsuperscript{32} In presenting these remarks, the \textit{New York Times} predicted that the President had sounded the first gun in a campaign to break the one-ship policy. Navy Secretary Victor Howard Metcalf confirmed as much on October 3 when he suggested that Congress authorize four battleships in the coming session. Roosevelt's and Metcalf's annual reports followed in early December and set the new program formally before Congress and the public.\textsuperscript{33} The fleet's departure for the Pacific followed in mid-December and thrust the Navy into the national limelight. The fleet cruise was a master stroke in terms of the upcoming battleship fight. Congress would have
difficulty resisting the President in the midst of a popular
craze for the Navy. The cruise also dramatically
demonstrated to East Coast Senators and Representatives—and
their constituents—that the United States lacked enough
battleships to protect the Atlantic shore in case of a
conflict in the Pacific.

The remainder of the struggle revolved around a contest
of wills between the President and members of the House and
Senate, especially Senator Eugene Hale of Maine. Roosevelt
lobbied hard, meeting with Hale, Speaker of the House Joseph
Cannon, and other congressional leaders, and he sent a
special message on April 14, 1908, urging four battleships.
He succeeded in obtaining only two ships but was pleased
with the result because he had broken the one-ship
precedent. All the while, other controversies swirled
about, and Roosevelt labored to keep them from sinking his
expansion plans. The question over defective battleship
designs raged at this time, and Roosevelt acted to prevent
it from becoming ammunition for his opponents. He distanced
himself from the extremism of reformers like Commander
William Sims, pointed to studies that mitigated the charges,
and concentrated on gaining the battleship authorizations.
He also faced controversy after the December resignation of
Rear Admiral Willard Brownson as Chief of the Bureau of
Navigation. Brownson had left his post after the President
insisted on appointing a medical officer rather than a line
officer to command the hospital ship Relief. Roosevelt lambasted Brownson for his action, and the incident exposed to the public a military service riven by disputes, of which Roosevelt seemed to be a cause. With the defects question appearing at the same time, public confidence in the Navy slipped just when Roosevelt wanted it high.®

Despite these problems, the President was ultimately successful, in part because he discouraged Sims and his compatriot, Commander Albert L. Key, from continuing the public side of their reform campaign. Publication of "The Needs of Our Navy" in the January 1908 McClure's Magazine had touched off the storm over design defects, and Roosevelt did not want such embarrassments to occur again; he certainly did not want naval officers to be the source of any more exposés. In an effort to curb the reformers, Roosevelt pointedly told Key in March 1908, "I think you sometimes exaggerate the defects, and I do not think the remedies you propose would work as well as you think."®

Roosevelt's display of displeasure worked, for the reformers never again made a deliberate play for publicity such as the McClure's article. His efforts to tamp down the controversy paid off with the authorization of two more battleships in early 1909.
On the Defensive

The events surrounding the battleship fight demonstrated that successful propagandizing of the armed services involved more than Roosevelt simply preaching to audiences from the speaker's stump. He also needed to combat negative press and to influence events so that criticism and controversy would not sabotage his military programs. The battleship fight was a tough struggle, but Roosevelt had to confront contention throughout his presidency, not just when he was a lame duck and Congress had tired of his aggressiveness. The Brownson affair showed that he did not always handle such situations well. But he worked hard at creating favorable perceptions of himself and his policies, and he succeeded in large part. The fact that his popular persona has continued to capture the public imagination testifies to his political talent and charisma. Still, at the time he had as many detractors ready to tear him down as admirers who applauded him.

Although the press conveyed his message, it also contained some of his strongest foes. Roosevelt cared most about newspapers in his native New York City and counted the Sun*, Journal, Times, Evening Post, World, Herald, and the Brooklyn Eagle among his enemies.* He especially disliked William Randolph Hearst's Journal and called Hearst, "the

* The Sun changed loyalties after Paul Dana retired in 1903.
most potent single influence for evil we have in our
life." Roosevelt claimed to shrug off their criticisms,
but he was too sensitive to the public pulse to ignore bad
press completely. His letters were in fact filled with
condemnations of press coverage, demonstrating that he
followed their stories closely and desired to counter bad
publicity. For example, he complained in July 1907 about
the anti-military attitude of The Evening Post, speculating
"that nothing in the world is so dear to the hearts of the
editors of The Evening Post as in any way lowering or
weakening the prestige and material efficiency of the
American navy and army.... What a basely unpatriotic lot
they are!" His military policies thus came under as much
fire as his other policies, so he tried to defuse
controversies and criticism while hitting back with a strong
defense in speeches and the media.

Roosevelt inherited some problems from the McKinley
administration. Lieutenant General Nelson Miles was a burr
under the President's saddle from 1901 until he retired in
1903. Miles had bedeviled McKinley, having been an
instigator of the embarrassing "bad beef" affair and having
sought to undermine his commander in chief's reelection in
1900. Under Roosevelt, the general opposed efforts to
reform personnel policies and had helped to torpedo the
first General Staff bill in 1902. The President's contempt
for Miles was well known. According to the New York Times,
hundreds noticed Roosevelt’s coldness to Miles during the West Point centenary celebration in June 1902. The President apparently did his best to ignore Miles, sharing a handshake and only a few words with him. In private, Roosevelt was harsher, denouncing Miles as "the most dangerous foe and slanderer of the army...." He dared not vent such sentiments in public nor dismiss the politically well-connected Commanding General, so he and Secretary Root granted Miles’s request to inspect the Philippines. This action removed the general from Washington while the administration made another attempt at a General Staff bill. Miles continued to stir up trouble by pointing to American atrocities in the Philippines, and thus he helped to create the climate of criticism that compelled Roosevelt’s defense of Army conduct during his western tour of 1903.

The President did not merely stand on the defensive against Miles. He did know, however, that a head-on confrontation with the general would be unpopular and would only increase public sympathy for him. In particular, the politically potent G.A.R. would react strongly against an administration assault. Given that situation, Roosevelt worked quietly to spread his opinion of the Commanding General. Wielding his pen instead of a big stick, he wrote to editors of sympathetic newspapers and denounced Miles to them. Roosevelt picked people that he knew were trustworthy, and thus he wrote to Hermann Kohlstaat of the
Chicago Times-Herald and to Lemuel Davis of the Philadelphia Public Ledger. Kohlstaat had a prominent voice in the highest circles of the Republican Party, and Davis was not only the editor of a big-city newspaper but was also the father of Richard Harding Davis, who was another recipient of the President's letters and who achieved even greater fame than his father as a journalist. Roosevelt spoke frankly and told Davis, for example, that Miles was "the most insidious enemy which the army has had during my term of public life" and that "the only ability he has shown has been in unscrupulous intrigue for his own political advancement." Such pronouncements spread the administration's version of events and thereby helped to counter criticism of Roosevelt for his obvious dislike of Miles.

McKinley also bequeathed the Sampson-Schley affair to Roosevelt. Rear Admirals William Sampson and Winfield S. Schley were the top American commanders during the naval battle at Santiago in 1898. Although popularly acclaimed as the hero of the action, Schley desired official recognition from the Navy Department, which favored Sampson. Sampson was overall commander as head of the North Atlantic Squadron but had been some distance away at the start of the battle. Schley's efforts eventually ended in a public court of inquiry. By the time the case reached Roosevelt, Schley was appealing the court's judgment. Roosevelt
supported McKinley's ruling in favor of Sampson but found the whole affair distasteful. He was more concerned about the impact on public opinion than about the admirals' egos. He wrote, "There is no excuse whatever from either side for any further agitation of this unhappy controversy. To keep it alive would merely do damage to the Navy and to the country." Although his treatment of Admiral Schley was unpopular, Roosevelt took a path that was most beneficial to the Navy and removed the matter from the headlines.

Roosevelt was fully capable of generating his own controversies, and he created a major one following the Brownsville incident of August 1906. A group of black soldiers allegedly shot up Brownsville, Texas, after a series of racial incidents between the white citizens of the town and members of three black companies at nearby Fort Brown. After an internal Army investigation, Roosevelt dismissed all of the enlisted men from the three companies in November 1906, forever barring them from military service or civil service positions. He acted against all of the troopers because none would reveal the identity of the culprits. Roosevelt hated disorder in general and would not tolerate military indiscipline in particular. As he saw it, the men refused to do their sworn duty as American soldiers and, black or white, an example needed to be set.

Roosevelt's action stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy. The black community was outraged, and
Republicans worried about sustaining black support for the party. Roosevelt dismissed their criticisms as misguided sentimentality and the protection of criminals.\(^6\) He could not ignore, however, the actions of Senator Joseph Foraker, who prompted the Senate Military Affairs Committee to investigate the Brownsville incident. By this time, the case had ceased to be a military matter and had become a political one. A conservative Republican from Ohio, Foraker seized a chance to nettles Roosevelt, perhaps position himself for the Republican nomination in 1908, or at least deny Roosevelt the opportunity to pick his own successor. The hearings revealed that Roosevelt had acted without clear evidence and that his orders were unusually severe. No perpetrators were ever positively identified; no military or civil court ever heard the case; and no proof ever appeared to confirm a conspiracy of silence among the soldiers. Roosevelt gradually softened his position and ordered a military court to review the cases of the dismissed soldiers two days before leaving office.\(^7\)

The President acted reluctantly because some of his deepest held beliefs seemed to be under fire. He had been raised with a strong sense of duty and possessed a liberal dose of Victorian smugness and self-righteousness, so much so that he found attempts to reinstate the soldiers to be highly offensive. He also believed blacks to be members of an immature and, hence, inferior race, one that had gotten
out of control.\textsuperscript{72} His jaundiced perspective blinded him to the fact that he had not dispensed proper justice. But Roosevelt also remained unbending because he thought that he was fighting a larger battle with Congress. He deemed Senator Foraker's actions an attempt to usurp military powers that rightly belonged to the President. Capitol Hill would seize for itself appointment powers, the right to exercise discipline, and the right to make assignments to duty. Roosevelt saw the undoing of all of his efforts to improve the Army officers corps, for Congress would "permit murderers to be reinstated" or "permit a colonel unfit for command to be restored...partly because he has influential social backing...."\textsuperscript{72} His overblown estimation of congressional intentions indicated how far relations with Congress had deteriorated late in his presidency.

He did not handle the matter much better before the press. At a Gridiron Club dinner in January 1907, Roosevelt exploded before a room filled with journalists and the national political elite. He did not join in the spirit of the occasion and accept the jibes of others. Rather, he delivered a serious defense of his policies, charging Senator Foraker with purely political motives in the Brownsville matter. Foraker was present and reacted with a twenty-minute tongue-lashing of the President for the illegality and injustice of his action towards the soldiers. Roosevelt was outraged at Foraker's rudeness and shot back
that he would have hung the offenders if he had known their identities. Then he left the room. His concern for popular opinion and press reaction succumbed to his outrage.\textsuperscript{73}

Usually, Roosevelt’s behavior was more cool-headed, but whatever the temper of his response, a pattern was still discernable in the way he handled military controversies. He harbored little tolerance for problems that struck at the heart of military effectiveness such as poor discipline, a failure to perform duties, or a lack of devotion to service and country. Although he was inclined to act swiftly and decisively to correct any shortcomings, he held back if a particular matter threatened to spill out of the military realm and cause serious political complications. In his handling of the Brownsville affair, Roosevelt felt he had a simple case of military justice. He would have been more circumspect if the men had not been troopers but instead had the political connections of Nelson Miles. Miles’s conduct was insubordinate, but Roosevelt restrained himself because of the general’s influence in Congress. Military reforms seemed at risk if he struck against the general, whereas nothing nearly as important seemed at stake when Roosevelt dismissed the black companies in November 1906. The same held true for the case of Admiral Brownson. Here Roosevelt thought he was dealing in an internal military matter and so he dealt intemperately with Brownson. In Sampson v. Schley, the conflict was one of public note, and Roosevelt treated
the affair with kid gloves, although he thought the matter unseemly.

Conclusion

Roosevelt's troubles over the Brownsville Affair and other controversies demonstrated that he was not an absolute master of the press. Such mastery was impossible given the fact that party preference colored the press's opinion of his policies and actions. But Roosevelt was usually astute at playing to journalists, and he knew how to grab headlines with his strong statements and personal adventures. He fell down when deeply held beliefs came under attack; then practical politics gave way to entrenchment and self-righteous anger. He took special offense when duty to the country or military service seemed to be under attack. These things not only lay at the heart of military effectiveness but also at the center of Roosevelt's being. He had devoted his life to improving his country and saw duty to the nation as the first requirement of good citizenship. Because he held up military personnel as model citizens, he became particularly intolerant when soldiers, sailors, and their officers wavered from his high standard. He made examples of people and berated them without much regard to popular reaction, concerned mainly about shoring up patriotic values. Without such vigilance, he believed that Americans would become self-indulgent and surrender
their destiny as a great nation and as a force for good in the world.

On the whole, Roosevelt did a remarkable job in using the media to his advantage. He attracted coverage whether a newspaper favored him or not, and thus he gained an image as the central mover of events in Washington. As Americans looked more to Roosevelt for leadership, they looked less to Congress, and thereby inflated the executive's standing in relation to the legislative branch. Long after Roosevelt's departure, radio and then television solidified this position by allowing the President to speak directly to the masses, his one voice overpowering the many on Capitol Hill.

In his military programs, Roosevelt showed what a president could do with such influence. Although he had mounting problems with Congress, he still managed to secure increases in key parts of the military budget until the end of his presidency. By no means did he get everything that he wanted, yet he was not stymied as often happens to presidents in their second term. For example, Roosevelt obtained two battleships in 1908 despite a financial panic in the autumn of 1907, criticism over the Brownsville affair, the dismissal of Admiral Brownson, and charges of battleship design defects.

Charisma was the key to Roosevelt's successes. He exhibited a talent for self-dramatization that inspired mass adoration and created devoted followers. Although he had
his problems, Roosevelt's performance as a popular figure was surely the envy of his successors, for he captured the national imagination, and not just for his time but for generations to come. The image of the youthful Rough Rider president still lives in the national lore nearly a century later. He loved the spotlight and was unabashed about presenting his vision for the country and its role in the world.
NOTES


6. This speech was later published as part of a larger work with the same title. See, Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, in *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, Memorial Edition, vol. 15 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 267-81. The quote is from page 268. *American Ideals*, published as part of the same series and volume, also contains a good representation of Roosevelt's pre-presidential speeches and writings.


8. Ponder, "Publicity," 547; Chambers, *Tyranny of Change*, 143-44; Cooper, *Warrior and Priest*, 70; William Loeb to
Robert Shaw Oliver, 29 November 1904, File 8018, RG 107, SecWar, NARA.

9. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 8 April 1897, in Morison, Letters, 1: 592n; Theodore Roosevelt to Paul Dana, 16 August 1897, ibid., 1: 652 and note; Theodore Roosevelt to Joseph B. Bishop, ibid., 2: 947 and note; Theodore Roosevelt to Paul Dana, 18 November 1901, ibid., 3: 200; Theodore Roosevelt to Finley Peter Dunne, 20 October 1902, ibid., 3: 357; Theodore Roosevelt to Lyman Abbott, 26 July 1904, ibid., 4: 866-68; Theodore Roosevelt to Ray Stannard Baker, 3 June 1908, ibid., 6: 1046-49. There are many more letters to these individuals contained in the above collection.

10. Archie Butt to Mrs. Butt, 15 June 1908, Butt Letters, 33-34.

11. William H. Moody to Theodore Roosevelt, 4 September 1902, Roosevelt Papers, Reel 29; Speech by William H. Moody to the Harvard Political Club, 2 November 1903, Moody Papers, Vol. 9; C. Sigsbee to E.T. Stotesbury, 27 November 1903, Dewey Papers, Box 16 Folder 5; Speech by George Dewey to the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America, 13 May 1905, ibid., Box 56, Folder 5; Charles H. Wacker to Paul Morton, ibid., 20 September 1905, Box 21, Folder 5; "Day of Glory for West Point, New York Times, 12 June 1902, 2.

12. George Dewey to Charles Dickinson, 28 October 1903, Dewey Papers, Box 16 Folder 3.

13. Henry H. Boyce to George Dewey, 24 July 1903, ibid., Box 15, Folder 5; Theodore Roosevelt to Benjamin F. Tracy, 19 March 1903, Roosevelt Papers, Reel 33; Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), 5-6, 8. The Navy Department gave the league's journal a boost by buying 500 copies every month, as described in J.W. Miller to Truman H. Newberry, 18 August 1906, and Truman Newberry to J.W. Miller, 21 August 1906, Files 19678-2 and 19678-3, RG 80, General Records, NARA.

14. John W. Foster to George Dewey, 9 January 1904, Dewey Papers, Box 17, Folder 1; Letter from Mrs. Donald McLean, 14 April 1907, ibid., Box 25, Folder 4; "Thirty Reasons Why Our Navy Should Not Be Enlarged," and "President Roosevelt Accepts the Honorary Presidency of the Practical Peace League and Espouses its Program for Peace," in Publications of Peace Societies, (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Library), 17, 64-65; Theodore Roosevelt to Andrew Carnegie, 6 September


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.


28. "The President at Sea Girt Camp," New York Times, 25 July 1902, 1; "San Francisco Greets President Roosevelt," ibid., 13 May 1903, 3; "President at Fest," ibid., 16 June 1903, 1; "Two Nations at Bier of John Paul Jones," ibid., 25 April 1906, 8; "Lesson of Antietam," Washington Post, 18 September 1903, p. 3; "President Rides in Engine Car," Chicago Daily Tribune, 2 April 1903, 2; "Speak Softly; Carry Big Stick; Says Roosevelt," ibid., 3 April 1903, 1; "Roosevelt in


32. Ibid.


34. Cooper, Warrior and Priest, 84-85.


36. These figures are culled from the daily chronologies contained in appendices of Morison, Letters, vol. 4, pp. 1343-79, and vol. 6, pp. 1592-1627. They do not include Roosevelt's numerous appearances at military commencement exercises, dedication ceremonies, receptions, and dinners, nor his many speeches about the Army and Navy.

37. Ibid.

38. "Fleet's Array a Grand Sight," New York Times, 1-2. For an account of the naval review of August 1903, see, "Destroyers Crash at Naval Review," ibid., 18 August 1903, 1. The following materials also mention the planning that went into the 1903 review, Henry C. Taylor to George Dewey, 27 June 1903, Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 1; Theodore Roosevelt to George Dewey, 1 August 1903, ibid., Box 16, Folder 1; Army and Navy Journal, 15 August 1903, 1257; Memorandum to the President, 24 March 1904, Moody Papers, vol. 12. Reckner's, White Fleet contains descriptions of the naval parades conducted for the departure and arrival of the Atlantic Fleet during the world cruise. See pp. 23-24, 154-55.
39. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu, 4 September 1906, in Morison, Letters, 5: 394. In the same letter, Roosevelt told Root that he had invited Peter Finley Dunne and James Brendan Connolly, a writer of sea stories, to view the fleet with him because he wanted them to have "personal feeling for the navy—to get under the naval spell." He wanted them as allies in pushing a strong navy before the people.


42. Roosevelt, State Papers, 638.


44. Roosevelt, State Papers, 479-80.

45. Leddy, Magnum Force Lobby, 67.


48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


51. Reckner, White Fleet, 123.


53. "Must Hit to Win Fights—Roosevelt," ibid., 4 October 1907, 1-2; "Use Vast Federal Power—Roosevelt," ibid., 3 October 1907, 1-2; "More Battleships Assured," ibid., 4 October 1907, 2; "Roosevelt Pleads for Water Routes," ibid., 5 October 1907, 3; Roosevelt, State Papers, 554; Reckner, White Fleet, 124.
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54. Ibid., 124.


56. Theodore Roosevelt to Albert L. Key, 26 March 1908, in ibid., 6: 982.


60. Theodore Roosevelt to Herbert Satterlee, 6 July 1907, in Morison, Letters, 5: 706.


64. Theodore Roosevelt to Lemuel Davis, 20 August 1903, in ibid., 3: 567-68. See also, Theodore Roosevelt to Hermann Kohlstaat, 24 March 1902 and 10 June 1902, in ibid., 3: 248, 271. The Daily Inter Ocean was also a Kohlstaat paper.
65. Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 27 May 1899, ibid., 1016n.

66. The President's Memorandum upon the Appeal of Admiral Schley, February 1902, Dewey Papers, Box 13, Folder 6.


70. Theodore Roosevelt to Ernest H. Abbott, 12 March 1908, ibid., 6: 968; Harbaugh, Life and Times, 290-93; Lane, The Brownsville Affair, 133-139.


CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

The return of the Great White Fleet provided a fitting end to the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt had expended considerable effort making the armed services, especially the Navy, into forces worthy of a great power. Not all of his changes were apparent by 1909: new ships continued under construction, and officials in both services kept working for reforms in training, personnel, and other policies. The most obvious symbol of Roosevelt's labors passed proudly into Hampton Roads on February 22, 1909. Twenty battleships sailed as a unit that morning, a steel testament to Roosevelt's drive to expand the Navy and make it into a formidable fighting fleet. Despite some design flaws, the ships represented American technological and military achievement. Not that many years before, wooden ships, sails, and cannon had been the order of the day, and many of the officers who commanded the white ships had trained and served aboard that older Navy. The new steel fleet was one of the top-ranked in the world and promised to give any foe a tough challenge. Its return from the world cruise created a major public spectacle, a fitting
conclusion to a journey that had popularized the Navy from beginning to end. Appropriately, Roosevelt stood at the center of the celebration, just as he had been at the center of American military affairs for nearly eight years.

The President's military policies were an extension of his personality. He wanted officers who, like him, were strong, vigorous, and wedded to duty. Hoping for equally potent military institutions, Roosevelt demanded that officers and their men train as realistically as possible through constant exercises, just as he regularly exerted himself through hikes, tennis, and other activities. A thoughtful man, the President recognized the desirability of a "brain" for both the Army and the Navy, that is, general staffs devoted to the consideration of strategy and the preparation of each service for war. Roosevelt also demonstrated a fascination for military technology and promoted innovations, particularly the submarine, the airplane, and the machine gun.

His actions were not without some shortcomings. Roosevelt wished to reform promotions in the Army and Navy but did not always follow the standards that he preached. Frustrated by Congress, he promoted individuals on his own authority, ostensibly on the basis of merit but also on the basis of personal acquaintance. Thus his personnel practices smacked of favoritism. He also did not grasp the exact needs of the military bureaucracy. Roosevelt presided
at a time when administrative functions were expanding and undergoing rationalization. He understood the need for improved control over departmental bureaus and for military advisory agencies after his experience at the Navy Department and in the war with Spain. But he did not comprehend entirely the duties of a general staff nor the problems it faced in asserting itself over long-established bureaus. Furthermore in the case of the Navy, Roosevelt preferred personal control and did not deem a general staff enough of a priority to risk his battleship building programs, although material problems with the fleet pointed to the necessity of better oversight. To his credit, however, he used the War Department General Staff well in the second intervention in Cuba and turned often to the General Board of the Navy for advice on base locations, strategy, and shipbuilding policy.

On the whole, Roosevelt left the military much better prepared for a great power war than when he found it. The fleet was larger and better trained, and it possessed the fundamentals of an overseas base structure that remain in place today. He pointed the way to the personnel reforms that would later take hold in both services, and in the interim he installed higher commanders who saw the United States military through World War I. Although small, the Army benefited from Roosevelt's emphasis on larger unit training and from its new planning capabilities, which
proved essential not only in the return to Cuba but in the world wars to come. Both services profited from the President’s sponsorship of technological innovation, although some advantages were not realized until well after he departed office. The Navy adopted a much more powerful design of battleship, and Roosevelt pushed for changes in the process of ship design, aiming to prevent the recycling of flawed models. Airplane development lagged until World War I, but the President helped to keep experiments alive with his promotion of military aviation. Lastly, Roosevelt strove to give submarines greater standing in a Navy conditioned towards surface engagements.

If Roosevelt achieved many of his goals, then almost as many objectives remained unrealized when he left office. The fleet lacked a balanced force of cruisers, destroyers, and auxiliaries, and centralized military direction of the Navy was not fully in place until 1942. Although the Navy finally settled on the principal overseas bases during Roosevelt’s tenure, development of those sites lagged, in part because of congressional disinterest but also because of the Navy Department’s own indecision. Both Army and Navy relied on promotion systems that elevated officers to the highest ranks too late in life and protected the incompetent and the lazy. Roosevelt’s policies gave incentives for early retirements and installed a leavening of younger officers at the top, but the benefits could be only
temporary without a thorough overhaul of the laws governing personnel. In the War Department, the General Staff continued to confront hostility from the staff departments and bureaus and their congressional partisans. It took American participation in World War I to demonstrate the General Staff's value and to seal its position. The Army itself remained a small force in need of more larger unit training and technological modernization. Motorization was just beginning to touch the Army, and aviation development stalled after the flight trials at Fort Myer in 1908.

Congress foiled many of Roosevelt's hopes for the military. On the one hand, Capitol Hill provided him with a good deal of what he wanted, but on the other hand Congress did not give Roosevelt everything he desired. Many factors affected the attitudes of legislators. Roosevelt's support of imperialistic policies offended some to the point of constant opposition. To them, such policies signaled the decline of American democracy and the rise of militarism in national life. Others gave reluctant support, accepting the fact that the country needed protection as long as it insisted on pursuing an expanded role abroad. In contrast, congressional enthusiasts endorsed Roosevelt's aims and wanted to surpass them. Budgetary concerns were also a major factor, and Congress guarded its purse jealously, especially as naval costs mounted and international arms races continued. Partisan concerns played a role, for
Senators and Representatives did not wish to divert funds from outdated local facilities or to surrender influence on officer assignments. They did not want to anger constituents, nor did they want to endanger ties to supporters in the Army and Navy staff bureaus or in the officer corps at large. Rather than sacrifice these politically rewarding relationships, they opposed proposals for promotion reform and a naval general staff, and they agreed with reluctance to the War Department General Staff. Finally, Capitol Hill increasingly resisted Roosevelt because he challenged traditional prerogatives with his expanded view of the chief executive's role.

Despite resistance from Congress, Roosevelt succeeded in enlarging the executive's influence in military affairs. The General Staff and General Board lent professional validity to executive branch proposals and policies, and Roosevelt consulted them often, especially the General Board. The President used his public image advantageously as well. He was a master at attracting public attention, whether the cause was battleship expansion or something non-military such as conservation, railroad regulation, or purer food and drugs. Such publicity was a useful lever against Congress, which had trouble resisting popularly supported presidential initiatives. In areas more within his purview, Roosevelt wielded his powers as commander in chief to the fullest. He ordered fleet and Army maneuvers, offered
promotions, sponsored naval gunnery, pushed technological innovations, and publicly promoted the military on his own authority. In retrospect, Roosevelt's increasing reliance on his own powers was a sign of things to come. Congress's peacetime prerogatives over the military eroded under the weight of pressure from two world wars and then the Cold War. Foreign wars and crises put a premium on quick action, and the President occupied the best position to act swiftly.

A single-minded dedication to preparedness drove Roosevelt's struggles with Congress. When he assumed office, Roosevelt believed that the United States lacked sufficient armaments to fight a first-rate power, and he recognized that the country had asserted interests in East Asia, the Western Pacific, and Latin America that could spark a clash with another great power. He did not wish to reverse policies that he believed were necessary to insure national greatness, so he sought to balance military capabilities with American interests. In his mind, any other course risked national humiliation.

But Roosevelt's motivations went beyond the military safety of the nation. To him, military might was a means to achieve something much grander for the United States. It was the vehicle that would allow the American people to participate in the world struggle for markets, resources, and the right to impress Western values on other peoples. Without such competition, Americans would lose their
"fighting qualities" and gradually slip into material pursuits, becoming dissipated and easy prey for the hardier peoples of the world. Roosevelt therefore believed that he was saving the United States from a dismal future and freeing it to achieve a destiny as one of the greatest nations in history.

As a child of the Victorian era, Roosevelt regarded Americans’ inner character as a top priority. An expanded role in the world would force responsibilities upon his fellow citizens and cement in them the same sense of national duty that inspired him. Americans needed to internalize the values of good citizenship if their society was to be viable in an industrial and urban era, an age that had already brought severe economic depression, labor unrest, and radical political agitation. Roosevelt wanted to restore a social equilibrium that he associated with an earlier, less complicated America. In a sense then, he was looking to the past even as he sought to modernize the military, for the armed services would help insure American involvement in the world and thereby assist in building social harmony at home.

Roosevelt’s Janus-like look to both the past and the future made him a transitional figure in the development of American governmental institutions. He espoused more rationalized systems of governance yet often preferred more personal methods, traits illustrated by his military
reforms. Roosevelt, for example, tried to install a promotion system based on objective standards of merit, but failing that goal he made his own merit promotions, acting on personal impressions and making no attempt at an informal system of selection. An ad-hoc board may have countered charges of favoritism and proved to doubters that a merit system could function with some measure of objectivity. In another instance, Roosevelt favored advisory and planning agencies for the Army and Navy but, at the same time, saw the root of bureaucratic problems in individuals and not so much in bureaucratic structures. The proper personnel, he believed, would set matters straight and eliminate the need for further reform. In the case of the Navy, he was perhaps less interested in a naval general staff because he chose to run the service himself, a prime example of his penchant for personal solutions.

Although driven by Victorian values, Roosevelt left precedents that would last to the present-day. For example, he demonstrated how the chief executive could translate media attention into a political advantage, and he used his talent at public relations to the benefit of his military programs. Roosevelt was so successful at cultivating a public persona that his image lingers on as one of the most colorful of American presidents. He also showed a decided interest in technological matters. Insatiable curiosity and a desire for involvement drove him, but Roosevelt’s interest
in technology also sprang from the fact that the industrial revolution had caught up with warfare. Technology was quickly reducing American geographic isolation, and a degree of technical knowledge increasingly became necessary for chief executives to make informed decisions on defense policy. Most significantly, Roosevelt made inroads against congressional prerogatives in military affairs. He vigorously employed his powers of commander in chief, pointing to the elevated danger of war for justification. Later presidents would follow a similar path, but they would go much farther along it. In the future, much more ominous threats provided grounds for putting American military forces in harms way and for presenting Congress with a fait accompli. By the 1960s, the executive branch had not only seized much of the initiative in defense policy but also in the committing of United States forces to war.

Roosevelt's successes as peacetime commander in chief did not, of course, result solely from his labors. Numerous other people supplied ideas, political talent, and long hours of work to enhance American military power and preparedness. Elihu Root, Stephen B. Luce, Alfred T. Mahan, William S. Sims, Leonard Wood, Albert L. Key, William Harding Carter, James Franklin Bell, and George Dewey were only some of the individuals who devoted their time and energy to improving the American military. Roosevelt, however, was in the best position to force action. He could
push innovators to the fore, issue orders to ships and troops, meet Congress as an equal, and mobilize popular sentiment. Military reformers recognized his interest and abilities and sought to exploit them for their own ends. Without Roosevelt, military reform would have doubtlessly occurred, but it would have moved more slowly and the country would not have been as well prepared for the military trials of the twentieth century. Roosevelt’s era was a time when the nation began to look to its commander in chief in peace as much as it did in war.
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