



Duke University--University of North Carolina National Security Policy Seminar

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# DUKE UNIVERSITY — UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY SEMINAR

By THEODORE ROPP\*

## ORIGINS, ORGANIZATION, AND PROGRAMS

THE origins of the National Security Policy Seminar are already veiled by the mists of history. The success of the Duke Commonwealth Studies Program led Professors Connery, Holley, and Ropp to elect themselves to a similar committee for military studies at Duke and to coalesce with a similar UNC group in 1957-1958. The combined group formed an informal, interdisciplinary, interuniversity seminar which has held six regular and various *ad hoc* meetings annually since 1958-1959.

Papers are general summaries of research in progress and considerable informal discussion now precedes and follows each hour and a half session. Interested staff, graduate students, military personnel, and townspeople have been recruited until attendance has been stabilized during the past two years at twenty to thirty persons. The group may become too large for the seminar format, but its present clientele of about forty insures lively and informed interdisciplinary discussion and respectable turnouts for distinguished visitors. The somewhat similar limits on the normal attendance at the long-established Erasmus Club and the Trinity College Historical Society may indicate that active university communities tend to form new groups when older ones become too large to meet the intellectual's real need for informed criticism by his peers; while organizations which must resort to formal or informal pressure to assure attendance or which fail to reach this size within a reasonable time do not reflect enough real interest or contain enough intellectual content to be worth the effort.

\*The subtitle of these remarks is "A Four-Year Balance Sheet." Professor Ropp of the History Department, Duke University, delivered the talk to the Old Trinity Luncheon Club at Duke, May 18, 1962. It should be of interest to other members of the academic community.

A chairman and a secretary are chosen annually by a policy committee which was to consist of one staff member from Political Science, History, and Economics at each university. No economist from either university has attended the 1961-1962 sessions. The seminar should now attempt to broaden its base by recruiting interested economists, social psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers, but such recruits can now be invited to invest their time in a going concern with a solid foundation in two disciplines, agreed goals, and methods of procedure.

The seminar has no budget. Each university pays, on occasion and on request, the expenses of outside speakers and for mailing or mimeographing. Proposals for major or minor foundation grants were worked out in 1959-1960, but no money was obtained. These proposals were approved in principle by the authorities of both universities and any future proposals will undoubtedly benefit from the seminar's increasing experience. Since the ROTC staffs are not permanent members of the two faculties, they do not serve on the policy committee but have given it excellent advice and their cordial cooperation.

One by-product of more regular contacts between the graduate students and staffs of two disciplines and two universities is broader and better informed support for individual requests for foundation awards. Another by-product is increased staff and graduate student participation at other university functions. Seminar members have made special efforts to see that others met such distinguished visitors as James M. Gavin, Michael Howard, Henry Kissinger, Louis Morton, and Harry Howe Ransom. Such meetings are easy to arrange by telephoning the responsible contact men on the other campus. Such

informal contacts between the two university communities are not new, but their effectiveness is greatly increased when individuals know whom to contact, who is interested in a specific problem, and who has ideas which might be of particular interest to his own classes, his seminar, or to an unexpected visitor.

The 1962-1963 program includes papers by one staff member, one graduate student, and one visitor from each university. Previous activities can be indicated by an analysis of the thirteen meetings of the past two academic years. Six staff members read papers. A Duke political scientist and a Duke historian dealt with their forthcoming biographies of James Forrestal and General John M. Palmer. Two UNC political scientists dealt with the cold war and Congressional authorization of weapons systems. A UNC historian ventured into economics in a discussion of the relations between the British government and the aircraft industry in the interwar period. A Duke historian dealt with the political and strategic factors affecting a middle power, Canada, in several multinational military organizations.

These descriptions indicate one of the seminar's most valuable features. Members can submit their ideas in their formative stages to informed and helpful criticisms from members trained in other disciplines. The line between political science and history is quite unclear. Such criticism, for this reason, can be very stimulating. All six staff members, it might also be noted, found outside support for these projects.

Four visitors— from the Royal Military College of Canada, Allegheny College, Vanderbilt, and the Advanced School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins—read papers. Two were historians and two were political scientists. Two were visitors at Duke and two at UNC. All dealt with current topics in the light of history: "The Korean

War: a Ten-Year Retrospection," "Military Education in the Nuclear Age," "The Role of the Non-Service Connected Military Analyst," and "National Defense and Democratic Government." One graduate student in political science presented a paper. An Air Force officer, who will teach at the Air Academy, analyzed the problems of unconventional warfare.

A professional soldier, an historian, and a political scientist discussed a significant military work by a sociologist: Morris Janowitz's social and political portrait of *The Professional Soldier*. The panel found that it was very stimulating and that it would have greatly benefited from interdisciplinary seminar discussion before publication. The eleven papers already mentioned were not mimeographed for distribution before or during the meetings, though a one-page précis or outline could be useful and could easily be distributed with the announcements of each meeting. All of these papers were informal "think pieces" rather than finished scholarly products, but it can also be claimed that this emphasis on ideas has been the key to the seminar's usefulness and the gratifyingly large attendance at its meetings.

The most ambitious event of the past two years was suggested and for the most part organized by a history graduate student. This was a 1961 Symposium on the History of Air Power, under the joint sponsorship of the Seminar and the Air Force Historical Foundation. More than fifty persons attended the sessions. Duke provided a dinner for all out-of-state guests and program participants and housing for some of the latter. The three formal papers—by staff members at the University of Colorado and the Air University and a New Jersey psychiatrist who has written the standard work on the Zeppelins in the First World War—were published in the *Air Power Historian*. Younger scholars in this neglected field had a rare opportunity

to get acquainted with each other and with older scholars and to exchange information about work in progress. Three aviation book dealers and representatives of the aviation press, the Air Academy, NASA, Bolling Field AFB, the Library of Congress, and the National Air Museum also attended the sessions.

#### GRADUATE WORK IN THE RESEARCH TRIANGLE UNIVERSITIES

This luncheon group, which can be assumed to represent informed Duke opinion, can also be assumed to be as interested in our seminar's future as in its past, and to be particularly interested in that future in relation to the general problems of graduate work at our two universities, and the present status and future prospects of military studies in general. My comments on graduate work will be confined to my interpretation of the views of two former Duke graduate deans, Drs. Paul Gross and Allan Cartter, and the stimulating discussion of these problems by Dean Alexander Heard of the University of North Carolina at a recent Duke AAUP meeting.

Dean Heard believes, first, that the existence of two major universities within fifteen minutes of each other is a prime asset to both of them. Each university aids the other in maintaining standards, raising salaries, and expanding its intellectual resources. Both universities are genuinely free. Their faculties have taken the lead in repulsing every effort to limit free discussion in North Carolina and have aided their colleagues and former students in battling the forces of McCarthyism, Birchism, and racism throughout the Southeast. The urban-rural complex in which we are located is increasingly rich in cultural opportunities. We can, in good conscience, still recruit free men from any section of our country.

Dean Heard's second point was both discouraging and heartening. Our state's and

region's poverty affects both universities. Seventeen states had 1961 per capita incomes under \$1900. Our \$1640 was under the average for the Southeast, \$1653, but placed us in the middle of these seventeen states.

Dean Heard's third point was historical. Our national reputations in the past thirty years were largely made by individual scholars who assumed leadership in new or regionally-significant fields. They were encouraged by national foundations who were committed to the development of the South. Such missionary money is now going overseas. Neither university is now a missionary enterprise. Both are on their own in a national competition.

In the ensuing discussion, Dr. Gross made a fourth major point. Duke's size and comparatively limited resources are serious handicaps in competing for cooperative, group, and governmental research projects. Cooperation within the Research Triangle complex is imperative, but we will still be handicapped in competing with the great research complexes of California, New England, and New York. I think that the most nearly comparable urban-rural institutions are Cornell and Princeton. Their success in maintaining their national standings during the past thirty years suggests possible solutions to our own problems. Princeton's early leadership in Near Eastern and military studies, to take two examples, has enabled them to compete effectively in these fields with much larger universities.

#### MILITARY STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Military studies in the social sciences are relatively new, intellectually stimulating, and nationally significant. The history of military history is both fascinating and pertinent to the present development of other military studies. As developed by the great German historian Delbrück, it reached a dead end in Germany after the First World War in po-

litically-motivated efforts to find solutions for current military problems, solutions which, it can also be contended, played major roles in the destruction of Delbrück's Germany. His account of the battle of Cannae deeply influenced German strategy.

This topic leads to American stereotypes of the "military mind," a subject of some importance in civil-military relations and one which offers some of the most interesting stereotype examples in current circulation. Since these are regularly reenforced by foolish soldiers, the observation that soldiers are people too is as good an opening cocktail gambit as a similar remark about women, doctors, educators, or scientists. But some elaboration of the obvious about the professional soldier does throw light on military history and the current American boom in military studies.

The soldier's disciplined hierarchic organization cannot function without the specific responses now known as a doctrine of war. An officer must believe in this doctrine and communicate his belief to his men. He now needs a broad scientific and general education. He must be sceptical about detail, without becoming agnostic about his profession. His solutions to general military problems are unscientific, since he cannot control the conditions of his experiments.

One of his most important psychological needs is for certainty, the opposite of the research scientist's trained agnosticism. The common American view of the military mind reflects the 18th century's method of imposing this certainty on officers whose formal education ended at sixteen and who were usually entirely ignorant of any other "science." The greatest single military innovation of the 19th century was the German General Staff's application of scientific methods to sharply limited strategic and administrative problems. They failed, by and large, to apply these methods to weaponry and may have

lost both wars because of this failure. They made extensive use of historical examples, but ignored or suppressed observations by professional soldiers which did not fit the "agreed fable." The General Staff was competent by definition in narrow military matters, incompetent by definition in others. German planning for both wars was crippled by the planners' conception of their role and the factors to be considered.

Though the "mind" of the American professional soldier does not fit the stereotype, he still faces this inbuilt need for certainty. He is being given a wide general education, but he cannot be expected to be critical in more than one area or discipline. This is also true of the politician or an historian who dabbles in the social sciences, but politicians and scholars can compromise or leave certain business unfinished. The soldier's command responsibility is quite different.

Many soldiers, like other professional men, attempt to keep up with recent scientific progress. They are well aware that group research in the natural sciences has led to spectacular progress in weaponry. They cannot be blamed for believing, with many natural and some social scientists, that similar research will lead to scientific solutions for political and social problems. Interested parties are hawking military nostrums with all the resources of advertising and jargonry. Only very strong and critical minds—some of whom, in spite of clichés, have always entered the military profession—can keep their balance. In the short period since 1945, American military men have been successively oversold on strategical and tactical nuclear weapons, big conventional aircraft carriers, games theory, the financial analysis of military problems, and cold and guerrilla warfare. These, like the General Staff concept, are useful tools, but some of the products of the present military studies boom are worthless and some positively dangerous. But the

need for critical analysis—of traditional ideas about war, peace, the national state, as well as of gadgets and tactics—makes this an intellectually exciting field of interest.

The foremost military historians of the interwar period were General J. F. C. Fuller, whose work was seriously flawed by his flirtation with Fascism; Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, another vigorous participant in current controversies; and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, Professor of Imperial and Naval History at Cambridge. Liddell Hart's plea for university studies in military affairs was not heeded and this failure was to be one factor in the transfer of intellectual leadership in this field to the United States. The British universities' resources were limited, but they used these limited resources brilliantly in areas which seemed to be more closely connected with practical military policy. Richmond's chair went to an "Imperial" historian. His diaries, a key source for the naval history of the First World War, were edited by Arthur Marder, a Harvard Ph.D. of the late thirties, who became the historian of British naval policy from 1880 to the Washington Conference. Liddell Hart, a Cambridge man, was not offered the Chichele professorship in the history of war, the oldest such chair in the English-speaking world, when Cyril Falls retired in 1953. Liddell Hart's criticisms of the increasingly uncritical work of the official historians were dismissed as anti-Establishment complaining. Criticism by university scholars might have been taken more seriously and less resented.

The pioneer in American military studies was the late Edward Meade Earle, whose presence at the Institute of Advanced Studies stimulated military studies at Princeton in the late thirties. A few Yale, Chicago, Columbia, and Harvard graduate students were also working in this area, but Princeton was the real center. Its library was no better in this field than the others I have mentioned.

The greatest private library of recent military materials in the world—the Hoover War Library at Stanford—did not ignite students spontaneously. Most of the pioneer works—the Sprouts' two volumes on American naval policy, Bernard Brodie's two naval volumes, Earle's *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Marder's *Anatomy of British Sea Power*, and Quincy Wright's two-volume *Study of War*—were published during the Second World War. Brodie studied with Wright at Chicago before moving to Princeton. The first five of the eight volumes mentioned here were published by Princeton and established its leadership in serious military studies. All of the scholars whose names I have mentioned, except Wright, can be euphemistically described as no more than middle-aged, i.e., they were in graduate school in the thirties, the Kissinger-Herman Kahn generation is post-war.

Military history has been recently surveyed by Louis Morton of Dartmouth, Walter Millis of the Fund for the Republic, and Michael Howard of the University of London and the British Institute for Strategic Studies. The first two have published their findings. Morton's "The Historian and the Study of War," the most pertinent here, is in the current *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (XLVIII, pp. 599-613, April 1962). After the usual *caveat* that these experts are not responsible for my conclusions, I would conclude that military history and military studies in the social sciences follow the four approaches common to natural sciences.

The best example of large-scale governmental contract research, in this as in so many fields, is RAND. Though such research has in general been less effective in the social than in the natural sciences, RAND's successful projects have obviously been guided by people, such as Brodie, who knew what they were doing. It is equally obvious that RAND is a fine post-doctoral training

school in the social sciences. I would interpret Dr. Gross's remarks to mean that our two universities can compete with RAND only by carefully-chosen, carefully-staffed *ad hoc* projects.

The historical sections of the three services are writing good official history. We cannot possibly compete with them in their fields. All of them welcome participation by outside scholars, who can work for them under contract, or use outside grants to work in their offices. The Army's historical section has been considerably more effective in post-doctoral training than those of the other two services. Both of them did too much "out-house" contracting and failed to develop and hold competent "in-house" staffs. The Army histories are as good as those of the Navy and Air Force, except in style. One Samuel Eliot Morison can outwrite most individuals and any committee. None of the service schools has competed effectively with RAND or the service historical agencies. The Air University has suffered particularly from RAND competition, from its failure to recruit men from the official Air Force history project, and from its location at Maxwell Field, Alabama.

The Harvard Defense Policy Seminar at the Center for International Studies is a university-sponsored RAND, whose original purpose was the training of defense administrators. Similar seminars or institutes at Columbia, Wisconsin, and Ohio State have not yet produced comparable results. Columbia and Wisconsin found it difficult to recruit or hold key personnel. Too many fingers in what looked like a very large pie at Ohio State have pulled out raisins rather than plums. All three of these institutes have done good work, though no better than that which has been done by a handful of people at Dartmouth. Their experiences and Dr. Gross's warning are powerful arguments against the establishment of a special De-

fense Studies Institute in the Research Triangle area.

The fourth, or Princeton, approach can be summarized as normal graduate training in established disciplines, with some emphasis, both formal and informal, on national security problems. Such training is slow, but it does contribute to the solution of two of the most serious problems in military studies, the lack of trained personnel and public understanding. As in the history of science—which now seems to be entering that period of overspecialization which military history is leaving—quick results cannot be expected. The key requirements are a large enough staff to support an interdisciplinary approach, released time and support for staff research, and fellowships for graduate students. Princeton's collaborative volumes, it might be noted, grew naturally out of the research interests of specific faculty members, who then invited outside scholars to contribute.

This list has suggested our liabilities rather than our assets. We cannot compete with RAND, the armed services, or Harvard. We are not first in this field, we can only hope to emulate Princeton. But we have raised salaries to the Princeton level and our assets do place us within striking distance. Before they are summarized here, two digressions might be inserted for general information.

Is this an interdisciplinary field, like the history of science, which routine minds should not enter? The answer is the usual scholar's "yes, but." The "but" relates to what can be called the "battle buff" or "gee, whiz" approach to military history. For reasons which social psychologists and literary critics should explore for us, the idea of war as a game, military archaeology, and military western writing and reading are endlessly fascinating. All of them have come to flower in the great American Civil War boom. As war has in fact become too hor-

rible to contemplate, playing at past wars has become a major sport throughout the English-speaking world, and military history attracts motivated students at all levels. Some of them are educable. Those who are not can still do useful research, because so much of the field remains unexplored. A study of the social origins and education of the infantry officers of any Confederate state might be considered donkey work, but Frederick the Great made good use of his famous mules, who knew no more at the end of a dozen campaigns than at the beginning. If such a project were properly directed, it would be considerably more useful than one which has been completed in North Carolina, locating the graves of all the Confederate generals. The problem is that of all graduate education, the sympathetic direction of a manageable topic to provide the basis for a man's future career.

A second, unrelated point is whether there is any real argument for regional centers to study these national and international problems. Is this regional appeal more than a handy foundation gimmick? Here the answer seems to be "yes." American public opinion is still, in part, formed regionally, educational institutions are still partly staffed on a regional basis, and some funds are still available for regional distribution.

#### OUR ASSETS

Even the best informed Duke-UNC faculty member may not realize how great our assets are until he tries to compute them. Our libraries are clearly a major asset. An interesting map in R. R. Palmer's *Historical Atlas* shows circles representing library resources in 1950 as one indicator of the state of American culture. Our 1,000,000-2,000,000 volumes circle was one of three (the others were Austin and Los Angeles) south of Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and San Francisco. We are now in the more select

2,000,000 to 6,000,000 circle. Only three other circles on the original map represented cities of less than 100,000. These were for Champaign-Urbana, Ithaca and Princeton. It can reasonably be contended that life in Chapel Hill and the Chapel Hill side of Durham is more pleasant than life in Champaign-Urbana, and almost as pleasant as in Ithaca or Princeton. More seriously, we can also claim that our libraries compare well with the other three in the social sciences and history. In the military field, we may be ahead of Illinois and Cornell and almost as good as Princeton. We have been buying heavily in this field for nearly twenty years. Only a few service libraries, the Library of Congress, Widener, and the New York Public have long runs of the great military periodicals. These materials are almost unobtainable.

Our second major asset is a surprisingly large number of staff members who are familiar with military problems and who have worked or are working on military topics. In almost any specific military social science project, skilled counsel is available. This has been true of Princeton. Professors Palmer and Gordon Craig, to take two notable examples, did distinguished work in both military and general European history. Craig's move to Stanford did not wreck Princeton. He may well make the Hoover War Library a real center for military studies.

Third, in addition to the normal run of defense-related graduate courses, Duke happens to be offering two senior-graduate courses in this area: Professor Connery's "Civil-Military Relations in American Government" and a formal course in military history. Two courses do not make an Institute, but formal courses are not necessarily the key to success in this field. Princeton, for example, listed no graduate courses in military studies in 1961-1962, and does not list military history as a graduate field for



general examination for the Ph.D. My personal commitment to my own course has led me to feel that a broad course in military history can be as helpful to a beginner in this field as a course in international relations to that field, but such courses are still rare and not, on the record, essential.

A formal military studies seminar would probably have to be interdisciplinary and interuniversity to be very useful. Graduate students may already take appropriate seminars or courses at the other university, though few students in economics, history, or political science do so. Until we get substantial foundation support, we might experiment along these lines and continue with the voluntary joint seminar. At Duke, the present practice of allowing military history students to use their military history research papers in the regular field seminars has not proved unduly cumbersome. Each paper is subjected to two rounds of criticism and civilian students can see military historians at their work.

Our fourth major asset has already been listed. We have been in this field for some years. Our activities have attracted graduate students, visitors, books to review, and manuscripts to publish. Our graduate students meet live admirals and listen to them talk about their interests. The results may be disastrous. Much more frequently, in view of current American stereotypes about the military mind, they are highly salutary. Our visitors are inadvertently or deliberately giving our studies some of that stimulation which was clearly given to Princeton by visitors to the Institute of Advanced Studies. The experience of the Commonwealth Studies program clearly indicates that such interchange is a major objective of any formal

or informal interdisciplinary and interuniversity program in any field.

My opinions about our future utilization of these very real assets need only to be summed up. We should be able to manage foundation support if we can find it and if it does not divert our attention from our main job. Time is less important than direction. We can keep going on our present lines, without much outside support, without losing the impetus which our voluntary seminar has already given us. If a special military studies institute is indicated, it should be interuniversity and interdisciplinary, and further faculty member's normal research projects. It must operate with minimum overhead of men as well as money. It should not engage in make-work activities or worry about quick and easily measurable results. Its funds should be devoted to faculty released time, graduate students, occasional visitors, and publication. In this last field, the outlook is excellent. The present boom in military studies is only beginning. The services are increasingly aware of the necessity for broad, university-connected research and of civilian participation at all levels of military education. The Civil War boom is spilling over into other fields of American military history. The World War II boom is backing into other periods. These happen to be periods in which our libraries are very strong and in which reinterpretation is badly needed. The same seems to be true of theoretical studies in all of the social sciences, from social psychology to international relations. Without these theoretical foundations and without people trained in these disciplines, the more immediately practical studies which are necessarily supported by governmental and semi-governmental agencies will soon suffer the fate of so much traditional German scholarship.