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**Sea Power and Diplomacy**

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Korea, no less than other parts of the Far East, first felt the influence of foreign penetration in the late 19th Century through the medium of naval power. It was a Japanese squadron, which in 1875 initiated the process towards the Kangwha Treaty in 1876, by sailing from Pusan to Wonsan and subsequently to Inchon—Korea’s three main ports which were then opened for trade with Japan. This process had mirrored the impact which Commodore Perry’s ‘Black Ships’ had had a number of years earlier when they had anchored off Shimoda in Japan, thus precipitating the opening of Japan to the West.

Fifty years ago in December 1941, and thus two generations or more on from the naval sabre-rattling of the 1850s-1870s, the projection of influence by sea power again turned the destiny of the Far East. Japan displayed her naval superiority through the use of carrier-borne aircraft to devastate the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour and the pride of the Royal Navy, HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales, were sunk in waters off Malaya.

Thus Sea Power has had a significant influence in shaping the Far East’s relationships with the West and merits examination. Such an examination may also bear upon future defence relationships in East Asia, with a reunited Korean peninsula, a strongly armed Japan, a China with enhanced economic strength in its littoral regions and a Russia seeking a new role for its blue water navy operating from Pacific ports.

As a result of my present posting here in Seoul I have been fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to extend my interest in the relationship between sea-power and diplomacy in the Far East which began with time served in Japan. I have set myself the following five issues for consideration in this paper:

a) to look briefly at some of the theories and their development about the use of naval power and to consider how this has historically been incorporated into the practice of diplomacy with particular reference to what is [page 2] known as gunboat diplomacy;

b)To look at the history of the period between 1853 when Commodore William Perry’s Black Ships first appeared off Shimoda in Japan until Japan’s ultimate domination of this region by 1910;

c) To look at one or two of the activities of the sea-power of two nations in this region during the Second World War, the US Navy and the Royal Navy;

d) To look also at some of the features of the extension of naval power in North East Asia during the recently ended Cold War;

e) To attempt one or two general judgements about the interlacing of naval power and diplomacy in this region and to consider what this might mean for the medium term future.

And in all this, I have to say that the views I express are entirely private and in no way reflect official views: a necessary disclaimer for all Ambassadors!

**SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Perhaps the first point I should emphasise about sea-power is its limited nature: it cannot be an end in itself. It is an adjunct to other forms of pressure, either diplomatic or military. A 19th Century British naval strategist, Julian Corbett once wrote:

“By maritime strategy we mean principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone.”

In this qualification of the extent of naval power, Corbett was distinguishing slightly his position from that of the preeminent expert in the subject, Captain Alfred Mahan of the US Navy whose seminal work “The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1669-1783” sought to demonstrate that international struggles since classical times had been greatly influenced by sea control, that is “the possession of that overbearing power on the sea which drives the enemy’s flag from it, or allows it to appear only as a fugitive.” The point about sea-power was that it made artillery mobile: this was a discovery made by the Portuguese in the 16th Century and which was developed in the latter half of that century by England. It allowed a power with access to the sea to [page 3] live in contact with the rest of the globe and thus to extend its influence on global events, its trade and its international position. To quote Mahan “England is, and yet more in those days was, wherever her fleet could go.”

It is that quotation which brings us to the British Prime Minister Viscount Palmerston. In 1850 when Palmerston was Foreign Secretary the Don Pacifico incident occurred. Don Pacifico was a Jew with a somewhat unsavoury character but he was none the less a native of a British Territory, Gibraltar. His house in Athens was attacked in broad daylight by a mob headed by the sons of the Greek Minister of War. But as a British subject, that was enough for Palmerston to demand redress of the wrong that had been done to him. And when diplomatic representations had been rebuffed, he ordered the British fleet into the Greek port of Piraeus to seize Greek vessels and hold them until redress was given to Don Pacifico. In the House of Commons debate on the incident on 25 June 1850，Palmerston said

“A British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confidence that a watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong.”

This was the incident which is thought to have given rise to the concept of ‘Gunboat Diplomacy’ It encapsulates the concept of the use of maritime power in support of diplomatic objectives. It provided the naval powers operating in North East Asia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Century with many of the justifications for their actions.

The essential point is that the exercise of ‘gunboat diplomacy’ requires two preconditions. First, the existence of conditions of nominal peace. Secondly the use of limited naval forces to threaten hostile governments and thus through intimidation to achieve a political and diplomatic end.

The element of threat in the use of maritime power in the support of diplomacy goes back to a period well before the Don Pacifico incident in the mid 19th Century. As indicated in the earlier quotation from Mahan, it was employed as far back as the 16th and 17th Centuries by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British who were able to wield an influence through their sea- power out of all proportion to their size, resources and manpower. Indeed，following the development of British sea-power at the end of the 16th Century, Britain was not merely able to control the flow of overseas treasure between the New World and Europe but also to manipulate on the continent of Europe the balance of half a dozen powers, each (France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire) intrinsically superior to her in every other respect. The same was true in terms of the protection of British merchant men in the Mediterranean, the [page 4] Caribbean and the Baltic in the latter half of the 17th Century and was obviously of fundamental importance in the extension of British influence overseas in the 18th Century into Canada, India and part of Southern Africa. The Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763 saw a succession of international victories by Britain thanks entirely to the paralysing effect of her naval mastery. British naval squadrons prevented France reinforcing her colony in Louisiana; British naval and land force occupied Quebec in Canada; Senegal in Africa was captured from France in 1758; French islands in the Caribbean were captured in 1759; and British reinforcement of her troops in India ensured that the French failed to secure a footing in the sub-continent

But we should return to the general question of principles in order to concentrate on the essential feature of gunboat diplomacy: its threatening nature rather than its actual employment of force. For gunboat diplomacy is the use of the threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage, or to avert loss, either in the furtherance of international disputes or else against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state. This is well evidenced, for instance, by reference to this region of the world by looking at the relationship between Britain and China between the 1840s and 1949. It was again Lord Palmerston who was in power when a British naval party raised the British flag over Possession Point in Hong Kong in January 1841 thus laying the West’s claims to extraterritorial rights in China. And in 1949 it was a British naval vessel, HMS Amethyst which failed in the exercise of gunboat diplomacy when it tried to navigate the Yangtze to guard the British Embassy at Nanking but was driven aground by the Communist batteries and had to withdraw. This brought to an end British influence in China in the face of the Communist Revolution. But within that entire period of just over 100 years, it would be difficult to find a year when British war ships were not employing armed force in China waters in full reflection of the principles of Gunboat Diplomacy.

**GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY IN THE FAR EAST**

For the purposes of this examination we will ignore the Portuguese and Dutch links which were established with the Far East in late 16th and early 17th Centuries and we will turn immediately to that epoch-making day July 8th, 1853 when Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Tokyo Bay with a fleet of four steamships sent by President Fillmore with instructions to obtain from the Japanese a treaty guaranteeing protection for shipwrecked crews, coaling [page 5] facilities and if possible some trade as well. We must not ignore the surprising nature of that event. Four ships, large by local standards arrived in a place where no truly sea-going vessel had been seen for two centuries. The ships bore guns，they were black and belched out black smoke. They moved without recourse to the wind. And as if to make matters worse for those Japanese who were anxious about the black ships, they even had on board sailors with black skins. This was in a sense a true exercise of gunboat diplomacy in so far as it was clear that Perry was not there to use maximum naval force to achieve his objectives. He bore a letter from President Fillmore to the Emperor of Japan seeking friendship and commercial relations with the Government and expected a reaction. Having delivered his Presidential communication, Perry withdrew to Okinawa to return again in February 1854 for his reply. Under the threatening guns of the American ships, the Government in Yedo had no choice but to sign a treaty with the United States opening two ports, Shimoda at the end of the Izu peninsula near to Tokyo and Hakodate in Hokkaido, to the provisioning of American ships. The door had been opened and the first move had been made in the ending of Japanese isolation.

This move was further entrenched on 21 August 1856 when black ships again arrived in Shimoda bearing this time the individual whose arrival the Japanese had been most reluctant to accept, the Consul General of the United States for Japan. The Consul’s name was of course Townsend Harris who had returned with Commodore Perry to assert the rights of the United States according to the original treaty of 1854. Harris’s own journal of his subsequent dealings in both Shimoda and Yedo which provide us with the first evidence of the juxta-position of relations between Japan and the outside world. It was also Harris who himself confessed to having been brought up to ‘fear God and hate the British’ who on his way to Japan had called into Hong Kong and had thus expressed anxiety about the potential threat of British influence usurping that of the United States in the opening up of Japan, again thus demonstrating both the perception of competing powers of the effectiveness of Gunboat Diplomacy and the value achieved by Britain s earlier seizure of Hong Kong.

Perry’s arrival in 1853 and subsequently in 1854 and 1856 was not the first example of the way in which naval power had begun to breach Japanese resistance to the opening of their country but it was the most effective. As early as 1837, a US ship had tried to make contact with the Japanese Shogunate by returning Japanese castaways to their homeland. The Dutch themselves, given their continuing strong links in Nagasaki on the Island of Deshima, had tried to warn the Japanese Emperor in 1844 of the conse[page 6] quences for Japan of what had been happening in China. In 1845 a Royal Navy survey vessel had called at Nagasaki and similarly in 1894, another Royal Navy survey vessel had surveyed the approaches to Yedo harbour.

The fact was that the European powers, following the industrial revolution, were looking for new outlets for their products and would have turned their attention more quickly to Japan if it had not been for their preoccupations in China or if they had foreseen more clearly the potential of opportunities in Japan.

After Perry’s arrival in 1853 and the signature of the Kanagawa Treaty in March 1854, a British squadron reached Nagasaki in September 1854 and similarly a Russian squadron in January 1855 and the Dutch in November 1855. All these arrivals led to the conclusion of treaties opening up ports in Japan for the use of foreign naval vessels. But these treaties were limited in their scope and it was only the arrival of Townsend Harris in 1856 that produced the breakthrough in the application of treaty arrangements which accorded trading rights and extra territorial privileges to Japan’s trading partners.

The US/Japan Treaty was finally signed in July 1858, The Dutch and the Russians concluded similar treaties in August 1858 and Lord Elgin led a British mission to Japan to sign a commercial treaty later that same month. These treaties of course only opened up certain ports to foreign traders. The fragility of the arrangements involved was of course particularly demonstrated by the precarious security experienced by Rutherford Alcock, the first British Consul General in Japan from June 1859, whose Japanese linguist was murdered in January 1860 and whose legation on the outskirts of Yedo was attacked in July 1861 with the wounding of 10 members of his guard. These attacks continued and they ultimately led to the arrival of a British squadron in Kagoshima Bay in August 1863 which bombarded and destroyed the town and extracted compensation, following the murder of a British merchant from Shanghai, Lennox Charles Richardson in September 1862.

All these events and also subsequent exchanges between Japanese coastal fortresses and visiting foreign naval squadrons demonstrate vividly the extent to which Western naval powers sought to apply the influence of their warships in securing rights for their privileges in Japan, sometimes with the application of force, and yet without any declaration of war.

This was a lesson which the Japanese themselves learned well in the aftermath of the conclusive events of 3 January 1868 which led to restoration of the Emperor. To that let us now turn, given in particular its relevance for the history of the opening of Korea. These events are important not only [page 7] because of the effect which they had on Japanese relations with China, Russia and Korea but also because they led in due course to the chain of events which culminated in the attack on the US fleet in Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.

The Japanese had learned early the value of an effective naval force. Admiral Togo had studied in Britain and some of the first Japanese naval ships made in steel were built in British yards. By 1894 Japan was able not only to build major warships but also to produce modern naval armaments. In 1894，the Japanese navy had 28 steampowered warships totalling 57,000 tons. Its longer term intentions were clear and it had already exercised its intentions in the direction of Korea.

Japan had nearly gone to war with Korea in 1873. But by the Treaty of Kangwha in 1876 a modus vivendi between the two countries was reached. Under that Treaty, three Korean ports were open to trade with Japan: Pusan, Wonsan and Inchon. But the point is, reverting to our continuing theme about the use of naval power to extend diplomatic rights, that the Japanese achieved this concession from the Korean Government by menacing those three ports by visits by battleships. As well as the rights to trade, the arrangements with Korea gave Japan the same sort of extraterritorial rights in these ports for her citizens as Japan had itself already accorded in its own ports to Americans, Britains, the French and the Russians. No doubt the Koreans among you will see this correctly as the first step in the installation of Japanese influence in the peninsula which ultimately led to Korean colonisation in 1910.

You would of course be right in that conclusion. The internal difficulties in Korea in 1882 were used by the Japanese and the Chinese as an excuse to established their own military forces in Korea. Rivalries at that time were primarily landbased. But it was of course again in 1884 after the failure of a Japanese-backed coup in Seoul, that the senior Japanese representative in the peninsula escaped by the skin of his teeth by resort to a naval vessel lying off Inchon.

The tragedy of Korea was that for succeeding years, it found itself the unwitting focus of superpower rivalries. These rivalries were largely land- based between China and Japan, and again this fact reminds us of Corbett’s 19th Century principle quoted earlier that naval strategy involves an assessment of the role of the fleet in relation to land forces. At sea, there was no shortage of activity: no shortage again of attempts by the great powers to demonstrate their influence through sea-power. The Russians for instance paid particular attention to the potential of Wonsan. They saw the chance of a warm water port whose occupation by the Russians would act as a useful bal-[page 8] ance to the icebound problems they faced in Vladivostok. As if to counter Russian activity, the British navy occupied Komondo in 1885. I do not need to go into the history of Port Hamilton for the RAS. The important point， however, to recall is that Komondo occupies a dominant position in the Korean straights and the presence of British naval forces there assured them, until their withdrawal in 1887, of continuing influence in the area.

But of much greater importance for our theme were the activities which began on the 25th of July 1894 off the West coast of Korea when just before 8 am in the morning three Japanese warships met two Chinese warships beyond the channel which leads from the town of Asan. Movement by one of the Chinese warships encouraged the Japanese to believe they were about to be attacked and the Naniwa opened fire at about 3,000 metres. As the ships closed，the other two Japanese ships opened fire and thus began one of those inconclusive actions which characterised naval engagements in the second half of the 19th Century. Fortuitously an incident then intervened of a perplexing quality for the Japanese; a Chinese warship appeared accompanied by a merchant ship flying the British red ensign. The perplexing nature of this situation for the Japanese was further enhanced by the fact that the Kowsing, as the vessel was called, was indeed British under a British captain but she was carrying ammunition, field guns and 1100 soldiers for the Chinese Army. The Japanese captain on the Naniwa could not let the Kowsing go free and the Japanese captain of the Naniwa decided that a neutral ship could not openly carry enemy men and material and as a result he sank the Kowsing. Regrettably, following the vessel’s sinking, Japanese troops on the Naniwa fired on the Chinese troops in the water with the objective of preventing their rescue.

The Sino-Japanese War had begun. In due course this naval action off the Korean coast near Asan led to the destruction of the Chinese fleet off the shores of Haiyang in the North of the Bay of Korea near the mouth of the Yellow River. 17 December 1894 was a fine day with a clear sky and a calm sea. The vessels sighted each other at 11.40 am. 12 Japanese ships matched by 12 Chinese. At 12.03 the battle began with two fleets converging on each other at a combined speed of 17 knots. It was a battle of nerve as to who would fire first. The Chinese nerve snapped. They opened up from 4 miles away but with this their line fell into disorder. The Japanese on the other hand maintained their order of battle, searched for the best killing range and in due course destroyed 5 of the 12 Chinese ships for no losses of their own. The essential point about this victory, of course, again in the context of our theme is that it provided the Japanese with the freedom they needed to control Korea [page 9] and subsequently to enter into China. The Treaty of Shiminoseki in April 1895 led to Chinese concessions over Korea, its accessibility to Japanese influence and the opening of Chinese ports to Japanese trade. The Sino-Japanese War had, therefore, fitted in well to our concept of the exercise of naval power in the support of Japan’s diplomatic objectives in the area. This had not been a case of the exercise of threat, it had rather been the use of Japan’s newly found navy to achieve the dominance in North East Asia which it had sought for many centuries.

Naval power and the conflicting interests of the powers in the North East Asian region were again at the heart of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5. And again, Britain played an important if not always benevolent role in the surrounding events, for by concluding the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902, the Japanese had hoped both to provide some assurance against the threat of aggression from Russia and also to ensure some international recognition for their own aspirations in the Northeast Asian region. The Japanese sought to get clear recognition by Britain of Japanese aims in Korea. Britain was not prepared to go as far as that, but Article 1 of the Treaty referred vaguely to Japan being “interested in a peculiar degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Korea.”

Building on this, the Japanese then in 1903 sought to secure agreement from the Russians that, inter alia, Japan had special political and economic interests in Korea. The Russians resisted this, and in February 1904, the Japanese broke off diplomatic relations with Russia and the Japanese fleet under Admiral Togo attacked and trapped the Russian fleet in port Arthur. Once again, therefore, the assertion of naval power in the Northeast Asian region was at the heart of resettlement of diplomatic objectives, ana it was from a British built ship, the Mikasa, which had been completed in 1902 that Admiral Togo gave his orders to close on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur. Out of seven Russian battleships at anchor in Port Arthur, three were hit, but it was not the comprehensive victory which the Japanese had sought. (Ana in this respect, it is worth noting that this surprise attack in February 1904 was no more comprehensively successful than the surprise attack made on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese fleet in December 1941.)

Port Arthur fell, war was declared between Japan and Russia and once again it was Korea that fell victim to the consequences. The war prosecuted by Japan in the North of the Korean peninsula, around the Yellow River and also in Manchuria was successful, with the Japanese capturing Mukden in March 1905. But this land conflict was not without cost and it was again with the application of naval power that the conflict was brought to an end with the [page 10] success of Togo’s Japanese fleet over the Russians at the Battle of Tsushima on 27-28 May 1905.

The Tsushima battle was epoch making in its own way. In the first place, it nearly never took place. As you may recall, the Russian fleet travelled to the Far East from the Baltic and on its way through the North Sea in October 1904 came within an ace of bringing Britain into the conflict with Japan. They fired on and sank some British trawlers fishing off the Doggar Bank in the belief that they were Japanese torpedo boats. You may ask how on earth the Russians could have believed that Japanese torpedo boats were operating so far from home in the North Sea. The explanation lies in the espionage activities of two Japanese naval Lieutenant Commanders who had worked in shipping offices in St Petersburg to secure information about the imperial Russian navy and subsequently in order to plant disinformation, which the Russians believed, about the possibility of there being an attack on the Russian navy in the North Sea.

The second crucial feature of the battle of Tsushima was that it was the first major sea battle since 1827 when a British, French and Russian fleet had confronted the Turks and Egyptians at Navarino Bay in Greece.

Thirdly, it was the first major naval battle between steamships equipped with the modern armaments which were to characterise naval building in the rest of the 20th Century. It was Tsushima which led the British First Sea Lord, Admiral Jackie Fisher, to come up with two major conclusions about ship building which were at the heart of the revolution inherent in the building of HMS Dreadnought in 1960: first the importance of speed 一 having the advantage of a few knots over the Russians gave the Japanese an immense element of superiority; secondly the ability to fire a battleship’s big guns accurately at long range dispensed with the need for small superfluous guns. It was the epoch-making Fisher who commented after Tsushima “if, as seems probable, the lesson is equally appreciated and acted on by other maritime powers, it is evident that all existing battleships will shortly become obsolescent and our proponderance of vessels in that class will be of little use.” Thus begun an international programme of naval rebuilding and redesign. It was wholly the result of the battle of Tsushima and represented a major turning point in the naval construction of the 20th Century.

Fourthly, and finally, it was Japan’s success at Tsushima; it was the inheritance which is the result Togo lett for his successors, and it was the real-isation of the potential effectiveness of naval power that led to the progressive build-up of Japanese strength in this area and which ultimately saw its apotheosis in December 1941. [page 11]

Those were of course major naval and international consequences from the battle of Tsushima. There were more local ones which, again, formed part of the tragedy of Korea’s history. It was as a result of the success which their navy had at Tsushima that the Japanese were able to insist in the Treaty of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, of September 1905 on Russian recognition of their predominance in Korea; on the transfer to Japan of leases on Port Arthur and Dairen; and in effect their total dominance in the Northeast Asian region.

Thus began an uneasy peace between Japan and the Western nations with Pacific interests from 1905 to 1941. Countries like Korea suffered of course from oppression during this period and in due course that fate befell Manchuria and the rest of China. It was following the Portsmouth Treaty in November 1905 that Korea was forced to agree to a Japanese protectorate which in due course was to lead to the Treaty of Annexation in August 1910.

**KOREA’S ANNEXATION TO 1941**

I do not intend to go into as full an analysis of the sea-power diplomacy relationship in this longer and more complex period. To do so, although fasci-nating, would on the one hand detain us for too long and on the other would take us away from our principle focus which is the North East Asian region. But there are, nevertheless, one or two elements of the operation of sea power in this region during that period on which I should like to dwell.

First, gunboat diplomacy. Let us revert to this aspect of our analysis: the use of naval power to threaten and exert influence. This continued in the Far Eastern region in the inter-war period and was particularly prevalent of course in the struggle for influence by the great powers in China. Just a few examples. In August 1921, the United States navy established an Yangtze River patrol “to protect US interests, lives and property and to maintain and improve friendly relations with the Chinese people.” Needless to say, the first objective was the principal one and as such of course characteristic of the type of pretext so often used for gunboat diplomacy.

In the next year, a British gunboat rescued President Sun Yat sen from Canton after his defeat by Chinese rebels and took him to Shanghai. In 1923， warships from a variety of the great powers (including Japan) were despatched to Canton to protect the Customs House, which was then under foreign administration against seizure by the Chinese government. In 1927, there was a major action in January and February when a British expeditionary force and US Marines landed at Shanghai to protect the international [page 12] concession from Chinese aggression. Altogether 25 international warships were concentrated in Shanghai (9 of them were British) and 40,000 troops and marines were landed or held off shore to deter the Chinese revolutionary armies from attacking. In the following month, March 1927, British and US warships bombarded Nanking to cover the evacuation of foreign nationals after attacks by Chinese troops on the foreign consulates.

The examples continue. But what is of particular interest and importance is that in the catalogue of incidents, action by Japanese warships in support of their own interests in China gradually began to occur. Japanese warships landed Japanese Marines in April 1928 to protect Japanese interests against Chiang Kai Shek’s troops. And then in January 1932, Japanese warships including an aircraft carrier bombarded a suburb of Shanghai and landed sailors ashore after attacks on Japanese subjects and a boycott of Japanese goods. This intervention was in fact unsuccessful and the Japanese troops were ultimately obliged to withdraw. The comparative lack of success of this intervention compared with the success of those mounted by the other great power tempts us to reflect upon the over ambitious nature of Japan’s attempts to engage in gunboat diplomacy at this stage. Then later in the period we are considering, as the clouds of war began to gather in the Pacific, it was Japan which became the object of gunboat diplomacy. In May 1939, Britain, France and the United States sent warships to land sailors at Kulangsu in China to protect the international settlement there against incursion by Japanese forces. And in January 1940 the British ship HMS Liverpool stopped a Japanese passenger ship the Sasama Maru 35 miles off Tokyo to remove German passengers who were suspected of being German reservists on their way home to Germany.

Gunboat diplomacy was, therefore, alive and active in the period before the outbreak of the Second World War in the Pacific in 1941. It was an implicit piece of gunboat diplomacy, in spite of the fact that war had already broken out, that produced one of Britain’s major naval disasters in the Pacific area on 10 December 1941. Following the build up of tension in the Pacific in the autumn of 1941, the British government decided to despatch two of its most powerful vessels, HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales, to Singapore as a threat to Japanese troop transports which were thought likely to operate in the Southeast Asian area. Given the threat from Japanese carrier borne aircraft, it was thought essential that these two capital ships not set to sea without the protection of their own air power. The new aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable was earmarked for this purpose but was at the last moment put out of action by accidental grounding. Thus these two great ships — a battle-[page 13] cruiser of First World War vintage and on of the newest King George V class of battleships sailed for the Far East without the requisite protection from the one form of Japanese attack, carrier borne aircraft, which only days later was to show itself so effective at Pearl Harbour. On 9 December, after war had broken out, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse were informed that no land based fight protection would be available as they steered in search of the Japanese transports. And then, inexorably at it seemed, attacks on both ships by high level bombers and torpedo bombers from the Japanese fleet began at 11am on 10 December By 1.20 pm both ships had been sunk with the loss of over 800 officers and men. The efficiency of Japanese air power had again been demonstrated. Two major British capital ships deployed as the most threatening possible demonstration of British naval power in the Pacific had been destroyed at trifling cost to the Japanese.

The second aspect of the relationship between naval power and diplomacy in the inter-war period which I should like briefly to consider concerns the attempts which were made to limit naval building and thus on the one hand reduce the threat to international security and on the other to limit the drain on national exchequers involved in massive naval rebuilding programmes. The process revolved around two naval conferences, one in Washington 1921-22 and one in London in 1930. Both are relevant to the history of this region because of the involvement of Japan.

In Britain, the urge towards restraint in Naval construction was motivated by the wish to save Government expenditure. Social Services took priority over military expenditure in the aftermath of the First World War In August 1919，the armed services in Britain were given the now famous order to draft their estimates “on the assumption that the British Empire will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years.” This initiated the ten-year rule which led to massive cuts in naval allocations from, for instance, an annual expenditure of £356 million in 1918-19, to projections for naval expenditure of £80 million in 1921 and £56 million in 1922. By then the manpower, warship strength and purchasing power of Royal Naval allocations was less than in the immediate pre-war years. There were no modern capital ships under construction apart from HMS Hood whereas the Japanese and the Americans were, respectively，bringing 8 and 12 such ships in to service.

It was against this background that the invitation to the Washington Naval Conference was received. It produced the 5-5-3 relationship between the British, American and Japanese navies. There were restrictions on the construction of replacement vessels and the Anglo-Japanese alliance which we will recall of 1902, as revised in 1905, was dissolved to be replaced by a [page 14] new agreement to respect the possessions of the main powers in the Far East. The treaty was in effect thrust upon the world by the American administration. It gave them the sort of peaceful assurances required by the post-Versailles isolationist spirit which was spreading in the United States. It removed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which the US thought destabilising. It aimed to replace it by a settlement of territorial disputes in Northeast Asia which was satisfactory to the Chinese. It was however also very satisfactory to the Japanese. The US Secretary of State gave the Japanese confidential recognition for their extensive railway and industrial interests in China and the doors were opened for further commercial and industrial links. And as China continued to suffer from internal rebellion and regional strife, the Japanese were able to use the existence of these commercial interests to justify the maintenance of military forces for their protection.

The same could indeed be said of Britain and her interests around Shanghai. We have noted earlier the extent to which China became a focus of gunboat diplomacy in the inter-war period. To some extent, the Washington treaty system was more than a naval limitation exercise as far as the Far East was concerned. It provided further justification for inter-power rivalry on the Chinese mainland.

This was the background to the second naval conference in London in 1930 at a time when the original ten year naval holiday on capital ship construction was ending and the Japanese navy wanted to raise its own battleship strength by 10%. This all meant changing the 5-5-3 ratio of the Washington Conference to a 10-10-7 ratio to improve Japan’s position.

The London conference again demonstrated the profound influence of Naval power on the Northeast Asian political scene. The Japanese secured their improvement to a ratio of 7 as opposed to 10 for Britain and the US, but only in respect of cruisers, vessels with smaller than 8 inch guns. They did not secure the improvement in respect of battleships. Failure in this respect was badly received by army factions in Tokyo. This led to protests from imperial navy officers and the shooting of Prime Minister Hamaguchi at Tokyo station on 14 November 1930. It was this shooting which strained to the limit democratic processes in Tokyo and which, with the enhancement of the influence of the military, led to the famous Mukden incident on the night of 18-19 September 1931 when an explosion fabricated by the Japanese army provided the pretext for them to despatch troops into Manchuria.

It is no small irony to us sitting here in Korea reviewing these events that the Mukden incident of 1931, which reflected the swing to militarism in Japan and precipitated the events which led to the Second World War, should [page 15] on the one hand have resulted from what were perceived as the unsatisfactory results of a naval conference in London and on the other that the Minister of Home affairs in the Japanese Government who connived in the collapse of democratic government in the face of the Mukden incident was Adachi Kenzo, thought to have been one of those involved on 8 October 1895 in the storming of the Kyongbok Palace and the assassination of Queen Min.

**AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

We now move to the post-war period and we can again focus briefly on two phenomena: first, the influence of naval activity of the Korean war and secondly, again, the role of gunboat diplomacy in the Far East.

In spite of gunboat activity in relation to China in the late 1940s (which I will outline in a moment), there was nothing in the lead-up to the Korean War which reflected the influence of naval activity and naval power on the politics of the region in the same way as was true of the period before the Second World War. Although the surrender of the Japanese on 2 September 1945 was conducted on the quarterdeck of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay in a way which vividly demonstrated the dominant influence of naval power in achieving Allied success in the Pacific, the Far Eastern region in the five years which followed was largely free from naval influence. The process of events which led to the outbreak of the Korean War was in military terms a matter for land forces, but I suppose that Dean Acheson’s ill-advised speech in January 1950 when he outlined the US defence perimeter, and in so doing excluded Korea, implied an area of defence activity in naval terms which included US naval bases in Japan and the Philippines but implied no extension of US military influence through naval activity in the area of the Korean peninsula.

Thus the Korean War started and with it, the early commitment of US naval power through the decision of President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 25 June 1950 to deploy the Seventh Fleet northwards from the Philippines towards Japan. Once the conflict had begun, the Korean War again gives us evidence of how naval power was brought to bear in the region.

Most obviously, and in the first place, McArthur’s brilliant surprise move in landing his marine assault force at Inchon on 15 September 1950 was a dazzling reminder of the effectiveness of amphibious operations in the Pacific war That deploymemt of naval power turned the tide dramatically in the [page 16] Korean conflict.

But we should also not forget the importance of naval power elsewhere during the conflict, for throughout the entire Korean conflict, one of the most important assets which the UN Command possessed was its ability to deploy aircraft from carriers close in shore wherever these might be needed. As well as the US Seventh Fleet, the Royal Navy operated in strength in the conflict. The British Far East fleet was situated west of Korea in the Yellow Sea and the American Seventh Fleet in the Sea of Japan and east of Korea, reflecting the concentration in the Korean campaign on the land war, the UN Command had virtually undisputed control of the sea. Britain deployed two aircraft carriers to fly sorties in support of the ground conflict.

Furthermore, cruisers and destroyers often worked close in shore bom-barding targets. Royal naval vessels were also joined by Australian, New Zealand and Canadian ships. The ability to deploy aircraft; the bombardment of coastal targets; the interdiction of coastal traffic; and the maintenance of an embargo from the sea - all these tasks fulfilled by naval forces during the Korean War, as well as the preeiminent task of mounting and supporting the invasion at Inchon, were crucial to the overall operation. It is also relevant that without such dominant naval power, the successful evacuation of the US First Marine Division from Hungnam after their withdrawal from the bitter privations of the Changjin Reservoir in December 1950 would not have been possible. Without the ability to withdraw the First Marine Division by sea, the near tragedy of the advance to the Changjin Reservoir could have turned into a catastrophe.

Although this brief analysis suggests a limited but important role for naval power in the Korean War, it is also worth considering its larger conse-quences. For just as the Korean War itself steeled the West to strengthen its own defences, so the weapons systems of the West (particularly naval tactics) were significantly affected by the experience of the Korean War. Aircraft carriers deployed off the Korean coast played such a varied and flexible role in the application of air power that important judgements were made which have affected, in particular, the US Navy ever since. For instance, the Essex class escort carriers which were left over from the Second World War and which were originally deployed in Korea, were gradually re-equiped with the steam catapults and reinforced flight decks needed to handle heavy jet aircraft. In turn the angle decks with which we are familiar in today’s aircraft carrier were added From 1951-57, construction of one carrier a year was begun until the USS Forrestal joined the US fleet in 1955 and thus opened a new era as the first of the attack carriers which are now the backbone of US naval power [page 17] world-wide. And it is worth adding that it was the shift of US naval building in this direction which then provoked the Soviet Union under Admiral Gorshkov to begin the construction programme which shifted the Soviet Navy from the coastal defence force of the 1940s and 1950s to a blue-water navy with carriers, all this an important by-product of the Korean War.

I said that I would also look briefly at the ways in which gun boat diplomacy had been employed in the Far Eastern region in the post-Second World War period Although, as I have explained already, this was a tactical approach little used in the run-up to the Korean War, this is one area of the world in which, following the Korean War, we have been able to detect more than the region’s fair share of gun boat diplomacy. What is particularly noteworthy and perhaps significant for the future is that this application of gun boat diplomacy has not been restricted to the former international naval powers.

For instance, in 1953 and 1954，the South Korean government used naval vessels to seize Japanese fishing boats to protect their own fishing grounds. South Korean forces were deployed to land troops on Takeshima Island to stake the claim of the Seoul government against that of Japan. Actions against Japanese fishing vessles by Korean warships were repeated in 1955 and in 1959. And then of course on 23 January 1968, the North Koreans engaged in one of the most blatant pieces of gun boat diplomacy seen in this part of the world in recent years with the seizure of the USS Pueblo and the capture of her crew to prevent US naval vessels engaging in electronic surveillance of the coast. The US of course reacted with the deployment of carriers in the Sea of Japan as a threat to North Korea; a move which was repeated in April 1969 following the shooting down of a US surveillance air-craft by the North Koreans. The North again in February 1974 sank what they alleged to be a South Korean spy ship and there were similar incidents later in that year. And then in 1979，the South Koreans retaliated with similar action against a North Korean spy ship.

We can now turn to a brief conclusion: Is gun boat diplomacy and the application of maritime power in support of political and diplomatic objectives likely to be a growth industry in the Northeast Asian region?

The answer to this question is, I suppose, regrettably yes. The examples which I gave a moment ago of the use to which this naval tactic has been put by both North and South Korea are indicative, and as I outlined earlier in this lecture, there is a strong historical pedigree in this region for the use of naval forces to exploit the pretensions and defend the interests of powers seeking to dominate and influence affairs in such a sensitive region of the world. [page 18]

The activities at the turn of the century which left Korea at the mercy of Japan, Russia and China, are all geopolitical facts which are bound to remain valid We also now, of course, face a different situation to that on which the existing US maritime strategy was based when it was developed under the auspices of Secretary of the Navy John Lehman and the Naval Chief of Staff Admiral Watkins in the United States nearly 10 years ago. In Far Eastern terms the threat to the US and the region was seen from Soviet naval power in Vladivostok and the Sea of Okhotsk where Soviet nuclear submarines are based. Dealing with the threat from this area was deemed one of the main objectives of Reagan administration maritime strategy. Indeed, it was John Lehman himself who pointed out in 1986 that “Today the United States has an Asian orientation at least equal to its historic engagements in Europe.” With over 30% of total US trade in Asia it was inevitable that the maritime strategy should concentrate upon achieving the freedom of the seas and access to overseas markets. This strategy is heavily dependent on deployment of the carrier battle groups which were integral to the Lehman-Watkins Maritime Strategy. Indeed it has been estimated that under current force levels, the United States may be able to assemble five carriers organised in two battle groups for deployment against the Soviet threat in the Sea of Okhotsk or indeed against any other regional threat to peace.

Now, however, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emphasis which has been laid by both Russia and the Ukraine on ensuring our availability of naval forces in the Arctic Ocean, Baltic and Black Sea areas, the question is raised about the relevance of the Maritime Strategy to the changed threat. Is the carrier battle group the most cost effective way of showing the flag and keeping peace in North East Asia? The answer probably has to be that since the naval build-up under the Reagan Administration has now achieved its results and since battle groups of the size and potency of those now in existence are available, the wide range of roles which they are able to exercise is such as to ensure their continuing relevance particularly at a time when we are entering a decade of uncertain future development.

Indeed, those future uncertain developments can be identified in maritime affairs in the region. Up to now, South Korean maritime security has been directed specifically against North Korean naval operations aimed at the infiltration of agents, small scale amphibious assaults and raids and interdiction of supplies to the South. This is immediately evident from the nature of the North Korean navy with 169 torpedo-equipped fast attack craft, 152 gun-equipped fast attack craft and 157 amphibious craft: a formidable armada of small vessels. North Korea too possesses 64 submarines with a proportion of [page 19] 2:1 being migdet submarines. South Korea’s more balanced forces with 16 destroyers and frigates and 22 corvettes as well as a significant number of fast attack craft have been designed to meet that threat. Clearly the Republic of Korea has to maintain naval forces designed to achieve that limited objective.

At the same time, it is no doubt thinking beyond that immediate and possibly reducing prospect and, like Japan, given its heavy dependence on international trade, wondering what resources it has to deploy in order to ensure a wider zone of maritime security around the peninsula. Korea only has to look at the scale of Japanese naval spending to find the direction in which to move, for Japan already has more destroyers and submarines than many European states，42 and 14 respectively as well as 16 frigates and 32 mine sweepers. Japan is even committed to the construction of Aegis class air defence ships, of the type now deployed with the US navy which many European nations have considered too expensive for their own needs at a full load of 8900 tonnes. To move forward in the same direction will, of course, be an expensive and formidable undertaking for a country like Korea, but in the words of a British researcher on this subject: “the potential importance of the task to a maritime country like the Republic of Korea is indisputable.