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Military values and society Political implications in Britain

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Editorial

Imperial retreat, military decline... and then?

How is our glorious country ploughed?

Not by iron ploughs;

our land is ploughed by tanks and feet marching

These are the words of the artist P.J. Harvey in "The Glorious Land" (2010). On the surface, they are testament to the role of military values in British history, notably the waging of war in foreign lands to sustain and expand the Empire.

Yet Harvey's words are also ironic in their reference to tanks and soldiers. One of the peculiarities of British history is precisely the reluctance to concede a standing army, as *Richard Harding* points out in his article for this year's very first issue of *British Politics Review*. It is rather naval power that has been quintessential to British defence and to the maintenance of imperial rule. Sustaining Empire "on the cheap" meant small mercenary armies but a wide-ranging Navy to keep control and to secure free trade.

The overall significance of the maritime is reflected in the first and final articles of this issue. While *Harding's* contribution considers the sea-mindedness - and later sea-blindness - of British military policy, *Atle L. Wold's* article addresses the role of the battleship as centrepiece of British defence. He examines its history until the present day, addressing the evident sense of decline.

The role of the military in a British context also extends to the maintenance of the Union itself. *Andrew Sanders* looks at conflicting perspectives on the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland. *Jamie Gaskarth* draws on another source of contestation in discussing the use of torture by British allies in the counter-terrorism strategies of the last decade. Summarising the challenges of foreign and security policy in Britain today, *Rhiannon Vickers* reports on what changes the coalition government has incurred since taking office in 2010.

Finally, there is also an epic and literary dimension to the military, reflected in war poetry and novels. *Siren Frøytlog Hole* captures this aspect by looking at the authorship of Virginia Woolf, who was among the many authors to whom the First World War was a watershed - not only in a military and political sense but also, more poignantly, for humanity itself.

Øivind Bratberg and Kristin M. Haugevik (editors)

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Sea-mindedness and British defence policy

By Richard Harding

For many years now the Royal Navy and its advocates have bemoaned what has been termed the 'sea-blindness' of British society. In Britain today few people are directly engaged in naval or maritime employment, and people can travel to almost all parts of the globe by air without ever having to see the ocean or consider how the majority of the goods which they consume were brought to their country. It is therefore hardly surprising that the perception of defence on the sea as a critical national concern has faded. There are no immediate, potentially catastrophic, threats to national integrity or economic survival that come directly from the sea. Piracy and migration have economic and political repercussions, but do not pose existential threats. Terrorism and cyber-attack do not have the unambiguously clear naval dimension that the convoy battles and the amphibious threats of the twentieth century presented to earlier generations.

To some this is a natural reflection of a post-naval world which now exists. The globalised world economy is so interconnected that it is not, and will not, be in anyone's interest to disrupt the sea lanes of communication which would wreck extensive havoc on neutrals and belligerents alike. Navies are tremendously expensive, complex, difficult to construct, develop and maintain. Technological changes bring on obsolescence quickly, while for almost every state investments in hulls, other platforms, weaponry, electronics and, critically, training lag behind what might be the decisive force combination for any given situation. Currently, even old wounds which still have diplomatic resonance, like the dispute between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands/Malvinas, seem almost impossible to conceive of as being



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resolved by naval action as it was in 1982.

To others this is just a passing phase in world history as the United States' naval hegemony which has given NATO its power to intervene globally in support of its objectives since 1990, gives way to challenges from rising powers such as China. Today, Chinese maritime territorial claims in the South China Sea are forcing a 'pivot' in US defence strategy away from NATO towards its Asian allies. If and when the revival of state-to-state rivalry occurs, the certainties of the current maritime economic order will rapidly crumble.

Britain is in many ways exceptionally vulnerable to maritime dislocations. Her economy is highly globalised both in terms of supply and demand. But this dependence is not easy to translate into immediate political concern when the working of the global maritime economy seems subject more to financial turbulence than physical constraints. This 'sea-blindness' may be a feature of the modern economy, in so far as the maritime dimension is not visible to the public, but it may go far deeper than this. For over two hundred and fifty years, from about 1650 to around 1918, there was a powerful symbiotic relationship between the political nation and naval power which rested on three key foundations – *domestic political ideology, foreign policy imperatives and economic interest*. In other words it was deeply engrained in the political mind of the nation. Gradually, over the course of the last one hundred years these three foundations have crumbled and the sea-mindedness of the nation has diminished with it.

The navy held a special place in British political ideology.



"For over two hundred and fifty years, from about 1650 to around 1918, there was a powerful symbiotic relationship between the political nation and naval power which rested on three key foundations – domestic political ideology, foreign policy imperatives and economic interest."

The experience of army rule under the Commonwealth (1649-1660) was such a shock to the English gentry that they were determined that never again would they allow themselves be ruled by a monarch or general backed by the power of a large standing army. This was a deeply entrenched political axiom throughout the eighteenth century that played into a narrative of the navy as being the principal bulwark of national defence.

A powerful navy meant that no foreign enemy would ever be able to come by sea to overthrow the established political order, so no large standing army could be justified on the grounds of national defence which could be turned on the monarch's domestic political adversaries. British political liberties and national defence were guaranteed by the Royal Navy. Although the explicit references to the dangers of standing armies declined during the nineteenth century, the emotional principle remained intact. The revival of European state conflicts in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was attended by the growth of conscript standing armies. Britain resisted this invasion of the liberties of the subject even as it engaged in a massive continental war in Europe in 1914. By 1916 the voluntary principle was no longer militarily tenable and conscription came to Britain. Despite reluctance to commit again to Europe, British defence policy rested on supporting France in 1939 and conscription was reintroduced in April 1939 as the Second World War approached. National Service remained until 1960 when it was abolished for sound military reasons, but it resonated with political expectations as well. Nevertheless, the old ideology of naval defence in preference to large-scale armies had been seriously undermined by the experience of two world wars and an understanding that in future Britain's defence within NATO depended more on the armies of the Central Front and the speed by which conflict become nuclear than on traditional naval power.

The second foundation of Britain's sea-mindedness was its clear association with foreign policy objectives. Throughout the eighteenth century, through to the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815, the navy was held up as the key to national survival. By European standards the army was small, but the navy was consistently larger than its rivals. There were periods of near equality and even inferiority, for example during the American War of Independence, but on the whole the eighteenth-century Royal Navy was a global force of unrivalled range and robustness. British expeditionary armies played a role in defeating Napoleon in Spain, but it was the Royal Navy which protected

British trade and destroyed French commerce that provided the cash and economic wealth which enabled Britain to provide the subsidies to other European powers eventually to unite and destroy the Napoleonic empire between 1812-1814. Even starker in terms of political discourse was the role of the navy in defending Britain. For two years from 1803 to 1805 Napoleon threatened to invade Britain and the Royal Navy stood in his way. By the late summer of 1805 he had decided that his plans had been foiled and was marching his *Grande Armée* to face an Austrian invasion of German territories. Yet, when Nelson met the combined Franco-Spanish fleets and decisively defeated them off Cape Trafalgar on 21st October 1805 it was seen as saving Britain from invasion.

The personality of Nelson, the end of the invasion menace and the annihilation of the enemy combined to present the Royal Navy as the saviour of the nation. This perception of the Royal Navy remained throughout the nineteenth century and underpinned the naval developments and expansions that attended the revived threat of the French navy in the mid-century and the new threat of the German navy in the early twentieth century. This belief gradually weakened during the twentieth century. During the First World War the navy did not manage to reproduce another Trafalgar. Although its blockade of Germany played a critical role in undermining the Central Powers and ensuring the allies of Entente gained the vital quantitative advantage on the Western Front by the summer of 1918, its role was not as dramatic as that of the Allied army.

As the century progressed the rise of the United States and Japanese navies made it clear that the hegemony of the Royal Navy was no longer complete. In 1940, for political and propaganda reasons as much as anything else, the role of the Royal Air Force rather than the Royal Navy was trumpeted in the defeat of German invasion plans that summer. By the end of the war, it was clear that the Royal Navy was a junior partner in an alliance and by the late 1960s it was unclear if the navy had any role other than supporting the NATO.



Nelson wounded at Tenerife, 24 July 1797. Painting by Richard Westall (1765-1836), commissioned shortly after Lord Nelson's death at Trafalgar. Few personalities have contributed more strongly to the myths of British supremacy on the seas. Oil on canvas, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London).

Defence now rested on alliance politics, US naval power, air power and ballistic missile technology. With the withdrawal from empire, the growing links with Europe, the significance of NATO and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was unclear exactly what British diplomatic priorities were or should be and what role a navy should play.

Even the two great contributions of the Royal Navy to post-war military policy have proved contentious. The first was the introduction of the submarine-launched Polaris nuclear missile force in June 1969. With this, the Royal Navy took over the ultimate British deterrent from the Royal Air Force, but the question of nuclear deterrence has proved politically and institutionally divisive from the initial decisions in 1962/3, through the decisions to re-invest in the Trident missile system in the early 1980s and is likely to prove similarly, if not more, difficult when the real decisions about a replacement for the Trident system have to be made in 2016.

The second contribution to military policy was the retaking of the Falkland Islands (Operation Corporate) from Argentina in 1982. Prior to this, the Royal Navy was evolving primarily into a North Atlantic anti-submarine force and on the verge of being further cut in capability. Operation Corporate was a remarkable amphibious operation, demonstrating the reach and impact of effective naval power, but it was considered by some to have led to a dangerous distortion of British defence energies, which was further exploited by the navy at the end of the Cold War in 1990. A revival in amphibious forces and submarine strike capability (using submarine launched cruise missiles from 1999) to support a policy of liberal interventionism from the Balkans to West Africa and the Gulf has led to investment in a new generation of high-capability helicopter carriers/assault ships (Ocean, Bulwark and Albion), destroyers (Type 45), submarines (Astute class), the two new large aircraft carriers (Queen Elizabeth class), and new frigates or 'global combat ships' (Type 26).

The bulk of these ships will be in service by the mid-2020s, with an operational life expectancy of twenty to thirty years – by which time, critics argue, Britain's economic situation and the world context will be very different. The investment lead-times for modern warships are so long, so prone to alteration, diminution or cancellation, that naval capabilities imperfectly reflect the national foreign policy needs at any given time. The Royal Navy can no longer depend on a clear understanding of its role within the British

political nation. With national interest unclear in the absence of clearly defined immediate threats and long-term investment decisions based so much on future possibility, yet influenced by past experience and immediate economic and political circumstance, it is difficult to maintain a solid and consistent political case for the nation's sea power.

The third foundation of political support for the Royal Navy rested on clear economic interest. From the 1650s naval power was seen as an essential element in promoting wealth. Mercantilist laws and naval power worked together to protect British trade throughout the eighteenth century. In return, the burgeoning maritime economy provided the physical resources and finance from which the Royal Navy was created as a global force second to none. In the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly during the period of the 'New Imperialism' (c1870-1914) the link between empire, economy and naval power was a deeply held belief. Ultimately, the empire was held together by the navy as the keystone of imperial defence. However, this economic justification for the navy diminished throughout the twentieth century. The direct symbiosis between maritime economy and navy was declining by the mid-nineteenth century, but with the reduction in warship building (domestic and for export) after 1918 naval contracts became a smaller part of that industry. By 2000 the industry itself had largely disappeared from Britain. The retreat from empire after 1945, the turn to Europe and US naval hegemony made any close, let alone causal link, between the power of the Royal Navy and economic prosperity difficult to demonstrate. The argument remains valid and true, particularly with regard to the uncertain future, but its proponents can no longer rely on it being held as a deep assumption within British political society.

Today there is something of a real and metaphorical sea-blindness in so far as the navy and the sea are less visible in the lives of the average Briton. Modern media is able to provide a massive barrage of images and sounds that could remedy the lack of real visibility, but far more significant is that over the last century the key factors that had entrenched the navy into the British political psyche, or culture – a union of political, diplomatic and economic assumptions – has fallen away. The sea-mindedness of the nation has dwindled and naval defence policy can no longer draw upon these assumptions to chart a sustainable long-term course. In a world of quinquennial reviews, changing diplomatic and economic realities, the political demands for immediacy over long-term strategy and the ever rising costs and complexity of sea power, very little can now be taken for granted. It provides an extremely challenging context for naval planners, politicians and the public at large which deserves thorough and detailed analysis in itself.

"The retreat from empire after 1945, the turn to Europe and US naval hegemony made any close, let alone causal link, between the power of the Royal Navy and economic prosperity difficult to demonstrate."

Woolf in War – fictional and factual ramifications

By Siren Frøytlog Hole

“Walk through the Admiralty Arch [...] or any other avenue given up to trophies and cannon, and reflect upon the kind of glory celebrated there,” Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) encourages in *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Known for her unique ability to transform private experience into events of fiction, to let the moments of an individual character stand in for the collective, political, or societal focus, Woolf's perspective on war presents a curious case where the public and personal, factual and fictional intersect. The shadow of the First World War is sometimes vague but nonetheless a constant presence in her novels, essays, and personal writings: “One has only to read, to look, to listen, to remember” (*AROO* 17).



Siren Frøytlog Hole is a postgraduate student in society, science and technology at the University of Oslo. She holds an MA in English literature from the same university. Her thesis concerned the use of fictional devices in Virginia Woolf's non-fictional *A Room of One's Own*.

Woolf's representations of war, her criticism of the patriarchal society responsible for it, and her bitter irony directed at military glory cannot be disentangled from her position as a modernist writer. In the company of artists, intellectuals, poets, and writers, Woolf grappled with the foundational question of how to represent reality. The outbreak of, and later disillusionment carried by the First World War, became inextricably linked to this ‘crisis of representation’. The historical chasm between the pre-war and post-war world created a discontinuity whereby new forms (aesthetic and formal, but also social and governmental) were sought as a partial remedy. For Woolf, who was acutely interested in the substance of art, the War presented itself as closed off. How could art, particularly fiction, go beyond what she called the “colourless phrases of the newspapers” (*E* 2 269)? Could fiction bring war to life? Woolf deemed the reported events too monumental, as towering over her and her contemporaries “too closely and too tremendously to be worked into fiction without a painful jolt in the perspective” (*E* 2 87). Her perception of the War was thus conditioned by not having seen battle, by her gender, and by being ‘locked out’ of the decisions and conversations of ‘great men’. Yet she should not be dismissed when considering the ways in which historical experience and contexts may be retrieved in literature. Woolf's efforts to make sense of the War surface through the lives of her characters, her formal and modernist experiments as well as in her feminist arguments.

“Woolf grappled with the foundational question of how to represent reality. The outbreak of, and later disillusionment carried by the First World War, became inextricably linked to this ‘crisis of representation.’”

In *Jacob's Room* (1922) Woolf lets the fragmented narrative reflect the disintegrating effect of war on the historical consciousness. Through the dispersed perspectives on the male protagonist, symbolically named Jacob Flanders, he and his death become as intangible and incomprehensible as the historical experience of the First World War itself. The narrative choices made in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) also incorporates aspects of the War. One of the functions of the ‘H-form’ or three-part structure is to enact and mirror the gulf imposed in history by the War. A related point can be made about ‘Time Passes’, the midsection between the ‘The Window’ and ‘To the Lighthouse’. It is devoted to the natural cycle and material effects caused by the passage of time. But the “slumber and sleep” of the house and its narrative are interrupted by “ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers” (181). While the shocks of the sounds only indicate the arrival of war, later loss and death pose as military intrusions: “[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous]” (181).

Known for its irony, this passage must be read as a critical remark on public and official dealings with the War. The horrific realities are made subordinate through the application of brackets, the reference to death in war as merciful, and by reducing the number of dead to approximation. Woolf also treats the civilian experience of war. In *The Years* (1937), for instance, the characters are interrupted by the air-raid in the section “1917”. The sounds of falling bombs and firing guns force them underground and causes a “complete break” (315). In its immediate context the stop prevents the characters from carrying on the conversation they were having, from “saying something very interesting” (315), but their experience is also a microcosmos of the cultural effects of war.

Naturally, Woolf also treats the time after the First World War: “The war was over –so somebody told her as she took her place in the queue at the grocer's shop. The guns went on booming and the sirens wailed” (*Y* 328). This view presents a common thread in her novels and essays. Despite being over, the War lingers and has consequences far beyond those concerning power and authority. In Woolf's works, as in the historical records, the multifocal experiences of the War dissolve its timeframe and make it bleed into anxious peacetime. She treats war as a human condition with ramifications for personal, social, and cultural life.

The novel that best synthesises these perspectives or layers is perhaps *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). By weaving the experiences of the individual psyche, class, and the Great War together, the narrative becomes a fabric of consciousness where the inner lives of the characters establish the contradictory position the recent war holds. Set in the historical context of 1923, their perspectives oscillate between social repression of the War, celebration of peace, reconstructions of the soldier's experience and suicide. While the two storylines of the novel are interdependent, only one of them confronts the reader with images that connects the present life in London with the military actions of the War.

Septimus Warren Smith, the novel's shell-shocked war veteran, "was one of the first to volunteer. He went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays" (94). In the trenches he developed the manliness, advancement in rank, and military friendship popularly contained in glorified notions of the soldier. His friend Evans was killed by a shell but Septimus did not register any emotion. When peace comes, the Shakespeare and the England he eventually returns to are not what they were when he left. Septimus is numbed by the War and his guilt of not being able to feel overflows his mind. The line between his external and internal world is disturbed and causes 'madness'. Unable to help Septimus, yet approaching him with force and authority, Dr Bradshaw and Dr Holmes epitomise a dark chasm between the soldiers fighting the War and the society it was fought for. When Septimus kills himself the latter's outburst is quite demonstrating: "The coward!" (164).

In *Mrs Dalloway* society's inability or unwillingness to comprehend mental illness is coupled with its attempt to repress the consequences of the war. When making the internal external by means of textuality, Woolf renders the experience of the soldier a part of the social reality after the War. Through Septimus's 'madness', which more than once forces the reader to interrogate the mad/sane dichotomy, the personal and social rationality and aftermath of the War are brought into question. The reactions of the medical authorities, of the governing

class, and of government officials embody what Woolf calls the shock of seeing "the faces of our rulers in the light of shell-fire" (AROO 17). It is underlined by their contrast to, and even disregard of Septimus's fate.

Similar perspectives on war are continued in Woolf's feminist writings. Strains of the argument in *A Room of One's Own*, later to be elaborated in *Three Guineas* (1938), connect the institutions of patriarchy with the causes and effects of war. The education of young men is seen as decisive for the "instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually; to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children's lives" (40). This view of authorities, the social and educational system, and the interworking of her fiction and feminist writings, also enable a comparison between the fate of soldiers and the lives of women. In this regard, the lack of choice, particularly relevant in light of conscription and the Military Service Act(s) of 1916, signifies a pertinent parallel. For Woolf the two groups are without authority to decide the course of military or domestic events, but are nevertheless forced to partake.

Of course, Woolf's writings on war can neither present a complete picture of the historical and human event, nor can it explicate the particular politics involved. In her diary Woolf emphasised that she was not a politician and that she could only rethink politics into her own tongue (*D V* 114). Yet her substantial work and comments on the matters of war and its implications for social and cultural life show the value of rethinking historical contexts through individual experiences.

The many dimensions of war in Woolf's works and her own life illustrate ways in which the personal and societal perspectives are negotiated in themes of military action. As she quite famously phrased it in her pacifist manifest *Three Guineas*: "[T]he public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; [...] the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other" (364).



Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) in an early photograph from 1902, twenty-three years before the publication of *Mrs Dalloway*, which addresses the consequences - physical and spiritual - of the First World War.

The British Army in Northern Ireland

By Andrew Sanders

In perhaps the most striking scene from the 1979 film "Radio On", directed by Christopher Petit, the protagonist Robert picks up a hitch-hiker who reveals himself to be a British soldier who has deserted the army following a tour of duty in Northern Ireland. Recounting to Robert his motivations for joining the army, he mundanely refers to the lack of alternative career options for young working class people in 1970s Scotland.

While compulsory military service ended in the United Kingdom in 1960, many young men, particularly from areas of lower socio-economic means, continued to view a career in the army as a viable option. For such men born between 1950 and 1990, chances were strong that their military service would take them to Northern Ireland.

John McCaig was one such young man. Northern Ireland's status as a domestic posting for British troops meant that new recruits who had not yet reached eighteen years of age could serve there after completing their basic training. Consequently, seventeen-year-old McCaig joined his eighteen-year-old brother Joseph in the Royal Highland Fusiliers on their 1970-1971 tour of Northern Ireland where they were based in central Belfast. Despite the rising tension in Belfast at the time, off-duty soldiers were still permitted to visit the city centre provided they dressed in civilian clothes. During the afternoon of 9 March 1971, the McCaig brothers and their colleague Dougald McCaughey visited a series of public houses in central Belfast. When they failed to return to base that evening, the alarm was raised. Their bodies were found a few hours later on a quiet country lane in the northwest of the city. Post-mortems revealed that two had been shot in the back of the head and the third in the chest. It was believed that they had been lured from the city centre by an Irish Republican Army unit which then assassinated them.

The murders of the three Fusiliers shocked the British public. Three soldiers had already been killed in Northern Ireland, but the young Scots were the first to be killed off-duty. In particular, the nature of the murders and the age of the victims caused horror since many had failed to perceive the IRA's capacity for brutal guerrilla warfare.



Andrew Sanders is a PhD graduate of Queen's University Belfast. His thesis concerned division in the modern Irish republican movement. He is the author of *Inside the IRA: Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy* (2011) and the co-author, with Ian S. Wood, of *Times of Troubles: Britain's War in Northern Ireland* (2012, both Edinburgh University Press).

The British Army should, of course, have known better. Since the end of the Second World War, British troops had been deployed in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, the Suez Canal Zone and in Aden as they defended the British Empire in its dying days. They had experienced significant violence, whether from the Irgun in Mandatory Palestine or the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen in Aden. While aspects of the operation in Northern Ireland were analogous with these post-colonial duties, what was unique about "Operation Banner", the codename given to the army operation there, was that their role was in fact as "aid to the civil power" – that is, the Northern Ireland authorities. In many cases, the military was deployed to offer specialist capabilities in situations beyond the capacity of the Civil Power. In Northern Ireland, their role was to relieve the beleaguered Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to maintain law and order in Northern Ireland.

From the perspective of the people of Northern Ireland, particularly the Catholic population, the initial arrival of the army was welcomed. For a number of reasons, the RUC was by now seen as a sectarian force, institutionally biased against Catholics. It had initially sought to recruit equally from either community, but Catholic recruitment levels were not sustained, notably in the

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Ulster Special Constabulary's part time "B-Special" unit. When the RUC attacked demonstrators during a civil rights march in Derry on 5 October 1968, the legitimacy of the police was severely challenged. Ten months later a Protestant march in the same city provoked further violence, and it became obvious that the RUC had lost control of the situation. The Inspector General of the RUC wrote to the army's General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland to request "the assistance of forces under your command in Londonderry City."

Soldiers were initially welcomed, not just in Londonderry/Derry, but in all areas of Northern Ireland. They were seen as lacking the sectarian baggage of the RUC and stories of troops receiving cups of tea from locals in Catholic areas are commonly told. The relationship quickly soured, however, and was irreparably damaged over the course of nineteen months beginning in July 1970. At that time, a curfew was imposed on the predominantly Catholic lower Falls area of west Belfast. Relations deteriorated further with the imposition of internment without trial for all suspected Irish republican paramilitaries and reached a nadir with the shooting dead of thirteen unarmed protesters in Derry on 30 January 1972, known as Bloody Sunday.

The Falls Curfew was in response to an army report indicating that IRA weapons were being held in a local house. The actions of soldiers at this time have become part of Irish nationalist folklore, suggestive of extreme brutality. There is no proof that soldiers entered the lower Falls area with the intention of killing anyone. Unlike the French response to Algerian resistance in the Casbah of Algiers in January 1957, there is more evidence to suggest that the British soldiers were simply ill prepared for the sensitive policing role which was necessary in Northern Ireland at this time.

The decision to enforce internment without trial for all suspected IRA members had been taken at government level. Internment had been used to great effect against the IRA during its 1956-1962 campaign and there had been calls for its reintroduction following the murder of the three Scottish fusiliers in March 1971.

Internment in 1971 however had rather a different effect. IRA volunteer Richard O'Rawe commented, "The [IRA] campaign was really starting to kick off in 1971, prior to internment coming in. There was the bombing campaign, particularly in the town, [which] was gathering pace and the ambush campaign was also starting to increase but it was really internment that was the catalyst for a huge upsurge in activity." Upon their arrest, internees were interrogated under occasionally brutal circumstances. The RUC station at Castlereagh in east Belfast became the focus of attention and interrogations there were subject to a damning Amnesty International report in 1978. Again, this was a mistake at the strategic level, rather than the tactical level which most soldiers operated at, but it was a mistake that was very costly too.

For many soldiers, duty on Operation Banner was interrupted by deployments to the Falkland Islands in 1982 and by the 1990s Northern Ireland had become very much secondary to the Gulf War and operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and latterly Iraq and Afghanistan. Operation Banner began to wind down following the 1994 IRA ceasefire. They broke their ceasefire in February 1996 but reinstated it the following July – too late for Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick who was the last soldier killed in the troubles, shot

dead by an IRA sniper in February 1997.

It was still a full decade before Operation Banner was finally concluded. The Ministry of Defence published its review of the operation in 2006 and noted that "there had been a decade of relative peace" in Northern Ireland. During this decade, the army had been replaced on the streets of the province by the police as part of a normalisation strategy which stretched back to the mid-1970s. The summer Orange Order marching season continued to pose challenges, particularly in the County Armagh town of Portadown, but these duties bore far more in common with the duties of an aid to the civil power than what amounted to a war against the guerrilla forces of Irish republicanism.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland were in operational terms a prelude to contemporary deployments of the British army. In particular soldiers developed their bomb disposal skills, which have been applied in both Iraq and Afghanistan. On the strategic level, the necessity of understanding the politics behind a conflict became an ingrained feature of army deployment, which has helped adaptation to become a more effective peace keeping force.

For the soldiers themselves, as one remarked, "Northern Ireland was like no other conflict I have ever experienced, including the Falklands. There was no distinction between friend and foe. Somebody could smile at you and shoot you." Five hundred and two of his colleagues gave their lives in Northern Ireland.

Recent years have been marked by Historical Enquiries Team investigations into the actions of the army throughout Operation Banner, often with serious accusations levelled at British soldiers. The selective nature of these enquiries has raised concerns among British troops and members of the unionist and loyalist

communities who are still waiting for an enquiry into the murders committed by the Provisional IRA. Reconciliation is a process involving many parties. One need only observe recent scenes in Belfast for evidence of the damage that perceived favouritism can do during the delicate process of reconciliation.



The Ulster Banner flying over a loyalist area (foreground), and Irish Tricolours flying over republican areas (background). Derry, 2009.

Photograph: Ardfern.

Is there a 'merchant's defence'? British complicity in torture after 9/11

By Jamie Gaskarth

To what extent was the British government complicit in the use of torture as part of the global effort to combat terrorism after 9/11? It is a question that continues to dominate discussion of intelligence and security matters in the UK, and it is one where security policy is confronted with the ethical demands of society. February this year saw the publication of a report by the Open Society Justice Initiative, *Globalizing Torture*, which alleged that the UK government had assisted in the extraordinary rendition of individuals who were later tortured. The government is also claimed to have given intelligence that led to such renditions, interrogated individuals secretly detained and extraordinarily rendered, and permitted use of airspace and airports to conduct these renditions.



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Some of this behaviour was a matter of choice. Britain did not have to allow the use of its airspace or airports, nor actively assist in the rendition process. It also might not have interrogated these detainees personally given the circumstances of their arrest and detention. However, all states are obliged to share intelligence in relation to terrorist threats, as set out in UN Security Council Resolutions 1269 (1999) and 1373 (2001), among others. It falls to the British government to protect its own citizens from terrorist attacks and to do so it must acquire intelligence from a host of countries – including some key allies such as the United States – who may have used torture to obtain this information. This was acknowledged by the 2005 judgment of Lord Brown in *A and Others v. The Secretary of State for the Home Department*, in which he argued: 'the executive may make use of all information it acquires: both coerced statements and whatever fruits they are found to bear. Not merely, indeed, is the executive entitled to make use of this information; to my mind it is bound to do so'.

The aforementioned report from the Open Society Justice Initiative, along with others in recent years by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, and Liberty, imply that in doing so Britain was complicit in torture. This represents a difficult ethical problem. Underlying the criticism of these groups is the sense that participation in the global intelligence-sharing network confers responsibility on all its members for the use of torture by a few; therefore, since some states use

torture as a matter of routine, all states become complicit. Given the unlikelihood of persuading these states to refrain from torture, the only ethical outcome is to withdraw cooperation. But to do so would risk putting UK citizens in jeopardy. This seems a morally unsatisfactory outcome.

Complicity here seems to boil down to 'guilt by association' (although a more critical description might be participation in a joint criminal enterprise given the extra-judicial nature of the rendition network and violations of international norms, most notably the anti-torture norm). What I wish to argue here is that actions should give rise to charges of complicity where officials have assisted or encouraged torture – not where they have gone about their lawful business of intelligence sharing. To understand this distinction, it is necessary to examine the concept of complicity in more detail.

Identifying when someone is complicit in a crime is notoriously difficult. The 2007 UK Law Commission report into *Participating in Crime* describes complicity doctrine as "characterised by uncertainty and incoherence". The idea itself is usually centred round attributing blame to an actor for another's unlawful actions. This is on the basis that the secondary actor (the accomplice) is not participating directly in the crime but has made a contribution to its commission. A range of criteria are used to try and pin down how far the secondary actor is to blame for the offence, namely contribution, intention, knowledge, and responsibility.

Scholars will often examine the contribution that was made and assert that it needs to be substantial, even if it did not cause the crime to take place and the crime might have occurred without it. Legal doctrine frames contributions as either assisting or encouraging. Put simply, assistance usually involves physical aid whereas encouragement generally entails incitement or psychological reinforcement. The kind of contribution the UK government is alleged to have had in torture, according to critics, ranges from physical activities such as organising the rendition of Libyan dissidents back to Libya in 2004 where they suffered torture, to more 'encouraging' behaviours, such as an official allegedly being present in an interview when a detainee was being abused in Afghanistan in January 2002. Among 'encouraging' acts one may also include UK security personnel conducting over 100 interviews with detainees in Guantanamo Bay whilst an abusive detention regime was in place, the Prime Minister Tony Blair refusing to condemn detention and rendition practices, and the intelligence services supplying questions to be put to detainees being tortured, in some cases over a period of years.

These actions may arguably have contributed to the normalisation of torture and abuse as part of the global war on terrorism. However, the fact that an actor has made a contribution does not by itself mean that they are complicit. A vital part of attributing blame is establishing that the actor intended that a crime took place. Complicity doctrine includes something called the 'merchant's defence', whereby someone going about a lawful activity should not be held

accountable if they unwittingly assisted a crime. If a hardware storekeeper sells a knife to a customer in good faith and the latter uses it to murder someone, we would not usually hold the merchant responsible. Similarly, if a state shares intelligence, which it is legally and morally bound to do, and the information is subsequently used for a criminal end, this could be defended on the basis that intelligence sharing is part of the normal business of government. The key point is whether the state was sharing intelligence to assist or encourage torture, or merely to fulfil its obligations under international and domestic law.

For much of the New Labour era, policymakers stuck to the following mantra: "The Government's position on the use of torture is clear: we unreservedly condemn it. Our policy is not to participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment for any purpose". In a joint article in 2009, the Home Secretary Alan Johnson and Foreign Secretary David Miliband argued: "we have to work hard to ensure that we do not collude in torture or mistreatment. Enormous effort goes into assessing the risks".

On the one hand, this would seem to be a firm indication that the UK government did not wish to promote the use of torture for intelligence purposes. On the other hand, the allegations of complicity in rendition that emerged from the burnt-out offices of Gaddafi's security offices in Libya gave a very different spin on these declarations. The Libyan regime had a long history of torture and abuse in its detention facilities. Despite this, British intelligence officials apparently colluded with the rendition of a number of individuals to Libya who, it was later alleged, were tortured as a result.



Pause for reflection. Cooperation between British and American intelligence in preventing terrorism has presented a range of ethical dilemmas.

The government might defend itself by stating that it was cooperating to gain intelligence and not to encourage torture. But without ensuring proper safeguards, this is akin to arguing that one didn't want to assist a crime, one merely wanted to use the proceeds to do good. Here knowledge becomes an important factor. The merchant may be excused if they did not know that they would be assisting a crime. However, in the case of Libyan detention practices there was

sufficient information in the public domain for officials to realise what was likely to happen. If these officials were aware that their actions might actively assist or encourage torture, they should arguably have sought an alternative action, such as detention in a state that did not have a record of torture. Failure to do so implies that the British government was at best indifferent or reckless in running the risk of torture, and at worst prepared to facilitate it to gain diplomatic advantages.

Ultimately, accusations of complicity in torture imply responsibility for the torture outcome. The difficulty, as the above discussion shows, is over where the lines of responsibility are drawn. The Director General of the Security Services, Jonathan Evans, argued in 2009: "it is important to recognise that we do not control what other countries do". It is an accepted principle of international law that states are only held legally responsible for the

actions of officials under their direct control. In a globalised world, the broadening of complicity to encompass the normal activities of intelligence sharing (often combined with passivity in the face of allies' use of torture) has the potential to create unbounded responsibility. The result would be that everyone (and hence no one) was responsible.

Yet, Britain's behaviour does seem to have contributed in a more substantial way to the practice of torture than what was required

by the limited goal of intelligence sharing. Critics of the government would be better off focusing on these over-extensions of state power as evidence of complicity rather than the broader practice of intelligence cooperation per se. Similarly, governments wishing to avoid charges of complicity in the future need both to ensure that their interaction with states that torture is limited to the minimum necessary to sustain their intelligence relationships, and to make clear in public and private, at home and abroad, that they do not approve of torture.

British foreign policy under David Cameron: continuity or change?

By Rhiannon Vickers



Rhiannon Vickers is a Senior Lecturer in the Dept of Politics at the University of Sheffield. She is the author of a two-volume study of the political history of **The Labour Party and the World** (Manchester University Press 2004/2011) as well as articles on the foreign policy of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government, on New Labour's foreign policy, and on Tony Blair and the invasion of Iraq.

Like any incoming Prime Minister, David Cameron took office promising a foreign policy that was distinct from that of his predecessors. Cameron signalled a number of changes. Among these were a focus on building stronger relationships with what Britain has termed 'emerging economies', in particular China, India and Brazil; forging an enhanced global role for the UK, complaining that under Labour, Britain had declined in importance across the world; and lastly, an end to the liberal interventionism carried out by Blair, with a greater focus on conflict prevention instead. He said that under Blair and Brown, British foreign policy had at times "lacked humility", and that the lesson of Iraq was that intervention was costly. Let us take each of the proposed changes in turn.

First, the more public focus on developing stronger links with what the coalition government calls "emerging powers", in particular China, India and Brazil, has been relatively easy to achieve. This focus, which is based on the desire for economic gain, was seen with Cameron's trip to China in November 2010, which he described as a "vitally important trade mission", and which consisted of four Cabinet ministers and forty-three business leaders. In his speech in China on 9 November 2010, Cameron promised "close engagement" with China, and said that "banging the drum for trade" was key to UK foreign policy, and "Our message is simple: Britain is now open for business, has a very business-friendly government, and wants to have a much, much stronger relationship with China." Cameron also visited India and Turkey, both growing economies identified by the government as targets for increasing trade, pleasing the former by criticising Pakistan and the latter by criticising Israel. Whether engagement with China and India will result in a resurgent Britain is unclear, but what is in no doubt is that for Cameron, "Our national security depends on our economic strength, and vice versa."

Second, Cameron promised an enhanced global role for Britain under the new government. Both Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague argued that it was in Britain's national interest to

expand its global role. Hague outlined at the start of the Foreign and Commonwealth's 2010 Business Plan that

"My vision is of a distinctive British foreign policy promoting our enlightened national interest while standing up for freedom, fairness and responsibility. It should extend our global reach and influence and be agile and energetic in a networked world."

Indeed, Hague had argued while still in opposition that despite Britain's economic problems - or "economic shrinkage" as he referred to it - a Conservative government would reject the notion that there needed to be any subsequent "strategic shrinkage". Delivering this, of course, has been deeply problematic in the context of a budget deficit and a Comprehensive Spending Review designed to cut expenditure. The Strategic Defence and Security Review reported its findings in October 2010, and since then commentators have questioned whether Britain will be able to fulfil its military and foreign policy commitments in the light of the cuts made as a result of the Review's recommendations.

It is perhaps the third change highlighted by Cameron that has proved to be the most unexpected challenge, namely an end to the military interventionism that occurred under Blair. The 2010 National Security Strategy focused on preventing conflict, rather than on intervening in it, and appeared to herald the end of liberal interventionism; the suggestion was made that if a Kosovo-type situation arose again, the new government might take a different approach than Blair had done. Of course, this was written and published shortly before the start of the Arab uprisings, and Cameron quickly found himself having to respond to situations where yet again there were conflicting views on intervention. Moreover, these were situations where the desire for Britain to be seen as leading force for good, as playing a leadership role in the response to a crisis, was simply too strong for a British prime minister to resist.

When it comes to the Arab uprisings, Britain has not responded in the same way to each one. A particularly striking divergence has been in the British response to the uprisings in Libya and in Bahrain. In the case of Bahrain - home to the naval base that is the command and control centre for both British and US naval operations in the Middle East - British action consisted of expressing concern at events and pressing for dialogue between the government and opposition groups.

In the case of Libya, Cameron was determined to be seen as at the forefront of the response to the deepening crisis in Libya in February 2011, and his response was to push for and take a leading role in military intervention. This was particularly interesting, because it had been Britain under Tony Blair which had played a significant role in the diplomatic success of getting Libya to renounce its WMD programme in December 2003, in return for the rehabilitation of Gaddafi. In a quite remarkable turn-around, Gaddafi quickly went back to being labelled an irrational dictator as Cameron pushed for Britain to be seen to be taking the lead in responding to the crisis.

A proactive response to the Libyan uprising does not mean, however, that any form of British intervention in Syria is at all likely. Libya had very few allies, certainly not ones willing to give it military support to resist any form of intervention. Syria is a very different case, and its strong alliances with Iran and Russia mean that any intervention could be met with large-scale, heavily armed resistance from Syria, and the scenarios for the situation to escalate mean that the loss of life on all sides could be extremely large. Britain is unlikely to do more here than call for action, press for resolutions of condemnation, and voice deep concern at the ongoing conflict. While initially Cameron and Hague talked up their role in co-ordinating the response of the international community to the Assad government, the intractable nature of the situation has made them, like most politicians, wary of saying anything that might sound like a commitment to taking action beyond sanctions and diplomatic pressure.

Overall, there have been some unexpected continuities in British external policy. Unusually for a Conservative Prime Minister, Cameron vowed to keep the Department of International Development that had been established by Tony Blair, and to protect the development budget. This was significant, for traditionally the Conservative Party has cut spending on international development when it has come into power, and this decision was taken against a backdrop of cuts to almost

every other government department as part of the government's austerity drive. The motivation for protecting the international development budget is not entirely clear. It might be partly domestic, an aspect of Cameron's plan to demonstrate to the British public that the Conservative Party has changed and is no longer the 'nasty party'; that it has a new moral code. It might be something that the Liberal Democrats pushed for, though they have largely stayed out of foreign policy. It is also likely to be partly structural: the Conservatives have come into office at a time when it would simply be unacceptable

for a country as wealthy as Britain, which claims to play a leadership role in the world, to be seen to be cutting its aid budget.

To what extent, then, has British foreign policy changed under Cameron? To a large extent, the shift is not so much between the New Labour governments and the current Conservative/Liberal Democrat government. The shift that has occurred is that Cameron's approach is different from his Conservative predecessors."

Cameron's approach is different from his Conservative predecessors. Cameron and his government is more concerned than previous Conservative administrations with how his government appears to the public and to the international community.

Foreign and security policy is thus an integral part of the government's self-proclaimed identity, one that signifies its vision for Britain.

Meanwhile, Cameron shares the same unwillingness as Tony Blair to admit that sometimes, Britain cannot actually change the behaviour of recalcitrant states. Cameron does seem to share some of the same symptoms of Blair of wanting to change the world, rather than simply dealing with it as it is. However, Cameron faces the huge challenge of making policy within the context of economic recession and an era of austerity budgets. This undoubtedly impacts on British foreign policy and makes achieving the goal of having an enhanced global role seem a little unlikely.

"[T]he shift is not so much between the New Labour governments and the current Conservative/Liberal Democrat government. The shift that has occurred is that Cameron's approach is different from his Conservative predecessors."



Navigating difficult waters. The Foreign Secretary, William Hague, has adjusted rather than redefined British foreign policy.

When Britain ruled the waves – or a brief history of the battleship

By Atle L. Wold



Atle L. Wold is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo and Vice President of British Politics Society, Norway.

Traditionally, British defence was focussed on retaining the supremacy of the Royal Navy over all other navies in the world. While most major powers in continental Europe raised large standing armies in the early modern period, the British insisted on keeping their peace-time army establishment at a minimum, and instead channelled their resources into the “first service”, the navy. As Richard Harding emphasises in the first article of this issue of *British Politics Review*, this “sea-mindedness” of the British persisted up until the twentieth century, and came as a consequence of clear political deliberations: the British found shelter behind their “wooden walls”, feared the prospect of a despotic ruler turning the army against his own people – so best not to have much of an army to start with – and then the focus on the navy made sense when seen from a trade & empire perspective too. The period of the most definite British supremacy at sea – 1805 until 1914 – which resulted from this persistent “blue water”-policy of the eighteenth century, also coincided with the age of the battleship, and this article tries to see British defence through the heavy guns which ruled the waves for so long. What was it that gave the British the upper hand?

By the time of Horatio Nelson’s crushing victory over the combined French and Spanish fleets off Cape Trafalgar in 1805, the commanding ships at sea

were large, ocean-going, wooden sailing ships, mounting guns on several decks – precisely such as the iconic 104-gun HMS *Victory*, Nelson’s flagship at Trafalgar. Since the majority of the guns were sticking out of the sides of the ship, the most efficient way of engaging an enemy was to fire *broadside*s, that is, all the guns on one side of the ship in rapid succession, or more or less simultaneously. Traditional warships thus had to pass by each other in battle, and when whole fleets met, the best way to bring the largest number of guns to bear on the enemy was to arrange the ships in a line-formation, from which the term “ship-of-the-line” sprang. Quite which ships were deemed strong enough to enter the battle-line, might vary depending on the size of the navy in question, but typically, they were ships with more than one gun-deck. Thus the ships-of-the-line were also the only true *battleships*. In the days of these wooden sailing ships, British ship designs differed little from those of other

navies and, indeed, ships would often be boarded and captured in battle, and then recommissioned for the navy of their new “owners”, often without even changing the name of the vessel. In the case of the *Temeraire*, captured from the French in 1759 for example, the very name was even adopted for several subsequent ships built for the Royal Navy. What gave the British their superiority at sea was thus not the ships themselves, but the quality of British seamanship – British gun crews typically worked twice as fast as their opponents – the number of ships in commission, and to some extent superior tactics. Battleship design was, however, to change dramatically with the construction of the first *ironclads*.

As the name would suggest, perhaps, these were ships “clothed” in iron plates, the purpose of which was to provide *protection*. Rather than simply trying to out-gun your opponent, the idea was now to prevent damage to your own vessel, and it was the French who led the way when they launched the *Glorie* in 1859. As well as being the first armoured naval vessel, the *Glorie* also combined sails with steam engines powering screw propellers, but it was still essentially “just” a traditional wooden ship underneath. The British response was to prove more radical and decisive. Launched in 1860 as an immediate reply to the *Glorie*, the iron-hulled HMS *Warrior* was twice as big and fast as any other warship afloat, and armed with much heavier guns. This was essentially a case of Britain’s industrial might and technological advance being deployed into building a ship so powerful, it was thought that it could have sailed into any fleet in the world and sunk it singlehandedly. The Royal Navy

had clearly regained the upper hand. Yet, for such a revolutionary ship, its pre-eminence was short-lived, as the rapid development of battleships which ensued, rendered *Warrior* itself obsolete within ten years of its launch.

The next 40-odd years were marked by a rapid development of warships, where the steady improvement of steam engines gradually rendered the use of sail unnecessary, and the development of heavy guns with

increasingly long range meant that the close-quarter fighting and boarding of the days of wooden sailing ships were clearly a thing of the past. The British were determined to stay in the lead of this development, and as great power rivalry intensified after the unification of Germany in 1871, the emphasis on naval superiority was taken one step further through the so-called “two powers standard” set out in the Naval Defence Act of 1888.

“After 1906, all the major navies in the world sought to build their own fleets of dreadnought-battleships, but up until 1914, the Royal Navy retained its supremacy in terms of numbers.”

This policy decreed that the Royal Navy should be superior to the the second and third largest navies in the world *combined*, not “merely” be on the top of the table. A direct challenge to this policy came with the German Naval Laws of 1898 and 1900, which set out openly that Imperial Germany should have a Navy to compete with Britain. The naval race between Britain and Germany which ensued lasted up until World War 1, by which point Britain was still in the lead, but in the meantime the development of battleships reached its culmination with the launch of HMS *Dreadnought* in 1906.



HMS *Victory* was a First Rate Ship of the Line when it was launched in 1765, and enjoyed an extraordinarily long active career. Made famous as Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar (when Nelson himself died), *Victory* is preserved in dry-dock at Portsmouth, and is still “in commission”, that is, no other ship in the Royal Navy can be called *Victory*.

Again, the British had built a ship which rendered all exiting battleships obsolete (to *der Kaiser's* fury, though *Dreadnought* also rendered the largest fleet in the world, that of the Royal Navy, obsolete). Moreover, through the *Dreadnought*, the battleship had arguably, and finally, found its modern form. So what was so new or revolutionary about it? At first sight, *Dreadnought* did not look so different from the last classes of *pre-dreadnought* battleships (as they were subsequently know). As with *Dreadnought* they were also all-steel ships, heavily protected by armour plating, and propelled by steam engines. The novelty lay with two other aspects of the design: one was the use of the new technology of steam turbines, which were lighter, more economical, and produced more power at much less vibration than the previously used reciprocating machinery. *Dreadnought* was thus much faster than previous battleships. The other main improvement was the adoption of a uniform battery of heavy guns (as opposed to the mixed batteries of *pre-dreadnoughts*).

On this point, the British had been unusually quick in adopting recent experience. At the Battle of Tsushima in 1905, the Japanese navy had secured a crushing victory over the Russian navy largely due to their efficient use of heavy long-range guns. But since the British-built Japanese battleships at Tsushima also carried an array of medium-sized guns in addition to the standard outfit of

four 12-inch heavy guns, the logical conclusion was to focus on the heavy caliber guns only – thus *Dreadnought* carried ten 12-inch guns, and no medium-sized ones. After 1906, all the major navies in the world sought to build their own fleets of dreadnought-battleships, but up until 1914, the Royal Navy retained its supremacy in terms of numbers. In the interwar period and during World War 2, the battleship was developed further, attaining ever higher speeds, stronger armour

protection, larger guns, and gradually also new techology such as radar, but these new ships were still all “dreadnoughts” in the sense that they adhered to the basic design parameters set out in 1906.

After 1918, Britain abandoned the two powers standard, and through the Washington Treaty of 1924, the British government also accepted that limitations be placed on the strength of the Royal Navy. By 1939, therefore, the Royal Navy was no longer in a superior position relative to the two other major navies in the world, those of the USA and Japan. Moreover, it was not the British, but the Japanese who were to build the ultimate “super-dreadnought” battleships, the Yamato-class in 1941. By the end of the war, however, it was clear that the days when the heavy gun ruled the waves had come to an end. Both the two Yamato-class ships – possibly the most heavily armoured warships ever built – had been sunk by American carrier-based aircraft, not by other battleships, just as the modern British battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* had been sunk by Japanese aircraft a few years earlier. The battleship itself was now obsolete.

In 1945, Britain still had a strong navy, but it was now clearly dwarfed by the US Navy, and gradually, it was also overtaken by the new Soviet Navy. By then, however, the Royal Navy had arguably lost its position as the country's primary defence and, again as Richard Harding underlines, it was not a position it was to regain the postwar period either.

Just before Christmas 2012, we celebrated the release of *Det glemte partnerskapet*, an edited volume about the Norwegian-British relationship. Very much a product of the British Politics Society's own efforts, the book traces the many strands of British-Norwegian relations - historically and today.

Britain and Norway enjoy bonds that are solidly anchored - historically, politically, economically as well as culturally. Never has the relationship between the two countries covered so many areas as it does today. Paradoxically, however, the public attention given to British-Norwegian affairs seems to have moved in the opposite direction. Today, the British-Norwegian relationship as such is rarely subject to systematic attention or critical debate. What is the present status of the relationship? In what direction is it likely to develop in the coming years?

This book seeks to fill the knowledge gap. Through ten chapters, contributors from political science, history, area studies, and literature studies offer insight into core aspects of the British-Norwegian relationship. The first part of the book gives a comparative introduction to the two countries' political systems, including their parliamentary traditions, electoral systems, and political parties. The second part examines foreign relations, from 1905 and onwards. Special emphasis is given to the two countries' diplomatic interaction, their cooperation on energy issues, and their approaches to the European integration process. The third and final part of the book discusses cultural and political 'mirror images', including the exchange of literature across the North Sea, and contemporary representations of British politics and society in Norway.



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To order the book online (currently 198 NOK), please visit www.akademika.no.

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Forthcoming edition of British Politics Review

In the next edition of British Politics Review we will look closer at *the beautiful game* - that is, the role of football in British society.

As usual, the topic will be approached from different angles. For example, what has been the dynamic between football and class? And what has been the relationship between shifts in racial relations in society, on the

football pitch and on the terraces?

There is also a strong element of place and belonging embodied in the many football clubs of Britain. The corollary is a history of rivalry between clubs, be it between cities such as Liverpool and Manchester, or between different areas (and social segments) within the same city. Football may also

be grounded in rather more fundamental cleavages, such as what is found in Glasgow between Celtic and Rangers. Finally, the international element of British - and particularly English - football is something to which numerous supporter groups in Norway all testify.

The spring edition of British Politics Review is due to arrive in May 2013.