

Colonial Policy and the Imperial German Navy

Admiral Alfred Tirpitz's motives in building a German battle fleet have been the subject of continuing historical controversy¹. While attributing primacy to domestic considerations, many historians identify Tirpitz's Navy as being the instrument of an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy at England's expense². Whether Tirpitz's battle fleet was to be a deterrent or, in fact, the instrument of an ultimate and intentional military confrontation, is a moot point. In any case, an increasing and belligerent German naval presence at the trouble spots of the world, from Samoa to South Africa, reflected a Germany emerging as a world power.

Germany's specific goals in achieving world power status, and the extent of territorial acquisitions abroad that she sought (assuming there was a deliberate – rather than an opportunistic – policy of imperial expansion), have been disputed. It is generally assumed, however, that there was a close relationship between commercial and colonial activity and the direction of German naval policy³. The maxim »trade follows the flag« was one commonly accepted in the latter decades of the Nineteenth Century, and in Germany the Flottenverein (Navy League) and the Kolonialgesellschaft (Colonial Society) generally complemented each other's goals in advocating imperialistic expansion⁴. The Navy required coaling stations for its warships, and mercantile interests needed raw materials and markets for their goods; the interdependence was obvious.

It is necessary, however, to analyze more closely the role of the German Navy in colonial affairs, particularly in terms of the changing strategic requirements and basing concepts of what was, after all, a military institution. The majority of Germany's African and Asian colonies were precipitously acquired by Chancellor Otto v. Bismarck in 1884, at a time when the little German Navy played an insignificant role in policy considerations, and when its steam-sail warships, sailing ships with auxiliary steam propulsion, were relatively independent of coaling stations abroad. By the 1890s, however, with the technological transition to full steam propulsion and the appeal of a commerce-raiding strategy of cruiser-warfare, the Navy became interested in overseas bases. None of Germany's existing colonies promised to satisfy the Navy's logistical and strategic requirements, however, and hence the acquisition of suitable locations was advocated. But this advocacy was short-lived, nor did it enjoy the support of the naval establishment as a whole; and when Alfred Tirpitz came to power in 1897, he was determined to concentrate on building a battle fleet in home waters, and generally opposed further commitments abroad.

The question of overseas acquisitions did play a role in Tirpitz's maneuvers to induce the Reichstag to pass his navy bills creating a larger battle fleet, but the motive here was political rather than substantive. The colonial officials, in fact, gradually came to realize that the Navy had no intention of protecting the colonies in time of war, and in 1914 the overseas possessions were left to their own devices. Whatever the motives behind Tirpitz's Flottenpolitik, they did not include the acquisition of colonies.

The Navy had come into being in 1871 with the unification of the German Reich, but its development was slow. The first head of the Admiralty was an infantry general, Albrecht v. Stosch, whose army career hardly equipped him to head the Navy, and whose subsequent political friction with Chancellor Bismarck bode ill for the fortunes of the service he now headed⁵. In a memorandum of May 6, 1872 Stosch stated the

tasks of the Navy to be the protection of searade, defense of the coasts, and the development of an offensive capability (but which was in no way meant to challenge the major European powers). The real strength of the Reich, he maintained, rested »with the point of the bayonet of the Army«⁶. Bismarck, in fact, once sarcastically observed, »We have a fleet that is unable to sail, so we cannot be injured in distant parts of the world.«⁷

Stosch favored the acquisition of colonies, both to absorb German emigration abroad, and to divert attention from the divisive social effects of Bismarck's Kulturkampf against Catholicism. But, aware of Bismarck's hostility, he did so privately. As he wrote his friend Gustav Freytag, journalist, historian, and Navy publicist, »the great Chancellor would be won over to my plans much sooner by the press than if I presented them«⁸.

But while the Admiralty chief did support various colonial interests in principle, he was less encouraging to individuals who proposed specific places abroad where the German flag might be placed⁹. Nor was he satisfied that missionaries or merchants should direct colonizing projects, as they had little national feeling, and usually depended on England's omni-present Royal Navy for protection¹⁰.

Whatever Stosch's colonization ideas, they were politically motivated, and did not reflect the requirements of the Navy itself. The small steam-sail warships cruising on foreign station had little need for the coaling stations that were to become so vital later, and the various ports of the world adequately met their requirements for occasional overhauling and repairs. In addition, the small Navy budget would not justify the expense of acquiring, developing, and maintaining Germany's own naval bases abroad¹¹.

Career Navy officers hoped that Stosch's successor would come from their own ranks, and that the Navy would then become a truly independent service. But this was not to be. It was another Army general, Georg Leo v. Caprivi, later German chancellor, who was appointed Chief of the Admiralty from 1883 to 1888. A General of Infantry, Caprivi had little interest in the Navy and even less in colonial enterprises. »I hear you are opposed to colonies«, said Bismarck after Caprivi became head of the Navy. »Yes«, replied Caprivi simply. »I am too«, the Chancellor assured him¹².

Caprivi's attitude reflected his preoccupation with a possible two-front war by France and Russia against Germany, in which case the Navy's strategy would merely be the passive one of coast defense. Overseas commitments and colonial adventures could only detract from this primary role. Protecting the trade-routes and the occasional requirements of gunboat diplomacy were minor supplementary obligations¹³.

It was only the next year, however, in 1884, that Bismarck suddenly reversed his previous overseas policies and acquired a colonial empire for the Reich. Imperial protection was granted to business enterprises in southwest Africa in April, and Togo and Kamerun on the West African coast were claimed in July. This activity excited an erratic twenty-eight year old adventurer named Karl Peters, who frantically collected the Xs of numerous native chiefs in East Africa on treaties signing away their territories, and that autumn he returned to Berlin and jubilantly presented them to Bismarck. The Chancellor demurred at first; but when Peters threatened to sell his treaties to the Belgians or the English, Bismarck gave in and sanctioned his claims in February 1885¹⁴. In the Pacific Bismarck had already acquired northeastern New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Solomon Islands in November 1884. In August of the following year Bismarck claimed the Caroline Islands (but yielded when Spain objected), and the Marshalls in October¹⁵.

In less than a year and a half, Bismarck had secured for Germany a colonial empire of impressive size and extent, if not wealth. But this empire was not to be the political and

economic asset that Bismarck had perhaps thought it would become, and he always treated it with contempt¹⁶. Bismarck's surprising incursion into the colonial field has prompted a debate among historians that promises to have no end. Economic, diplomatic, political, and social interpretations have all been advanced and elaborately documented, leaving the conclusion that Bismarck's motives were as complex as that great figure himself¹⁷.

No one, however, has suggested that the desires of the German Navy played a role in these acquisitions, nor would the documentation support such an interpretation¹⁸. Yet the existence of overseas colonies, linked to the homeland by maritime commerce, ultimately depended on the protection of naval units abroad. It was the frigates »Leipzig« and »Elisabeth«, as well as smaller gunboats, in fact, which brought the flag and the imperial commissioners to the far-flung territories. But in 1884 and 1885 the German Navy was merely the obedient instrument of colonial acquisition. Its requirements were not considered in the formation of a colonial empire, nor was it even solicited for an opinion.

Bismarck hoped to avoid embarrassing political commitments and government expenses by having private enterprise assume the burden of administering and developing the colonies gained. »Germany will do what England has always done, establish Chartered Companies, so that the responsibility always rests with them.«¹⁹ But this hope was in vain. There would have to be an initial outlay of funds to develop the harbor and transportation facilities necessary for ultimate profitable exploitation of the mineral and agricultural resources of the possessions; and the individuals and merchant firms at whose instance the colonies had been acquired, proved either unable or unwilling to make this initial investment. In addition, these circles were politically astute enough to realize that the government, having extended official protection to the colonies, was committed to retaining and defending them²⁰. Though four companies were formed specifically for the colonies, they either refused sovereign rights or soon divested themselves of them, and imperial commissioners had to be despatched to administer the territories²¹.

No sooner had the colonies been gained than a military presence was required to secure them. German sovereignty was challenged, not by other colonial powers – England in particular was preoccupied with the Mahdist rebellion in the Sudan and the relief of Khartoum, and Prime Minister Gladstone had little interest in imperialism anyway – but rather on the part of some of the new German subjects²². Friction between pro-English and pro-German tribes in Kamerun broke into open violence in October 1884, and Rear Admiral Eduard Knorr was despatched from Wilhelmshaven with a squadron of four warships to restore order. When the Sultan Said Barghash of Zanzibar protested the German claims in East Africa the following spring, another squadron was formed under Captain Paschen, joined by Admiral Knorr and two of his ships, to enforce the German position²³.

Nine cruiser-frigates and cruiser-corvettes, plus a number of smaller gunboats, had already been employed in acquiring and securing the new colonies, and the demands on the Navy threatened to increase. Admiral Knorr, in fact, urged the formation of German colonial troops (Kaiserliche Schutztruppen) and African auxiliaries (Hilfs-truppen), but as this implied increased government commitments, the idea was considered premature²⁴. When Dr. Heinrich Goering was despatched to Southwest Africa in 1886 as Imperial Commissioner, he found himself in the middle of the perennial Herero-Namaqua native war. But to his persistent requests for a German military presence, Bismarck replied that »Armed intervention would, in any case, not correspond to our colonial system«²⁵.

Thus it was the Navy that was called on to police this new colonial empire. Attempts to

end the slave trade in East Africa caused revolt on the part of the local Arabs in August of 1888, and a squadron of six warships was formed under Admiral Deinhard to blockade the coast²⁶. Subsequent unrest in Kamerun, Southwest Africa, and the South Seas all demanded the presence of warships and featured coastal bombardments and landing-parties going ashore.

The Navy was also the instrument of government policy elsewhere. The dispute over the Samoan Islands with Great Britain and the United States involved three more warships, two of which were wrecked and the third stranded in the typhoon which struck Apia anchorage on March 15 and 16, 1889²⁷. Germany was interested in the islands of Savaii and Upolu, where the Godeffroy firm traded in copra. But the port town of Apia at Upolu held no attraction for the Navy. All cargo had to be discharged into lighters, and the roadstead itself was sheltered only by a reef offshore. The typhoon further demonstrated what the Navy had already concluded; that Apia was unsatisfactory for naval purposes²⁸. In none of these areas did the Navy itself have any stake, and maintaining colonial policies was considered merely one of its routine responsibilities.

The Navy's attitude toward colonies, however, began to change in the 1890s, because of three factors: the desire of the young Kaiser Wilhelm II to build a more impressive Navy, the formulation of a strategy for that Navy, and the technological transition from sail to steam, making coaling stations overseas mandatory for ships abroad. But the Navy itself no longer had a single head to coordinate planning. On March 30, 1889 the Kaiser applied the »divide and rule« concept by dissolving the Admiralty into three separate but equal departments: the Reichsmarineamt (RMA) or Imperial Naval Office, under a State Secretary appointed by the Chancellor, with responsibility for the administrative and technical development of the Navy; the Oberkommando der Marine (OKM) or High Command of the Navy, under a Commanding Admiral appointed by the Kaiser, with responsibility for the operational planning and employment of all naval forces; and the Kaiserliches Marinekabinett (MK) or Imperial Naval Cabinet, under a Chief, which controlled personnel procedures and served as an advisory body to the Kaiser. There was constant friction between the three departments, as the Kaiser alone was their superior²⁹.

The German Kaiser, whose maternal grandmother was Queen Victoria, greatly admired the Royal Navy, and determined that his Reich should have a respectable navy too. His enthusiasm for naval affairs was greatly stimulated by the publication of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*. London 1890. Mahan's advocacy of sea power as a determining factor in history found a champion in Wilhelm, and Mahan's book became required reading for all German naval officers. Germany's future lay on the water; but what kind of a fleet to build?

At that time it seemed hopeless that Germany could ever match the leading fleet (the Royal Navy) in size. A more subtle strategy had to be developed that would avoid a major fleet confrontation. The answer seemed to be a commerce-raiding strategy of cruiser-warfare, advocated by a French school of thought, the *jeune école* or »Young School«. While torpedo boats prevented a close blockade of the home coast and ports, commerce-raiders would prowl the trade routes of the enemy, sinking ships and disrupting maritime commerce – »Shamelessly attack the weak, shamelessly fly from the strong.«³⁰ This French strategy (*la guerre de course*) was oriented against England, whose whole economic structure depended on sea-borne imports of food and raw materials. The commerce-raiding strategy was not intended to »starve out« England, but rather to produce economic chaos and panic with high insurance rates and high prices, driving the masses to revolt and demand peace.

Cruiser-warfare (Kreuzerkrieg) was attractive to the German Navy for it implied an active role by a small fleet, and in addition would not require large funds that an obstinate Reichstag would be unlikely to allocate. The leading advocate of Kreuzerkrieg was Vice Admiral Viktor Valois, who pursued the concept in a number of publications and published a book on the subject in 1899. Commerce-raiding would be valid against most potential enemies he said, especially England. By virtue of her maritime supremacy she was »the nation against which all the rest of the sea powers, including Germany, must direct their preparations«. England depended on her sea-trade for her very existence, as her commercial interests were »strewn throughout the entire world . . .«³¹ The Royal Navy would expend much effort and material in attempting to protect England's world-wide trade routes from the ravages of a relatively small number of German raiders³².

Kreuzerkrieg received powerful support from Admiral Friedrich Hollmann, State Secretary of the RMA 1890–1897. The RMA was not itself responsible for the development of tactics and strategy, as this was the province of the OKM. But as it was his office that drew up building programs, Hollmann was in a position to influence, if not determine, strategy. Although the OKM had operational control over forces at sea, it would have to work with the type of ships, in this case cruisers, that Hollmann provided – and cruisers could not fight a fleet engagement against battleships. But Hollmann nonetheless encountered difficulties, for his counterparts at the OKM opposed the cruiser-warfare concept. This was true both of Admiral Max v. d. Goltz, and of Admiral Eduard Knorr who succeeded him in 1895³³. The Kaiser's naval adviser, Freiherr Gustav v. Senden-Bibran at the MK, likewise opposed Hollmann, primarily because he felt the RMA chief was not the man to create a stronger Navy. Caught between the enthusiastic and impatient Kaiser and an unresponsive Reichstag, and harrassed by the OKM and MK, Hollmann was on the defensive with whatever policy he initiated. The building programs of the 1890s, in fact, consisted of battleships and cruisers, developed with little tactical or strategic coordination in mind³⁴. Nonetheless Kreuzerkrieg, in theory if not in practice, was the prevailing strategy of the German Navy for most of the decade, until Admiral Tirpitz succeeded Hollmann in 1897.

No longer, however, could commerce-raiders like the Confederate »Alabama« keep to the seas for months at a time. Developments in naval technology had been occurring that profoundly affected the tactical implementation of a cruiser-warfare strategy. The transition from sail to steam meant that bases overseas were now necessary for refuelling purposes, and this requirement caused a renewed interest on the part of the Navy in colonial affairs.

The great advantages of steam power over sail in being independent of wind and current far outweighed the disadvantages, and other considerations based on ordnance and engineering advances resulted in the universal adoption of steam as the sole means of propulsion by the 1890s. But the reciprocating steam engines of the time devoured coal at a prodigious rate, and made coal consumption the dominant problem in the employment of warships. The armored cruiser »Scharnhorst«, Graf v. Spee's flagship in the Far East at the outbreak of war in 1914, carried 2,000 tons of coal giving her a radius of action of 5,168 sea miles at a cruising speed of 10 knots, enough for 21.5 days. A 15 knot speed reduced the range to 3,513 miles and 9.8 days, while at 20 knots the range was only 2,222 miles, with coal bunkers empty in 4.6 days³⁵. Light cruisers, with less displacement but also with less coal capacity, reflected similar limitations. The fact that the ratio of coal consumption to increased speed was geometric rather than arithmetic, made even the most careful calculations contingent upon the need for additional power in case of enemy action or unforeseen foul weather conditions.

Under wartime conditions, then, warships engaged in Kreuzerkrieg would have to replenish their coal supply at least once a week.

The process of coaling, however, was such difficult, tedious, and time-consuming work, that warships could only refill their bunkers while at anchor in a sheltered harbor. Unlike fuel oil of a later time, which could be pumped through a flexible hose between two ships while they were moving at sea, coal had to be brought aboard in baskets or sacks. When in port, walkways would be erected so the crew – or preferably native handlers when they were available – could shuttle the heavy baskets of coal aboard from the depots ashore.

When no port facilities were available coal was brought alongside in colliers or lighters, shovelled into sacks, and swung up on deck in a cargo net by the ship's boom. From there the coal was dumped down the shutes into the bunkers. To attempt to coal a ship without doing so in port was a task that verged on the impossible.

If Germany were to pursue a strategy of Kreuzerkrieg, she had to have a series of bases abroad from which the cruisers could operate. Mahan himself emphasized the steaming radius of warships and the need for a network of coaling stations »which every naval nation should frame for itself«³⁶. Such bases (Stützpunkte) were later defined by Admiral Knorr at the OKM: »The ideal base is a good harbor favorably located, which offers everything necessary for the berthing, equipping, and maintenance of a large number of ships, and which, through natural and artificial defensive works, can hold out for a long time against a sea and land attack.«³⁷

Germany indeed had a colonial empire, with possessions from Africa to the Far East; but did these possessions have the potential for supporting a cruiser-warfare strategy? Analysis of the existing territories and their harbors demonstrated they did not. Various colonial officials indeed realized the advantages of interesting the Navy in developing a naval base in the territories under their jurisdiction, for no other agency appeared likely to provide a suitable harbor. In Southwest Africa Imperial Commissioner v. François was irritated at being dependent on British-owned Walfish Bay, and he prevailed on the Foreign Office to consider developing Swakopmund just to the north. The gunboat »Hyäne« had visited the inlet in April 1890, but at the time Captain Freiherr v. Sohlern reported it as unsuitable for development. At François' repeated urgings »Hyäne« called again two years later, and this time successfully landed a party in surf boats. François constructed a station building there and in February 1893 the small cruiser »Falke« described it as a satisfactory anchorage – but it was a long way from being a satisfactory Stützpunkt³⁸. The sandy cove of Angra Pequena (renamed Lüderitz Bay) was also unsatisfactory, as were Lomé in Togo and Duala in Kamerun.

In any case, cruiser-warfare based on the West African coast would not have a significant impact on British maritime commerce, as the primary trade routes were those from the Far East that converged at the Gulf of Aden to pass into the Red Sea and through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean. East Africa was, however, ideally located for operations against the Gulf of Aden traffic, and Dar-es-Salaam had an excellent harbor. The Navy was, in fact, to assist in developing it³⁹. But British Zanzibar was, unfortunately, in sight across the bay, and British warships based on Aden would make cruiser-warfare a hazardous undertaking⁴⁰. The South Sea islands of the Pacific offered potential harbors, but they were distant from significant trade routes, and the task and cost of constructing fortified Stützpunkte would be formidable⁴¹.

Even if the existing colonies were of no use to the Navy, they still had to be pacified and defended. The influence exercised by warships and landing parties was limited to the coastal areas, however, and to project power into the interior to pacify hostile

natives was a formidable undertaking, and one for which the Navy was ill-equipped. The Arab revolt of 1888 in East Africa, occasioned by German interruption of the slave trade, necessitated the creation finally of colonial defense troops (Schutztruppen) – German army volunteers and native Askaris – to suppress it⁴².

After peace was restored two years later, the colonial troops were continued on a permanent basis. The Colonial Department of the Foreign Office had neither the desire nor the experience to administer a military force however, and as there was no imperial »Army« (as there was a »Navy«), it would have been inappropriate to put the imperial colonial or protectorate forces under one of the states, specifically Prussia. For these reasons, as well as the geographic and transportation factors involved, it was decided to put the Schutztruppen administratively under the Navy. This was made official on March 22, 1891. The Kaiserliche Schutztruppen were also formed in Southwest Africa in 1894 and in Kamerun in 1895. (Only native police troops were created for Togo and the South Seas.)

For personnel and military affairs (including equipping, training, and military justice) the Schutztruppen were administered by the RMA, while their pay and operational utilization were handled by the Foreign Office and civilian governor or commissioner respectively. »This duplication was not entirely fortunate«, wrote a Schutztruppen Captain later, »all the more so as the troops were, and remained, an inconvenient appendage for the Reichsmarineamt which considered them as completely alien.« On July 16, 1896 the Schutztruppen were officially transferred to the Kolonialabteilung⁴³.

The Navy had no interest in the colonial troops, nor in the colonies themselves. The colonies had been acquired for economic and political reasons, and were unrelated to any strategic or logistical requirements of the Imperial Navy. The colonies merely constituted further responsibilities for a service that was already pressed to meet its worldwide obligations, and the Navy came to resent the continual requests for warships and landing parties.

In none of her existing overseas possessions then, did Germany have the potential for the network of bases the Kreuzerkrieg advocates felt necessary. Given this situation, and taking such a strategy to its logical conclusion, the German Navy of the 1890s would be expected to actively promote a colonial expansion that would satisfy its strategic and logistical needs. It was no coincidence, indeed, that Admiral Valois himself was the Executive Vice President of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (German Colonial Society) for a time, and that a number of other naval officers were members of that society⁴⁴. The Colonial Society and the Flottenverein (Navy League), formed in April 1898 to advocate naval expansion, supported each other's efforts, and naval publications were sympathetic to colonial enterprises⁴⁵.

At the RMA Admiral Hollmann supported Valois and the Kreuzerkrieg proponents during his term of office. Yet apparently no specific plans were ever drawn up detailing a network of strategically located bases around the world, and no concerted policy was proposed to acquire particular places. One reason was certainly the disagreement within the Navy itself about strategic doctrine, and another was Hollmann's political difficulties in running the Navy at all, prodded by an impatient Kaiser and thwarted by an unsympathetic Reichstag. Intruding into the realm of foreign policy with an expansionist program of colonial acquisition, and requesting additional funds to construct Flottenstützpunkte abroad, was politically unappealing.

In any case there was an obvious dilemma confronting the Kreuzerkrieg advocates: the necessary bases would have to be acquired in a world already divided up by the colonial powers, and over which Great Britain exercised a preponderant influence. The obstacles to acquiring, fortifying, and maintaining bases overseas were thus

formidable, and Hollmann's approach was one of extreme vacillation.

German mercantile activity had meanwhile been increasing in the Far East, and the protection of the maritime trade there demanded an increased German naval presence. The Cruiser Squadron that had been formed off East Africa in 1888 remained in existence, and after 1890 was generally located East of Suez. Yet it had no base of its own for the necessary overhauling, repairs, and coal re-supply. Instead it depended on Nagasaki in Japan or British Hong Kong, and hence on the good-will of those nations. Its own requirements were thus low-priority, and at Hong Kong berthing space had to be reserved some nine months in advance, and even then might be cancelled at short notice⁴⁶. A base in the Far East came to be considered necessary, if only for the logistical support of the warships maintained there.

The opportunity to acquire such a base seemed to present itself in 1894 with the Sino-Japanese War. Believing that the imminent collapse of China would precipitate a scramble for the spoils, the Kaiser proposed to Chancellor Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst the acquisition of Formosa⁴⁷. Four days later Count Schenck zu Schweinsburg, the German envoy at Peking, suggested acquiring the Pescadores Islands off Formosa or Kiaochow Bay on the Shantung Peninsula⁴⁸. Nothing was done, however, though there was much speculation during the winter of 1894–95 as to what Japan's peace terms would be and what opportunities might result.

The initiative regarding the acquisition of a far eastern base thus came from the government itself, and only rather belatedly did the Foreign Office approach the Navy, on March 11, 1895, requesting criteria and possible locations for such a base. On April 17 Admiral Hollmann replied with the conclusions at which the RMA, as well as Admiral Knorr's OKM, had arrived⁴⁹.

In the Navy's analysis, cruiser-warfare criteria for a harbor was subordinated to commercial potential. As German trade in East Asia extended from Singapore to Hakodate, Hollmann urged acquiring two bases, one in the north and one in the south, »which must be on the main trade routes, and must themselves already possess significance in a commercial respect; dead places, not capable of development, are worthless«. Commercial considerations would locate the Cruiser Squadron where its presence would be most useful, and developing harbor facilities that would benefit business interests as well as the Navy should encourage political cooperation between the two. Hollmann named and analyzed three pairs of locations in the order of their desirability: the Chusan Islands and Amoy, Kiaochow Bay and Mirs Bay, and Montebello Island (apparently near Korea) and the Pescadores Islands.

On that same 17th of April 1895 the defeated Chinese signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki – which in turn prompted the European powers to put pressure on Japan to surrender some of her gains, and pressure on China to grant »compensations« to themselves. At the height of the negotiations in September Berlin learned that a German mission station at Swatow on the South China Sea had been destroyed by Chinese anti-foreign elements, and the Kaiser had the OKM order the Cruiser Squadron to »make preparations to occupy Wei-hai-wei immediately upon telegraphed order«⁵⁰. But the ships could not rendezvous for several days, the missionaries had not been personally harmed, and in any case the Navy was not happy with Wei-hai-wei. Located on the northern side of the Shantung Peninsula, it was isolated from the interior by mountains, and thus lacked the commercial potential the Navy believed desirable⁵¹.

Envoy Schenck did put forth Germany's demand for a coaling station, but this the Chinese successfully resisted. In the end, Russia and France both secured railroad and mining concessions, while Germany came out a poor third with two minor trading concessions in Hankow and Tientsin⁵². The opportunity to seize a base had been

allowed to pass; but for the next two years, until the necessary »moral« pretext (the murder of two missionaries in November 1897), the German Navy and government made a thorough study of acquiring a port in China. This search was characterized by apprehension on the part of the Foreign Office, which sought to avoid antagonizing Great Britain or Russia by intruding into their spheres of influence, indecision on the part of the Navy, whose departments could not agree on any one location, and impatience on the part of the Kaiser, whose Prestigepolitik required some sort of acquisition⁵³.

The Navy also showed reluctance to seize other opportunities that presented themselves. German sympathies were with the South African Boers in their resistance to British imperial encroachment; and when the Dr. Jameson raid into the Transvaal was foiled in December 1895, an indignant Kaiser convened a crown council meeting on January 3, 1896, including the three Navy heads, demanding the despatch of troops, landing at nearby Delagoa Bay, a protectorate over the Transvaal, or some other action to assist the Boers. The other ministers, including Hollmann, were horrified at what Great Britain's reaction might be. Delagoa Bay in particular, was not only a Portuguese possession, but its proximity to Cape Colony made its status a matter of deep concern to the Royal Navy. The Kaiser was finally restrained to sending the »Kruger Telegram«, congratulating the Transvaal president on preserving the independence of his country. »You have no idea what proposals were made there«, said Foreign Secretary Marschall v. Bieberstein to Friedrich v. Holstein, »this is still the mildest«⁵⁴.

Upon the request of the German consul at Pretoria for marines, two cruisers anchored in Delagoa Bay. But the landing of troops was discouraged, by the Portuguese and the Boers, as well as the Foreign Office, and England's pointed formation of a flying squadron caused the cruisers to be removed. »This forfeiture or non-acquisition of Delagoa Bay«, complained the Kaiser, »will have to be heavily paid for in the future, and we shall some day deeply regret it«⁵⁵. If this was the ulterior motive, it was not at the Navy's urging.

Meanwhile the search for an east Asiatic base continued. Tirpitz, commanding the Cruiser Squadron, persuasively argued in favor of Kiaochow Bay, sometimes referred to as Tsingtao after the small fishing village there, on the Shantung Peninsula⁵⁶. Other favorable reports regarding Kiaochow finally caused the Kaiser to demand action. »We must act now, swiftly and resolutely«, he told Chancellor Hohenlohe, and orders were despatched to Tirpitz to concentrate the Cruiser Squadron off – Amoy⁵⁷! Tirpitz was thunder-struck. Upon inquiry, he learned that Envoy Heyking at the Chinese capital had told Berlin that Tirpitz and himself were agreed on Amoy⁵⁸. Heyking and the Foreign Office were concerned about Russian interest in Kiaochow, and Marschall had earlier suggested Quemoy or Amoy or »some other place of minor importance, suitable for strictly naval purposes«⁵⁹. Given the divided counsels, the orders to Tirpitz were cancelled, and the question of a far eastern naval base remained unresolved⁶⁰.

In the summer of 1897 Tirpitz returned to Berlin to succeed Hollmann at the RMA, and with his accession to power the Kreuzerkrieg concept came to an end. Tirpitz's appointment as State Secretary of the RMA was the victorious culmination to a power struggle that had been continuing for several years within the ranks of the Navy⁶¹. While the causes, issues, and consequences of this power struggle were complex and varied, the formulation of strategic doctrine played a signal role. Knorr at the OKM opposed Hollmann over the Kreuzerkrieg issue, as did Gustav v. Senden-Bibran of the MK, if for other reasons.

Even as Tirpitz was returning from East Asia, Admiral v. Knorr prepared a memo-

randum on the future of the Navy. In a struggle with France and Russia, Germany's most probable opponents, the protection of maritime trade and overseas colonies would best be accomplished by a battle fleet, concentrated in home waters, decisively defeating the enemy battle fleets. Should a war with England occur, »which we should hardly expect to fight alone, our value as an ally would be greatly increased for other sea powers«⁶². Knorr then proposed a tentative outline for such a battle fleet of twenty-eight battleships by 1910, and the concept of a powerful German Navy had been born. It was to be based on the construction of a battleship fleet, a strategy of decisive fleet action in home waters, and the »alliance value« of such a fleet.

Tirpitz revised and expanded this concept when he arrived, in a memorandum to the Kaiser on June 15, 1897. He felt that Great Britain, as the leading sea-power, was Germany's most dangerous potential enemy. Commerce-raiding from overseas bases was hopeless in view of English superiority, and »our fleet must be so constructed that it can unfold its greatest military potential between Helgoland and the Thames«. Constructing and employing cruisers abroad would be to the detriment of the battle fleet in home waters. »Only the main theater of war will be decisive.«⁶³ He further emphasized this point to the Reichstag later: »Overseas conflicts with European nations will be decided in Europe.«⁶⁴

Then in November 1897, as Tirpitz was formulating his program for presentation to the Reichstag, Berlin suddenly learned that two German missionaries had been murdered on the Shantung Peninsula. The Kaiser, frustrated by the continued vacillation of his advisers, sent orders directly to the Cruiser Squadron to seize Kiaochow. But now Russia objected, and the Foreign Office, Chancellor Hohenlohe, and Admiral Knorr, all put pressure on the Kaiser to postpone an actual occupation⁶⁵. Even Tirpitz, distressed that the political repercussions might jeopardize his building program, telegraphed the Chancellor: »Consider the action against China as unfavorable for the Navy Bill, and in the intended form very risky; the result of this sort of action must lead to a serious threat of hostilities.«⁶⁶ It was all to no avail. The commander of the Cruiser Squadron, Admiral Otto v. Diederichs, carried out the Kaiser's original order and occupied Kiaochow on November 14. Russia was placated, and Germany had acquired her long-desired far eastern naval base⁶⁷.

It was ironic, of course, that Kiaochow's strategic significance had already declined with Tirpitz's accession to office, and his determination to build a battle fleet in home waters, rather than cruisers abroad. But as long as German trade with the Far East was increasing, and Germany would be participating in political decisions there, the Navy would have to maintain warships in the area. Given that political fact, and the logistical difficulties of servicing and maintaining a squadron some 10,000 nautical miles from the nearest German naval base, the advantages of Kiaochow were obvious to all elements of the Navy. Tirpitz himself later always took a special interest in Kiaochow, and sought to advance its development, not only as a naval base, but also as a commercial and cultural enterprise. He insisted it be administered by the RMA, rather than by the OKM or the Foreign Office; and when a later governor, Admiral Oskar Truppel, opposed the creation of a German-Chinese Hochschule, Tirpitz fired him⁶⁸.

Whatever the value of Kiaochow, it was not as a base in a projected network of Stützpunkte for a cruiser-warfare strategy. Financing cruisers and bases abroad would be detrimental to the building of Tirpitz's battle fleet in home waters. Tirpitz's concept was confirmed as the result of the Spanish-American War a few months later, when Spain's colonial empire was obliterated in a few weeks, primarily by decisive fleet action. Spain's overseas bases proved to be death-traps for the warships caught there. »The experiences of the recent war«, maintained the naval journal *Nauticus*, »con-

firm that the principles of the German Navy, as laid down as the reason for the (new) Navy Law, are on the correct path for the construction of the fleet.« Regarding the *jeune école* doctrine, »Kreuzerkrieg is a utopia!«⁶⁹ No detailed plans for acquiring a network of bases strategically located around the world was ever drawn up, no bases of any significance were ever developed in any of Germany's colonies, and no bases were acquired elsewhere. The idea that there ever existed a *Flottenstützpunkt-politik* is a tantalizing but illusory one⁷⁰.

The Navy's role in Kaiser Wilhelm's »Jack-in-the-box« diplomacy can better be explained in terms of his *Prestigepolitik* for domestic or foreign consumption, which seldom represented a consistent policy. There is no better example of this than the sending of Admiral v. Diederichs' Cruiser Squadron to Manila Bay in June 1898, to observe and report on Admiral George Dewey's blockade of the Spanish forces there. Knorr dutifully prepared a memorandum considering a naval base in the Philippines, particularly at Palawan Island, though pointing out the disadvantages of overseas bases. In any case, Foreign Secretary Bülow had already told Tirpitz that the Kaiser had decided against a German protectorate over the Philippines themselves⁷¹. The belligerent German presence served only to anger Dewey and the United States, and give the Spanish a promise of support that was not fulfilled⁷².

A residual Navy interest in further colonial acquisitions, rationalized by the desirability of additional coaling stations, continued to influence at least the OKM, which dealt with logistical problems, and its successor, the Admiralstab der Marine (AdM) or Admiralty Staff of the Navy. In his long memorandum of July 13, 1898 on overseas bases, Knorr concluded, »The only advantage of Stützpunkte, in a war with England, would be that they would attract and hold enemy forces.« Little money should be wasted on them. »This conclusion, however, should not be taken to oppose the acquisition of overseas territories, if such opportunities offer themselves.« Coaling stations would still be convenient, as long as they could be acquired without difficulty⁷³. But this interest was a very peripheral one, and in no way reflected German naval strategy or policy.

American preoccupation with the Spanish war did prompt Knorr to point out to the Kaiser the advantages of a coaling station in the Caribbean Sea, mentioning Curaçao and Aruba in the Dutch West Indies and St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John in the Danish West Indies. The Dominican Republic, in fact, even offered Germany a naval base (presumably to offset an imperialistically ambitious America). But the Kaiser realized there was more involved than maritime requirements, and regarding the latter offer he said that he »would not fall into such a trap« nor did he wish to »set himself at odds with the United States«⁷⁴.

Albert Ballin, director of the Hamburg-America steamship line (HAPAG), did pursue the idea of a Caribbean coaling station, and received Tirpitz's support in devising a plan to buy the Danish island of St. John. Chancellor Hohenlohe and the Kaiser opposed the idea, however, and it was dropped⁷⁵. There was nothing sinister, of course, about naval – or mercantile – interest in possible coaling stations, as coaling was a concern of all maritime nations. (These same Virgin Islands were purchased by the United States in 1917.)

On their routine patrols German warships visited numerous other locations, including Spanish Fernando Po off West Africa, and the Farisan Islands in the Red Sea. The Turks did apparently agree to the erection of a German coal shed in the Farisan Islands for a nominal rental fee; but the islands were hot, barren, and infected with cholera, the Red Sea would be too easily controlled by the Royal Navy in wartime, and Aden was more convenient in peacetime⁷⁶. The Foreign Office later suggested a coaling station on the Pacific coast of Mexico at Magdalena Bay. But the AdM

believed that the United States would object, and it was soon learned that the Americans had leased the bay for three years anyway⁷⁷. Other Admiralty Staff studies included the Chagos and Maldive Islands in the Indian Ocean, Pulo Lankawi in the Strait of Malacca, and Sumbawa Island in the Dutch East Indies. As the first two island groups were controlled by Britain, such acquisitions would presumably have been negotiated.

Like the Manila Bay incident, the Samoan imbroglio, which broke out into violence again in January 1899, also reflected a confusion of goals. Only on October 10 did Foreign Secretary Bülow write both Tirpitz at the RMA and Admiral Felix Bendemann, chief of the new AdM, regarding the Navy's desires. The government, he said, was considering relinquishing its claims to the Samoan and nearby Tonga Islands, in exchange for compensation elsewhere, particularly in the Solomon Islands and the mouth of the Volta on the West African gold coast, adjacent to German Togoland⁷⁸. Bendemann and Tirpitz both felt the Solomons and the Volta were worthless. Bendemann suggested the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean, and Tirpitz named Zanzibar and Walfish Bay. But Tirpitz argued strongly in favor of Samoa itself, both as a naval base and as a station for a trans-oceanic cable. Yet he knew that the United States would get the only decent harbor in the group, Pago-Pago at Tutuila, and it is apparent that Tirpitz only wanted to prolong the quarrel to point up the need for a larger German Navy⁷⁹. In the treaty concluded on November 14, 1899, Germany received Upolu and Savaii, in neither of which the Navy had any interest.

The Samoan quarrel may have assisted Tirpitz's new Navy Bill in the Reichstag, but the decisive factor came with the South African War and British suspicion that the Germans were supplying the Boers. In December 1899 British warships seized the German mail steamer »Bundesrath«, and in January 1900 stopped the steamers »General« and »Herzog«, on suspicion of carrying contraband. German indignation was intense, and the impunity with which the British stopped German ships awakened the German public, as nothing else might have, to their utter helplessness on the high seas. »Now at last«, gloated Tirpitz, »and thanks to the English, we are sure of getting the support we need for the Reichstag to pass the new Navy Bill.«⁸⁰ A German battle fleet might indeed restrain English arrogance, but German dependence on the coaling ports of the British Empire was once again exasperatingly manifested in the summer of 1900. As a demonstration of German naval power at the time of the Boxer Rebellion, the Kaiser despatched a large force, including the four latest »Brandenburg«-class battleships, to the Far East; but they had to coal at Gibraltar, Port Said, Aden, Colombo, and Singapore to get there⁸¹.

The Navy's peripheral interest in coaling stations played little role in the diplomatic crises that strained relations in the opening decade of the Twentieth Century. Toward the end of the first Moroccan crisis the Foreign Office requested the Navy's views on adequate territorial compensation from the French. The RMA passed the request on to the AdM, with a suggestion by Tirpitz that a harbor on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, or French Somaliland with its shipping port of Djibouti, might be useful. Chief of the Admiralty Staff Wilhelm Büchsel in turn listed Dakar as well as Djibouti, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean, and Tahiti in the South Pacific. Nothing came of it all, nor did the Navy expect much; and the reply to the Foreign Office was routine⁸². The Navy also had no interests at stake in the second Moroccan crisis of 1911, and sending the little gunboat »Panther« to Agadir was a political act.

Not only did the Navy not show much interest in further colonial acquisitions, it resented the responsibilities incurred by the existing ones. The Herero uprising in Southwest Africa in 1904, and the Maji-Maji Rebellion in East Africa in 1905, both required the employment of warships and marines. The Navy refused to allow any of

its personnel to be subordinated to colonial Schutztruppe control, for example insisting that »the basic idea in sending naval infantry as reinforcement for East Africa was solely to release Schutztruppen for employment in the interior«⁸³. Battlefield cooperation, however, was effective.

The Navy's financial commitment in the colonies was also kept to a minimum. At Dar-es-Salaam, for example, a floating dock that could take small cruisers of the »Condor«-class had been put into operation in 1902, with construction expenses shared by the Foreign Office and the RMA. By 1907 the Colonial Department felt a floating dock with greater capacity was desirable, but it was unable to appropriate sufficient funds, and the Navy was unwilling to do so⁸⁴.

This was not the case with Kiaochow, the only »colony« acquired and administered by the Navy. Extensive funds were allocated to develop harbor facilities and defensive works, to serve and protect commercial and naval interests in the Far East alike. But while Kiaochow was the peacetime base for the Cruiser Squadron, it would not serve as such in a war with a major naval power. While operations under the various contingency plans would depend on the power or powers involved, warships would rendezvous in isolated Waworada Bay, Sumbawa, in the Dutch East Indies⁸⁵. The Japanese blockade of Port Arthur in 1904 further confirmed the American blockade of Santiago in 1898 in demonstrating that a fortified naval base overseas might only be a death-trap. As Rear Admiral Friedrich v. Ingenohl, commanding the Cruiser Squadron in 1910, wrote Tirpitz, »The type of warfare prescribed for the Cruiser Squadron in all cases requires operations which exclude the utilization of Tsingtao as a repair facility and as a base in general.«⁸⁶.

Coal resupply remained the greatest problem for warships abroad confronted with a superior naval power. Land depots would be too easily patrolled or destroyed, nor could warships themselves be accompanied by slow colliers. In 1910 the RMA approached the Hamburg-America Line, hoping that with the HAPAG's numerous ships and foreign commercial connections, some arrangements for coaling warships could be made. But the HAPAG's ships themselves would be hard-pressed to find safety, and the problems of distributing code-books and changing cipher systems and radio frequencies were formidable. »The result was negative«, concluded the RMA⁸⁷. Individual transports and warships abroad were given secret wartime instructions, directing them to neutral ports or isolated rendezvous, depending on their location and the alignment of belligerents. In all cases they were to avoid being trapped in German colonial harbors⁸⁸.

The colonial officials gradually realized that the Navy could not be depended on to protect the colonies in time of war, and on October 28, 1912 Dr. Wilhelm Solf, State Secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office (Reichskolonialamt), pointedly raised the question with the head of the Admiralty Staff. On December 6 Admiral August v. Heeringen replied, lamely suggesting that the individual governors confer with the ranking naval officer on the relevant station. As to sharing funds for colonial defense, he referred Dr. Solf to the RMA⁸⁹.

The discussions between the colonial officials and the Navy station commanders in the spring of 1913 were not encouraging. To be sure the senior officer on the East African station, Axel Walter, enthusiastically drew up proposals to defend Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga, including shore batteries and minefields. But he admitted the question of expense would have to be settled in Berlin, and nothing was done⁹⁰. For Southwest Africa Lieutenant Commander Schnabel of SMS »Panther« suggested shore batteries at Swakopmund and Lüderitz Bay, but felt that landings could not be prevented and that the colony could »in no way be secured«⁹¹.

The defense of little Togo was considered hopeless, and for Kamerun the Schutztruppe

commander felt that the only chance for the colony was that the less significant the port of Duala seemed, the less an enemy would be willing to pay for it in casualties. The colonial administrators even hoped that Duala might be spared altogether, as the 1907 Hague Convention forbade bombardment of unfortified places. But the senior naval officer on the West African coast, Hubert v. Rebeur-Paschwitz, pointed out that the Convention excepted »maintenance shops and installations which could be made useful for the requirements of an enemy fleet«. Under that qualification, he added, »more or less everything falls (i. e., floating docks, maintenance shops, barracks, etc.)«⁹².

In the Pacific the prospects were equally discouraging. Lieutenant Commander Zuck-schwerdt on the Australian Station could only advise the governor of Samoa to destroy the wireless station, extinguish the harbor entrance lights of Apia, and enter into negotiations with the enemy commander. New Guinea was also considered indefensible, as were the South Seas island groups⁹³. The naval base at Kiaochow, of course, was fortified and garrisoned. It would hold out as long as possible, in the hopes that a European war would be short; but the operations plans for the Cruiser Squadron called for it not to be trapped at Kiaochow.

In April 1914 Dr. Solf of the RKA summed up the situation to Admiral Hugo v. Pohl, Chief of the AdM. Only Dar-es-Salaam and Duala might be defended against a light-weight attack; against a serious invasion, the colonial Schutztruppen could only fight a delaying action until the treasury and official records had been removed to the interior. Solf again wanted to know what naval action the AdM could promise, and what funds for defense Tirpitz might contribute from the RMA. Pohl informed Tirpitz that the colonial defense measures were »worthless for the purposes of the Imperial Navy«, and Tirpitz concurred⁹⁴. Surrendering the coast meant that the colonies could not be supplied or reinforced, and that warships could not be reprovisioned or repaired. The colonies and the warships on foreign station were on their own.

When war did come in August 1914, the German warships abroad were rapidly swept from the high seas. Graf Spee's Cruiser Squadron quickly departed Kiaochow, but its chances of ever returning to Germany were remote. The other isolated cruisers and gunboats were all soon interned or destroyed. Disguised auxiliaries (Hilfskreuzer) and U-boats were effective commerce-raiders later, but they did not operate from bases overseas. Though some colonial forces resisted from the interior, the maritime approaches to the colonies were controlled by the Royal Navy.

The strength of the Royal Navy abroad rested not only with the numbers of warships maintained, but also in the profusion of bases and maintenance facilities and the colonial military forces of the Empire itself. Tirpitz was astute enough to appreciate that actual control of the sea abroad required far more than mere warships, and was unwilling to make the commitment necessary to make Germany a first-rate imperial power. But he did hope that political decisions overseas could be influenced by a military weapon within European waters themselves, hence the battle fleet.

It is academic to speculate on what colonial ambitions Tirpitz would have entertained had his battle fleet reached »parity« or »superiority« vis-à-vis the Royal Navy⁹⁵. The naval arms race consumed all the resources of the German Navy, and the development of expensive overseas bases would have been not only irrelevant, but actually financially detrimental, to the continued growth of a battle fleet. Whatever the ambitions of Germany's colonial administrators and enthusiasts, they came to realize that the German Navy had no interest in pursuing an expansionist colonial policy.

- ¹ See, for example, *Marine und Marinepolitik im kaiserlichen Deutschland 1871–1914*. Ed.: H. Schottelius, W. Deist. Düsseldorf 1972.
- ² J. Steinberg: *Yesterday's Deterrent*. London 1965, p. 201 (cit. Steinberg), describes »the resolution and stubborn determination of the three most influential men of the Imperial Navy to wrest from Great Britain her exclusive hegemony over the world's oceans«; and V. R. Berghahn: *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914*. New York 1973, p. 36 (cit. Berghahn: *Approach of War*), asserts, »The notion of a power-political instrument to be used by the Reich against Britain implied, of course, the idea of a future conflict.« Berghahn's analysis of Tirpitz's motives is in id.: *Der Tirpitz-Plan*. Düsseldorf 1971 (= *Geschichtliche Studien zu Politik und Gesellschaft*. Vol. 1.)
- ³ Berghahn, for one, feels that »Tirpitz wanted to bully the other powers into recognising Germany's need for a colonial empire.« *Approach of War*, p. 40.
- ⁴ The *Marine-Rundschau*. 6 (1895) urged this in such articles as *Der deutsche Seehandel* (pp. 373 ff.) and *Der Besitz von Kolonien* (pp. 709 ff.).
- ⁵ Bismarck's animosity was motivated by jealousy of Stosch's close relations with the Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm who later ruled briefly as Kaiser Friedrich III. See Fr. B. M. Hollyday: *Bismarck's Rival*. Durham, N. C. 1960 (cit. Hollyday).
- ⁶ Vizeadmiral a.D. Dr. v. Mantey: *Deutsche Marinegeschichte*. Charlottenburg 1926, p. 110 (cit. Mantey). Stosch's *Denkschrift in Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg i. Br.* (BA-MA) Fach 7169 RMA II. 2.1. S. 17. PG 68859. (PG numbers refer to documents in the German Navy archives micro-filmed by the British Admiralty and shared with the American Navy and National Archives.) I owe thanks to the archivists at both the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* and the *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv*, particularly Oberarchivrat Dr. Sandhofer, for assisting my research on the German Navy.
- ⁷ Hollyday, pp. 140–141.
- ⁸ Letter, Stosch to Freytag, April 22, 1875, quoted in Hollyday, p. 120. Stosch's ideas on the overseas emigrants were also later quoted in the article *Seeinteressen*. In: *Nauticus. Jahrbuch für Deutschlands Seeinteressen*. 1 (1899) 319–322.
- ⁹ Stosch supported, for example, the geographer Baron Ferdinand v. Richthofen's »German National Committee of the International Association for the exploration and opening of Central Africa«. Stosch to Richthofen, December 13, 1876; BA-MA F 7169 RMA II. 2.1. S. 17. PG 68858. On the other hand Stosch wrote to Otto Siemon in Panama on July 27, 1878, that no German naval station in the area was intended; and he was non-committal in correspondence with Eduard Delius, 1879–1880, regarding Costa Rica, Bogota, and even a part of the Pickens District in South Carolina to which Delius had inherited the land title; BA-MA F 4349 Admiralität XIX. 1.1.3.
- ¹⁰ Stosch to the Prussian Minister for Spiritual, Educational, and Health Affairs, v. Gossler, December 26, 1882; BA-MA F 7169 RMA II. 2.1.S.17. PG 68859.
- ¹¹ German naval service overseas, from supporting financial claims in Haiti and protecting German interests in Spain, to saving crews of ships stranded off the Liberian coast, is detailed in Mantey.
- ¹² H.-U. Wehler: *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*. Köln 1969, p. 427 (cit. Wehler). See also Caprivi's correspondence with Hatzfeldt of the Foreign Office regarding Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg's ideas of a settlement in Paraguay, January 1884. The Prince was the President of the *Deutsche Kolonialverein*. BA-MA F 4349 Admiralität XIX. 1.1.–2.
- ¹³ The defensive role envisioned for the Navy during the Caprivi era was exemplified by the building of the eight »Siegfried«-class ships, stubby little coast defense vessels mounting three 9.4 inch (24 cm) battleship guns in barbettes. They had only limited range and sea-going capabilities. Technical details of German warships are most precisely given in E. Gröner: *Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe, 1815–1936*. München, Berlin 1937.
- ¹⁴ M. E. Townsend: *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884–1918*. New York 1930 (cit. Townsend), is a dated but still useful history of the colonies. See also A. R. Carlson: *German Foreign Policy, 1890–1914, and Colonial Policy to 1914. A Handbook and Annotated Bibliography*. Metuchen, N. J. 1970, and W. O. Henderson: *Studies in German Colonial History*. Chicago 1962.
- ¹⁵ Bismarck referred the Caroline Islands dispute to Pope Leo XIII, who awarded them to Spain; but at least the Chancellor won the good will of the Catholic Center Party in the Reichstag. Germany later purchased the Carolines, as well as the Palaus and the Marianas (Ladrones), from Spain on December 10, 1898.
- ¹⁶ Bismarck later referred to Southwest Africa, for example, as a »little pot of sand«. J. H. Esterhuysen: *South West Africa 1880–1894*. Cape Town 1968, p. 66 (cit. Esterhuysen).
- ¹⁷ It is beyond the purview of this study to summarize the historiography of the debate. The current thesis of a »manipulated social imperialism«, argued by Wehler, has been questioned by P. M. Kennedy: *German Colonial Expansion. Has the »Manipulated Social Imperialism« been Ante-Dated?* In: *Past and Present*. No. 54. February 1972, pp. 134–141, especially regarding Samoa (Bismarck's Imperialism: the Case of Samoa, 1880–1890. Ed. by P. M. Kennedy. In: *The Historical Journal*. 15 (1972) no. 2, pp. 261–283). The synopsis by H. Pogge v. Strandmann and A. Smith: *The German Empire in Africa and British Perspective. A Historiographical Essay*. In: *Britain and Germany in Africa. Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. by P. Gifford, W. R. Louis. New Haven, London 1967 is suggested.
- ¹⁸ The Foreign Office did encourage the Navy to consider Palawan Island in the Philippines as a possible coaling station, at the time of the New Guinea acquisition; but more sober investigation showed, as Envoy Graf Solms wrote from Madrid, that Palawan was »incontestably Spanish«. Foreign Office

- to Caprivi (Admiralität), August 25, 1884; Solms to Bismarck, Madrid, October 4, 1884; BA-MA F 4349 Admiralität XIX. 1. 1. 3.
- ¹⁹ Townsend, p. 119. Bismarck expanded on this idea in the Reichstag on June 26, 1884 in answering Eugen Richter's criticisms that a colonial policy would involve expense and naval power; Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags. 5. Legislaturperiode, 4. Session, 42. Sitzung. Vol. 2. Berlin 1884, p. 1062 (cited hereafter as Reichstags-Verhandlungen).
- ²⁰ Bismarck first encountered this dilemma on September 25, 1884 when he met with a number of Hamburg traders interested in Kamerun, including Adolf Woermann, W. Jantzen, and J. Thormählen. H. R. Rudin: *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884–1914*. New Haven 1938, pp. 121–122.
- ²¹ The companies were the East African Company, the Southwest African Company, the New Guinea Company, and the Jaluit Company. Only the latter two survived past 1890. To coordinate colonial administration the Kolonial-Abteilung (Colonial Department) of the Foreign Office was created on April 1, 1890. It was replaced by the Reichskolonialamt (RKA) or Imperial Colonial Office in 1907.
- ²² »If Germany is to become a colonizing power«, said Gladstone later, »all I can say is God speed her. She becomes our ally and partner in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind.« R. First: *South West Africa*. New York 1963, p. 72.
- ²³ Ship movements are detailed in Mantey, pp. 141 ff. and 144 ff. See also Rangliste der Kaiserlich Deutschen Marine. Berlin 1885 and 1886.
- ²⁴ Wehler, p. 322.
- ²⁵ Dr. Richard Krauel of the Foreign Office to Goering, September 19, 1887; Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (BA) Kl. Erw., 340/III. Vol. 2. Goering's son Hermann was the later Nazi leader and creator of the Luftwaffe.
- ²⁶ The Arab slave trade is discussed in a later report on the general political picture of the Kolonialgebiet, September 1, 1892; BA-MA F 3419 MK XXII h./Vol. 1, PG 67346. The routine of blockade duty is covered by reports in BA-MA F 628 RMA XII. 2. 4. 43.
- ²⁷ The gunboats »Adler« and »Eber« were lost, and cruiser-corvette »Olga« was beached to save her. Two American warships were also sunk and a third beached, only a large British cruiser being able to escape the crowded anchorage. Mantey, p. 170. The best study of the Samoa question is P. M. Kennedy: *The Samoan Tangle*. New York 1974 (cit. Kennedy: *The Samoan Tangle*).
- ²⁸ Various items and reports concerning the Navy and Samoa are in BA-MA F 5078 AdM-B II. Samoa (and F 5079 for later developments).
- ²⁹ See W. Hubatsch: *Der Admiralstab und die Obersten Marinebehörden in Deutschland, 1848–1945*. Frankfurt 1958. In 1899 the OKM was replaced by the Admiralstab der Marine or Admiralty Staff of the Navy, with responsibility for operational planning but not employment.
- ³⁰ See Theodore Ropp's discussion in *Makers of Modern Strategy*. Ed.: E. M. Earle. Princeton 1952, pp. 450 ff.
- ³¹ Quoted in Admiral Tirpitz's undated Denkschrift on Valois' Seemacht, Seegeltung, Seeherrschaft. Berlin 1899; BA-MA N 257/44 Tirpitz Nachlaß. Valois had commanded the overseas Cruiser Squadron as Rear Admiral, 1890–1892.
- ³² The Royal Navy was indeed concerned with the commerce-raiding threat of both France and Germany. Patrolling the trade routes and convoying were measures analyzed but rejected, in favor of stationing cruiser squadrons at the focal points of converging trade routes such as Singapore and the Cape of Good Hope. This was the concept put into operation in 1914. A. J. Marder: *The Anatomy of British Sea Power*. New York 1940, pp. 98–100.
- ³³ See, for example, Knorr's Denkschrift of November 28, 1895 setting forth the OKM views on the future development of the fleet which attacks Hollmann's policy; H. Hallmann: *Der Weg zum deutschen Schlachtfloottenbau*. Stuttgart 1933, Chapter 4.
- ³⁴ The four »Brandenburg«-class and five »Kaiser«-class battleships were all built during the 1890s.
- ³⁵ Coal consumption calculations in Kapitän zur See E. Raeder: *Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern*. Vol. 1. Berlin 1922, p. 74. Raeder was Hipper's Chief of Staff at Jutland in 1916, and directed the Kriegsmarine during World War Two until 1943.
- ³⁶ Second in a series of articles after the Spanish-American War by Mahan, which the Germans avidly followed, in the *London Times* of December 1, 1898; BA-MA F 5086 OKM II. Am. 11a. The point was implicit in some of his earlier articles as well.
- ³⁷ Denkschrift from Knorr to the Kaiser at the time of the Spanish-American War, July 13, 1898; BA-MA F 3419 MK XXII h./Vol. 1. PG 67346.
- ³⁸ Esterhuysen, p. 170. Various reports are in BA-MA F 629 RMA XII. 2. 4. 44.
- ³⁹ See the angry letter of Dr. Bernhard Dernburg (Kolonial-Abteilung) to Tirpitz (RMA), April 16, 1907; BA-MA F 5122 AdM-B II. Deutschl. 23c.
- ⁴⁰ In 1914 *Dar-es-Salaam* was quickly found untenable, and the cruiser »Königsberg«, despairing of coal resupply, secreted herself up the Rufiji River where she was later discovered and destroyed.
- ⁴¹ The Japanese later established fleet and air bases at Rabaul and Kavieng in the Bismarck Archipelago, as well as at Truk in the Carolines, which were purchased by Germany in 1898.
- ⁴² See E. Nigmann: *Die Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika*. Berlin 1911. Nigmann was a Schutztruppen Hauptmann, 1903–1910. The force was nicknamed the »Wissmanntruppe« after its first commander.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 23. Orders in BA-MA F 4120 OKM II. 6. A. 13. Officers in the Schutztruppen were listed in the Marine-Rangliste from 1892 to 1895 and in the Armee-Rangliste after 1895.

- ⁴⁴ See some of the later (1900 and 1901) correspondence between Valois, on behalf of the Colonial Society, and the RMA, regarding the distribution of Schutzgebiet regulations within the Navy, and the expanded interchange of various publications between the two organizations; BA-MA F 4349 RMA XIX. 1.1.2.
- ⁴⁵ The articles in the annual *Marine-Rundschau*. 7 (1896) 387–398, *Eindrücke aus Deutsch-Ostafrika*, and 8 (1897) 246–266, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der deutschen Kolonialgebiete*, may be cited as examples of this.
- ⁴⁶ A. v. Tirpitz: *My Memoirs*. Vol. 1. New York 1919, p. 95 (cit. Tirpitz: *Memoirs*). Tirpitz commanded the Cruiser Squadron, 1896–1897, before succeeding Hollmann at the RMA. In November 1890 there were three steamship cruisers in the Cruiser Squadron, and a fourth cruiser and two gunboats on the East Asiatic and Australian Stations. *Marine-Rangliste*, 1891.
- ⁴⁷ Kaiser's telegram quoted by Chancellor Hohenlohe to Foreign Secretary Marschall v. Bieberstein, November 17, 1894; *Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914*. Ed.: J. Lepsius, A. M. Bartholdy, Fr. Thimme. Vol. 1–40. Berlin 1926/27, here vol. 9, no 2219, pp. 245–246 (hereafter cited as G.P.).
- ⁴⁸ Referred to by Marschall writing to Hollmann, March 11, 1895; G. P., vol. 14, t. 1, no 3645, pp. 5–7; also BA-MA F 2422 RMA XIX. 1.1.1. PG 60942.
- ⁴⁹ Marschall to Hollmann, March 11, 1895, and Hollmann to Marschall, April 17, 1895; *ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ Knorr to Admiral Hoffmann, September 26, 1895; BA-MA F 7562 AdM-B Kreuzergeschwader G. IIIa.
- ⁵¹ RMA memorandum on Wei-hai-wei, October 25, 1895; BA-MA F 2422 RMA XIX. 1.1.1. PG 60942. The British occupied the harbor in 1898 only because it was strategically located opposite Port Arthur, taken by Russia shortly before. They never intended to develop it commercially.
- ⁵² Schenck to Foreign Office, October 29, 1895; G. P., vol. 14, t. 1, no 3655, pp. 20–21. The German concessions, leased October 3d and 30th, are in J. Van Antwerp MacMurray: *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894–1919*. Vol. 1.2. New York, London 1921, here vol. 1, pp. 42–50.
- ⁵³ The involved story of the decision to seize Kiaochow may be found in the dated, but still useful, R. A. Norem: *Kiaochow Leased Territory*. Berkeley 1936. See also A. H. Ganz: *The Role of the Imperial German Navy in Colonial Affairs*. Ohio State University, Phil. Diss. 1972, pp. 76–134 (cit. Ganz).
- ⁵⁴ *The Holstein Papers*. Ed. by N. Rich, M. H. Fisher. Vol. 4. Cambridge 1963, no 608, p. 22.
- ⁵⁵ Kaiser's marginalia, Chancellor Hohenlohe to the Kaiser, January 7, 1896; G. P., vol. 11, no 2618, pp. 37–39. In the Anglo-German Treaty of August 30, 1898, Germany gave up any claim to Delagoa Bay for acquisition elsewhere in the Portuguese Empire; G. P., vol. 14, t. 1, no 3872, pp. 347–355.
- ⁵⁶ See Tirpitz's thirty-one page report to Knorr (OKM), September 5, 1896, Hakodate; BA-MA Tirpitz Nachlaß N 257/45; also F 2422 RMA XIX. 1.1.1. PG 60943.
- ⁵⁷ Kaiser to Hohenlohe, November 27, 1896, G. P., vol. 14, t. 1, no 3668, p. 43.
- ⁵⁸ Tirpitz: *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 97. Knorr to Kaiser, November 28, 1896; BA-MA F 2422 RMA XIX. 1.1.1. PG 60943. Communications between Tirpitz and Heyking are in *ibid.*, as well as the Tirpitz Nachlaß N 257/44, 45.
- ⁵⁹ Marschall to Hohenlohe, December 6, 1895; G. P., vol. 14, t. 1, no 3658, pp. 22–23. It is doubtful that the Foreign Office ever desired the acquisition of Amoy, for its status as a Treaty Port would have posed great diplomatic difficulties. A Russian squadron had indeed wintered at Kiaochow, 1895–1896; but Tirpitz realized that as there could be no direct link to their Manchurian railroad, the place was not of lasting value to the Russians.
- ⁶⁰ The Kaiser did have the OKM draw up a detailed plan for the seizure (*Besitzergreifung*) of Kiaochow Bay, which was approved by him December 22, 1896; BA-MA F 3408 MK XXIIc PG 67305.
- ⁶¹ Numerous works deal with this subject, including those by Jonathan Steinberg, Hans Hallmann, Walter Hubatsch, and Eckart Kehr, as well as the contributors in Schottelius and Deist, *op. cit.*
- ⁶² Vortrag des Oberkommandos der Marine, Aufgaben der Marine im Krieg und Frieden, und Immediatvortrag des Oberkommandos der Marine, May 10, 1897; BA-MA RMA III. 1.5.3., quotes from Steinberg, pp. 120–122.
- ⁶³ Memorandum in BA-MA MK I. f. l., included in Steinberg, pp. 208–223, as Appendix One.
- ⁶⁴ Reichstags-Verhandlungen, 10. Legislaturperiode, 1. Session 1898/1900, 119. Sitzung, December 11, 1899, p. 3295.
- ⁶⁵ Correspondence between the Kaiser and the OKM, and subsequent revised OKM orders to the Cruiser Squadron, November 10–14, 1897; BA-MA F 5168 AdM-B III. 1.8.
- ⁶⁶ Draft of telegram, Tirpitz to Hohenlohe, November 10, 1897; BA-MA F 2422 RMA XIX. 1.1.1. PG 60944. Steinberg, p. 155 fn, suggests this indicated Tirpitz's opposition to Kiaochow. But Tirpitz was very sensitive about his Navy Bill, and probably only objected to seizing Kiaochow at this particular time.
- ⁶⁷ The treaty leasing Kiaochow to Germany for 99 years was signed March 6, 1898. A further colonial scramble ensued as Russia leased Port Arthur on March 27, and England retaliated by leasing Wei-hai-wei on July 1; France acquired Kwangchow Bay on April 11, and England secured Kowloon on June 9.
- ⁶⁸ Tirpitz's determination to control Kiaochow may be found in the correspondence in BA-MA F 2423 RMA XIX. 1.1.5. PG 60949, and F 3408 MK XXIIc PG 67305, as well as Tirpitz: *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 100. The administration of Kiaochow is covered in J. E. Schrecker: *Imperialism and Chinese*

- Nationalism. Germany in Shantung. Cambridge 1971. For the fascinating Hochschule controversy, see Ganz, Phil. Diss, pp. 237–252 (see fn 53).
- ⁶⁹ Erfahrungen aus dem Spanisch-amerikanischen Kriege. In: Nauticus. Jahrbuch für Deutschlands Seeinteressen. 1 (1899) 125, and Die französische Marine, *ibid.*, p. 175. See also Admiral von Knorr's criticisms of Flottenstützpunkte of July 13, 1898; BA-MA F 3419 MK XXIIh. PG 67346.
- ⁷⁰ Documents in packets such as BA-MA F 5174a AdM-B III. 1–15. Überseeische Flottenstützpunkte 1898–1915 merely include various political-military reports, and in F 4292 RMA XIV. 1. 1. 7., correspondence between colonial and naval officials regarding the Navy's lack of interest in the colonies. O.-E. Schüddekopf: Die Stützpunktpolitik des Deutschen Reiches 1890–1914. Berlin 1941, is critical of Germany's failure to establish bases abroad.
- ⁷¹ Knorr's Denkschrift of July 13, 1898, *op. cit.*; Bülow to Tirpitz, May 18, 1898; BA-MA F 5085 OKM II. Am. 11a.
- ⁷² Diederichs-Dewey correspondence in *ibid.* Th. A. Bailey: Dewey and the Germans at Manila Bay. In: The American Historical Review. 45 (1939) 59–81, concludes that Diederichs was to strengthen the German position for acquiring the Philippines should the United States not do so. This is doubtful. Germany did purchase the Caroline Islands from Spain in December 1898, which the Navy privately thought worthless. Kennedy: The Samoan Tangle, p. 125.
- ⁷³ Knorr's Denkschrift of July 13, 1898; *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁴ Knorr to Kaiser, April 20, 1898; BA-MA F 3419 MK XXIIh. PG 67346. Count v. Metternich, adviser accompanying the imperial party, to the Foreign Office, Hannover, September 3, 1898; G. P., vol. 15, no 4204, p. 111.
- ⁷⁵ L. Cecil: Albert Ballin. Princeton 1967, p. 153. Various correspondence relating to the West Indies, though none by Tirpitz, continued into 1899; BA-MA F 3419 MK XXIIh. PG 67346.
- ⁷⁶ Correspondence between SMS Wolf, off Fernando Po, and the AdM, February–April 1900; correspondence between Tirpitz and the AdM, 1900–1901, regarding the detachment »Steamer Marie« in the Red Sea; report of SMS Condor to AdM, February 1901, regarding the Farisan Islands; and Admiral Diederichs (AdM) to the Kaiser, January 2, 1901, regarding the agreement with the Turks; BA-MA F 5174a AdM-B III. 1. 15.
- ⁷⁷ Minister Wangenheim to Foreign Office, Mexico City, August 19, 1907; subsequent correspondence September to November 1907; *ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ Correspondence in BA-MA F 5166 AdM-B III. 1.4b. Samoa.
- ⁷⁹ Tirpitz to Bülow, October 11, 1894; G. P., vol. 14, t. 2, no 4107, pp. 660–662. That Tirpitz only wanted to exploit the Samoan quarrel for naval propaganda purposes is also Kennedy's conclusion (*id.*: The Samoan Tangle, p. 218).
- ⁸⁰ Quoted in J. v. Kurenberg: The Kaiser. New York 1955, p. 128.
- ⁸¹ Reiseplan of the Battleship Squadron in BA-MA F 4467 RMA China.
- ⁸² Von Tschirschky (Foreign Office) to Tirpitz (RMA), September 21, 1907; RMA to AdM, October 11, 1907; AdM to RMA, October 22, 1907; BA-MA F 5174a AdM-B III. 1. 15.
- ⁸³ RMA (Ahlefeld for Tirpitz) to the Foreign Office, probably September 1905; BA-MA F 5194 AdM-B VII. 1.5a. Regarding Southwest Africa see, for example, Colonel Wyneken, Inspektion der Marineinfanterie, to the Kaiserliche Kommando der Marinestation der Ostsee, Kiel, December 10, 1904; BA-MA F 4623 OKM Station der Ostsee III.15.1.
- ⁸⁴ See fn 39.
- ⁸⁵ Kreuzergeschwader Operations Plans dated 1900, and for some years thereafter; BA-MA F 5170 AdM-B III. 1.9b. Waworada Bay was given as 8°44' S. Lat., 118°47' E. Long.
- ⁸⁶ Ingenohl to RMA (Tirpitz), Nagasaki, April 23, 1910; BA-MA F 5205 AdM-B VII. 1.8.
- ⁸⁷ RMA Denkschrift on Kreuzerkrieg, April 24, 1911; BA-MA F 5167 AdM-B III. 1.5a.
- ⁸⁸ Instructions to various warships in BA-MA F 5172 AdM-B 1.9b., F 5166 AdM-B III. 1.4g., etc.
- ⁸⁹ Solf (RKA) to Heeringen (AdM), October 28, 1912, and Heeringen's reply, December 6, 1912; BA-MA F 4292 RMA XIV. 1. 1. 7. The RKA had succeeded the Kolonial-Abteilung in 1907.
- ⁹⁰ Walter to Geheimrat Methner, representing Governor Dr. Heinrich Schnee, March 13, 1913, forwarded with a cover letter to the Reichskolonialamt, March 19, 1913; *ibid.*
- ⁹¹ Schnabel's communication reported by Governor Seitz to Dr. Solf, Windhuk, November 8, 1913; *ibid.*
- ⁹² Togo Governor Herzog zu Mecklenburg to RKA, Lomé, April 17, 1913; Schutztruppen Major Fabricus to Kamerun Governor Dr. Ebermaier, Soppo, July 3, 1913; Rebeur-Paschwitz to Kamerun government at Buea, from Victoria, January 14, 1914; *ibid.*
- ⁹³ Samoan Governor Dr. Schultz-Ewerth to the RKA, Apia, November 9, 1913; New Guinea Governor Hahl to RKA, Rabaul, January 20, 1914; *ibid.*
- ⁹⁴ Solf to Pohl, April 21, 1914; Pohl to Tirpitz, May 19, 1914; *ibid.*
- ⁹⁵ This possibility became feasible with the launching of HMS »Dreadnought« (1906) and the introduction of the all-big-gun ship principle, negating England's previously unchallengeable numerical superiority.