

John Paul Jones and *Guerre de Razzia*

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La stratégie navale se divise traditionnellement en deux écoles de pensée: le raid marchand et le raid d'escadre. Pendant la Guerre d'indépendance américaine, John Paul Jones prôna une troisième stratégie: le raid des ports et avant-postes de l'Empire situés dans les régions côtières des îles britanniques. Son but stratégique était de forcer l'Angleterre à disperser les navires de la Marine royale. La Marine continentale ne disposait pas des navires nécessaires aux attaques que voulait mener Jones contre l'Afrique, la baie d'Hudson et Terre-Neuve, mais avec les ressources limitées dont il disposait, il attaqua les centres de pêche de Nouvelle-Ecosse ainsi que le port de Whitehaven, en Angleterre. Il tenta d'obtenir la participation de Leith, en Ecosse.

Naval historians and strategists traditionally divide naval strategy into one of two schools, *guerre de course*, often referred to as commerce raiding, and *guerre d'escadre*, a strategy focussing on large warships deployed in fleets designed to engage similar enemy vessels similarly organized. The labels for both groups come from nineteenth-century France where theorists of the *Jeune École* applied methods of analysis common to land warfare to the study of conflict at sea. Proponents of the *Jeune École* theorized that recent technological developments had rendered obsolete the fleet actions so characteristic of warfare under sail during its highest stage of development. They conceded that such engagements may well have determined the outcome of the Wars of the French Revolution and Empire, but members of the *Jeune École* pointed out that they were virtually absent from the wars of the mid- and late-nineteenth century. Analysts concluded that naval operations played only minor roles in the American Civil War, the Austro-Italian War, and Germany's wars with Austria, Denmark and France. From these case studies the *Jeune École* concluded that the day of the battle fleet was past and that in the short wars characteristic of the modern world blockades had become obsolete.¹ In his 1879 treatise, *Le guerre navale et les ports militaires*

¹ The concepts are defined and their developed traced in Etienne Taillemite, *Dictionnaire des marins français* (Paris, 1982); and Theodore Ropp, *The Development of a Modern Navy: French Naval Policy, 1871-1904*, edited by Stephen S. Roberts (Annapolis, 1987).

de la France, Admiraî Hyacinthe Laurent Théophile Aube, leader of the *Jeune École*, does not use the term *guerre de razzia*, nor does he appear to understand the concept. His strategic concepts are framed in economic terms and advocate pursuit of a commerce raiding strategy by France, asserting that "The highest objective of war [is] to do the most possible harm to the enemy... [Since] wealth is the sinew of war, everything that strikes the enemy's wealth ... becomes not only legitimate but obligatory." Thus he advocated warfare aimed at sapping an enemy's economic strength.² Writing near the end of the century Alfred Thayer Mahan rejected the views of the *Jeune École* and argued not only that battle fleets were not obsolete, but that they were the essence of sea power and essential to obtaining "command of the sea" which bestowed on its possessor immense advantages.

For the last century the dichotomy between the ideas of the *Jeune École* and those of Alfred Thayer Mahan - that is, between advocates of *guerre de course* and their critics who supported a strategy of *guerre d'escadre* - has dominated the study of naval strategy and indeed formed the framework on which most authors have organized their histories of the United States Navy. During the 1990s alone works by Kenneth J. Hagan, Stephen Howarth, Robert L. Love, and George W. Bear adopt this construct.³ From reading these authors it would appear that there was no other possible strategy, but indeed there was an alternative, *guerre de razzia*, and it was first advocated by John Paul Jones in 1776, when the Continental Navy, precursor to the U.S. Navy, was in its infancy.

Jones would not, of course, have recognized the term *guerre de razzia*, - it had not as yet been coined - but he would have understood the concept because it embodied strategic principles he advocated for the new American navy. The term *guerre de razzia* is, like *guerre de course* and *guerre d'escadre*, French in origin. Simply translated, it means "war of raiding," a style of warfare in which the main goal of operations is not the capture or destruction of the enemy's commerce as in *guerre de course*, or the defeat of his fleet as in *guerre d'escadre*, but the raiding of his coasts and colonies. The strategic goal is much the same as that of *guerre de course*, to capture or destroy enemy assets and to force the enemy to divide his forces in an effort to defend his possessions, but *guerre de razzia* does not include economic gain among its main motives. Thus it is significantly different from *guerre de course* and thus constitutes a different strategy.⁴ Privateers played an important role in *guerre de course*, but would not be interested in *guerre de razzia* because the profit incentive is absent. The same can be said for many naval personnel as John Paul Jones would learn in 1778 and 1779 when officers and sailors serving in ships he commanded resisted participation in operations designed to execute a *guerre de razzia* strategy.

² Quoted in *ibid.*, 158.

³ Kenneth J. Hagan, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power* (New York, 1991), Stephen Howarth, *To the Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1991* (New York, 1991), Robert Love, *History of the U.S. Navy*, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, 1992); and George W. Bear, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, 1994).

⁴ *The Great Raids in History: From Drake to Desert One*, edited by Samuel A. Southworth (New York, 1997) contains essays on nineteen raids. Each is chronicled in isolation and there is no discussion of employing them as a strategy.

The term *guerre de razzia* has not previously been applied to naval warfare.⁵ It originated in the writings of French military officers, members of the "colonial school" of warfare who employed it to describe operations in North Africa during the nineteenth century. The "colonial school" dates from 1840 when Thomas-Robert Bugeaud went to Algeria. In North Africa, Bugeaud saw parallels to the type of guerrilla warfare he had experienced in Spain during the Peninsula War. He countered the North Africans by copying the raids local tribal groups launched against the flocks, herds, and storehouses of one another. One of Bugeaud's subordinates summarized the reason for adoption of such a strategy saying that capturing the enemy's posts, (seizing his territory), would not work. "For this reason," he wrote, "we make war on silos, war on cattle, the *razzia*?"⁶ The indigenous peoples of North Africa employed *guerre de razzia* as a form of limited warfare aimed at redistributing wealth through the theft of cattle and sometimes captives who could be ransomed, but the French used it to destroy the economic viability of their opponents. Thus for the French in Algeria *guerre de razzia* became a total war of extermination.

Nations had engaged in naval raiding long before the American Revolution. Norsemen virtually made raiding a state policy in the same sense that the Barbary States practised *guerre de course*. During the sixteenth century English freebooters attacked Iberian trade and settlements in Africa and America for the same reason though state sponsorship was not as clear as in the case of the Barbary Corsairs. The goal in each case was to gain wealth.⁷

During the Great War for Empire raids involving the brief occupation of French ports played an integral part in William Pitt's peripheral strategy. In this case the goal was to tie down French forces along the Atlantic preventing them from being sent eastward to engage Prussia. Britain also assisted Prussia with subsidies so that it could bear the brunt of

⁵ Archer Jones speaks of "raiding" as a naval strategy, but invariably uses the term in the sense of *guerre de course*. Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (Urbana, 1987), 90, 265-66, 319, 423-25, 447-18, 467-78, 583, 586, 589-95, 614-15, 618.

⁶ Bugeaud describes his methods in his memoirs, H. Bugeaud dTde ville, *Memoirs of Marshal Bugeaud*, 2 vols. (N.p., 1884) as does Anthony Thrall Sullivan in *Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, France and Algeria, 1784-1849: Politics, Power, and the Good Society* (Hamden, 1983). The quotation is from Gen. Le Comte de Castellane, *Souvenirs de la vie militaire en Afrique* (Paris, 1879), 268, quoted in Douglas Porch, "French Colonial Forces on the Saharan Rim," in James C. Bradford, ed., *The Military and Conflict between Cultures: Soldiers at the Interface* (College Station, 1997), 166. The development of this "colonial school" is analyzed in Jean Gottman, "Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited by Edward Mead Earle (Princeton, 1943) and in a successor essay by the same title, Douglas Porch, "Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited by Peter Paret (Princeton, 1986). The later shows that the "main theories [of the "colonial school"] were developed by Bugeaud in Algeria and later refined by [Joseph-Simon] Galliéni in Tonkin and [Louis J Lyautey in Morocco." 377.

Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984) describes several examples.

the fighting on the continent of Europe while Britain attacked France's overseas empire.⁸ It would be tempting to postulate that John Paul Jones drew his inspiration for *guerre de razzia* from history, but it appears more likely that he based his ideas on events he had personally witnessed.

Early American naval forces were assigned a number of roles, but these roles were not part of an overall strategic plan. The first vessels fitted out by Congress were ordered to intercept ships carrying war supplies. A week later Congress laid the basis for assigning other roles to the navy when it voted to fit out another two vessels "for intercepting such transports as may be laden with warlike stores and other supplies for our enemies, and for such other purposes as the Congress shall direct."⁹

When the first ships of the Continental Navy were ready for sea their commander was ordered to sail first to Chesapeake Bay, then to the Carolinas, and finally to Rhode Island. In each place he was to "attack, take and destroy all the naval forces of our Enemies" to put an end to British coastal raiding and seizure of American trading vessels.¹⁰ Thus was added coastal defense and commerce protection to the roles of the Continental Navy. John Paul Jones served as senior lieutenant in the flagship of Commodore Esek Hopkins when Hopkins chose to ignore the orders sent to him by Congress, and taking advantage of a clause allowing him to exercise his own discretion by following "such courses as your best judgment shall suggest to you as most useful to the American cause and to distress the enemy" sailed not to the Chesapeake but to the Bahamas Islands where he attacked and then removed military stores from Forts Montague and Nassau at New Providence and returned with them to New England.

After the British left Boston for Halifax in March 1776, George Washington was convinced that their next target would be New York City. In May John Paul Jones was given command of the sloop *Providence* and ordered to carry soldiers to New York City, thus indicating another role - troop transport - assigned to the Continental Navy.¹¹ After fulfilling these orders Jones set sail in August on his first independent cruise. In short order he captured sixteen British prizes and destroyed the local fishing fleets and shore facilities at Canso and Isle Madame in Nova Scotia.¹² These were the first two of several raids that were

Secretary for War Henry Dundas clearly understood the strategy initiated by Pitt and in a 1800 memorandum advocated the capture of Belle Isle which could be used as a base for "a flying force to the amount of 5,000 men . . . in order to distract a large part of the enemy's force, by keeping a constant alarm on some part of their coast" and Walcheren which he stated could be used "as a proper station from whence to distract to a very considerable degree the force of the enemy by keeping up a [continual?] alarm on the coasts of Holland and Flanders." Memorandum by Henry Dundas, Secretary for War, for the consideration of his Majesty's ministers, 31 March 1800, in *British Naval Documents, 1204-1960*, edited by John B. Hattendorf, et al. (Aldershot, 1993), 344-350, quotation on 349.

⁸ Jones to Morris, 17 October 1776. Journal of the Continental Congress, 5 and 13 Oct 1775, William Bell Clark, et al., eds. *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, 10 vols to date (Washington, 1964-), 1: 307-308, 441-42; 6:1302-04 (henceforth NDAR).

⁹ JCC, 5 Jan 1776. *Ibid.*, 3:638.

¹⁰ Esek Hopkins to Jones, 10 May 1776. *Ibid.*, 3:27.

¹² Jones to the Marine Committee, 30 Sep 1776, *Ibid.*, 6: 1047-1050.

to become characteristic of Jones's strategic thought and his operations during the rest of the Revolutionary War.

A fortnight after returning from the Grand Banks, Jones wrote to Robert Morris proposing "An expedition of Importance ... this Winter [against] the Coast of Africa [to] give a Blow to the English African Trade which would not soon be recovered by not leaving them a Mast Standing on that Coast."¹³ Jones did not mention the capture of ships or cargoes or any other form of wealth to be gained from the expedition, only the distress it would cause the British. In Morris, Jones found a ready listener. Morris forwarded Jones's plan to Congress with an endorsement and a suggestion of his own, that the target of Jones's next cruise should be Pensacola, Florida, rather than the coast of Africa.

Morris clearly grasped the strategy behind Jones's proposal. In his response he endorsed Jones's plan saying that,

disturbing [British] settlements & spreading alarms, Shewing & keeping up a Spirit of Enterprize, that will oblige them to defend their extensive possessions at all points, is of infinitely more Consequence to the United States of America than all the Plunder that can be taken ... It has long been clear to me that our infant fleet cannot protect our own coasts & that the only effectual relief it can afford us is to attack the enemies defenseless places & thereby oblige them to station more of their ships in their own countries or to keep them employed in following ours and either way we are relieved as far as they do it.¹⁴

Had this plan been undertaken, as "conceived" by Jones it would have represented a shift in American strategy from *guerre de course* with the capture of supplies and prize money and the distress of British merchants as its goal, to *guerre de razzia* with a goal of forcing the British to spread out their navy by transferring ships from North American waters to those of the West Indies or Africa as its goal.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the expedition could not be carried out. Both Jones and Morris had thought in terms of a squadron of four or more ships, but the Continental Navy was unable to form such a force. Indeed, Jones lost command even of sloop *Providence*.

In March and April Jones visited Philadelphia and obtained command of the *Ranger* with orders to sail the sloop to France and there to take command of a frigate being built for the United States in Holland. When Jones reached France he learned that the British had got wind of the plan and pressured the Dutch into refusing to deliver the ship. Though

¹³ Jones to Morris, 17 Oct 1776. *Ibid.*, 6:1302-1304; Executive Committee to John Hancock, 16 Jan 1777, Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, 23 vols to date. (1976-), 6: 113-114 (henceforth: *Delegates*).

¹⁴ Morris to Jones, 5 February 1777. NDAR 7:1110.

¹⁵ "The project was conceived by me, and I had discussed it with Mr. Morris ..." *John Paul Jones's Memoir of the American Revolution*, translated and edited by Gerard W. Gawalt (Washington, 1979), 11 (henceforth: *Memoir*). Morris acknowledged Jones's authorship in Morris to Jones, 5 February 1777. NDAR 7:1109.

disappointed, Jones was able to secure orders from the American Commissioners in France, to "proceed with [*the Ranger*] in the manner you shall judge best for distressing the enemies of the United States by sea, or otherwise..."¹⁶

Precisely what the Commissioners meant by the "or otherwise" can not be known for certain, but during the fortnight he had been in Paris, Jones had almost certainly discussed strategy with at least one of the commissioners, Benjamin Franklin. That Jones had already formed plans to attack the English port of Whitehaven and perhaps also to land at St. Mary's Isle in Scotland is likely because, after designating where Jones should send any prizes taken, the Commissioners wrote cryptically, "Should you make an attempt on the coasts of Great Britain, we advise you not to return immediately into the Ports of France, unless forced by stress of weather, or the pursuit of the Enemy."¹⁷

In April 1778 Jones sailed the *Ranger* out of Brest and into the Irish Sea. On the night of 22-23 April he led two boat parties ashore at Whitehaven, the port from which he had first gone to sea almost twenty years before. This was not a cutting out expedition planned to capture prizes and profit from their sale, but a raid in which Jones and the party in his boat achieved their objective of spiking the thirty guns of the fort that was supposed to protect the harbor. The other boat carried combustibles, the job of its crew being to set fire to shipping along the south side of the harbor. In the end the raid destroyed only a few ships, but, as Jones wrote in his report to the American Commissioners in Paris: "What was done, however, [was] sufficient to show, that not all their boasted navy can protect their own coasts."¹⁸ As if to reinforce the fact, Jones crossed the Solway Firth and led another boat party ashore at St. Mary's Isle the following night. His goal was to take hostage the Earl of Selkirk and thereby force the British government to exchange American mariners held captive in English prisons in return for release of the earl. Fortunately for the earl, he was away at the time and eluded capture. Still, the raid was not without result because it demonstrated again the defenselessness of the British Isles against such raids.¹⁹ The effect

American Commissioners to Jones, 16 January 1778. James C. Bradford, ed., *The Papers of John Paul Jones* [microfilm edition] (Alexandria, 1986), document 234 (henceforth: Jones: 234). Leonard Labaree *et al.*, eds, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 32 vols to date (New Haven, 1964-), 25: 479-81.

¹⁷ American Commissioners to Jones, 16 January 1778. Jones: 234. Shortly after this Jones suggested a plan of operation for the French fleet to both the American Commissioners and to Minister of Marine Sartine: "Ten or twelve sail of the line with frigates . . . would give a good account of the fleet under Lord Howe. . . . Small squadrons might then be formed to secure the coast and cut off the enemies supplies while our army settled the account current." Jones to American Commissioners, 10 February 1778. Jones: 242. "If this plan had been adopted... Lord Howe would have been surprised and taken prisoner in the Delaware. Americans could then immediately have manned his fleet and, sending small detachments right and left, they could easily have annihilated the English naval forces on the American coasts before the arrival of [reinforcements]." *Memoir*, 13-14. To suggest that the U.S. could man the captured vessels was overly optimistic, but another Jones proposal was more realistic: "I am sir, convinced that the capture of Lord Howe's light Ships and Frigates in America, and the destruction of the Enemy's Fishery at Newfoundland . . . would effectually destroy the Sinews of their Marine for they would not afterwards be able to man their Fleet, as to their Army in America that must fall of course." Jones to Sartine, 31 March 1778. Jones: 272.

¹⁸ Jones to the American Commissioners, 27 May 1778. Jones: 310.

¹⁹ Jones to the Countess of Selkirk, 8 May 1778. Jones: 287.

on British public opinion was electric. Not since the Dutch burned Sheerness in 1667 had foreign forces landed with such impunity on British soil.²⁰ As expected the residents of Whitehaven screamed for protection, but the alarm spread far beyond the Solway.²¹ A London newspaper stated that Jones's "inferno plan [to burn shipping at Whitehaven was] unprecedented except in the annuals of John the Painter" and officials in Whitehaven "dispatched" "expresses" "to all the capital sea-ports in the kingdom where any depredations are likely to be made."²² Insurance rates for merchant vessels crossing the Irish Sea from England to Ireland jumped to "5 guineas per cent [from] one and a quarter."²³

When Jones followed these exploits by capturing the British warship *Drake* off Belfast and carrying it into a French port, he gained acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Villages and towns around the Irish Sea rushed to prepare defenses and the Admiralty dispatched at least three ships in search of Jones.²⁴ The monetary damage inflicted on Whitehaven was small, certainly no more than £1500, but the psychological impact on the region was great. When officials in London refused to appropriate funds for coastal defense Whitehaven residents pledged £1000 to expand the harbor defenses.²⁵ A study of area newspapers shows that "the entire region remained on edge for months after the raid."²⁶

In America Massachusetts Congressman James Lovell grasped the significance of

The provost at Kirkcudbright wrote to the secretary to the Board of Admiralty that following Jones's raid on Whitehaven he had "alarmed the coast," but since there were no military forces closer than Edinburgh or Glasgow, he feared that "the whole of this Shore will be laid under contribution." William Lenox to Philip Stephens, 23 April 1778. ADM1/3972. Another official at Kirkcudbright wrote to the provost at Dumfries expressing similar fears. The provost forwarded the letter and its request that the Royal Navy send ships to drive off the "American privateer." Jno. Murdoch to John Clark, 23 April 1778, enclosed in Clark to the Earl of Sandwich, [24] April 1778. *Ibid.* The alarm caused by Jones's raids on Whitehaven and St. Mary's Isle and by his capture of the *Drake* was reported in *The London Chronicle*, 24-28, 28-30 April, 30 April-2 May and 2-5 May 1778.

²¹ Twenty "Principal Inhabitants of Whitehaven to the Early of Suffolk, Secretary of State for the Northern Department. SP/37. State Papers, Domestic, Public Record Office. The alarm of residents at Whitehaven, Kirkcudbright, and Workingham was reported in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 1 and 5 May 1778.

²² *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 28 April 1778.

²³ *The Gazeleer and New Daily Advertiser*, 7 May 1778.

²⁴ The preparations are described in May issues of the *Cumberland Packet*, a newspaper printed in Whitehaven. Reproduced in "Chronicle of Press Reports Relating to John Paul Jones," *The Scottish Genealogist*, 20:2 (June 1973), 48-50 (henceforth: "Chronicle of Press Reports"). A frigate was sent from Grennock, Scotland, and two sloops of war from Spithead. The armed ship *Heart of Oak* also cruised the Irish Sea in pursuit of Jones. *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 4, 9 and 14 May 1778.

²⁵ *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 18 May 1778.

²⁶ Gregory P. Ripple, "'Never So Critical Situation as the Present': English Provincial Reaction to John Paul Jones, 1778-1779," in William M. McBride, ed., *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth Naval History Symposium* (Annapolis, 1998), 57-58, concludes that "Jones touched a raw nerve at Whitehaven ... the inhabitants of [England's] northwestern worried about what could have been, and what might be ... The entire region remained on edge for months after the raid." 52.

Jones's raids on Whitehaven and St. Mary's Isle when he wrote that Jones's "conduct alone will make England keep her ships at home."²⁷ French officials also recognized Jones's talents. Even though hard pressed to prepare the French fleet for war with Britain, Minister of Marine Sartine invited Jones to suggest operations and sought ships for Jones to command. Jones reported that when "requested to send my ideas for employing a small, light squadron [he] seized the opportunity and proposed several plans on that subject: among others, to destroy the power of England in Africa and in Hudson Bay; to destroy the Newfoundland fisheries; to intercept the English fleets from the East and West Indies; and what was then more important, to intercept the Baltic fleet."²⁸

When Jones finally located a suitable ship Sartine arranged its transfer to the American flag. Jones renamed the ship the *Bonhomme Richard* in honour of Benjamin Franklin and readied it for sea.²⁹ Sartine demonstrated his confidence in Jones by issuing him discretionary orders stating only that "you will determine by yourself, and according to circumstances, the role you will play either in European or American seas [with only the stipulation that Jones was to] give [Sartine] a precise report on the events of your voyages every time that you will enter a port which is under the King's rule."³⁰ While readying the ship for sea four additional vessels were added to Jones's command along with five hundred men from Walsh's Irish Regiment, a unit in French service. In consultation with Charles Jean Comte Gamier, a French diplomat recently returned from service in England, Jones planned a series of raids along the coast of England.³¹

When Spain demanded a joint invasion of England as a price of an alliance, France agreed to launch one and determined a new role for Jones and his squadron. Jones reluctantly abandoned his plans for independent action. By April 1779 French strategy called for a Franco-Spanish fleet to clear the English Channel of English warships and a French army of twenty thousand men to land on the Isle of Wight. That strategic position opposite the Royal Navy base at Portsmouth would then be held pending either diplomatic negotiations where it might be traded for Gibraltar or some West Indian island, or until it could be utilized as an advance base for a subsequent invasion of the English mainland. To assist in securing the success of the attack on the Isle of Wight, French military leaders planned a raid on a city in northern England to draw forces northward away from the English Channel. Liverpool was selected as the target, the Marquis de Lafayette, recently returned from America, was selected to command the army troops assigned to the expedition and Jones was to command the naval forces. Jones accepted the assignment with enthusiasm, but the plan was abandoned

²⁷ James Lovell to William Whipple, 14 July 1778. Smith, *Delegates* 9:278.

²⁸ *Memoir*, 23.

²⁹ Jones had been forced to decline the command of a larger vessel, *le Mèrechal de Broglio*, because he feared he would not be able to recruit enough sailors to man it. *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁰ Sartine to Jones, 4 February 1779. Jones: 514.

³¹ *Memoir*, 24.

by the end of May and Jones given a different assignment.³²

The new orders involved a cruise against shipping off the Orkney Islands and in the North Sea. Jones protested that the language of the instructions was too restrictive. He later wrote that the way they were written would have "so limited my operations that I would not be able to take advantage of circumstances which might permit me to render more important services, such as ... making a landing and alarming the enemy in the north" thereby indicating that he had more than commerce raiding, *guerre de course*, in mind. Benjamin Franklin acceded to the wishes of the captain and dispatched new orders which, in Jones's words, "gave me carte blanche for six weeks [of] operations."³³ Acting under those orders, Jones put to sea on 14 August from Lorient and with a squadron of five vessels sailed clockwise around the British Isles.

Off the southwest coast of Ireland seven prisoners taken captive in three prizes escaped from Jones's squadron and told the customs collector at Tralee that "Jones's Intention is to scower this Coast and [then to] burn some particular Towns on this Coast."³⁴ Admiral Sir Thomas Pye responded to their warning by sending six ships in search of Jones, but by the time they reached the area Jones was long gone.³⁵ Fear of an attack spread to Dublin, where "papers describe that City and other parts of the Kingdom as being in a great commotion," and to England where a special session of the "Council for the Town of

Memoir, 26. Lafayette to Benjamin Franklin, 31 March 1779, to the Comte de Vergennes, 1 April 1779, to Jones, 27 April and 22 May 1779, Benjamin Franklin to Jones, 27 April 1779, Stanley J. Idzerda, ed., *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790*, 5 vols. (Ithaca, 1977-83), 2: 250-251, 258-263, 267-269. Jones: 577-578, 623. For the planned Franco-Spanish invasion see Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787* (Princeton, 1975), 143-158.

³³ *Memoir*, 29. See also Jones to Franklin, 5, 9, and 12 July 1779. Jones: 671, 674, 678. Those orders instructed Jones "that every Opportunity of Distressing the Enemy should be embraced." Franklin to Jones, 19 July 1779. Jones: 690.

³⁴ Thebd. Spottswood to William Blenneshasset, 24 August 1779. Admiralty Papers 1/4139. Public Record Office (henceforth A D M 1/4139). The information wound through government offices to reach Philip Stevens, Secretary to the Board of Admiralty, almost two weeks later. James H. Porten to Philip Stevens, 30 August and 6 September 1779. A D M 1/4139. State Papers 42/55/177, Public Record Office (henceforth 42/55/177). Virtually identical wording was used in a report from customs officials in Dublin in a letter printed in the *Hibernial Journal*, 1 September 1779, reprinted in the *London Evening Post*, 7 September 1779. Concern about Jones's whereabouts and intentions are evident in S. Porten to Philip Stevens, 5 September 1779. State Papers 42/55/173-74, Public Record Office (henceforth: SP 42/55/173-174), and officials in Workington and Whitehaven feared Jones would head for their area as he had the year before. *London Evening Post*, 7 September 1779. Writing from Valencia, Ireland, Peter Burrell reported that "we suppose [Jones's target] to be Bingle, Limerick or Galway." *Ibid.*, 11 September 1779. In wording parallel to that quoted in the text, government officials warned "Jone's [sic] intentions are to scour the Coast and burn some principal towns, having a Quantity of Combustibles." *Adams's Weekly Courant*, 7 September 1779.

³⁵ Sir Thomas Pye to Lord Shuldham, 2 September 1779. New-York Historical Society. When a "flying squadron" of nineteen ships left Portsmouth on 13 September, a London newspaper listed pursuit of Jones and one of three possible missions for it, though it soon learned its real target was St Malo in France. Jones was reported on the Irish coast as late as 11 September at which time he was in the North Sea east of Scotland. *London Evening Post*, 15, 17 and 20 September 1779.

Liverpool" met to discuss "the proper and most effectual means of putting this town into a State of Defence [now] that Paul Jones [is reported to be] upon the coast."³⁶

Jones gave no indication of plans to raid the western coasts of the British Isles, but by mid-September he had rounded the Orkney Islands and was sailing southward in the North Sea ready to execute *guerre de razzia*. From prisoners taken aboard ships he captured off the coast of Scotland, Jones had learned that the Firth of Forth leading to Leith, the port city of Edinburgh, was virtually undefended. Determined to "strike a brilliant blow" against Britain, he planned to masquerade as British ships and sail into the Firth, to send a landing party ashore with orders to capture any cannon in the area, then to deliver a letter to the Provost of Leith.³⁷ In the letter Jones demanded a "Contribution towards the reimbursement Which Britain owes to the much Injured Citizens of America." Saying that if an indemnity of £200,000 was not paid within one-half hour he would "lay [the town] in ashes,"³⁸ Jones told the commander of the landing party that he could negotiate with city officials but not to accept below £50,000 sterling, half of which must be paid in cash and half secured by a promissory note. Money was not Jones's chief object though it was for many of his men. Jones ordered the landing party commander to take into custody six city councilmen when he first landed. Three of these could be released when half the money was received in cash but the other three should be held as "collateral" until the note was redeemed.³⁹ Jones ordered one hundred and thirty men to board six boats and go ashore, but before he could execute his plan "a sudden storm rose and obliged me to run before the wind out of the gulf of Edinburgh."⁴⁰

Frustrated in this plan, Jones continued down the coast of Scotland spreading alarm as he went. On 19 September, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, he made preparations to send boats ashore on another raid, but had to abandon his plan when the captains of two of his ships, Denis-Nicolas Cottineau of *La Pallas* and Philippe-Nicholas Ricot of *Le Vengeance*, threatened to desert him.⁴¹ Jones stated that the "project," as he called it, "would have been highly honourable though not profitable," an indication that again his motive, as at

Adams's Weekly Courant, 15 June and 13 July 1779. The "commotion" in Dublin is described in the *Cumberland Packet*, [August 1779], quoted in "Chronicle of Press Reports," 54, and. See also Liverpool Town Books, 13 September 1779. Liverpool Archives. Richard Brooke, *Liverpool as It Was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1853), 360.

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Memoir, 31.

³⁸ Jones to The Provost of Leith, 14 September 1779. Jones: 742.

³⁹ Jones to Paul de Chamillard de Varville [commander of the landing party], 14 September 1779. *Ibid.*, 741. See also the Articles of Capitalization Jones drew up for the signatures of "the Provost, Recorder, and Principal Magistrate, of the City or Corporation of Leith," 14 September 1779 *Ibid.*, 743.

⁴⁰ *Memoir*, 31. Jones described his plan and its failure in virtually identical letters written to Benjamin Franklin, the President of the Continental Congress, the Marquis de Lafayette, Edward Bancroft, and Minister of Marine Sartine at the conclusion of his cruise (all dated 3 October 1779). Jones: 749-753. Officials in Edinburgh feared a return by Jones. For their precautions see Captain Charles Napier (Lord Provost at Edinburgh) to Philip Stephens, 16 and 17 September 1779, ADM 1/2221, and Basil Cochran, George Clark Maxwell, and Adam Smith (Customs Collectors at Edinburgh) to John Robinson, 17 September 1779. Treasury Records, T 1/548, PRO.

⁴¹ *Memoir*, 31.

Whitehaven sixteen months before, was not financial, such as collecting prize money for vessels captured or a profit from keeping ransom extracted such as Leith a few days earlier, but to spread alarm and force the British to divert forces from the crucial theatres of the war.⁴² Lacking the support of the captains under his command, Jones felt forced to abandon the raid but his goal was still achieved to an extent. The Marquis of Rockingham, Vice Admiral of Yorkshire, described the fears of the city of Hull in a letter to Lord Weymouth, the secretary of state for the South.⁴³

Jones's subordinates did not share his strategic vision, or at least declined to be guided by it unless there was the added incentive of profit. Thus his squadron of three ships continued southward until they arrived off Flamborough Head. Jones planned to intercept the Baltic Convoy carrying naval stores vital to the British war effort. Its capture would serve both Jones's strategic ends and by providing prize money fulfill the more mercenary desires of his subordinates. Shortly after noon on 23 September, the convoy arrived off Scarborough and that night Jones engaged its escorts in the historic Battle of Flamborough Head, the hottest single ship engagement in the Age of Sail. During that battle the *Bonhomme Richard* captured the new British frigate *Serapis*, a victory that lifted American spirits at one of the low points of the Revolution, made Jones the toast of Paris society, and led Louis XVI of France to present him with a gold-hilted sword and a knighthood.⁴⁴

Even before that battle, Jones had become the topic of concern up and down the coast. When his ships were sighted off Tynesand, Scotland, "The Magistrates [at nearby Dunbar] ordered the Drum to go through [the town] and proclaim that every man who would take arms, should appear immediately" to protect the town.⁴⁵ A resident of Newcastle wrote that Jones's ships "appeared off Tynmouth [on 19 September], and after parading a while in the offing, proceeded onwards to Sunderland, and so much alarmed the inhabitants of that place, That many of them immediately had their valuable effects either buried in the earth, or conveyed up the country [and that] The militia there beat to arms."⁴⁶ The city of Hull took elaborate precautions including the erection of batteries along the shore to prevent a landing by hostile forces. After the battle additional batteries were set up at Marfleet and Pauls on the north side of the Humber.⁴⁷ On the day after the battle Charles Saxton, captain of the *Winchelsea* in Yarmouth Road, wrote to the Admiralty that he had half a dozen ships under his command and that he hoped "to be out early in the morning and [to capture] Paul Jones

Jones to Franklin, 3 October 1779. Jones: 749.

⁴² Rockingham to Weymouth, 28 September 1779. *The American Historical Review*, 15 (April 1910): 567-71.

⁴⁴ James C. Bradford, "The Battle of Flamborough Head," in *Great American Naval Battles*, edited by Jack Sweetman (Annapolis, 1998), 27-47.

⁴⁵ *Edinburgh Evening Courant and the Caledonian Mercury*, 21 September 1779. The alarm at Hull was reported in the *London Evening Post*, 21 September 1779.

Letter of 25 September quoted in the *London Evening Post*, 28 September 1779.

⁴⁷ City Record Books, September 1779. Kingston-upon-Hull Council Archives. The virtual hysteria of residents was reflected in a London newspaper report that Jones captures sixteen colliers off the Humber on 25 September. *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 27 September 1779.

[if he could] be still found on the Coast."⁴⁸ The Admiralty dispatched additional ships to scour the coast and prevent Jones passing through the English Channel, but to no avail.⁴⁹ The wily American was gone. The London *Morning Post* reported that "Paul Jones resembles a Jack o'Lantern, to mislead our marines and terrify our coasts. He is no sooner seen than lost."⁵⁰

Jones's naval career proved anti-climatic after the Battle of Flamborough Head. He would never again command a Continental Navy vessel under orders allowing him to act on his own strategic ideas. Indeed his subsequent commands were limited to sailing the frigate *Alliance* from Holland to France, retorting from France to the United States in the sloop-of-war *Ariel*, and overseeing construction of the ship-of-the-line *America* in New Hampshire. Almost a decade later when Jones became an admiral in the Russian navy, conditions dictated execution of an *guerre d'escadre* strategy which he did with great success wiring the battles of the Liman which opened the way for Russian capture of the Turkish fortress at Ochakov.

But to return to consideration of John Paul Jones and strategy during the American Revolution: throughout the war Jones was a clear strategic thinker. It was he who proposed the strategy adopted by the French Navy in 1778 and, indeed, the biographer of Admiral De Grasse credits Jones with proposing the strategy which ultimately brought Franco-American victory at Yorktown.⁵¹ Perhaps it was not difficult to suggest strategy for a nation with a significant navy. That is to say that it did not require original flunking to devise a *guerre d'escadre* strategy for France in 1778 or 1781. Similar "inside the box" thinking - to use a modern term - would lead one to propose a *guerre de course* strategy for the tiny Continental Navy in its war against the mighty Royal Navy of Great Britain, but John Paul Jones was capable of, again to use a modern term, "thinking outside the box." He advocated not a *guerre de course*, but a *guerre de razzia* strategy, a strategy of raiding, for the United States. This was unique in its time. Jones advocated it in conversations with Robert Morris and Benjamin Franklin, explained it in letters to other American leaders, and executed it whenever the opportunity arose. Between 1776 and 1779 he proposed launching expeditions against British possessions in Africa, Hudson Bay, and the Caribbean and personally led raids on Nova Scotia, Whitehaven, and St. Mary's Isle. He planned, but at the last minute was prevented, launching raids against Leith and Hull.

Jones advocacy of a *guerre de razzia* strategy was not motivated by narrow military considerations. In his *Memoir* of the American Revolution Jones enumerated broader goals

⁴⁸ Charles Saxton to Philip Stephens, 24 September 1889. ADM 1/2484.

⁴⁹ Board of Admiralty Minutes, 23-29 September 1779. ADM 3/89. No less than eleven ships were reported in pursuit of Jones. *London Evening Post*, 28 September 1779.

⁵⁰ *London Morning Post*, 1 October 1779. Jones was reported on the coast of England, indeed even to be returning north around Scotland, and towns continued to send pleas for protection long after he was in Holland. Ships remained in port for over a week fearing his presence. *London Evening Post*, 28 September, 2, 4-5, 19 October 1779; *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 11 October 1779, reported Jones back off Mull, and ten days later reported that "Paul Jones [remains] the most general topic of conversation." *Ibid.*, 29 October 1779.

⁵¹ Charles Lee Lewis, *Admiral De Grasse and American Independence* (Annapolis, 1945), 70-71.

for the cruise of the *Ranger*.

Justly indignant at the treatment meted out to these Americans [*captured at sea*] I resolved to make a great effort to procure their relief and to bring to an end the barbarous ravages perpetrated by the English in America, burning homes, destroying property and even entire towns. I received no orders to secure reparations for these misfortunes and I had not communicated my plan to this end to the American ministers residing in Paris. I proposed to descend on some part of England and there destroy merchant shipping. My plan was also to take someone of particular distinction as a prisoner and to hold him as hostage to guaranteed the lives and exchange of Americans then imprisoned in England.⁵²

Jones shared these objectives with Admiral Louis Guillouet, Comte D'Orvilliers, commander of the French fleet at Brest who offered to secure a commission in the French navy for Jones "so that in case [Jones] ran into superior forces [he] could claim the protection of France." Jones declined the offer explaining that "had I accepted such a commission from France my devotion to the cause of America might have been doubted."⁵³

Many historians have cynically discounted Jones's "devotion to the cause of America" and assertions such as "I have drawn my Sword in the present generous Struggle for the right of Men; yet I am not in Arms as an American, nor am I in pursuit of Riches ... I profess myself a Citizen of the World."⁵⁴ They should not. Statements of such sentiments were common during the era and Jones was as sincere in making them as Thomas Jefferson, Edward Gibbon, Lafayette, and others.

His advocacy of *guerre de razzia*, a strategy that promised no financial gain, supports Jones's assertion that he did not act "in pursuit of Riches," but this is not to argue that Jones acted simply out of altruism or that he did not expect to gain from his actions. What he sought was not monetary reward, but glory. Pursuit of glory has led other naval officers to engage in combat against overwhelming odds. Indeed to achieve fame and glory through service to a cause or nation was fully consonant with the actions of his American contemporaries.⁵⁵ Jones once admitted to French Minister of Marine Antoine de Sartine that, "My desire for fame is infinite."⁵⁶ In the opinion of John Lehman, former naval aviator and

Memoir, 16.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁵⁵ The pursuit of fame and glory through public service is the theme of Douglas Adair's "Fame and the Founding Fathers," in *Fame and the Founding Fathers*, edited by Trevor Colbourn (New York, 1974).

Jones to Sartine, 13 September 1778. Jones: 404. A decade later, Jones mused, "I am perhaps too much attached to honours.... Jones to Baron Krudener, 23 March 1788. Jones: 1673. Indeed, John Adams called Jones "the most ambitious and intriguing officer in the American Navy. Jones has Art, and Secrecy, and aspires very high." John Adams, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, 4 vols edited by L. H. Butterfield, *et al.* (Cambridge, 1961), 2:370.

secretary of the navy, "naval personalities fall into three general categories. There are the daring warriors who live for glory and for battle. John Paul Jones, Stephen Decatur, Jr., and William B. Cushing" fall into this group.⁵⁷ Lehman is correct in ascribing to Jones a desire for glory, but does him a disservice in failing to mention another dimension of Jones' character: the professionalism he exhibited in his suggestions for the establishment of a school for young officers, a squadron to test tactics, a promotion system based on merit, and other reforms.⁵⁸ Jones never had the resources to execute fully the strategy he advocated and it enters the realm of counterfactual history to speculate on how effective it would have been.⁵⁹ Shortly after Jones's 1779 circumnavigation of the British Isles, Admiral Richard Kempenfelt advised the first lord of the Admiralty that, "When you know the enemy's designs, in order to do something effectual you must endeavour to be superior to them in some part where they have designs to execute, and where, if they succeed, they would most injure you. If your fleet is divided as to be in all places inferior to the enemy, they will have a fair chance of succeeding everywhere in their attempts."⁶⁰ It is not too much to infer from such a document that he would have advised Lord Sandwich against spreading the British fleet too thin in an effort to guard the outposts of empire which Jones advocated attacking. Whether it would have been effective or not, the fact that Jones conceived such a strategy and executed it to the limit of his resources, within the orders given him, and to the extent he could convince the men under his command to follow his plans, is a measure of the range of his strategic and naval flunking.⁶¹

John Lehman, *On Seas of Glory: Heroic Men, Great Ships, and Epic Battles of the American Navy* (New York, 2001), 1.

⁵⁷ For fuller discussion of Jones's professionalism see James C. Bradford, *The Reincarnation of John Paul Jones: The Navy Discovers its Professional Roots* (Washington, 1986).

⁵⁸ E. H. Carr dismissed counterfactual history, as entertaining as it could be, as "a mere parlour game" and "a game which all of us in moments of distraction or idleness indulge in," but it continues to be popular enough as to receive academic assessment. Geoffrey Hawthorn, *Plausible Worlds: Possibility and Understanding in History and the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, 1991). The Library of Congress cataloguing system has two subject headings for it: "Imaginary wars and battles" and "Imaginary histories," but many works of the genre not included in these categories, but instead are placed in general historical categories, e.g., Showalter, Dennis E. and Harold C. Deutsch, (eds.), *What If?: Strategic Alternatives of World War II* (Chicago, IL, 1997), and Robert Cowley and Stephen Ambrose, (eds.), *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (New York, 1999).

⁵⁹ "Admiral Kempenfelt's observations on the arrangements given to him by Lord Sandwich," in *Letters and Papers of Charles, Lord Barham, Admiral of the Red Squadron, 1758-1813*, 3 vols, edited by John Knox Laughton (London, 1907), 1:361-362.

⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (1911) Sir Julian Corbett does not use the terms *guerre de course* or *guerre d'escadre*. He focuses more on offensive versus defence action, and that his assessment of British strategy and operations during the Seven Years War concludes that "coastal diversion^]. . . . can seldom be satisfactory [and have been] brandfed] as unworthy of a first-class Power. Yet the fact remains that all the great continental masters of war have feared or valued British intervention of this character. . . ." Corbett, *Some Principles*, edited by Eric J. Grove (Annapolis, 1988), 66. Still he totally ignores raids against imperial possessions. The fact that his work contains references to British, French, German, Dutch, Austrian, and Japanese admirals, but to only two Americans, Alfred Thayer Mahan and William Sampson, may reflect a lack of interest in the United States. He could not have been expected to have had access to manuscripts

John Paul Jones was an eighteenth century man and must be understood in that context. Most of his biographers have been overly influenced by the times in which they wrote. These range over time from nineteenth-century American writers who viewed him as a hero and focused on his exploits against Great Britain to the early twentieth-first-century when his most recent biographer, influenced by current events, depicts Jones as a practitioner of terrorism. A century ago, during a time of Anglo-American rapprochement, both the navy and writers saw in Jones the proto-professional naval officer and emphasized his proposals for a naval academy, a squadron of evolution, a merit-based promotion system, and other reforms popular with Progressive reformers of the time. Jones's ideas about strategy were largely ignored, probably they varied with the immutable strategic principles enunciated by Alfred Thayer Mahan, the Prophet of Sea Power. At bottom, Jones shared the belief of later navalists that a nation's greatness rested on its overseas commerce, but Mahan stressed the need to defend that commerce by forming the navy's ships into a battle fleet that could defeat the enemy in blue water battles that produced Command of the Sea. In contrast, Jones advocated a peripheral strategy that involved small squadrons attacking an enemy's weakly defended coasts and outlying possessions. Timing may have been poor in another way: The first analytical studies of Jones appeared at a time most political and military leaders were promoting Anglo-American amity and focussing on how Jones proposed to defeat the British might have been viewed as something of an embarrassment at a time when popular culture reflected the growing friendship between the two societies. Such trends were reflected by writers such as Rudyard Kipling in *Captain's Courageous* (1897) and "White Man's Burden" (1899), and by advertisers, such as Pear's Soap which advertised that "Together an Anglo-American naval alliance and Pear's can improve the complexion of the world." Depictions of Jones, like those other individuals and events, often reveal as much about the author or time in which they are written as they do about their subject.⁶²

For its first century the US Navy relied on *guerre de course*, for the past century on *guerre d'escadre*, but it is worth noting that another option existed, *guerre de razzia* and that its first proponent was John Paul Jones. John Paul Jones is often honoured with the title "Father of the American Navy." He also deserves another title: "Father of American Naval Strategy."

written by Jones, but he could have consulted Augustus C. Buell's *Paul Jones: Founder of the American Navy*, 2 vols, (New York, 1900), had he been interested. None of his references to the American Revolution (pp. 92, 190, 193, 210, 221-223, 226) mention a single American. In the same vein, the volume does not contain a single reference to the American Civil War. His extended section on "Attack, Defence, and Support of Military Expeditions" does not consider the strategy behind such operations, but focuses on operations analysing the methods of conducting them. *Ibid.*, 280-304.

⁶² In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, Jones's latest biographer depicts him as something of a terrorist saying that "He understood the power of psychological warfare, that the civilian population could be terrorized by attacks on their homeland." Evan Thomas, *John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy* (New York, 2003), 9. See also "John Paul Jones: Terrorist? Hero? Or Both?" *The New Hampshire Gazette*, 6 June 2003, 4-5.