

### 3. The Influence of Air Power on the Naval Problem.

The development of aviation, while destined to have a great influence on the tactical organisation of our Naval Forces, will not, outside narrow waters such as the English Channel or the Mediterranean, materially affect the problem of the control of the ocean routes, which, in the main, will continue to depend upon surface craft. Airships, if developed and found reliable, may, however, play a considerable part, in co-operation with surface vessels, in carrying out the reconnaissance of the sea routes and the keeping open of sea communication.

### 4. The Standard of Naval Strength.

The definite standard of Naval strength necessary for the peace and security of the Empire must naturally vary with the general political situation, always allowing for the fact that Naval strength and efficiency cannot be improvised, and that it takes several years to build a capital ship and a generation to train a really efficient body of senior officers.

The Imperial Conference of 1921 defined the One-Power Standard of Naval strength as the basis of Imperial defence. This standard was contemplated by the Conference as a minimum. It was subsequently, as far as the main units of the Battle Fleet are concerned, fixed as the maximum by the Washington Agreement. This limitation was accepted by the representatives of the Empire at Washington and by the Admiralty, in the general interest of world peace. But in view of the fact that we depend for our very existence upon the freedom of the seas, it is essential that the Naval Forces of the Empire should, within that limitation, attain the highest point of individual and combined efficiency, and the greatest possible degree of mobility.

### 5. The Problem before the Imperial Conference.

At the forthcoming Imperial Conference the Admiralty will present for discussion with the Dominions the building programmes with which the Empire is faced for the next few years in order to maintain the One-Power Standard, and invite them to consider how they can best co-operate in a task which, even with the substantial relief afforded by the Washington Agreement, involves an unduly heavy burden for Great Britain to bear alone. It is obvious that, in order to secure the necessary minimum of security with the equally necessary minimum of cost, there must not only be the most complete and whole-hearted mutual co-operation between the Governments and Services concerned in peace and war, but that the peace organisation must be such as to fit in with the most effective organisation for war.

### 6. Peace Organisation: The Principle of Dominion Navies.

The maintenance of the Naval Forces of the Empire in peace must depend ultimately on the sustained will of the peoples of the Empire as expressed by their Parliaments and through their responsible Governments. It is not merely approval, but the active and determined support of public opinion in every part of the Empire that is required if the Naval effort is to be adequate to our needs. With the growth of the Dominions in national status and sentiment, the only system of Naval co-operation which can command sufficient permanent good-will and support is one under which each Dominion possesses and controls its own Naval Forces. The Admiralty whole-heartedly endorses this principle, not only on political and constitutional grounds, but also because it will develop new centres of Naval strength, and new bases for the Navy of the Empire which are essential to the strategy of the future.

### 7. Organisation in War.

In war the Naval Forces of the Empire must be considered as a single collective Empire Fleet. From the strategical point of view, that Fleet may conveniently be regarded as falling into *three categories*. These three categories are closely interdependent, but they stand in a very definite order of relative importance.

*First and foremost* comes the *Main Fleet*. This must be capable of performing its function of destroying or containing the Main Fleet of the enemy. On it rests the fate of the whole Empire.

*Secondly*, there are the *Detached Forces* which, backed by the power of the Main Fleet, exercise control of the sea communications in areas distant from the main theatre of operations.

*Thirdly*, there are the *Local Defence Forces* which are necessary in order to free the Main Fleet and the Detached Forces for their proper work on the High Seas. The effort expended upon these Local Defence Forces should only be the minimum necessary to resist such pressure as the enemy may reasonably be expected to exercise in any particular area in view of the general position on the High Seas. It should never be allowed to limit or starve the preparations for the Sea-going Fleet.

### 8. Progressive Development of Dominion Navies.

The Naval Forces of the Dominions can, as they develop, take their part progressively in each of these categories. In the course of their development they will naturally pass through certain distinct but successive phases.

*Phase 1.*—In the First Phase provision should be made and responsibility assumed for Local Defence Services. At the same time preparations should be made for the next phase by beginning the training of personnel for a sea-going force. Canada and South Africa are in the First Phase.

*Phase 2.*—In the Second Phase the first definite steps are taken in the creation of a force for work on the High Seas, as opposed to a local defence force. This phase involves the obtaining of one or more seagoing ships, and in the first instance it may be necessary, for financial and other reasons, to obtain both the ships themselves and a portion, at any rate, of the personnel from the Royal Navy. Throughout this phase the necessary training, repair and fuelling facilities should gradually be built up in preparation for the next phase. This Second Phase has been reached by New Zealand.

*Phase 3.*—The Third Phase is reached when a Dominion is in a position to provide and man a seagoing squadron of its own, and to take over the full control in peace of the station in which its shores are included. That station will be the normal home station of its Squadron, but interchange and co-operation with British Units on other stations should be arranged. Australia is the only Dominion which is now in the Third Phase.

*Phase 4.*—In the Fourth and final Phase the Dominions should be capable, in addition to the Squadrons for service on their own home stations, to provide, whether in the shape of additional cruiser squadrons or of capital ship units, a substantial part of the general scheme of naval defence and, more particularly, of the Main Fleet.

Throughout the process of development certain general considerations should be kept in view. The fostering of a Mercantile Marine, and with it of a seafaring population and of a national sea sentiment, constitutes an essential foundation for the building up of a Dominion Navy. A small local Navy, with no scope for ambition and no variety of scene, cannot, in the long run, secure the right type of officers or men, or maintain a high standard of efficiency. A good deal can be done to surmount these difficulties during the Second and Third Phases by a free interchange, both of individuals and of ships, with the Royal Navy. But the real solution lies, for the Dominions which can afford it, in reaching the Fourth Phase as soon as possible and being able to provide in their own ships a regular rotation of home and foreign service, as well as regular opportunities for taking part in the Fleet Exercises of the Royal Navy, and a more extended and varied responsibility for their own senior officers. In any case, whatever the stage of development to which the Government of each Dominion considers its naval efforts can attain in the near future, it will be the endeavour of the Admiralty, by whole-hearted co-operation and assistance, to contribute to the success of those efforts.

Admiralty, S.W. 1, June 11, 1923.