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## Geopolitics

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### Alfred Thayer Mahan and American Geopolitics: The Conservatism and Realism of an Imperialist

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## **Alfred Thayer Mahan and American Geopolitics: The Conservatism and Realism of an Imperialist**

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*Debate about the goals of American foreign policy at the end of the twentieth century, especially that thread differentiating “conservative” from “neoconservative” perspectives, might profit by revisiting the debate over American expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. “I am an imperialist,” Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan once remarked, “simply because I am not isolationist.” This paper explores the connection between Mahan’s defense of imperialism—often couched in terms of national interest and balance of power—and the norms of American power in world politics. The will-to-power behind American expansion and involvement, a formidable pillar in Mahan’s realism, coexisted (often uneasily) with the affirmation of national purpose, a less formidable but still important part of Mahan’s idealism. Mahan’s strong conservative inclinations in politics were matched by a willingness to employ the tools of realism—particularly traditional diplomatic methods—as a way to uphold historic national goals and moral vision in American foreign policy. Far from seeing an irremediable conflict between the counsels of realism and limited moral gains in foreign policy, Mahan understood that governments are not immune from certain overall constraints. Seldom if ever could American actions abroad be defended by arguing solely for the maintenance or increase of national power.*

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expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. "I am an imperialist," Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan once remarked, "simply because I am not isolationist."<sup>1</sup> This sailor-turned-prophet constructed a tightly knit historical justification of why and how the United States could expand beyond its continental limits. The cause and effect relationship he posited between sea power and national greatness looked forward to an informal Anglo-American naval alliance policing the world. Mahan's justification of American expansion hardly embodied what Hans J. Morgenthau described as the intellectual error of militarism or the machinations of *raison d'état* often thought to bolster the seamier side of political realism.<sup>2</sup> The simplistic profile of Mahan's geopolitical thought as a spur to war and brutal conquest, from which only the mighty or ruthless survive, does an injustice to the full range of political, economic, and moral factors that shaped his international outlook. Morgenthau, more so than Mahan, may be guilty of the intellectual error of linking his subject's historical and philosophical vision to a determinist international theory that makes little, if any, room for free will and a broad range of independent judgment about the forces impacting on the destiny of leaders and nations.

Mahan, as Walter McDougall points out, was also a devout churchman, and like most Protestants of his time he believed that God had raised the United States to world power for a reason.<sup>3</sup> To see him merely as an agent of the political Darwinians is to ignore how his work echoed an evangelical, or social gospel, message of social uplift at home and abroad. Mahan believed that Providence somehow would teach great naval powers to use their power for righteous ends. Expansionists in the 1890s, Theodore Roosevelt among them, "avidly received the Captain into their midst, and proclaimed him their spokesman."<sup>4</sup> This paper explores the connection between Mahan's defense of imperialism – often couched in terms of national interest and balance of power – and the norms of American power in world politics. The will-to-power behind American expansion and involvement, a formidable pillar in Mahan's realism, coexisted (often uneasily) with the affirmation of national purpose, a less formidable but still important part of Mahan's idealism. Mahan's strong conservative inclinations in politics were matched by a willingness to employ the tools of realism – particularly traditional diplomatic methods – as a way to uphold historic national goals and moral vision in American foreign policy. Far from seeing an irremediable conflict between the counsels of realism and limited moral gains in foreign policy, Mahan understood that governments are not immune from certain overall constraints. Seldom if ever could American actions abroad be defended by arguing solely for the maintenance or increase of national power.

Conservatives today often disagree about whether the national interest standard moves beyond self-preservation and necessity to encompass moral imperatives, not to mention whether the proliferation of obligations

throughout the world is consistent with a prudent reckoning of American power in different geographical and cultural settings. Some who claim today's neo-conservative imprimatur argue that American power is linked ineluctably to the principled defense of liberty and freedom beyond the arithmetic of geopolitics. In a lengthy review of American foreign policy of the past century in *Commentary* magazine, the neo-conservative Norman Podhoretz makes the historical case for optimistic assertiveness over "realistic" accommodation. At a lecture before the American Enterprise Institute in 2004, columnist Charles Krauthammer rhapsodised about America's "global dominion" and its having "acquired the largest seeming empire in the history of the world."<sup>5</sup> Saying that realism "cannot be a prescription for America," since "it cannot be our purpose," Krauthammer proposes a neo-conservative "moral overlay" for a foreign policy geared to "democratic globalism." Krauthammer explains the divorce between realism and a principled foreign policy in the following, informal terms:

Beyond power. Beyond interest. Beyond interest defined as power. That is the credo of democratic globalism. Which explains its political appeal: America is a nation uniquely built not on blood, race or consanguinity, but on a proposition – to which its sacred honor has been pledged for two centuries. This American exceptionalism explains why non-Americans find this foreign policy so difficult to credit; why [Tony] Blair has had more difficulty garnering support for it in his country; and why Europe, in particular, finds this kind of value-driven policy ... irritatingly moralistic.<sup>6</sup>

Paleo-conservative Patrick Buchanan offers a dissenting and less sanguine opinion: "For the neo-conservatives, Iraq was simply Phase II of World War IV for imperial domination of the Middle East and serial destruction of the regimes in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority."<sup>7</sup> In a spirited commentary on Krauthammer's depiction of America as the new Rome, and "unchecked by any power," Buchanan laments that

as one watches the Old Republic spend herself into bankruptcy, run up trade deficits that debauch her currency, decline to defend her own bleeding borders, permit rivals to loot her technology and cart off her manufacturing plants, America does in a way resemble Rome. But it is, unfortunately, the Rome of the late fourth century.<sup>8</sup>

Rudyard Kipling in the late Victorian era might as well have been speaking about the contemporary imperial impulse in American foreign policy when he wrote in his "Recessional": "For frantic boast and foolish word/Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!"<sup>9</sup> Buchanan's critique of neo-conservative

crusaders today mirrors the arguments made by Morgenthau and George Kennan about moral perfectionism as an ideology in American diplomacy during the Cold War. The error of moral perfectionists is to make an unjustifiable leap from the omnipresence of the moral element in foreign policy to the conclusion that the United States has a mission to apply its own moral principles to the rest of humanity. Abstract moral principles about freedom and human rights not only come into conflict with other diplomatic and strategic interests that America may possess in a given circumstance; in addition, the actual impossibility of consistently pursuing the global defense of nationally celebrated, self-evident truths is evidenced both by the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms and by the existence of universal ideological claims in the foreign policy of non-democratic states.

Despite the changing international terrain over the course of a century, the intellectual arguments about the projection of American power and ideals, about intervention or neutrality in foreign conflicts, were not unknown to nineteenth century leaders. And consulting the diplomatic record of earlier generations might help clarify the meaning of “conservatism” as a tradition of foreign policy inquiry. Mahan’s career offers a unique case study which affirms the importance of realism, contrary to the claims of today’s neo-conservatives. Mahan’s conservatism in foreign policy looked less to idealistic principles and more toward national habits and traditions that provide opportunities *and* limitations for the projection of power in world politics.

### THE EDUCATION OF AN IMPERIALIST

Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) spent a quarter century of his life as a fairly subordinate official before he was to join the Naval War College (1885) and publish his best selling books about history. Following his graduation from the US Naval Academy in 1858, he rose from the rank of midshipman to that of lieutenant, to lieutenant commander by 1865, to commander by 1872, to captain in 1885, and with that rank he retired after forty years of service.<sup>10</sup> Far from what Charles Beard once derided as a “swivel-chair admiral,” Mahan’s sea duties took him all over the world, to the Far East, South America, and Europe. He possessed, in the words of historian Ralph Gabriel, “such a world view as was to be found in post-Appomattox America only among the students who had returned from graduate study abroad.”<sup>11</sup> His closest friend from Academy days, Samuel A’Court Ashe, recalled an 1858 training cruise on which Mahan naively lamented that “the day of traditional naval heroes, men like Stephen Decatur, was over, that distinction through personal daring would be difficult if not impossible to achieve, and that he proposed to win renown in his profession through intellectual performance.”<sup>12</sup>

Up until the mid 1880s, Mahan seemed an unlikely candidate to emerge as the avatar of American imperialism. In 1883, Mahan took command of the *Wachusett* at Callao, Peru. The *Wachusett*, one of five vessels in the grand "Pacific Squadron," had been assigned to oversee American interests and property in the outcome of "War of the Pacific" (1879–1884) between Chile and Peru.<sup>13</sup> The "Plumed Knight" from Maine, Secretary of State James G. Blaine, opposed territorial cessions in the Americas, but he could not overcome either Chile's upper hand in the conflict or public opposition in America to any use of military force. Mahan objected to Blaine's "intermeddling," complicated by the fact that the American minister in Chile strongly espoused the cause of the Chileans and quarreled bitterly with the American minister in Peru, who just as vigorously upheld the claims of the Peruvians. Mahan observed up close Chile's occupation of Peru, in addition to the violent overthrow a short time later of the Chilean-supported puppet government in Lima. His anguish about having been exiled to this remote station, his loneliness and homesickness, his contempt for "Jingo Jim" Blaine, his condescension toward "banana republics" – all of these factors led Mahan to see a world inhospitable to America's national interest.

In fact, Mahan enjoyed an exceedingly brief career (perhaps a few months at best) as an outspoken anti-imperialist. In the war between Chile and Peru, as he wrote in July 1884, "our country seems to consider it has some business with them ... tied down to [this] stretch of coast." The internal politics of these countries were consumed "with expected strife and revolution." But there was one saving grace in this otherwise hopeless ordeal.

Luckily Mr. Blaine is not yet President so we will not probably interfere beyond taking refugees on board if necessary; but if that magnetic statesman were in office I fancy American diplomats would be running around in the magazine with lighted candles ... the question of landing troops in a foreign country is very delicate. I trust it may be avoided.<sup>14</sup>

He confided to a friend even "the very suspicion of an imperial policy is hateful; the mixing of our politics with Latin republics especially." Mahan "dreaded outlying colonies of interests," which would occasion the need for large military establishments as well as the "oncoming of a strong central government" and the possible "subversion of really free government."<sup>15</sup> Here Mahan echoes the sentiments of John Quincy Adams, who worried in 1821 about the dangers to republican government caused by crusading nations going abroad in search of monsters to destroy.

Two events were decisive for Mahan's conversion to the cause of imperialism: the role of the US navy during the disorders in Central America (1885–1886) and the historical research he completed at the English Club's

library in Lima. With the *Wachusett* being part of US government intervention in Panama, and having to show the flag throughout the region after the president of Guatemala proclaimed a federal union of all of the Central American states, Mahan grew concerned about foreign threats to American commercial and strategic interests. He began to see the outlines of a more complicated world from which America could not retreat and in which a new navy would be the frontline of national power.

I think our geographical position will make war with us unlikely, but the surest deterrent will be a fleet of swift cruisers to prey on the enemy's commerce. If we are going for an Isthmian policy we must have nothing short of a ... thoroughly first class, iron clad navy – equal to either England or France. To this I would add ... pursue a policy not of formal alliance but of close sympathy, based on common ideas of justice, law, freedom and honesty, with England.<sup>16</sup>

The power of Britain's empire, which he much admired, was enshrined in the larger pageantry of civilisation on a progressive march. England, he wrote, "is like every nation, selfish but in the main honorable; and the best hope of the world is in the union of the branches of that race to which she and we belong."<sup>17</sup>

Mahan's journey from the melancholy mid-career officer to naval philosopher began in the library of the English Club of Lima. Commodore Luce – detached from the command of the North Atlantic Fleet to assume presidential duties of the newly created Naval War College – offered Mahan (in 1884) a faculty position that would enable him to direct work in strategy and tactics as well as instruct in naval history. But Mahan was nowhere satisfied with some preliminary lectures he prepared on steam battle-fleet tactics geared toward modern technical capabilities. Concerned that the discipline was "already deluged with speculations ... as to future naval warfare," Mahan aimed for a different goal: "I want ... to wrest something out of the old wooden sides and 24 pounder that will throw some light on the combinations to be used with iron-clads, rifled guns and torpedoes; and to raise the profession ... by a clear comprehension of the great part it has played in the world than I myself have hitherto had."<sup>18</sup> History led him to relate questions about naval power to larger political and economic issues.

Of particular importance for Mahan was Theodor Mommsen's three-volume *History of Rome*. The German historian's chronicle of the Second Punic War – particularly the Carthaginian general Hannibal's invasion of Rome in the third century B.C. – emphasised the importance of naval power and the superiority of the Roman Navy to the Carthaginian land forces. Mahan was struck "how different things might have been could Hannibal have invaded Italy the by sea, as the Romans had Africa."<sup>19</sup> Hannibal's land campaigns were crippled by his inability to transport his army by sea or to

otherwise maintain over-water communications with Carthage because of Roman naval superiority. The march, Mahan wrote, cost Hannibal more than half his veteran troops – thirty-three thousand of sixty thousand – and enabled the Roman general Scipio to intercept his communications and confront him at the Trebbia River.<sup>20</sup> Years later, Mahan likened the discovery of his great historical insight to a moment of transcendence, there having dawned on his consciousness “one of those concrete perceptions which turn inward darkness into light – and give substance to shadow!”<sup>21</sup>

On a more temporal plane, Mahan began to look to the sea as “a highway for commerce and also for hostile attacks upon countries bordering on it.” That led to a concern for the sources of maritime power or weakness – material, personnel, national aptitude, harbors and their location relative to commercial routes and enemy coasts. Mahan then “proposed ... to bring forward instances, from ancient and modern history, of the effect of navies and the control of the sea upon great or small campaigns.” While part of his study of past campaigns looked to questions of strategy, a more important line of investigation tried to “seek out any parallelism between the weapons or branches of land forces and those of the sea.”<sup>22</sup> By October 1885, Mahan finally received his long-awaited orders for the War College, together with permission to spend the next ten months collecting additional research material in New York City. His lectures, now a year in preparation, were to be an investigation of the general conditions affecting the maritime development of nations and of the influence of naval power on Europe and America since 1660.<sup>23</sup>

Of importance to this discussion is how Mahan’s work on sea power fits within the larger discipline of geopolitics. In fact, geopolitics may be seen as two distinct schools that comprise the organic state theory and geostrategy.<sup>24</sup> The organic state theory originated in the thinking of two European scholars: Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and Rudolph Kjellen (1864–1922). Ratzel, a professor at the University of Leipzig, coined the term *Anthropogeographie*, which denoted a synthesis of geography, anthropology, and politics.<sup>25</sup> Ratzel argued from Darwinian theory that states are like living organisms. States have boundaries, a capital, and lines of communication, as well as a consciousness and a culture. The size of a state and its resources, he reasoned, would gauge its strength. Therefore, states would seek to grow in size in order to retain their vitality. He is generally credited, quite ominously, with the term *Lebensraum* (living space).<sup>26</sup> Ratzel also argued that states were constantly in competition, driven by a process in which larger states would naturally seek to expand in order to consolidate their power. Kjellen, a member of the Swedish parliament and a political scientist, first used the term geopolitics to describe the geographical basis of national behavior. Kjellen’s theories would soon gain an insidious popularity with a generation of emerging Nazi leaders and other Axis geopoliticians. Karl Haushofer founded the German Academy at the University of

Munich in 1925, together with the journal *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. Both received active support from the Third Reich.<sup>27</sup> This strain of geopolitical thinking, as Robert Strausz-Hupé has written, was revolutionary, and dangerous, because it tried to transcend the nineteenth-century conception of the balance of power and, in fact, sought hegemony and domination.<sup>28</sup>

About the same time as Ratzel and Kjellen analysed the political significance of spatial factors in world affairs, an American and an Englishman would compose their theories of geostrategy. Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that sea power was vastly important to the state. He concluded that sea power was the key to commerce and economic competition, if not strategy and global political advantage. Mahan's theories helped to shape America's growing international interests at the turn of the century and deeply influenced Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>29</sup> Conversely, Sir Halford Mackinder, a professor of geography and director of the London School of Economics, felt that the relationship between sea power and land power had been altered. Mackinder espoused the view that inventions such as the railroad would cause land power to be the determinant in international affairs.<sup>30</sup>

Geographical influences in foreign policy have most often been emphasised as part of global defense strategy. American leaders, throughout the nineteenth century, argued that the Monroe Doctrine was founded upon the geographical fact of continental isolation. Similarly, Britain's policy of maintaining a dominant navy and a balance of power on the European continent was shaped, in large part, by its insular position. The Prussian policy of military efficiency was influenced by its continental position and its lack of natural barriers to invasion from either east or west.<sup>31</sup> Captain Mahan held that a state with predominant sea power, including an adequate navy, a maritime-minded population sustained by a large merchant marine, well-distributed bases, and control of narrow waterways could dominate world politics through the use of this power to blockade and strangle its rivals.

Also significant for Mahan's strategic outlook was the work of the Swiss military theorist, Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779–1869). A number of works on Mahan have accepted the arguable proposition that the Swiss strategist was the source of Mahan's supposed claim that command could be reduced to a mechanistic application of principles. Jon Sumida vigorously refutes conventional speculation on the link between Jomini and Mahan's alleged embrace of determinism.<sup>32</sup> Mahan was far less interested in "scientific" operations of war than in the qualitative-moral attributes of effective command. What Jomini supplied Mahan, according to Sumida, was the conception of the decisive battle as the resolver of strategic difficulty, particularly principles such as the concentration of force, and a model of presenting analysis in the form of narrative accompanied by critical commentary.<sup>33</sup> From the Swiss strategist, he also came to refute the commonly accepted maxim that the general and the statesman occupy unrelated fields; from his striking

phrase, “the sterile glory of fighting battles merely to win them,” the sea power philosopher deduced the succinct sentence, “War is not fighting but business.”<sup>34</sup>

In sizing up Mahan, one might see a more profitable link to Clausewitz, at least in the way Mahan approached matters of comprehensive theory. This is the case even though Mahan finished the last installment of the “Influence of Sea Power” before what is believed to have been his first encounter with the writings of Clausewitz.<sup>35</sup> Both the Prussian and the American believed that the uncertainty of command required intellectual as well as moral qualities. Line officers in the navy, he believed, needed moral power, which to him meant “fearlessness in responsibility and in danger, self-reliance,” and “promptitude in action.” The existing emphasis on science tended “to promote caution unduly; to substitute calculation for judgment; to create trust in formulas rather than in one’s self.”<sup>36</sup>

Diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber distinguishes Mahan’s philosophy of expansion from seventeenth century mercantile expansion.<sup>37</sup> Despite some convergence between the two philosophies (e.g., the need for a favorable balance of trade), Mahan rejected tariffs as a way to address trade imbalances and applauded efforts to lower tariff walls. Tariffs were problematic in that they represented a force of tradition and came “clothed in the mail of conservatism.”<sup>38</sup> And Blaine, quoted by Mahan, averred: “It is not an ambitious destiny for so great a country as ours to manufacture only what we can consume, or produce only what we eat.”<sup>39</sup> “Reciprocity, increased freedom of movement, is the logical corollary of expansion.”<sup>40</sup>

Mahan certainly did not treat the state as an economic unit, separate from moral or religious regard for individual welfare and happiness. The white man’s burden was as much moral obligation as it was foreign policy gospel. “Personal liberty,” Mahan wrote, “is a greater need than political independence, the chief value of which is to insure the freedom of the individual.”<sup>41</sup> With the dawn of a new century, and the rise of new combinations of economic power, Mahan acknowledged a need for regulation “not to substitute government action for that of the individual” but only to control the latter “where combinations of individuals do threaten common rights.” He understood that governmental regulation introduces a competitive factor into the social order, “thereby setting up the interest of the community at large against that of individuals or corporations when the power of these becomes excessive.”<sup>42</sup>

Mahan differed from his mercantile predecessors on three other key issues: production, the merchant marine, and colonial empires. While mercantilists emphasised production as a way to increase national wealth in bullion, Mahan treated production – the creation of a great industrial complex capable of producing vast surpluses – as an end in its own right.<sup>43</sup> As Mahan affirmed in 1890, both shipping and foreign markets – as a reflection of America’s foreign policy – look to a world “radically distinct from the

simple idea of self-sufficingness.” He summarised these various propositions in a postulate: “In these three things – production, with the necessity of exchanging products, shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on, and colonies ... – is to be found the key to much of history, as well as of the policy, of nations bordering upon the sea.”<sup>44</sup> While classic mercantilists treated production as a mechanism of pulling wealth into the country, Mahan defined production in larger socio-economic terms – that is, as a process of keeping American society healthy, stemming labor unrest, and maintaining full employment.

A flourishing merchant marine had been, for the mercantilists, a *sine qua non* of empire. And, for a period of time, Mahan considered this attribute crucial for the security and prosperity of representative government. Louis XIV illustrated that a “purely military sea power” might enjoy temporary success, but “experience showed that his navy was like a growth which having no root soon withers away.” To enjoy lasting sea power, the “military expenditure must have a strongly represented interest behind it, convinced of its necessity” – that is, a merchant marine.<sup>45</sup> As the decade of the 1890s passed, the theme of merchant shipping figured far less in Mahan’s writing than territorial expansion, naval development, and naval strategy. The minuteness of the American merchant marine did not inhibit Congress from building a new American battleship fleet, did not divert businessmen from seeking profit in foreign markets, and did not delay Mahan himself becoming a celebrated prophet at home and abroad.<sup>46</sup>

Mahan also differed from the mercantilists over the purpose of colonies. Mercantilist philosophy emphasised colonies inasmuch as they provided raw materials, foreign markets for surplus production, and areas for the resettlement of discontented populations. Mahan was hard-pressed to commend the earlier European legacy as a model for American statecraft. European statesmen, with few exceptions, “have not been able to supply the lack of strong natural impulse; nor can the minute regulation from home produce as good results as a happier neglect.” He feared that the United States would not want “foreign establishments, either colonial or military.”<sup>47</sup> Mahan more often looked to foreign acquisitions to “provide resting places” for American warships, “where they can coal and repair.”<sup>48</sup> These prerequisites seemed satisfied by the port of Manila on Luzon, the Canal Zone, and the Hawaiian islands. Mahan – along with William McKinley, John Hay, and Henry Cabot Lodge – had little interest in “colonising” either Asia or Latin America, so much as exploiting lucrative commercial opportunities as they might fall within the larger orbit of Western, Christian civilisation.

American efforts to establish strategic primacy over the Panama Canal (as Britain had with the English Channel) would enable “the Atlantic coast to compete with Europe, on equal terms as to distance, for the markets of eastern Asia,” in addition to markets along the western coasts of Latin America.<sup>49</sup> Similar arguments buttressed Mahan’s support for annexation of

Hawaii, and later the Philippines. Seizing Hawaii would deprive Britain of one of the “intermediate links” in a chain extending from “British Columbia in the northeastern Pacific, and of Australia and New Zealand in the southwestern [Pacific].”<sup>50</sup> The balance of his annexationist zeal was about economic growth and development. Annexation was to be

but a first fruit and a token that the nation in its evolution has aroused itself to the necessity of carrying its life ... beyond the borders which heretofore have sufficed for its activities... . It is rarely that so important a factor in the attack or defense of a coast-line – of a sea frontier – is concentrated in a single position; and the circumstance renders doubly imperative upon us to secure it, if we righteously can. It is to be hoped ... that the opportunity thus thrust upon us may not be viewed narrowly.<sup>51</sup>

If President McKinley claimed spiritual guidance in America’s acquisition of the Philippines, Mahan too could see a larger providential plan unfolding for the United States. “The part offered to us is great,” he wrote about American responsibilities toward China, “the urgency is immediate, and the preparation made for us, rather than by us, in the unwilling acquisition of the Philippines, is so obvious as to embolden even the least presumptuous to see in it the hand of Providence.” But the precise will of God over time was far more ambiguous than immanent strategic assets offered by the archipelago. As the years passed, Mahan acknowledged that America’s task in the Philippines was “troublesome ... [and] perhaps doubtful.”<sup>52</sup> But naval and commercial (and perhaps political) concerns trumped the reservations. Serving as bases, the new Pacific possessions lessened the burden of purely naval increase, “for by tenure of them and due development of their resources,” the navy received “an accession of strength, augmented facility of movement,” making it more able to defend manifold interests the nation had abroad even prior to its possession of “a square foot of territory without its borders.”<sup>53</sup>

### MAHAN AS AMERICAN REALIST

Some international thinkers find in Mahan’s late nineteenth century philosophy of sea power, and its geopolitical mooring, a thin cloak for reactionary preferences of war-minded (and mongering) great powers. That Mahan, like Lodge or Roosevelt, was a proponent of realism in diplomacy and foreign policy opens for debate any connection between his conservatism and defense of power politics. Certainly Mahan often supported Roosevelt’s muscular presidential stewardship in American domestic politics and foreign policy. For example, Mahan approved of Roosevelt’s speech “The New

Nationalism,” delivered at Osawatomie, Kansas, on 31 August, 1910. The Bull Moose campaign (for the presidential election two years later) blended ideas that included building a larger navy, supporting an activist foreign policy with American participation in an “international police force,” and cracking of trusts and monopolies at home.<sup>54</sup> The “malefactors of great wealth” were far from reassured by Mahan’s noisy friend from Oyster Bay. “Every man holds his property,” Roosevelt preached, “subject to the general right of the community to regulate its uses to whatever degree the public welfare may require it.” The former president, writing to a friend a few days after his speech, pronounced himself “a general radical.” He reaffirmed his belief in what he called “imperialist democracy.” With this generalisation, Mahan certainly agreed – so long as the “democracy part of it did not become too democratic.”<sup>55</sup>

Any demarcation of Mahan’s realism faces a number of challenges. He seldom used the concept in any precise theoretical way to connect it clearly either to European or to American traditions of statecraft. Mahan was a journeyman historian (though an elected president of the American Historical Association), never provided readers with any “systematic” treatment of his views on politics, but often stood out as a capable synthesist of secondary historical works. Yet Mahan had few equals in being a popular and persuasive writer, so that statesmen and boards-of-admiralty would seize the moment, if not the Trident of Neptune, in the grand naval contest for the sovereignty of the seas. The diplomatic historian, Sir Charles Webster used to tell his students that Mahan was one of the causes of the First World War.<sup>56</sup> Being a public figure, often on call to the statesmen and dignitaries of his day, his outpouring on international subjects was often inspired as much by momentary political battles as by any philosophical originality.

Mahan’s writing on world politics echoes the mainstays of contemporary realist international thought. In viewing anarchy as the distinctive attribute among sovereign nation states, Mahan emphasised the struggle for power and advantage as the centerpiece of world politics. International agreements for cooperation were less a product of enlightened public opinion and more the result of traditional diplomatic manoeuvres rooted in competing, and sometimes reconcilable, interests. In Kenneth Waltz’s phrase: “Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order.”<sup>57</sup> Recalling George Washington’s counsel in the Farewell Address, Mahan thought it “vain to expect nations to act consistently from any motive other than interest.” In fact, this kind of thinking, “under the name of realism,” is the “avowed motive of German statecraft.”<sup>58</sup> Mahan elaborated in the following way:

It follows from this ... that the study of interests, international interests, is the one basis of sound and provident policy for statesmen. This involves a wide knowledge of contemporary facts as well as power to

appreciate them; but for a nation to exert its full weight in the world such knowledge and appreciation must be widespread among its plain people also. So only can the short vision common to most men expand to the prevision of national needs, and the timely provision of the necessary means for national self-assertion.<sup>59</sup>

He distrusted grand schemes of universal disarmament and arbitration, as much as he championed the balance of power as the best mechanism by which to advance national interests in an arena untamed by international law and morality. "Artificial arrangements such as these," Mahan claimed, "are effective only in so far as they take account of, and correspond to, the contemporary qualities of human nature; to its virtues, defects, passions, interests." The raw material of politics and diplomacy cannot "be worked into a finished product possessing characteristics not found in the material itself." He noted, for example, the status quo of Europe in 1815 was not merely one of a balance of regularised power, artificially constituted.

There were among the different states, upon the equilibrium of which the scheme depended, varying stages of political, social, and industrial development; varying conceptions of right; varying degrees of wealth and opportunity. These ... as time advanced, would give rise to national dissatisfactions, whence in due order follow national ambitions and disputes.<sup>60</sup>

Mahan wrote about the balance process not merely as a quantitative assessment of physical or military force, but from "a wide estimate of the advantages and disadvantages attendant upon the course of action."<sup>61</sup> As a rule, Mahan gave priority to six indicators: territory, population, armed forces, commerce, national resources, and national character or will (which encompasses a government's ability to carry out long range planning and to mobilise a country's resources).<sup>62</sup>

Mahan did not view an acquaintance with human nature as fundamentally incompatible with theoretical explanations of state behavior emphasizing the distribution of power or capabilities throughout the international system. History taught Mahan that the very advance of civilisation brought "an inevitable element of aggressiveness, which can be kept within bounds only by an opposition of force."<sup>63</sup> But the precise way in which nations "are intent each upon its own advantage," as well as the manner in which "the individuality and independence of nations comes to expression," entail a mix of tangible and intangible forces. The Monroe Doctrine, no less than the Open Door, were different geographic expressions of the balance of power. For Mahan, the balance provided for "equal independence" of the major (though not minor) powers, minimised prospects for deadly encounters between leading states, and hinged equilibrium (not to be confused for

peace) on combinations of weaker powers being able to deter a more powerful aggressor.<sup>64</sup>

Mahan made clear his views on arbitration beginning as early as 1896, when he refused to endorse the creation of a Permanent Tribunal of Arbitration for future use by Britain and the United States. No judicial body, he thought, could adjudicate “national convictions of right and wrong” or substitute itself for the conscience of a people and their leaders.

I think that while peace throughout the world is to be prayed for, I consider no greater misfortune could well happen than that civilized nations should abandon their preparations for war and take to arbitration. The outside barbarians are many. They will readily assimilate our material advance, but how long will it take them to reach the general spirit which it has taken Christianity two thousand years to put us? What then will protect us?<sup>65</sup>

The man holding these views, in no small twist of fate, would find himself within two years serving on the five-member American delegation to the First Hague Conference. Mahan’s contribution to the overall conference (arguing, for the most part, about the rules of neutral commerce in wartime) was less significant than his successes and persuasiveness within the American delegation.<sup>66</sup> He urgently reminded his colleagues of certain geopolitical realities by pointing out that

the immediate cause of Russia calling for the Conference was the shock of our late war, resulting in the rapprochement of the U.S. and Great Britain, and our sudden appearance in Asia, as the result of a successful war. In peace, Russia’s aggressive advance moves over the inert Asiatics like a steam-roller; but the prospect of America and England, side by side, demanding that China be left open for trade, means either a change in her policy, or war. Hence, she wishes peace by pledge... . [A nation] should never pledge itself by treaty ... to arbitrate before it knows what the subject of the dispute is.<sup>67</sup>

Andrew White, who led the American delegation, claimed it was Mahan who “threw in a bomb” that led to a reversal of American support for the French-proposed Article 27 (which would have *required* all nations to involve themselves, in one degree or another, in the disputes of any two nations). The American delegation quickly introduced a qualifying clause exempting the United States and the Monroe Doctrine from article language obligating the signatory powers, “in case a serious dispute threatens to break out between two or more of them, to remind these [powers] that the permanent Court of Arbitration is open to them.”<sup>68</sup> Mahan’s was a plea not to sign away the “right to maintain justice by war by entering into a pledge

beforehand to arbitrate, *except* on questions most strictly limited and defined.”<sup>69</sup>

Arbitration, Mahan argued, also raised important moral and legal issues. In his twice-reprinted 1899 article for the *North American Review*, “The Peace Conference and the Moral Aspect of War,” Mahan made a case that the admitted evils of war had become such a preoccupation with pacifists and advocates of arbitration that they neglected to consider positive moral gains that might come from war. Worse things could happen to men and nations than the ravages of war. He explained his position in a letter to the social reformer Grace Hoadley Dodge:

I do not presume to read the actions of Providence, but I see not how it can fail to strike you that at the very moment the very sound of “Arbitration” so fills men’s ears that they can listen to nothing else, their device is returned in mockery on their hands by two wars [Spanish-American and Anglo-Boer], just if ever war was just, and into which one of the parties in either case could not have refused to enter, except at the cost of dereliction to conscience.<sup>70</sup>

Even had America been “derelict” in the 1898 war, there would still be “contingencies which do not admit arbitration, duties which a nation must discharge even at the cost of war and suffering.” Arbitration might secure further a nation’s material prosperity, but “if the countervailing truth is not preached ... and accepted ... [then] it will have been better for the nation that it had never been born.”<sup>71</sup>

For Mahan, arbitration and armaments represented two different facets of national power. While armaments speak to force (as the basis of any social or international order so long as evil exists to be repressed), arbitration looks to law for its ultimate expression. International law was “artificial and often of long date” and “frequently inapplicable to a present dispute.” Few supporters of arbitration were willing to recognise the fact that force, under one form or another, underlies law itself. Mahan alluded to necessities and circumstances which transcend law itself, “a truth which found expression in the phrase once familiar to American ears – a ‘higher law.’”<sup>72</sup> National honor and vital interests represented sentiments and determinations which defied “every argument but force,” and “equity which cannot be had by law must be had by force.”<sup>73</sup> In 1905, he returned, once again, to place arbitration upon a high level of morality.

In these days of ... arbitration it cannot be affirmed too distinctly that bodies of men – nations – have convictions binding on their consciences, as well as interests which are vital in character; and that nations, no more than individuals may surrender conscience to another’s keeping. Still less may they rightfully pre-engage to do so. Nor is this

conclusion invalidated by a triumph of the unjust war. Subjugation to wrong is not acquiescence in wrong. A beaten nation is not necessarily a disgraced nation; but the nation or man is disgraced who shirks an obligation to defend right.<sup>74</sup>

### MAHAN AS CONSERVATIVE REALIST

In any discussion of Mahan as foreign policy conservative, it might be well to ask just what it was that he wanted to conserve and whether this conservatism related to the means or ends of politics and foreign policy? Warren Zimmerman's account of the "pen and ink sailor" reminds us that these ideological labels cannot be easily applied to Mahan with reassuring consistency. He was not what might be called a "political man," although some evidence of conservatism might be found in his support of free trade, his defense of states' right (not to include secession), his opposition to female suffrage, and his general opposition to the federal government.<sup>75</sup> And Mahan's humanism and religion were never far from his philosophy of sea power. As Sumida points out, Mahan viewed the true essence of Christianity as comparable in nature to an act of critical command decision-making in war, insofar as both initiatives had to be undertaken in the face of uncertainty.<sup>76</sup>

This is Faith, even when exercised in other than religious matters. It is conspicuously required in military conduct, where the unknown quantities are the gravest, most appalling. It is a high military virtue, to which in its perfection few attain; one chief factor in military success or unsuccess.<sup>77</sup>

Regarding America's role as a great power in world affairs, Mahan found little worth conserving in those isolationist sentiments at odds with the advantages to be had from an open door commercial empire. Certainly he had little difficulty casting aside his brief flirtation with anti-imperialist convictions in the 1880s, in addition to related concerns about the costs of a large defense establishment. While Mahan did not actually inspire the naval arms race at the turn of the century, his influence gave it the momentum necessary to make the nation a first-rate naval power. His close relationship with Lodge and Roosevelt (and particularly his embrace of the latter's "New Nationalism") militated against a narrow or strict construction of presidential power in other areas of domestic and foreign policy. In his memoirs, Mahan amplified on his worldview:

I am frankly an imperialist, in the sense that I believe that no nation, certainly no great nation, should henceforth maintain the policy of isolation which fitted our early history; above all, should not on that outlived plea refuse to intervene in events obviously thrust upon its conscience.<sup>78</sup>

The conscience of this imperialist could embrace simultaneously the idealism and strategy of American power. "However men may severally regard imperialism as a political theory, the dominion of Christ is [essentially] imperial, one Sovereign over many communities."<sup>79</sup>

Mahan's acceptance of the inevitability of conflict and violence, as part of the human condition, did not culminate in a normative sanction for war as the ultimate expression of the national interest or, for that matter, in the disregard of traditional diplomacy as an important factor in the equilibrium among nations. Moreover, his defense of the national interest made room for moral sentiments in shaping national policy. Nowhere are Mahan's convictions better illustrated than in his *North American Review* essay on Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*. At issue was Angell's contention that modern war had become ruinous, that nations stood to lose rather than to profit from war, and that material interests loomed as the primary motivation for foreign policy elites. Mahan deserves to be quoted at length.

Nations are under no illusion as to the unprofitableness of war... . A ... consideration of the wars of the past sixty years ... will show that the motives to war have not often been "aggression for the sake of increasing power, and consequently prosperity and financial well being." The impulses ... have risen above mere self-interest to feelings of convictions which the argument of *The Great Illusion* does not so much as touch... . To regard the world as governed by self-interest alone is to live in a nonexistent world, an ideal world, a world possessed by an ideal much less worthy than those which mankind, to do it bare justice, persistently entertains... . The inciting causes of war in our day are moral... . Even where material self-interest is at the bottom of the trouble, as ... in the present state of feeling between Germany and Great Britain, it is less the loss endured than the sense of injustice done, or apprehended, that keeps alive the flame.<sup>80</sup>

Mahan treated moral sentiments and, indeed, emotions as the "most energetic element of nation action," insofar as "governments are careful to obtain for their contentions an aspect of right."<sup>81</sup>

Sumida finds some equivocation over time in Mahan's international outlook about the likelihood of war among great powers. Economic imperatives might not work in favor of great power conflict. "National nerves are exasperated by the delicacy of financial situations," Mahan wrote in 1902, "and national resistance to hardship is sapped by generations that have known war only by the battlefield." The maintenance of "commercial and financial interests constitutes now a political consideration of the first importance, making for peace and deterring from war."<sup>82</sup> He tempered his enthusiasm in the ensuing decade, believing that competition among the major powers for colonial possessions in Asia and Africa might provide the

spark for a major confrontation. "It is the great amount of unexploited materials in territories politically backward, and now imperfectly possessed by the nominal owners," he observed in 1912, "which ... constitutes the temptation and impulse to war of European states."<sup>83</sup> And the decision for war may be prompted more through public passions and emotions than by rational calculations of *raison d'état* by autocratic rulers.

As [diplomatic] discussion proceeds, each government, deeply conscious of the evils of war, endeavors to reach a solution of peace; but to the people the matter gradually assumes the aspect of a right and a wrong, and popular feeling, disregarding of the particular self-interest which peace represents, is wrought up to a pitch of supporting by arms its asserted right – that other self-interest which is commonly defined as self-respect, or honor.<sup>84</sup>

Mahan as foreign policy conservative quarreled with a new generation of Wilsonian liberals less about internationalism and engagement and more about the methods or instrumentalities of statecraft. Moral crusading, no less than the universalism of international law, was more likely to inflame than suppress the machinations of power. The language of national interest and traditional diplomacy encouraged nations to recognise their own partial and limited claims in an anarchical society where conciliation and negotiation might be insulated from inflamed public opinion or abstract ideological causes that afford little room for compromise. Not all disputes between nations could be brought under a system of laws. He foresaw cases "in which the right is one of morals and expediency – in other words, of policy – not susceptible of legal definitions, because the preciseness of these deprive them of the elasticity necessary to successful international adjustments; which elasticity diplomacy possesses."<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The foreign policy debate in America between "neo-conservative" voices (whose triumphalism is punctuated with grandiose assertions of American moral leadership) and more traditional conservative sentiments (emphasising the limitations as much as the uses of power) distorts the interplay between morality and realism in American diplomatic history. The conservatism of Alfred Thayer Mahan, geared to an earlier time when the United States was to take its place among the other great powers, embraced *both* a geopolitical design attuned to the realities of power politics and a moral justification for national expansion. Mahan, along with others like Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, did not perceive any mortal conflict between morality and the national interest. Whereas some American conservatives a century later would decry the narrowness of realism, and declare American supremacy at a

unipolar moment in world history, Mahan's geopolitics and realism discovered concrete moral gains through a sense of proportion and limits to the projection of power and interests on the world's stage.

Mahan's reference to the elasticity of diplomacy as a prerequisite of international adjustments calls to mind Sir Herbert Butterfield's cogent reminder that too easily "one overlooks the amount that can be achieved by the kind of thought that reconciles."<sup>86</sup> Mahan's conservatism was less about defending first principles in war, much less accommodating the social Darwinism of his era, than the prudential art of bringing those different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly. Since Mahan assumed that international politics (like all politics) is engaged in by imperfect men and nations, he took for granted compromise, give-and-take, and reconciliation. At odds with the ethical cynicism of *raison d'état*, Mahan believed that men or nations could no more escape having to make estimates of right and wrong in foreign policy than individuals could shed their feelings over justice and injustice in their personal lives. Morality in foreign policy, in Mahan's view, was more a procedural matter by which the national interest itself constitutes a self-limiting motive. Any rigorous defender of the national interest concept must accept that other nations have their legitimate interests too. The recognition of equal claims sets bounds on aggression and serves as a potential brake upon the temptation of hypocritical pretense in foreign policy (e.g., equating political or military success with moral superiority). Whereas contemporary American conservatives tend to view the foreign policy heritage of realism as incompatible with American values, Mahan's geopolitics eschewed any sort of determinism and made room for moral judgment in the process by which the ends and means of foreign policy are brought into harmony with the available resources of national power.

## NOTES

1. Quoted in J. C. Bradford (ed.), *Admirals of the New Steel Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1990) p. 42.
2. H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1951) p. 120.
3. W. A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin 1997) p. 104.
4. P. Karsten, *The Naval Aristocracy: The Golden Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern American Navalism* (New York: Free Press 1972) pp. 341–342. See also R. W. Turk, *The Ambiguous Relationship: Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan* (New York: Greenwood Press 1987) p. 1.
5. C. Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press 2004) p. 2.
6. *Ibid.* p. 18.
7. P. J. Buchanan, 'America's Next War,' *The American Cause* (23 August 2004, 03 October 2005), <http://www.theamericancause.org/patamericasnxtwar.htm>.
8. P. J. Buchanan, 'The Stillborn Empire,' *The American Conservative* (14 March 2005, 03 October 2005), [http://amconmag.com/2005\\_03\\_14/buchanan.html](http://amconmag.com/2005_03_14/buchanan.html).

9. D. Gilmour, *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), pp. 120–21.
10. G. Livezey, *Mahan on Sea Power* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press 1981) p. 6.
11. R. H. Ferrell, *American Diplomacy, a History* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (New York: Norton 1975) p. 318.
12. R. Seager II, *Alfred Thayer Mahan, the Man and His Letters* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1977) p. 14.
13. By the time Mahan reached Callao, the war was in its fifth and final year. Chile was the clear victor and was demanding the nitrate rich desert region between the two countries. When Peru sued for peace, the US government offered to assist with negotiations through its minister in Lima. See also W. Zimmerman, *First Great Triumph, How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2002) pp. 86–87.
14. Seager (note 12) pp. 140–41.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Seager (note 12) pp. 146–47.
17. C. C. Taylor, *The Life of Admiral Mahan, Naval Philosophy* (London: John Murray 1920) pp. 179–180.
18. A. T. Mahan, *Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan*, eds. Robert Seager II and Doris D. Maguire (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), I: 625.
19. *Ibid.* p. 277.
20. Zimmerman (note 13) pp. 88–89.
21. W. D. Puleston, *Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1939) pp. 68–70. See also A. T. Mahan, *From Sail to Steam* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), pp. 276–77.
22. Seager (note 12) p. 146.
23. Livezey (note 10) p. 42. See also J. Tetsuro Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press 1997) p. 23.
24. J. Hillen and M. P. Noonan, 'The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement,' *Parameters* 28 (Autumn 1998) pp. 21–34.
25. F. Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (Stuttgart, Germany: J. Engelhorn 1899) Part I, p. 2. On the evolution of geopolitics, see R. J. Johnston, *Geography and State: An Essay in Political Geography* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1982) pp. 1–28, 120–187; J. R. V. Prescott, *Political Geography* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1972); H. Sprout and M. Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1965); P. F. Diehl, 'Geography and War: A Review and Assessment of Empirical Literature,' *International Interactions* 17 (1991) pp. 11–27; L. Febvre, *A Geographical Introduction to History* (New York: Knopf 1925) pp. 358–368; P. W. J. Vidal de la Blache, *Principles of Human Geography*, E. de Martonne (ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1926); O. H. K. Spate, 'How Determined Is Possibilism,' *Geographical Studies* 4 (1957) pp. 3–8; S. B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a Divided World* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press 1973).
26. M. I. Glassner, *Political Geography* (New York: John Wiley & Sons 1993) p. 224.
27. For a discussion of the German Academy, see D. H. Norton, 'Karl Haushofer and the German Academy, 1925–1945,' *Central European History* I (March 1958) p. 82.
28. R. Strausz-Hupé, *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons 1942).
29. G. R. Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy, 1890–1987* (Brighton, UK: Wheatsheaf Books 1988); Hillen and Noonan (note 24) pp. 21–34.
30. Glassner (note 26) p. 226.
31. Quincy Wright, *The Study of International Relations* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 343.
32. "Prejudice and incomprehension of Mahan's naval pedagogical sophistication, according to Sumida, combined with the problems posed by the length, complexity, and difficulty of his writing, led the authors of the standard monographs to misrepresent the analytical substance of his writing." See Sumida (note 23) p. 4.
33. *Ibid.* p. 24. For an overview of Mahan's reading of Jomini in the 1880s, see Seager, *Alfred Thayer Mahan* (note 12) pp. 164–73. See also Mahan, *From Sail to Steam* (note 21) p. 283.
34. Mahan, *From Sail to Steam* (note 21) pp. 278, 282–83; Livezey (note 10) p. 44.

35. Sumida claims that Mahan's outlook was identical to that of Clausewitz about things that were central to each other's thought. He might be "a Jominian by casual confession" although he was, in substance, "whether by direct or indirect inheritance or coincidence, a Clausewitzian." Sumida (note 23) pp. 113–14.
36. *Ibid.* pp. 17–18.
37. The following comparison between Mahan's expansionism and seventeenth century mercantilism draws heavily on LaFeber's analysis. See W. LaFeber, 'A Note on the Mercantilistic Imperialism of Alfred Thayer Mahan,' *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 48 (March 1962) pp. 674–85.
38. A. T. Mahan, 'The United States Looking Outward,' *Atlantic Monthly* 66 (December 1890) p. 817.
39. *Ibid.*
40. A. T. Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect: Studies in International Relations, Naval, and Political* (London: Sampson Low, Marston 1902) pp. 19–22.
41. Mahan, *From Sail to Steam* (note 21) pp. 324–25. For a revealing discussion of Mahan's emphasis on individual liberty and moral obligation, see Livezey (note 10) pp. 258–62.
42. *Ibid.*
43. While acknowledging that industrial efficiency led to the creation of a strong navy, LaFeber points out that this reverses Mahan's priorities. "He did not define a battleship navy as his ultimate objective, nor did he want to create a navy merely for the sake of doing so [and] ... he did not seek military power for military power's sake." LaFeber (note 37) pp. 676–77.
44. A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890), pp. 28, 70, 83–84.
45. *Ibid.* p. 87–88. See also LaFeber (note 37) p. 679.
46. Livezey (note 10) p. 266.
47. One can also detect some slight equivocation in Mahan's prognosis about future colonising by Americans. He could still imagine an opportunity – "if there be in the future any fields calling for colonization" – whereby his countrymen would bring to the task "all their inherited aptitude for self-government and independent growth." *Ibid.* pp. 57–58.
48. Quoted in LaFeber (note 37) p. 683.
49. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (note 44) p. 33. See also A. T. Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company 1898) pp. 99–100.
50. Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power* (note 49) p. 39.
51. *Ibid.* pp. 48–49.
52. Quoted in Livezey (note 10) p. 201.
53. *Ibid.* p. 204. See also A. T. Mahan, *Lessons of the War with Spain and Other Articles* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company 1899) pp. 301–308.
54. Seager (note 12) p. 584.
55. *Ibid.*
56. G. S. Graham, *Politics of Naval Supremacy: Studies in British Maritime Ascendancy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1965) p. 5. See also B. M. Gough, 'Influence of History on Mahan,' in (ed.), J. B. Hattendorf *The Influence of History on Mahan: The Proceedings of a Conference Marking the Centenary of Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press 1991) p. 8.
57. K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley 1979) p. 11.
58. A. T. Mahan, *The Interest of America in International Conditions*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company 1918) p. 81.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.* pp. 23–26.
61. *Ibid.* p. 89.
62. Maurer, 'Mahan on World Politics and Strategy: The Approach of the First World War, 1904–1914,' in *The Influence of History of Mahan: The Proceedings of a Conference Marking the Centenary of Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991), p. 159.
63. Mahan, *The Interest of America in International Conditions* (note 58) p. 166.
64. *Ibid.* pp. 124, 144.
65. Quoted in Seager (note 12) p. 337.

66. Against the more pacific and altruistic-minded of the American delegation, Mahan saw in the conference (the "Czar's Peace Picnic") a thinly disguised Russian motive (with Russia falling behind in the arms race) to have other powers disarm down to Russia's level. See *ibid.* p. 409.
67. Quoted in Livezey (note 10) p. 270. Seager (note 12) pp. 409–410.
68. Seager (note 12) p. 411.
69. *Ibid.* p. 413.
70. *Ibid.* pp. 413–14.
71. *Ibid.*
72. A. T. Mahan, *Armaments and Arbitration* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1912) pp. 12, 39.
73. Livezey (note 10) p. 271. See also Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (note 49).
74. A. T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company 1905) p. viii.
75. Zimmerman (note 13) p. 121.
76. Sumida (note 23) p. 77.
77. A. T. Mahan, *The Harvest Within: Thoughts on the Life of a Christian* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company 1910) p. 24.
78. Quoted in Zimmerman (note 13) p. 121.
79. Mahan, *The Harvest Within* (note 77) p. 180.
80. Mahan, *Armaments and Arbitration* (note 72) pp. 126, 153–54.
81. Quoted in Livezey (note 10) p. 285.
82. Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect* (note 40) pp. 143–144. See also Sumida (note 23) pp. 92–93.
83. Mahan, *Armaments and Arbitration* (note 72) pp. 110–111.
84. *Ibid.* p. 125.
85. *Ibid.* p. 78.
86. Sir Herbert Butterfield quoted in K. W. Thompson, *Ethics, Functionalism, and Power in International Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1981) p. 20.