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Arthur William Tedder  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE NAVY BEFORE THE RESTORATION

“THE credit of your navy is so greatly impaired that having occasion to buy some necessary provisions, as tallow and the like, your minister can obtain none but for ready money<sup>1</sup>”: so wrote the Admiralty Commissioners to the Council of State two months before the death of the Protector; nor was it the first time that they had written in that strain. The reins of government were indeed already loosening in Oliver Cromwell’s grasp, and the Navy early felt the change. The all too small assignments to the Navy had been diverted in part to the Army, and to pay the salaries of the Protector, the Judges and others. A naval administrator without money is like a sower without seed, and at a decent interval after the death of Oliver the Commissioners again wrote a bitter complaint to the Council giving a vivid picture of the financial condition of the Navy. They wrote, “we have several times laid before you the great straits and necessities of naval affairs and hoped something would have been done. . . . The late sad change has constrained us to silence, but the need becoming more pressing, and no whit provided for, we must remind you thereof, the

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* July 6th, 1658.

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rather that the receipts assigned to the Navy are again in part diverted and diminished, though falling very short of the charge. We have struggled to keep off clamours, but ships have to be kept abroad upon dead wages, contracts and debts are unpaid, the stores are unsupplied, and contracts for the ensuing year have to be disannulled. We beg that the Navy income may not be diverted, and that some course may be taken to carry on the service<sup>1</sup>.”

On September 3rd, 1658, Oliver Cromwell died, and on the 4th his son Richard was proclaimed Protector of England: “the Vulture died, and out of his ashes rouse a Titmouse<sup>2</sup>.” The trouble anticipated with so much eagerness by the Royalists seemed to be very far off. The proclamation was peacefully accepted throughout the country: the fleet under Rear-Admiral Bourne “made bold to manifest the truth of its affection by the expense of some powder from the several ships in the Downs<sup>3</sup>”—a proceeding for which Bourne was severely reprimanded<sup>4</sup>: which did not, however, prevent him from ‘making bold’ once again, on this occasion “to expend some powder to solemnize the funeral of his late Highness<sup>5</sup>,” precisely 14 days before that ceremony took place. Apart, however, from such small contretemps, the fleet adapted itself very readily to the change of government; and, with one or two exceptions in the Mediterranean squadron, there were no objections raised by the commanders against subscribing to an

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* October 14th, 1658.

<sup>2</sup> Heath's *Chronicle*, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* September 8th, 1658.

<sup>4</sup> *Rec. Off. Adm. Sec. In Letts.* September 10th, 1658.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* November 9th.

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address, which Mountagu prepared, swearing fidelity to the "undoubted rightful Protector<sup>1</sup>" as against royalist and republican. Indeed the fleet showed at this juncture the same loyalty towards its admiral that made it so important a force a year and a half later.

The change of government did not mean improved administration or finance so far as the Navy was concerned. A spasmodic attempt was made to remedy some of the abuses of absenteeism among the dockyard officials, but there was no alteration made at the root of the evil; the shortness of supply continued and, inevitably, its consequences developed and worsened. The political split that was growing, between the supporters of Richard and Fleetwood and his republicans, had a twofold result, in increasing the neglect of the Navy and in still further weakening the credit of the government: a strong healthy debtor is a more reliable person than one who is constitutionally weak. When it became necessary to set out a fleet, in November and again in February, the cry of the Navy Commissioners was for ready money. "Unless there be a present supply of money to provide necessaries," they write on February 14th, "there will be a full stop to your affair, for our credit is gone. . . . The hemp merchants deliver not what they have, because not paid for the former; timber, plank, cordage, and the like, not to be gotten because no compliance with bills. . . . Although we know that of late we have given good price for several provisions, yet now—men's stocks and credit being drawn out who have usually dealt with us—other men

<sup>1</sup> *Brit. Mus. E.* 999, 12, "A true Catalogue."

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will not deal upon any terms<sup>1</sup>.” Contractors, seamen and dockmen alike suffered from this intolerable neglect. Some ships had already gone 2½ years unpaid at Richard’s accession—some actually being still unpaid in the spring of 1660, a period of 4 years without pay<sup>2</sup>. Some contractors were bankrupt, others had paid the State’s debts with their own money, others borrowed to pay them. An estimate of the debts of the Navy to November 1st, 1658, gives the total as £541,465. 14s. 7d., of which £160,000 is due on bills already signed, £266,257 due for wages of seamen, £25,000 for wages in dockyards<sup>3</sup>. Eight months later the total has risen to £703,703. 16s. 3d., £210,000 due on bills, £317,600 in wages to seamen, £38,000 in wages in dockyards: the growing charge to December 1st is estimated at £549,490, making a total of £1,253,193. 16s. 3d., “towards which the provision already made exceeds not the summe of £260,000...,” the remainder “falls much short of answering the pressing occasions of the Navy unto which they are applyed.” “Present action” needs £20,000 a week and upward, while since May 31st “there has not been received £8,000 a week<sup>4</sup>.”

The following pathetic little series of letters is typical of the ever increasing volume of entreaties and complaints with which the Navy Office was inundated:

“DOVER, *July 2nd*, 1659.

Our need at Dover is so exceeding great that we are constrained to cry out to you to help us to the money due

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* February 14th, 1659.

<sup>2</sup> *S. P. Dom. Int.* cccxii. f. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Adm. Lib. MSS.* 8, Orders and Warrants, 1658–60.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* July 8th (“Report touching money for supply of Navall occasions”).

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to this poor town. Our condition is so bad that we are weary of making known our wants...3 quarters account due to us...

*August 6th.*

Is so much out of pocket, and so much engaged, that he cannot remain silent, but must still be begging a supply.

*August 10th.*

Hopes pity for their condition at Dover and an order for some money, as they are always in action, and as speedy with dispatch of business as any port in England<sup>1</sup>."

etc., etc.

"Let me be an humble petition," writes Major Bourne, a commissioner, "in y<sup>e</sup> behalfe not only of many hundreds of poore seamen and their distressed wives and children who are ready to starve (having their just pay kept back) and in y<sup>e</sup> name of many poore widdowes and families who are in danger of utter ruine for want of due payment for their goods; But also in behalf of divers other persons who tho' their estates are larger yet suffer extremely both in reputation and loss of Trade by a non compliance w<sup>th</sup> them in point of payment, who have given a vast credit to the Nation for supply of Navy stores...<sup>2</sup>."

With shortness of money came also the inevitable shortage and badness of victuals, and the State Papers contain numerous complaints against both quantity and quality. "At Woolwich," writes Vice-Admiral Goodson, "I find the men are victualled with fiery salt, old and rusty meat, and this not only by report but have seen and tasted some of it myself. At this place,

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* 1658-9, 1659-60 *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Rav. MSS. A.* 187. f. 1.

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when men have been at their labour all day, they cannot get their provisions till night<sup>1</sup>.”

In the face of such facts as these in the administration of the Navy, it is not a little surprising to find quite a considerable activity on the part of the State ships. It was probably the inertia of Cromwell's naval energy. He had initiated a naval policy which necessitated, and made use of, an effective permanent fleet: and even though the idea of a fleet as a purely diplomatic argument was not yet appreciated, the principle that a fleet was a unit that was usable for other things besides a battle *mêlée* was already deeply set. The new government acted on, if it did not understand, the principle, and the year following the death of Oliver is one of a naval activity that is extraordinary, in the light of the financial difficulties, when it is remembered that England was not at war and had no specially warlike thoughts against any of her neighbours.

Since 1657 there had been war in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden: in the summer of 1658 the Netherlands, after remaining neutral for some time, joined to support the Danes, and early in November they gained a hard-won victory. In the meantime the English government had decided to interfere with the object of ensuring a reasonable balance of power in those waters: neither a Dutch nor a Swedish supremacy was likely to favour the English trade. Sir George Ayscue was to go out and endeavour to mediate between Denmark and Sweden. The original idea was that wo “fit vessels<sup>2</sup>” should accompany him. Early in

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* February 10th, 1659.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* October 25th, 1658.

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November, however, a fleet<sup>1</sup> was ready to sail for the Sound under the command of Goodson : Ayscue was to go with it. On the 17th Goodson sailed from the Downs. Winter had already set in, and the English fleet, meeting some very rough weather, was forced to put in at Sole Bay. There Goodson was kept until the beginning of December. He made use of the time to supply the fleet with pilots or their substitutes : originally he had only one pilot. After "rummaging the fleet, according to the sea phrase," he found six mates and midshipmen somewhat "acquainted with the Sound," whom he distributed amongst the ships<sup>2</sup>. At length, early in December, he got clear of the coast and made for the Scaw, meeting with winter gales and heavy seas, and being "hurried to and again by the foul weather." Not until the 15th did the fleet arrive off the Scaw, and then "on account of the ice and violent cross winds<sup>3</sup>," it being impossible to get into the Sound, it was decided at a council of war to return to England. The following day the fleet was scattered by a violent snowstorm and gale, and when the whole of it had reached the English coast by December 30th, it was found that no less than 12 ships had more or less serious defects, one being entirely dismantled.

This unfortunate experience did not, however, deter the Parliament from preparing a still larger fleet to go to the Sound in the following spring. For a time the question was in doubt as to whether it should be sent: news of the Dutch preparations settled it. "It is a

<sup>1</sup> List in *S. P. Dom. Int.* cxcv. ff. 72-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* November 30th, 1658.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* December 21st.

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shame," writes a news-letter, "that wee should sitt still at home with our hands in our pocketts, and to let the Dutch goe with so great a fleete into the Sound, and so probably have it delivered up by the Dane unto them, and we sit still at home, and not to come and interpose by way of mediation to keepe the balance equall betweene those two Princes, that the Dutch may not take it from them both, and give a law to us as to our navigation, the wooden walls of the nation<sup>1</sup>." At the end of February, Parliament decided to send a fleet. On March 12th, Mountagu, having been appointed 'General-at-Sea,' went on board his flagship, the *Naseby*, on the 22nd he set sail with a fleet of 51 sail including 18 of 50 guns and over, 13 between 40 and 50, and 8 between 40 and 26. On April the 6th the vessels anchored in Elsinore Roads. He had arrived before the expected Dutch reinforcement, and immediately made precautions against their arrival, setting guards in the entrances to the Sound while he himself lay before the town and castle of Elsinore. He sent a letter to Opdam, the commander of the incoming Dutch fleet, explaining his mission; he desired Opdam's "assistance in promoting the peace" and asked, "that you will not suffer the fleet or fleets under your command to act in hostility against, or give any further assistance to either side, or act in such a way as may occasion jealousy between England and the United Provinces, whilst these endeavours are on foot<sup>2</sup>." In the meantime Goodson was given orders that if the Dutch attempted to relieve Copenhagen he was to

<sup>1</sup> *Clarke Papers*, III. 183.

<sup>2</sup> *Rawl. MSS.* A. 64, f. 43, printed in *Thurloe S. P.* VII. 645.



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engage them "and fight with, sink, take or destroy such of them as shall proceed to pass through as afore-said; the which myself and the rest of the ships of the fleet... shall second and stand by you in<sup>1</sup>."

At the same time that he wrote to Opdam, Mountagu had written to the Kings of Denmark and Sweden also explaining his mission, "a common friend to you both, contributing what in me lyes to remove those difficulties, that may be in the way of the peace<sup>2</sup>." The term 'common friend,' however, was not one that was true in any but a very superficial sense. The one constant factor in the negotiations was the utter distrust that the Dutch and English had of each other: Mountagu's feeling was best illustrated by his precautions; De Ruyter wrote home "that the English, as far as he was able to judge by their manner of Proceeding, seemed ill intentioned, notwithstanding all their fair Protestations, and that he believed they turned Affairs in that manner, with Design to favour Swedeland<sup>3</sup>." Mountagu had corresponding suspicions concerning the Dutch and the Danes. Consequently it was almost inevitable that his good relations with Sweden should prosper rather at the expense of his 'common friendship.' Then came the news that the two Dutch divisions under Opdam and De Ruyter intended to unite—which would have given them a united fleet of over 80 ships. In a council of war it was decided to berth the ships "in the most advantageous manner to hinder the conjunction<sup>4</sup>." Before

<sup>1</sup> *Sandwich MS. Journal*, i. 67 in Harris, *Life of Mountagu*, i. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Thurloe S. P.* vii. 645.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Tromp*, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup> *Sandwich MS. Journal*, i. 87-90, in Harris, *op. cit.* i. 128.

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even this plan could be put into execution there came the news which changed the whole face of matters so far as Mountagu and the English were concerned. Richard Cromwell had been deposed. His last instructions to Mountagu show how much the whole policy of the English towards the Dutch was changed: "you shall carry yourself friendly towards them and use your endeavours that by consent they may not give their assistance to the Dane, until the issue of the treaty be known, but not engage with them unless it be in your own defence<sup>1</sup>." The fleet accepted the new political change with the "very calme and good temper<sup>2</sup>" that characterises it through the recurring changes at this time; at a council of war it was decided, in the light of the new instructions, to withdraw northward to the Scaw, and from that time the English fleet is of interest merely as the focus for the intrigues that finally won over Mountagu to Charles, and through him, the fleet.

The other scene of active naval action was the Mediterranean. In July, 1658, it had been resolved in council, "on consideration of the Mediterranean trade, that a fleet be continued there of the same strength as formerly<sup>3</sup>": consequently Capt. John Stoakes remained out in those waters doing useful work in the way of pirate-catching<sup>4</sup>, of which the most noteworthy incident

<sup>1</sup> *Thurloe S. P.* VII. 666.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Intelligencer*, May 31st-June 6th, 1659.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* July 27th (Council Proceedings, 5).

<sup>4</sup> Piracy was not by any means confined to the Mediterranean: the Irish Sea was a favourite haunt of pirates, a large number of whom were Spanish. "There are great complaints by merchants of pirates being on the coast and none of the state's ships to look after them. . . . There are no less than 5 pirates now upon the coast, some carrying 22 guns apiece. . . if some course is not taken to secure the coasts all