



Occasional Papers 3

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Editor's Introduction

This third in a series of *Occasional Papers*, published by the Society for History in the Federal Government, carries three essays originally presented by their authors at the Annual Meeting of the Society at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, in March 1999.

Raymond W. Smock's essay deals most importantly with the activities of professional historians relating to the impeachment and trial of President William Jefferson Clinton on 1998–1999. His title contains the words “Educated Beyond their Intelligence,” a description used by Representative Henry Hyde to refer to intellectuals, including historians, who testified or otherwise expressed their views on the impeachment proceedings. While critical of the role of some historians in this process, Smock argues that historians “were not adequately used” at the time or in the immediate aftermath of the impeachment events. He goes on to discuss the role historians will play in the coming years in considering the “verdict of history” on the impeachment, a verdict he predicts will never be final.

In “What’s the History of the Senate Jail?” Richard A. Baker discusses the uses of history by the United States Senate during the impeachment process, with particular reference to the involvement of the Senate Historical Office. He describes the Senate’s use of history over the years and its reliance on “history as an integrating device.” He summarizes the work of the Senate Historical Office since its founding in 1975 and the impact of the impeachment

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Cover image: U.S. Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist oversees proceedings from the well of the Senate during the impeachment trial of President William Jefferson Clinton, February 12, 1999. (U.S. Senate Photo, Courtesy U.S. Senate Historical Office)

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on the Office's workload, within the context of eight categories of questions the office received from senators, the public, and others relating to the matter, including "Where's the Senate Jail?" He also explains what projects the Senate Historical Office has begun to augment the Senate's long-term memory of impeachment trials.

Gary E. Weir, in "Applied History for the Navy," describes the SUBLANT project undertaken by the U.S. Naval Historical Center (NHC) in 1998. Through a series of roundtables involving naval officers and enlisted personnel at three Submarine Force Atlantic bases, Weir and his colleagues from NHC discussed with naval personnel such topics as the impact of the end of the Cold War on the Navy and its future roles and missions. He analyzes in detail one of the major findings of the roundtables in the field of "human investment," which he defines as the "application of consideration, money, material resources, and time to the personal and professional concerns of the Navy's officer corps and enlisted personnel." Weir's essay presents an important case study of the value of historical understanding to a federal agency, in this case the United States Navy.

All of these essays, indeed, help to illuminate the critically important contributions that individual historians and federal historical offices can make to their agencies' conduct of affairs and decisionmaking on important issues.

The editor of *Occasional Papers* and the Society in general would welcome comments and suggestions from readers. Please address your remarks to Editor, *Occasional Papers*, Society for History in the Federal Government, P.O. Box 14139, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044-4139.

ROGER R. TRASK
Editor, *Occasional Papers*

“Educated Beyond Their Intelligence”: Historians and the Clinton Impeachment¹

Raymond W. Smock

Chairman Henry Hyde, the senior House Manager in the impeachment trial of President Clinton, had historians on his mind as he rose to speak before the Senate on January 26, 1999. Hyde noted that all the witnesses the President’s defense called were expert witnesses, not those who could address the facts of the case. It was clear he had other burrs under his saddle besides the President’s defense team. One of those nasty burrs was nothing less than the history profession itself.

Chairman Hyde said of the President’s defense team: “Oh, they will come up with academics. We saw a parade of professors. You know what an intellectual is? It is someone who is educated beyond their intelligence. I certainly don’t mean some of those Harvard professors who they paraded out, even though we disagreed with them, but you would get eye strain looking for a fact witness.”

The Chairman, perhaps realizing his joke about intellectuals may have been too sweeping, even though it got a few chuckles from the Senate, back pedaled and excluded “some of those Harvard professors” from the charge of being educated beyond their intelligence.

Henry Hyde had a pretty good reason for feeling unhappy with some of the historians during the impeachment hearings in the House. He may have been thinking of the prominent play that was given to a statement signed by more than 400 historians, including some of the most distinguished historians in the nation. Here are the opening two sentences of the statement called *Historians In Defense of the Constitution*: “As historians as well as citizens, we deplore the present drive to impeach the President. We believe that this drive, if successful, will have the most serious implications for our constitutional order.” The statement and the words and actions of a handful of its signers became part of the impeachment record and part of the congressional testimony. The words of historians received prominent play in the news. Some historians decided their role in the impeachment process was to take a public (and partisan) stand.

This is perfectly legitimate as long as those taking such a position speak as individuals and not suggest they were speaking for the entire profession. It is equally legitimate for other historians to scrupulously avoid airing their personal convictions about political matters before the nation. Activism sometimes carries a price for historians and for this reason, regardless of their personal feelings in the matter, most historians chose to keep their powder dry so that doors that are shut on some historians would remain open to others.

One historian who decided to fire both barrels of his gun at the House Judiciary Committee was Princeton history professor Sean Wilentz, one of the 400 historians who signed the statement and one of a handful of historians who testified before the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment hearings. Wilentz departed from his role as a professional historian and engaged in predicting the future when he wrote in his prepared statement [Dec. 8, 1998] that if the House impeached the president, even if he was eventually acquitted in the Senate, that there would be “widespread revulsion at Congress, for extending a nauseating process . . .” He predicted impeachment would “increase public cynicism about the rule of law by raising serious questions about how easily prosecutors can manipulate criminal charges and judicial proceedings for partisan ends.”

¹ This paper was presented before the Annual Meeting of the Society for History in the Federal Government at the National Archives at College Park, MD, March 19, 1999.

Wilentz concluded his prepared remarks with a strong admonition of the Republican majority on the Judiciary Committee: “And your reputations will be darkened for as long as there are Americans who can tell the difference between the rule of law and the rule of politics.” He sounded more like an Old Testament prophet than a professor of history. He certainly displayed partisanship, the very thing he condemned the House Judiciary Committee for doing.

It wasn’t just Republican members of the Judiciary Committee who felt they were being bombarded with partisan testimony. That sentiment was echoed from the left side of the political spectrum by historian Jesse Lemisch, professor of history at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York, who took to task what he called the “anti-impeachment” historians in a full page editorial in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Lemish said “I am a left historian, but would not have signed the ad had I been on those folks’ e-mail list.”

Respected columnist David Broder also criticized the statement of the 400 historians and characterized one of the spokesman for the historians, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., as akin to “James Carville in cap and gown.” Broder said this group of historians was engaged in a “tenured trashing of Congress.” Sean Wilentz, responding to Broder in the *Washington Post*, accused Broder of being “snide and dismissive.”

Does all of this represent the best that the history profession can do? I don’t think so for one minute. I do not mean to trivialize this debate or suggest it was nothing more than a temper tantrum on all sides. This episode will take its place as a chapter in the impeachment story. It demonstrates that some historians will be characters in the story, while others will be the writers of that story.

From Day One of the process that led to the impeachment of President Clinton there has been a powerful invisible force hovering over the President, the Congress, and all persons and institutions in any way connected with this major event in American political history. That invisible force is the ominous VERDICT OF HISTORY.

Members of the House and Senate said in numerous ways that they felt the “weight of history” bearing down upon them. Recently [Mar. 7, 1999] Greg Craig of President Clinton’s defense team, speaking on the Newshour with Jim Lehrer, said: “History would have smiled on the House Republicans” had they allowed a vote on censure. It is nice to know that history can smile.

Listen to more of the voices:

“We all must cast an eye to the past, looking over our shoulders to be sure that we have learned the right lessons from those who have sat in this chamber before us,” said White House Counsel Charles Ruff [Feb.8 during the Senate trial.]

“It is not history’s verdict alone that I fear. I also fear how our actions will shape history,” said Representative Marty Meehan (D. Mass.) just before the House voted to impeach the President.

“I think that history, when it looks back from the viewpoint of 10 years, 20 years, 30, 50 or 100 years, will say that the Senate under all these circumstances did pretty well,” said the venerable torchbearer of the Senate’s history, Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia.

Above the North doorway of the old chamber of the House of Representatives, stands a magnificent marble statue of Clio, the muse of history. The statue was placed there almost two centuries ago. Clio, riding in a chariot called the Car of History, floats serenely above the earth as she records history in her big book. The statue was to remind members of Congress that what they did in tending the nation’s business was not a fleeting thing. They were in Congress to shape history and to be accountable to future generations. Their actions would have repercussions down

the corridors of time, affecting the lives of those yet unborn. This work of art is a bold statement that history is important.

Unfortunately, the real history profession is not like the Muse of History in the Capitol. Her history was perfect because she was a god. Our earthly vision of history is not always as clear as we would like it to be. We are not judges in flowing robes and our judgments about events are seldom final. We can play an important part in arriving at a useful Verdict of History or we can be part of the problem that prevents a clear verdict. This is why historians have to be separated from the great abstract idea of a VERDICT OF HISTORY.

This simple recognition of our own limitations gives us the ability, when we are at our best, to work hard at being fair. We know better than most how fickle Verdicts of History can be. But we also know how important they are to a culture like ours that is steeped in law, tradition, and precedent. If history wasn't important in the United States we would not be here in this building—the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to preserving the memory of a nation.

So what are the roles of historians in the impeachment process? So far we have seen historians as advocates and as critics. Historians have shown up as talking heads on television, as contributors to newspapers and magazines, as columnists, as authorities on prior impeachment proceedings, as authors of books and articles about impeachment, as expert witnesses before Congress, as background sources of information, and as advisers to the House and Senate in helping to determine the procedure used in the trial.

Most historians will wait until a little more dust settles on the records before they take up the task of reconstructing the story. The first draft of history has usually belonged to journalists, to government officials, to the critics and defenders of the President, and in this case to an Independent Counsel who gave us a blockbuster, runaway bestselling interpretation of events called the Starr Report, which has been distributed far more widely and far more quickly than any government document in the history of the nation. It will be hard for any future history of the impeachment to compete with the incredible distribution of this report.

Historians so far have played mostly cameo roles in this unfolding drama. We have been overshadowed, outshouted, and upstaged by other voices. In the long run, however, it will be historians who will determine the broad contours of how the impeachment plays to future generations. That is the awesome responsibility we ultimately have.

Thanks to 24-hour-a-day cable news and the Internet, the documentary record of President Clinton's impeachment is far more diverse than ever before. It seems that history itself has speeded up and expanded. We will have a harder time reconstructing the history of this impeachment because part of the record is electronic. There is no such thing as a reliable Internet Archive that is more than a few days or a few months old. Who will save the reports of Matt Drudge for us to examine in 20 or 50 years? Who, for that matter, can guarantee that there will be a complete record of television's impact on the impeachment process? What will be preserved are the snippets of Monica in her black beret hugging the President and the equally famous snippet of the President wagging his finger at us and telling us that he did not have sex with that woman. Who will save the rest? Much of it is commercial property that will never make it to the National Archives or any other repository. The electronic record is already starting to disappear into cyberspace.

It is my contention that historians were not adequately used during the impeachment process and even now, in its immediate aftermath, we are not called upon to the same extent that is true of professionals in related fields. To some extent this reflects the nature of the history profession today. The study of political history is a relatively small field these days. Political scientists and Constitutional law professors dominate a field that was once the almost exclusive province of historians.

Television stations seeking experts turned to former prosecutors and trial lawyers who knew the law and knew courtroom procedures. They were picked for their telegenic qualities as

much as their expertise. They were hired to be glib, colorful, and controversial. But they were often inadequate when it came to explaining an impeachment trial in the Senate where there was a judge who was not a judge but a presiding officer, and a jury of 100 persons who also served as 100 judges. There were no witnesses to cross-examine and no last minute Perry Mason style confessions. It was neither a criminal nor a civil proceeding. It was a constitutional and political trial, where the judges and the jury made up the rules as they went along. No wonder the public seemed confused. They had no real context to understand this trial.

The television pundits compared it to what they knew: civil and criminal trials in petit courts. In all of American history we had only one other trial that even vaguely resembled the Clinton trial. Since Andrew Johnson's 1868 trial had no video tape to run on the nightly news, television gave that trial only a cursory glance. The print media, with a few exceptions, did not fare much better in providing historical context. Television did have footage of Watergate and of the Judiciary Committee hearings related to President Nixon. Watergate became television's reference point, not the more pertinent trial of Andrew Johnson.

Even though I have not worked as the House Historian for four years, I found my phone rang regularly during the impeachment. Reporters were eager for background and context related to questions of censure, impeachments of judges, of Andrew Johnson, and the impeachment hearings on Richard Nixon. No one on the House side of Congress seemed to be talking on the record to reporters about historical matters. So I filled in whenever I could. On the Saturday President Clinton was impeached in the House, I spent five hours doing commentary for Fox News Channel 5, along with political scientist Ronald Walters of the University of Maryland. When the vote on the first article of impeachment passed, I found myself trying to muster the best Walter Cronkite imitation I could, when I said: "The President of the United States is impeached."

Most television coverage of the impeachment was conducted in an adversarial mode through talk shows and news broadcasts that pitted partisans against one another. From the standpoint of "in your face" television, most historians would not come across very well unless they decided to assume the mantle of a partisan. In the case of my own television interviews, I managed to stick to the past most of the time. But inevitably the reporter would turn away from history and ask about the future. What would impeachment mean to the 2000 elections? What would the next two years of Clinton's administration be like now that he has been impeached? These may be softball questions for pundits, but they smack of crystal ball gazing to professional historians who do not want reputations as partisans.

It is too bad that regular appearances by historians cannot be a feature of Network news coverage. Here in Washington, where local news is often inseparable from national news, and where many stories have historical dimensions, it would be nice to see historians used regularly on something more than the Newshour with Jim Lehrer or on C-SPAN. One would think with 24 hour a day news coverage, and with most stations maintaining their own websites, there would be a regular place for historical analysis all the time and not just during spectacular events like an impeachment.

As the impeachment story moves off the front pages it will take on different dimensions. Historians will explore not just the Starr Report, the work of the House Judiciary Committee, or the Senate trial. They will examine the history and conduct of the Office of Independent Counsel. They will look into the chronology of how the charges against the President were brought. Historians will interview participants at the center of the impeachment and those with interesting perspectives from the fringes.

As the years go by, information not currently available to us will find its way into the record. Memoirs will be written. Diaries will be revealed. At first these memoirs and diaries will be written by those with an ax to grind or those cashing in on this historical event. Eventually some participants will have time to reflect on their own roles. It is happening already. I have

talked to three historians in the past week who say they regret having signed the statement of the 400 historians. Already time is changing views of things.

Twenty five years from now we may have a different picture of what happened. Just as James G. Blaine, a member of Congress during the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, writing twenty years after the impeachment, said he would have voted differently, members of this Congress will eventually have time to reflect and to sift the record and their role in it.

Will we ever reach that final Verdict of History? I doubt it very much. The interpretation of the impeachment will vary from generation to generation as new questions are asked of the evidence and new histories are written. What are more important than the final verdict of history are the uses of history we make along the way. What is important is that we preserve a good record of what happened and learn some useful lessons about the political life of this nation. If the people are going to run this nation the way the Founders intended, we all have a right to know the story and to gain some wisdom from it.

There is plenty for historians to do. We are at it now. And, if I may be forgiven for trying to predict the future, we will be going at it with vigor for as long as the Republic stands.

“What’s the History of the Senate Jail?” Notes from an Impeachment Trial

Richard A. Baker

I’ll get to the jail in a few minutes, but first a few words generally about the Senate’s uses of historical knowledge and specifically about the trial.

When confronted with institutional change, the Senate instinctively looks to the steadying forces of its history and traditions. In the twenty-six years from the 1973 Senate Watergate Committee to the 1999 Clinton impeachment trial, the Senate experienced institutional change at a greater rate than in any previous quarter century of its 210-year existence. This may simply reflect the pace of change in our larger society, but, by the Senate’s leisurely standards, change of this nature is significant and worthy of attention. Here are some examples.

- In 1973 the Senate had no women members; in 1999, it has nine.
- Since 1973 the Senate has democratized its committee system, opening to the public previously restricted mark-up sessions and limiting chairmen’s previously unfettered power.
- Between 1977 and 1981, fifty-five new members joined the Senate—an all-time record for a cycle of three elections. (In 1996, fifteen members departed, also an all-time record).
- In 1981, for the first time in twenty-six years, party control changed. It changed again six years later, and again eight years later.
- In 1986, after a bitter seven-year struggle, the Senate agreed to televise its proceedings amidst fears that the cameras would significantly change the institution. They have.

These and other changes over the past quarter-century have taken place during the tenure of eight majority leaders and nine chief administrative officers. The Committee on Rules and Administration, which sets priorities and funding levels for Senate operations, has had seven chairmen.

How does the Senate make sense of all this institutional turmoil? What filter does it use to separate the enduring from the transient? Is there a frame of reference more commonly employed than any other?

Not surprisingly, this conservative, change-retarding institution relies heavily on history as an integrating device. If you think all political institutions are naturally bound to consider their past in dealing with the present and future, a study of the Senate’s sister institution—the House of Representatives—might produce a different conclusion.

Three developments in the decade following 1973 helped to reenforce the Senate’s custom of applying historical knowledge to its institutional operations. These occurred during the same decade that witnessed the conception and birth of the Society for History in the Federal Government. The first was the 1975 establishment of the Senate Historical Office.¹ This action came as part of the Senate’s post-Watergate passion for self-examination. The second development occurred in 1980 when Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd discovered that there existed no comprehensive written history of the Senate. He enlisted the Historical Office to help him create one.² From that point, he took on the role that the *Washington Post* has described as

¹ Richard A. Baker, “The Senate Historical Office: Why, What, and For Whom,” *Congressional Record*, June 13, 1977, p. 18639; Baker, “Documenting the History of the United States Senate,” *Government Publications Review* 10 (Fall 1983):415–26. This paper was presented before the Annual Meeting of the Society for History in the Federal Government at the National Archives at College Park, MD, March 19, 1999.

² U.S., Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789–1989*, by Robert C. Byrd, S. Doc, 100-20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 4 vols., 1988–1994.

the Senate's "unofficial historian." (He would later apply this role to debates over the constitutionality of the line-item veto, the need for comity in the Senate, and the overall management of the Clinton impeachment trial.) The third development, the Senate's 1989 bicentennial commemoration, dates from the 1980 creation of a Senate panel to help guide preparations for that singular event. The bicentennial provided attention and funding for projects and programs that might otherwise have been ignored.³

Not content to let Democratic leader Byrd completely appropriate the vaunted title of unofficial historian, Republican leader Bob Dole, in 1987, decided that he too wished to try on Clio's mantle. Over the next two years, at the start of each day's legislative session, Senator Dole delivered a series of historical vignettes that he called "Senate Bicentennial Minutes." Produced with our help, these vignettes were subsequently issued as the *Historical Almanac of the United States Senate*,⁴ which he dedicated to the memory of his parents.

More recently, Senator Trent Lott, the current majority leader, decided to take a historical approach in focusing members' attention on the institution's traditions and manner of operation. He did this by creating a "Leader's Lecture Series." Lott's series began in March 1998 with remarks by 95-year-old Mike Mansfield, the longest serving majority leader in Senate history and the Historical Office's founding patron. Mansfield was followed later in the year by former Republican Leader Howard Baker, former Democratic Leader Byrd, and former President George Bush. Each of these lectures was held before a capacity crowd of current senators in the grandly restored Old Senate Chamber. Each speaker reiterated the integrating value of institutional history.⁵

It was to that grand chamber, so evocative of the Senate's mid-nineteenth-century "Golden Age," that one hundred senators returned on January 8, 1999, to establish guidelines for the Clinton impeachment trial. Never before had the two party caucuses met jointly in such a session. Members immediately turned to the guiding spirit of history and tradition. Senator Byrd began that closed session with a reminder that he had been born during the administration of Woodrow Wilson and sworn into the U.S. House in the administration of Harry Truman, to whom he pointedly referred as his favorite Democratic president. He expanded history's boundaries to encompass not only past events, but *future* events, as well. He said, "I try to take the long view of the history that is yet before us. The . . . things we do here, the service we perform, our words and our deeds will be long remembered and long recorded. . . . The Nation will be watching us and I implore us all to conduct ourselves in a way that will bring honor to this body."⁶ Thus spoke the "Conscience of the Senate." Two and a half hours later, senators emerged unanimous in their support of a plan for conducting the trial's sensitive initial stages. Their goal: maintaining the Senate's institutional integrity.

The Senate consciously chose to follow a historical model in conducting the Clinton trial. This model relied heavily on the Andrew Johnson impeachment trial precedent, on a close reading of the Constitution, and on careful study of the institution's traditions. By blending the

³ Charlene Bangs Bickford, "A Celebration with Substance: The Observance of the Bicentennial of the United States Congress," *The Public Historian* 12 (Winter 1990): 63-75; U.S. Congress, Senate, Study Group on the Commemoration of the United States Senate Bicentenary, *Final Report*, S. Doc. 98-13, 98th Cong., 1st sess., 1983.

⁴ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Historical Almanac of the United States Senate*, by Bob Dole, S. Doc. 100-35, 100th Cong., 2d sess., 1989.

⁵ See the Senate's web site at www.senate.gov/learning/lecture_series/lecture.html

⁶ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 106th Cong., 2d sess., pp. S1028-29 (daily edition).

substance of the 1868 impeachment rules with the symbolism of the 1850s old chamber, the Senate kept its traditions clearly in mind from start to finish.

The Senate Historical Office's involvement with the Clinton impeachment trial began at least six months before the Senate convened as a court of impeachment on January 7, 1999. We received literally thousands of questions from senators, staff, news media, and the general public. What follows is an arrangement of those questions in eight broad categories. Following each question is an "answer," or general observations on the issues associated with the inquiry.

1) Should there be an impeachment trial?

This proved to be the trial's most fundamental question. When the House of Representatives impeached President Clinton on December 19, 1998, even the most casual observers recognized that the chances of the Senate's actually convicting him were close to non-existent. At this point, I received a late-night call from a person in a position to shape the trial's direction asking for a history-based answer as to whether the Senate was constitutionally obligated to conduct a trial. As he noted, the Constitution provides only that "The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments." It does not say the Senate must use that power.

If the Senate had ever wished to duck an impeachment trial, the 1797 House impeachment of Tennessee Senator William Blount offered an excellent opportunity. In existence only nine years, the Senate had not previously tried out these powers. The House notified the Senate on July 7 that it had impeached Blount for conspiring with the British to seize control of Spanish territories in Louisiana and Florida. The Senate expelled Blount the following day. This action, requiring the same two-thirds majority needed to convict an impeached official, should have ended the matter. It did not. House managers subsequently showed up with formal impeachment articles and the Senate accommodated them with a trial. Ultimately, the Senate dismissed the case, presumably because members of Congress and resigned officials are not impeachable. The trial's only sure legacy was a set of rules and procedures, several of which survive today.⁷

The House referred to the Senate all but one of the fifteen subsequent impeachments by a nearly unanimous vote. From William Blount to William Clinton, the Senate has followed the political imperative of convening as a court. For the two presidential trials, senators focused not on whether to have a trial but on the political costs of a runaway trial—one without clear, pre-determined limits. Andrew Johnson's trial, by its tenth week, had exhausted all concerned. Nearly every responsible participant longed for it to be over. Throughout the Clinton proceedings, the fear of an extended trial like Johnson's nagged at the Senate's leaders and produced a conclusion within five weeks.

2.) May someone other than House managers present the case against the impeached president?

This became one of the trial's most important procedural questions. As specific trial planning went forward during December's final two weeks, the House managers asked permission for the Judiciary Committee's majority counsel to participate in presenting their case to the Senate. While counsel is permitted to represent impeached officials, never have the House impeachment managers been permitted to address the Senate through their counsel. This request stirred ever-present fears of staff performing functions that are the sole province of members. We assured Senate negotiators that no such practices had been seriously contemplated during any previous trial.

⁷ Buckner F. Melton, Jr., *The First Impeachment: The Constitution's Framers and the Case of Senator William Blount* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988), chapter 5. The best general account of Senate impeachment trials through 1986 is Eleanore Bushnell, *Crimes, Follies, and Misfortunes: The Federal Impeachment Trials* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

3) Why does the Senate conduct its trial deliberations in secret?

The trial's most contentious question, this was also one of the easiest to answer from the perspective of the Senate's past institutional operations. Even after it first opened its legislative proceedings to the public in 1795, the Senate, with some exceptions, continued to shut its doors for deliberations on nominations and treaties until 1929. Ending this practice simply moved the arena for serious negotiations off the floor and into back rooms. But on fifty-three occasions since 1929 the Senate has held closed sessions, usually because the negotiations needed to take place with everyone present and under the motive force of severe time pressures. Traditionally, these off-the-record sessions have permitted free and constructive exchanges as well as time for simply listening—or as Senate Republican leader Everett Dirksen once put it—for senators to indulge in the occasional luxury of an unexpressed thought.⁸ The Senate closed its first two impeachment trials. Preparing for the third trial—the 1804 proceeding against Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase—the Jeffersonian Republicans, who then controlled the Senate, decided to open this politically charged proceeding. Several years earlier, in the minority, they had attacked the Federalist majority for keeping the doors closed. This open-door policy then continued for the next two trials—both minor proceedings—but was scrapped for the politically volcanic Andrew Johnson trial. The rule for closed sessions has remained in place since that time. Because it applies only to the deliberation stage—and not the presentation of evidence—and because it requires a two-thirds vote to overturn, it will surely remain in place despite the compelling arguments for government openness.⁹

4) Where can we find the closed-session transcripts of the Andrew Johnson trial?

This proved to be the most baffling question. None of the scholarly studies of the Johnson trial offered sufficient institutional detail to provide an answer. It seems that only a historical office would think such matters worthy of attention—along with about one hundred senators and scores of journalists during the Clinton trial. At that trial's beginning, we had no idea about those transcripts. Our friends at the Center for Legislative Archives reported they had none—and therefore the transcripts probably did not exist. Indeed, a subsequent reexamination of the Johnson trial's printed record disclosed the Senate's explicit rejection of a motion to allow a stenographer into the closed-door portion of the deliberations. Even though we repeatedly explained this to the major news outlets, the question persisted to the trial's conclusion. We also discovered, much later than we should have, that the Senate began keeping such transcripts only as recently as 1989.

5) Are there remedies other than conviction?

The Senate Historical Office heard this question more often than any other. What about censure? In 1982, we had prepared a detailed account of the Senate's censure of President Andrew Jackson. We probably faxed and mailed more copies of that article to news organizations than anything else we have ever written about the Senate's institutional history. In 1995, we published a reference book that described the eighteen occasions over two centuries in which the Senate has sought to censure its own members. That work provided a wealth of information illustrating the differences between censuring a Senate colleague and censuring a president. This question, in particular, generated much discussion about separation of powers issues, that heatedly engaged Americans of many stations—from members of Congress in session to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting at a Miami, Florida, fire station. A participant in the latter

⁸ Quoted by his son-in-law, Howard Baker, in "On Herding Cats," Leader's Lecture Series, July 14, 1998, *Congressional Record*, 105th Congress, 2d sess., p. S8376 (daily edition).

⁹ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Senate Manual*, S. Doc. 104-1, 104th Cong, 1st sess. (1995), pp. 177–85 ("Rules for Impeachment Trials").

session, calling to comment on a remark I had made during a television interview, told me, “I never thought we’d be sitting around the firehouse arguing about the Constitution.”

6) Should the impeachment trial rules be updated?

This question proved popular with the media and unpopular with senators. Reporters seldom referred simply to the Senate’s *impeachment* rules; they referred to the Senate’s *arcane* impeachment rules. Those rules are largely the product of the Andrew Johnson trial. In the summer of 1974, a small team of Senate staff reviewed the rules in anticipation of an impeachment trial for President Richard Nixon. When Nixon resigned, they set their work aside. Twelve years later, facing the first judicial impeachment trial in a half century, the Senate adopted the minor changes that the staff panel had recommended in 1974. By December 1998, all but one of the 1974 team members had left the Senate. Our 1978 oral history interview with a former Senate parliamentarian, who played a key role in the 1974 deliberations, proved to be one of the few authoritative documentary records of that proceeding.¹⁰

Weeks before Christmas, representatives of the Senate’s majority and minority leaders met with other administrative staff to prepare a detailed script for the January trial.¹¹ Addressing dozens of issues from the role of the presiding officer to the printing and distribution of special gallery passes, this script followed the 1868 experience wherever possible. In a supercharged political environment, where seemingly innocuous matters had the potential for sparking unwelcome confrontations, members and staff welcomed the reassuring security of established precedent. The 1868 trial rules, and our reporting of the surrounding history, served this purpose most effectively. The prospect of changing one or more rules, an action requiring a two-thirds vote and a great deal of time, appealed to no one.

7) Where’s the Senate jail?

Schoolchildren most often asked this question.

One of the positive and unanticipated legacies of the trial experience is the large number of personal connections it spawned among senators. The Senate chamber served as incubator. Under usual legislative circumstances, members see each other on a random basis only when they go to the chamber to vote. Otherwise they travel largely in their own orbits, intersecting with selected groups of other senators only at committee meetings, party caucus luncheons, and political events. The trial obliged them to spend large blocks of time in the chamber. While they were sitting there, they had a unique opportunity to listen to and evaluate their colleagues. Historically, this experience replicated that of the Senate’s first century, when a member’s desk on the Senate floor served as his only office. During the trial, members also had the opportunity to think in some detail about Senate procedures and their origins. In short, the experience provided an institutional history lesson. We received questions from members’ offices such as “Do we vote alphabetically by state in an impeachment trial?” and “Under what circumstances can a member be jailed?”

The second question grew out of the sergeant at arms’ daily proclamation: “Hear ye, Hear ye. All persons are commanded to keep silence on pain of imprisonment.” Where’s the jail?

This exhortation has deep roots in seventeenth-century English parliamentary practice. We never did find a satisfactory answer as to how its commandment would be executed against a

¹⁰ Floyd M. Riddick, *Senate Parliamentarian*, Oral History Interviews, June 26, 1978 to February 15, 1979 (U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, DC), chapter VI.

¹¹ Staff relied on a document prepared for the 1986 Harry Claiborne trial: U.S., Congress, Senate, *Procedure and Guidelines for Impeachment Trials in the United States Senate (Revised Edition)*, S. Doc. 99-33, 99th Cong, 2d sess. (1986).

member. If a senator failed to keep silence, the extreme consequence would more likely be expulsion. An obstreperous staffer would more easily be fired. What about the public, visiting in the galleries? For them, there is a holding cell in the Capitol police headquarters. Any history that it may have remains unrecorded. One citizen discovered that cell when he shouted from the gallery, “Good God almighty, take the vote and get it over with!”¹² He was arrested and charged with disrupting Congress, a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of a \$500 fine and six months in federal prison.

8) How can we be better prepared for the next presidential trial?

This ranked as a favorite question among the Senate staff who gave up their Christmas holiday to prepare for the Clinton trial.

There is a major—if perhaps obvious—point in all this about the study of institutional history. There is nothing like a crisis in an institution’s operations to expose its vulnerabilities and to pose questions no one would have otherwise thought to ask. Finding credible answers to these questions places a premium on historical knowledge. Leaders, members, the press, and the public eventually find their way to the Senate’s historical office, expecting not only direct answers, but also historical context. We have experienced this rush of attention at other times over the past quarter century in efforts to expel misbehaving members, to resolve contested elections, and to expedite bitter confirmation battles—but never with this intensity.

Until the early 1970s, the Constitution’s impeachment clauses seemed like dead letters. No one today can responsibly subscribe to that belief. In another example of the Senate’s determination to be guided by history and precedent, work is now underway on three major projects designed to reenforce the institution’s long-term memory on the conduct of impeachment trials. The first will bring forth a multi-volume trial record. The other two are taking place within the Senate Historical Office.

We recently began a series of oral history interviews with more than twenty senior Senate staff members responsible for the trial’s management. We are aware of the inherent difficulties in interviewing so close to the event and the problem of asking those to whom we report administratively to discuss problems with their peers and superiors. We have assured our interviewees that their transcripts will be closed for twenty years, unless they specify otherwise. This protection, however, is unlikely to overcome natural reticence to speak with full candor. Without question, we will need to follow up in the years ahead as part of our ongoing oral history program with retired senior Senate staff. Having said this, I have been pleasantly surprised during the first interviews of this series with our interviewees’ openness. It is clear that they see the trial as their unique brush with history and they feel a responsibility to set it all down. Furthermore, they seem to trust us as institutional historians.

Our second project is a one-volume documentary history of the Senate’s seventeen impeachment trials. Although there is no lack of studies of the impeachment process, no existing work offers the institutional perspective that we intend to bring to this project. The resulting book will include answers to the many questions raised during the long months leading up to and through the Clinton trial. One of the questions sure to be included is “What’s the history of the Senate jail?”

¹² *Washington Post*, February 5, 1999.

**Applied History for the Navy
The U.S. Naval Historical Center SUBLANT Project, 1998**

Gary E. Weir

Historical perspective offers the penetrating insights necessary for truly informed decisions and effective leadership. Because those making critical decisions rarely use naval history for this purpose in a premeditated and systematic way, the Navy has for years underutilized one of its most valuable analytical assets. Generated within the Navy at the Naval Historical Center (NHC), this historical resource is useful, economical, and readily available. Through the Roles and Missions Roundtables, held at Norfolk, New London, and King's Bay in 1998, NHC has reintroduced history to the Navy in this valuable role. The utility of naval history goes well beyond the preservation of the past and the collection of documents and artifacts. It is a living process of illumination, reflection, and understanding that offers great rewards to those who wish to use it.

Introduction

Few questions possess more import for the Navy than those gradually revealing the nature of the next war or the next threat. While the Navy's leadership has uncovered many of the questions critical for an understanding of the post-Cold War world, key answers remain a mystery. Given the geopolitical paradigm shift of the late Twentieth Century, we can assume very little and certainties are fewer still. How can effective planning take place in this environment?

The Problem

The end of the Cold War presented a particularly formidable challenge to the submarine force. Defined strategically and tactically since World War II by deep water anti-submarine warfare [ASW] and the Soviet nuclear threat, submariners found themselves obliged to redefine their world as the Iron Curtain crumbled. Consequently, disturbing questions about roles, missions, and identity emerged as the submarine force approached its centennial. Who is the enemy? What is the threat? If not the Russians, then who? What roles and missions still belonged to submarines? If not deep water ASW, then what? Indeed, were these even the best questions to ask?

In the last year of the Twentieth Century, submarine force planners must take care to address these significant issues armed with a sophisticated 100-year perspective on undersea warfare; not merely a knowledge of today and the past forty or fifty years as recalled by senior officers and honored veterans.

How can the submarine force determine the best roles and missions in this new world and in what ways can it best adapt? In what context should the submarine force analyze both the present debate and the process of adjustment now affecting its future? These are the issues that gave birth to the NHC's SUBLANT project. They form the core of this analysis.

Methodology

Historians are prepared by present experience to interpret the past. Speaking with naval personnel directly can provide professionally specific insight into the historical forces that have shaped lives and institutions. Addressing the needs of the submarine force in a world changed by the Cold War's conclusion, historians must start with the shared personal chronicles of the

This paper was presented before the Annual Meeting of the Society for History in the Federal Government at the National Archives at College Park, MD, March 19, 1999.

participants—the reality of specific challenges met over the course of many individual careers and varied personal viewpoints on the recent geopolitical transformation.

It is very clear from the close contact made possible by this project that submariners personally define themselves historically in terms of the successful undersea campaign of the Pacific war between 1941 and 1945. In spite of their competence in nuclear engineering and obvious technical sophistication, they live in the benign shadow of World War II.

Through this project, we suggested that the time has come for the Navy's historians to provide a much broader view. The submarine force needs a bold, historically valid corporate memory extending over a century in which those currently serving clearly see themselves playing a part; a story to which present and future submariners can contribute their own meaningful passage.

By immersing themselves in the realities of the past twenty to thirty years of submarine service, historians can better understand current circumstances. What critical benchmark events or developments most effected submarine roles and missions during those careers initiated a quarter-century ago but not yet concluded? How would an admiral, captain, or commander answer this question? Would the same answers come from the chief of the boat? Talking to senior people who have lived through the Soviet challenge and the conclusion of the Cold War offers insight into its real and perceived consequences. Historians can then take these current impressions and perspectives on the recent past and place them carefully into a wider context that will help illuminate their long-term significance. The latter frequently differs greatly from the impressions of the near term.

The Naval Historical Center initiated its Roles and Missions Roundtable Project in February 1998. In an effort to obtain directly the views of those who must live with the recent past while shaping the future, the NHC team selected a workshop or "roundtable" approach to promote an easy environment for information and interaction.¹ As it turned out, in this setting officers and senior enlisted personnel felt able to voice their opinions fairly and frankly, to discuss the significance of their past and present experiences, to reflect on the forces that shaped them, and to offer their views on the future course of the submarine community.

Beginning with the success of a single session of roughly four hours' duration with Vice Admiral Richard Mies, then Commander Submarine Force Atlantic, and his senior officers in Norfolk in February of 1998, the roundtables expanded considerably. With the consent of Rear Admirals Joseph Henry [Submarine Group Ten, Kings Bay] and John Padgett [Submarine Group Six, New London], the NHC team scheduled a series of three roundtables at each of these sites. The first session included a three-hour roundtable with the admiral and his senior staff. This ensured that participants usually held the rank of captain or higher and brought to the discussion considerable staff and command experience as well as longevity in the submarine force. The second three-hour session included officers currently in command of a submarine, whether a ballistic missile boat [SSBN] or fast attack [SSN]. We populated the third roundtable, on the morning of our second day at a given base, with senior and master chiefs, usually serving as chief of the boat or COB on their respective vessels.

All seven roundtables turned into very informative and lively exchanges on the most important issues affecting roles, missions, and personnel in the submarine force of the recent past and present. The team came away with audiotapes and notes that offered an extraordinary window on careers, identity and image, strategic and tactical problems, technical issues, training, retention, weapons, platforms, perceptions of the past, and future directions. This first-hand experience with those serving in the submarine fleet provided the insights necessary to perceive

¹ The core NHC team for the entire project consisted of the author, Commander David Winkler, Ph.D., USNR, Mr. Timothy Francis, and Mr. Frank Thompson.

both the limits of the community's current view of itself and the insights that history may bring to various aspects of present submarine activity.

Issues in Historical Perspective:

The results of the roundtables at all three locations proved compelling in four areas.

1. Roles and Missions
2. Leadership
3. Human Investment
4. Technology

Discussion of these four categories dominated each of the seven roundtables. Doubtless, the questions posed by the team of historians must take partial responsibility for this eventuality. However, the nature of an open-discussion roundtable allowed each to take on its own character. Even though this happened quickly, these subjects still emerged as common denominators. Furthermore, the emphasis of each event shifted according to the primary responsibility of the people involved. For example, while the COBs found strategy and tactics important, they identified training and personnel as their most critical concern and in every case open, very informative, energetic exchanges took place on these matters. This gave the roundtable team from NHC a fair picture of the personal and collective perspectives of those attached to the Atlantic coast submarine force.

To provide a flavor of the roundtable experience, the balance of the present essay will reflect on "human investment" and the end of the Cold War as treated in the context of the final report's macro-historical perspective. In the context of our roundtables, "human investment" referred to the application of consideration, money, material resources, and time to the personal and professional concerns of the Navy's officer corps and enlisted personnel.

Historians from the Naval Historical Center alone generated this historical analysis. The team combined input from the roundtable face-to-face experience, all manner of historical sources, and personal expertise to produce both the final project report and any deeper insights that further inquiry from readers and researchers required.

For the Navy Leadership: Life Without the "Bear."

For naval personnel shaped by this peculiar conflict, the collapse of the Soviet Empire has assumed the role of first cause in most every issue confronting the submarine force of the 1990s. Many COBs found disturbing the tendency of sailors to focus on their college education often at the expense of their naval training. Their inclination at an early stage to look beyond the Navy to a civilian career demonstrated to the chiefs the detrimental effect of no longer having the Soviets as a focus. How do you motivate, train, and retain young people without a threat in the crosshairs?

Effective leadership must answer this question. Determining causes opens the door to understanding and possible solution. At the very least, it informs more effective policy. Can we hold the conclusion of the Cold War responsible for a drop in enlistments, for retention difficulties, for motivation problems, and for a seeming self-centeredness in the expectations of enlisted personnel?

A closer look at some of these issues suggests that the end of the Cold War actually had a minimal impact. The Navy can trace currently significant issues back to fundamental changes in both roles and missions and quality of life questions first emerging in the late 1940s with the end of World War II. The advent of nuclear power and the true submarine in the mid-1950s just gave them greater meaning and more immediate importance to the success of the submarine's role. Thus the Navy must take care to keep the end of the Cold War itself in historical perspective. This episode often looms so large that leaders can lose track of other important social, political, and economic factors influencing major debates within the Navy. The significant past for the

submarine force does not simply consist of the decade since the Berlin Wall fell to the strains of Beethoven and jackhammers. There is far more historical continuity in the past century of submarine activity than the deafening crash of the Soviet Union would lead many to believe. Even when our lives and practices seem to change fundamentally, we must still ask questions that will help us determine the true cause and effect of those changes. In the 1990s, we have the most valid historical analysis of the Cold War's end still ahead of us. National leaders need to make sure that our very imperfect understanding of this significant event does not play a role in formulating policy all out of proportion to its true significance. We need to carefully measure the effect of the event and take stock, to avoid having it consume us.

The Ultimate Primary Cause?

The participants of all seven roundtables, regardless of rank or experience, personally appreciated the profound effect of the Cold War's conclusion. While it confirmed the success of the submarine force's efforts, it also brought disturbing uncertainty. Knowing your enemy and his capability is a comforting thing. It gives direction, provides motivation, permits a warfare community to measure itself against a worthy opponent, and sets standards for performance on board every submarine.

What happens when a particular focus suddenly evaporates? While some old challenges dissolve, new ones appear, sometimes bringing wholesale institutional change. When the Cold War ended, albeit fitfully, life became different in the submarine force. As the threat of global nuclear exchange receded, so did the size of the military budget and the size of the armed forces. As one participant noted, the current "enemy vacuum" has "led to a diminishing of public support for the military as a whole. Its *raison d'être* is now in question." This smaller Navy, tasked with the same pre-1989 overseas commitments, was then forced into a higher operations tempo or "op tempo." On a personal level, as one chief said, the submarine force used to do a pretty good job keeping people in the service, but now men were retiring after sixteen years. In the recent past this was relatively foreign. People were saying they can't take the pressure, can't take the stress on their families, or "they just don't like it anymore." For some, the Navy is just not doing a great job selling the lifestyle.

The end of the Cold War certainly forced the submarine community to revisit and painfully recast some basic assumptions of long standing. As the comments above suggest, many of the roundtable participants insisted that the effect went much deeper. From their point of view, the dramatic reduction of the Russian threat also adversely affected recruitment, retention, and motivation. Many chiefs, for example, saw the absence of the Soviet "Bear" as a primary reason for diminished focus among the crew. The attention of many crewmembers seemed to shift to their future beyond the Navy, leading some chiefs to deplore the distracting presence of on-board educational programs that emphasized college rather than mission-related skills and proficiency. The absence of the Soviet menace seemingly deprived officers and enlisted personnel of their adversary, the worthy opponent against whom they sharpened and measured their skills. As historians, we suggested that this reaction reveals less about the effect of the Cold War's end on performance than it does about current personal viewpoint and the absence of a true historical perspective.

Roots Deeper than the Russian Threat

To what extent did the Soviet Union affect the motivation of naval personnel? That answer varies according to the intensity and public awareness of the Soviet nuclear threat. From the popular standpoint, Eisenhower, prosperity, Rock and Roll, and the fear of communism dominated the 1950s. The latter seemed not only a nuclear threat, but also a fundamental cultural challenge. In the first two postwar decades anti-communism acted as a driving force in politics and society, as illustrated by Senator McCarthy, fear of the bomb, and the Berlin Airlift. This dangerous race toward confrontation culminated in the Cuban Missile Crisis of the early Kennedy

Administration. Doubtless, recruiters drew the early nuclear submariners into the Navy, at least in part, by arousing their patriotism and anti-communist feelings. Navy representatives then blended with these the mystery and appeal of understanding nuclear propulsion and living on the cutting edge of modern technology.²

After the demise of McCarthy and the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis, circumstances changed. Popular reaction to the near experience of nuclear holocaust and the political insanity of the communist scare, while not reducing the national commitment against communism, brought a desire to address the Soviet threat differently. These efforts encompassed everything from the installation of the Hot Line with Moscow to global containment efforts; including the stalemate in Europe and the non-nuclear conflict in Vietnam. By the late 1970s, nuclear-enforced coexistence, maintained in large part by American SSBNs, permitted a rather uneasy normalcy to descend upon Russian-American relations. At the very least, each side could expect the other to act in its own best interest within the parameters set by mutually assured destruction. As old adversaries, we knew one another well. Knowledge and experience provided a small measure of comfort.

In this environment, the Navy's recruiting practices changed. Containing the communist threat had quite a different meaning for young Americans considering naval service in the period between 1964 and 1990 than it did in those years before the Cuban Missile Crisis. By the mid-1980s recruiters no longer emphasized the Soviet threat in their efforts to draw the best and brightest to the submarine community. The appeal lay not in the legacy of Joseph McCarthy, but in that of Hyman Rickover.³

Those choosing to serve in submarines rarely selected that option based upon a strong anticommunist feeling. They could satisfy the latter in any service, in any warfare specialty, or in any government agency. Officers in training and promising enlisted prospects wanted submarines because nuclear power and ocean surveillance technology placed them on that very appealing "cutting edge." Service in submarines also came with Admiral Rickover's promise of the highest challenges and the most demanding standards. Not everybody made the grade. Those who did would operate the most advanced and capable submarines ever created. While the Soviet threat made the submarine force necessary, for the most part the best people did not come to submarines for that reason. They came for the technical challenge, for the education, to keep company with those identified as the best, and to further their own expertise and education. One recruiter with whom we spoke asserted that the challenge, the technology, the mystery of submarines, and the educational possibilities drew the brightest people and kept them. The specter of the Soviet Union, while certainly a target, played a less significant role in recruitment and retention. Every roundtable we held actually confirmed this perspective, even with the participants still clearly in the grip of the Soviet collapse.

The Power of Changing Expectations

A point of view looking back nearly fifty years rather than ten obviously offers a more valid alternative to the collapse of the Soviet Union as the determining factor in the vital human investment issues now facing the submarine force. The real watershed for post-World War II submarine personnel came with SSN-571, USS *Nautilus*. Nuclear power precipitated a

² For an overview of American seapower in this period see, George W. Baer, *U.S. Navy 1890–1990: One Hundred Years of Seapower* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) chapter thirteen.

³ Richard Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Nuclear Navy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Gary E. Weir, *Forged in War: The Naval-Industrial Complex and American Submarine Construction, 1940–1961* (Washington D.C.: Brassey's, 1998); Francis Duncan, *Rickover and the Nuclear Navy: The Discipline of Technology* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1990); Theodore Rockwell, *The Rickover Effect* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1992).

fundamental change in the expectations of those who went to sea in submarines. This change in expectation is the historical key.

Nuclear power affected people as much as vessels. Admiral Rickover's standards for the nuclear propulsion program are legendary, inspiring stories ranging from the infamous nuclear program entry interviews to the enviable safety record compiled by nuclear ship crews. Expectations generated by the admiral's standards forced naval personnel to change in ways World War II never demanded. With the true submarine staying submerged longer, going deeper, and depending absolutely on the efficient performance of a nuclear reactor, personnel had to change.

They had to understand nuclear power. This task alone made work at Clinton, Arco, Argonne, and Knolls imperative; long hours in the classroom with concepts in physics and mathematics, engineering practice, and safety procedure.⁴ This high technology demanded a greater level of intellectual ability and made education and regular training an integral part of the nuclear sailor's world. The application of nuclear energy to ship propulsion as opposed to yet another weapon also promised the population at large greater benefit from a potential source of power generation. At the same time it suggested that nuclear sailors would find excellent post-service employment in facilities such as the Shippingport Nuclear Power Station, opened in 1957.

The creation of Shippingport, with Rickover's considerable technical involvement at the AEC, demonstrated the global effect of the pressurized water reactor. Thousands of civilian engineers received instruction from Westinghouse in 1954 and 1955 on nuclear power for electrical generation. This technology seemed the way of the future, and Rickover offered the crews of American submarines a practical opportunity to serve their country and to invest in their long-term personal prosperity. A staunch advocate of education, Rickover's policies gave the educated the advantage, encouraged proficiency and advanced training, and made learning one of the ways up the promotion ladder. They also promised rewarding employment beyond a naval career.

When nuclear power made prolonged submergence possible, quality of life issues also became paramount. The crew had to remain healthy and relatively content on lengthening submerged deployments. Very soon matters that had not occupied the submarine force since the pioneering design days of the 1920s took on a new significance. On board habitability first became important in designing the S-class in 1916, in upgrades to these boats, and with the T and V-class attempts to achieve the "fleet submarine" during the interwar period. Carbon dioxide absorption with soda-lime canisters, plans that placed bathroom or "head" far too close to the eating area, heat, cold, body odor, and air that could not guarantee an alert crew; all of these problems arose on extended pre-World War II voyages to Coco Solo in the Canal Zone, or across the Pacific Ocean to Cavite in the Philippines.

Just as the Navy's first blue-water submarines began to define assumptions about life submerged earlier this century, expectations changed one again with *Nautilus*, refocusing attention on habitability. Waste disposal, air quality, food, space within the boat, berthing, recreation possibilities, physical well-being and countless other matters came to the fore with new fast submarines of great submerged endurance, independent, and self-contained. Crews experienced a fundamental change, one that clearly separated them from their World War II counterparts.

Quality of life expectations and the nuclear Navy's emphasis on all forms of self-improvement demonstrate that many of the issues of present concern actually emerged decades ago as the Cold War began, not as a result of its end. Rickover's exacting standards, the demands of blue water ASW and strategic deterrence, combined with an unforgiving propulsion

⁴ These were the primary laboratory training sites for the Navy's nuclear personnel: Clinton Laboratories in Oak Ridge Tennessee; the naval reactor prototype facility in Arco, Idaho; Argonne Laboratory in Chicago; Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Schenectady, New York.

technology to compose the professional expectations of nuclear submariners. The present level of change and redefinition certainly injects a measure of uncertainty undeniably attributable to the end of the Cold War. On human investment issues, however, nuclear submarine crews now look for the same things that fast attack and SSBN personnel have sought for nearly five decades. A nuclear submarine candidate expected sustained sophisticated training, expressed a desire for personal and intellectual improvement, wanted berthing space next to competent people with high standards, and sought a place to grow and prepare for life.⁵

A Life Worth Living?

No other constructive application of current time and resources will prove more important than the submarine community's human investment. Rather than an anomaly, current personnel needs and requests have deep historical roots. Some of the roundtable participants were sensitive about the phrase "quality of life." Many chiefs of the boat, the senior enlisted rating on board, felt that it has degenerated into a catch-all expression that, when reduced to its core, means "more money and more time off." They believe it sends the wrong message to sailors. From their perspective, quality of life should refer to "a life worth living." The chiefs were amazed at how well sailors live today and then even more astonished that the sailors "bitch about it," and complain about day-care or something else in their personal lives. Chiefs worry that young sailors "don't make sacrifices anymore." For those who have chosen to make the sacrifices, the chiefs of boats insisted that providing people with "a pool, a gym or eighteen restaurants" on base doesn't help motivation when the "bean-counters" erode the basic promises of good pay, healthcare, and a secure retirement. According to the chiefs, "all sailors really want is a purpose in life, a place to sleep, and good pay."

The most important element in the human investment equation for the turn of the new century resides in this concept of a "purpose in life." The concerns voiced by the COBs are nothing new. Peace and the reduction of the Russian threat has shifted attention back to fundamental human needs. As was the case with their shipmates immediately after 1945, submarine personnel find themselves momentarily puzzled by their own success. The submarine force played a significant role in the Cold War and must accept part of the credit for bringing the Berlin Wall down. However, political reflection on the cost of the Cold War has placed in question many of the premises underpinning fifty years of submarine strategy and purpose. For the Navy, peace is always a greater trial than war.

Present submariners would find interwar and immediate post-1945 conditions remarkably familiar. Submariners in 1945 watched their vessels retreat into mothball fleets, or undergo reconfiguration into oilers, special operations vessels, and high-speed, deep-diving experiments. With a much reduced force, many careers ended early. For a time operations frequently ceased to provide the intensity and purpose that made submarines attractive, and many professional officers and enlisted personnel looked beyond the Navy to a more appealing and rewarding civilian career. The uncertainty of force level reductions and the post-1945 personnel contraction obliged many excellent people to ask basic questions about the wisdom of staying with the submarine force. It took nearly five years for the Navy to define the next most likely maritime threat and to initiate an effort to address the problem. When that process began in 1950, the Soviet Union provided a singular focus and a triple role for the submarine force; intelligence gathering, anti-submarine warfare, and strategic deterrence.

Concluding Observations

Presently the Navy has emerged from its Cold War victory into an infinitely more complex multi-polar world. Defining a sailor's necessary "purpose in life" will take more time

⁵ Hewlett and Duncan, *Nuclear Navy*; Weir, *Forged in War*; Duncan, *Rickover and the Nuclear Navy*.

and prove less certain. There is no “enemy vacuum.” If anything, the Navy must address too many potential threats. As submariners take the time to make new decisions in an environment that provides them with more freedom than ever, many careers will end. Uncertainty will lead both junior and senior personnel to look beyond the Navy, and valuable people will seem lost in the whirlwind of change.

As an anchor, history offers a reminder that the pursuit of professional satisfaction driving nuclear submariners since 1954 and the SSN-571 did not depend upon the Soviet Union. Communism barely affected the career decisions of naval personnel. The best people are still drawn to submarines by the same factors that fascinated their professional ancestors. The fall of the Soviet Union did not create the problem. That event merely created an enduring environment of uncertainty that the Navy has not experienced since V-J Day. Rather, the true problem rests in a pleasing but often confusing condition as historically significant as war itself; the advent of peace. An uneasy peace, the absence of bipolar simplicity, the constant presence of change, and the resulting domestic and global adjustment has made coping with peace harder than ever for the Navy, but nothing new. However, without historical insight, the ship drifts without an anchor, the uncertainty and period of adjustment proves personally or institutionally overwhelming.

The naval service should more frequently draw on its past. Only then will its appreciation of the present and its contemporary decisions remain in phase with the true origins of current professional challenges. Do not reduce or withdraw on-board educational programs. The absence of the Soviet threat has little to do with the tendency of sailors to look beyond the Navy to a civilian career. Those programs have always helped bring the best and brightest to the submarines. Continue to emphasize the elite nature of the nuclear submarine force. This will attract talented and dedicated people. Stand guard over those fundamental needs so vital to every crewmember, viz., a worthy job, professional challenge, promise of possible advancement, good pay, housing and insurance to protect families, and the satisfaction of keeping company with cutting-edge people and technologies. This will keep people in the service if the submarine leadership honors its part of the bargain. The roundtables rang absolutely clear on this point.

It may be that, rather than suffering the absence of the Soviet Union as an adversary and measure of ability, distracted junior officers and crews currently exhibit the effect of prolonged uncertainty in an era of relative peace. Historically this is nothing new and the painful adjustment it brings will resolve itself in the cooperation between civilian and naval leadership. As was the case at the beginning of the Cold War with the committee chaired by Rear Admiral Francis Low, the Navy and the national command authority must redefine the most immediate and potent maritime threat. In mid-century, this took roughly five years and the Soviet Union provided a singular cultural and naval adversary. In a multipolar world this kind of definition will take longer and the old Cold War clarity of focus may never return. Indeed, adaptability to change and relative comfort with frequently shifting roles missions may become the acid test of the next decades for submariners.

Naval commands, indeed any vital agency in the public or private sector, should look to history for a deep perspective on their current concerns. In this way, history will help leaders avoid potent and immediate misperceptions. Historically-informed decision-makers can focus on true, well-defined problems, their likely causes, and sound policies for the future.

Contributors

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