



# **The German Naval Menace: The Relationship between the Press and Diplomacy in the Dreadnought Era 1904-1914, an Era of Misperception?**

A humanities thesis submitted by

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of

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Department of Media Production  
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I declare that this thesis/project is all my own work and the sources of information and the material I have used (including the internet) have been fully identified and properly acknowledged.

Student signature .....

## **Abstract**

The aim of the thesis is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the Anglo-German arms race in the early twentieth century by combining press histories and international relations theories. The thesis suggests that the British misperceived German naval and imperial ambitions and pressed for a retraction of German power and an increase in Britain's naval budget. British misperceptions of Germany were exacerbated by the British press, newspapers and editors. The press exacerbated Anglo- German antagonisms by issuing hostile publications throughout their pages which caused a misperception of foreign and naval policy. Moreover, British attempts to secure its trade routes across the globe had the unintentional effect of making Germany less secure.

The thesis provides a chronological account of the Anglo-German arms race. Topics discussed in the thesis include Foreign Office affairs, personal relationships between journalists and politicians and a break-down of the principal newspapers in circulation in Britain and Germany. The thesis will also trace Anglo-German insecurity explaining how the press aggravated a sensitive situation. The thesis will address the underlying hostilities in Anglo-German relations and attribute them to the press.

*I wish to give a special mention to my supervisor Dr. Scott Keefer who, as always, has been a fantastic source of knowledge and support. Without your unwavering encouragement over the past four years I would not be in the privileged position am in today, so thank you.*

*I also wish to acknowledge the brilliant and knowledgeable staff at the National Archives in Kew, London and the Parliamentary Archives at the House of Commons. Thank you for all the conversations I have had with members of staff at Bournemouth University. I also wish to thank the history department at Bournemouth University who nurtured me through the process of research and writing, not only for this thesis, but for my undergraduate degree as well.*

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## *List of Abbreviations*

<b>ADM</b>	<i>Admiralty</i>
<b>AC</b>	<i>Aim Correction</i>
<b>BEF</b>	<i>British Expeditionary Force</i>
<b>CAB</b>	<i>Cabinet Papers</i>
<b>CID</b>	<i>Committee of Imperial Defence</i>
<b>C- in - C</b>	<i>Commander in Chief</i>
<b>CGS</b>	<i>Chief of General Staff</i>
<b>CIGS</b>	<i>Chief of the Imperial General Staff</i>
<b>CoS</b>	<i>Chief of Staff</i>
<b>Com</b>	<i>Commander (RN)</i>
<b>Cpt</b>	<i>Captain</i>
<b>DMO</b>	<i>Department of Military Operations</i>
<b>DNI</b>	<i>Director of Naval Intelligence</i>
<b>HST</b>	<i>Hegemonic Stability Theory</i>
<b>IR</b>	<i>International Relations</i>
<b>Lt Col</b>	<i>Lieutenant Colonel</i>
<b>NID</b>	<i>Naval Intelligence Department</i>
<b>PUS</b>	<i>Permanent Under Secretary</i>
<b>RMA</b>	<i>Revolution in Military Affairs</i>
<b>RUSI</b>	<i>Royal United Service Institute</i>
<b>RN</b>	<i>Royal Navy</i>
<b>TNA</b>	<i>The National Archives - London</i>
<b>WO</b>	<i>War Office</i>

*'I am but a comparatively young journalist, but I have seen Cabinets upset, Ministers driven into retirement, laws repealed, great social reforms initiated, Bills transformed, estimates remodelled, Acts passed, governors appointed, armies sent hither and thither, war proclaimed, and war averted by the agency of newspapers'*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William T Stead - 'Government by Journalism' 1889 – former editor of *Pall Mall*.

# The German Naval Menace: The Relationship between the Press and Diplomacy in the Dreadnought Era 1904-1914, an Era of Misperception?

## Chapter I. Introduction & Historiography

*Foreign politics are the relations between so many bands of outlaws. There are seldom any strong ties between the parties, either language or history or neighbourhood or habits; very often there are traditions of positive hostility and mutual dislike.<sup>2</sup>*

Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in late October 2018 a £1 billion investment into Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The investment is aimed at the *Dreadnought* programme, a class of four submarines destined for the Senior Service. The four *Dreadnought* class submarines will be charged with providing the 'continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent' on behalf of the United Kingdom into the late 2060s. The submarines will host Trident nuclear warheads which are expected to cost an estimated £31 billion over their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> Coupled with the renewal of the Trident nuclear missile system, the announcement induced a *cause célèbre*, splitting public and political opinion in the United Kingdom. Numerous media campaigns by prominent political figures have highlighted the ethical and financial implications of renewing Trident.<sup>4</sup> However, with threats of Islamic extremism and an expansionist China in the Far East, the renewal of Trident is looking like an increasing necessity. Moreover, with the ongoing challenges of Brexit and a resurgent Russia, the Royal Navy is adopting an increased international presence, 'showing the flag' around the globe.<sup>5</sup> Controversy apropos the expense of armaments is not an aberration of British naval history, the contemporary debate drawing comparisons with the Dreadnought Era.

The thesis provides an interdisciplinary approach to the Anglo-German naval arms race by incorporating press history and international relations (IR) theories. The thesis takes

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<sup>2</sup> Murray & Gilbert. *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey, 1906-1915*.  
<https://archive.org/details/foreignpolicyofs00murr/page/40>. p.41

<sup>3</sup> Policy Paper – gov.uk - Dreadnought Submarine Programme: Factsheet. The names of ships have been announced as HMS *Dreadnought*, *Warspite*, *Valiant* & *King George VI*.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/successor-submarine-programme-factsheet/successor-submarine-programme-factsheet>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/02/nuclear-arms-westminster-abbey-jesus-weapons> The Guardian provides just one example of how controversial the topic of Trident has become in the UK press.

<sup>5</sup> HMS *Montrose*, a Type 23 frigate has been forward deployed to Bahrain on a three-year operation. See <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/hms-montrose-arrives-in-bahrain-for-three-year-deployment/> for further information.



inspiration from political psychology and the IR theory of 'misperception' provided by Robert Jervis. Jervis' seminal work attributes misunderstanding and misperception of US-Soviet policy as the cause of the Cold War. Jervis asserted that there has been 'little attention paid to the general questions of how adversaries were perceived'.<sup>6</sup> Jervis' seminal work will be addressed in full throughout the literature review. The thesis will examine whether the IR theory of misperception can be utilised in the context of the Anglo-German arms race and discuss the possibility of a potential Anglo-German misperception caused by British and German newspapers. The thesis will seek to demonstrate that misperception was perpetuated by the press of both nations, who utilised its power *au fond* for their own purpose. It is the aim of the research to fill similar gaps regarding the Anglo-German arms race in the early twentieth century. The thesis will also explore the issue of public opinion, and the impact of journalists and political posturing on Anglo-German relations throughout the Dreadnought Era. The thesis will also introduce key newspaper proprietors, such as Lord Northcliffe and Charles Scott MP and their effect on newspaper publications.

The thesis will argue that British foreign policy towards Germany produced a self-fulfilling prophecy and will discuss concepts of IR theories. The British misperceived Germany as aggressive due to their imperial and naval ambitions which was exacerbated by the press. This in turn led to Germany viewing the British as aggressive. Consequently, Britain pushed for the retraction of German power, leading to polemics in the German press against Britain. The British also failed to see that in aligning themselves with France and Russia, in an attempt to increase their own security, it contributed to German insecurity. Conversely, Germany's attempts to alienate Britain from France and Russia had the adverse effect.<sup>7</sup> Ergo, the arms race was a cycle of misperception aggravated by the press. It is worth noting that Germany did pose a credible threat to Britain, however this threat was exacerbated by the press.

The IR model utilised for the research is the 'spiral model'. The spiral model indicates that Britain's aspiration to secure its trade routes led to an increase in naval expenditure. This had the unintentional effect of menacing an insecure Germany, looking to increase its imperial assets. Britain's drive for economic security and defence produced actions, perceived by Germany as hostile. Consequently, German press outlets pressed for an increase in naval budget which can be partially attributed to the Anglo-German arms race. The thesis suggests that both British and German politicians were aware of these events

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<sup>6</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P. xvi

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 89

and actively sought an 'understanding'. However, polemics in the press aggravated the situation and estranged the two countries.

The principal theme of the research concerns the relationship between the press and diplomacy. The thesis will demonstrate that the press created an Anglo – German misperception. This will be done by utilising a number of British sources, including papers from the National Archives, Parliamentary Archives and numerous online resources such as the British Newspaper Archive. The sources incorporate Admiralty, Foreign Office and Committee of Imperial Defence papers. Moreover, the British Newspaper Archive presents the historian with an opportunity to study regional and local newspapers which provides the thesis with a unique angle on public opinion. Through the use of these sources the thesis will attempt to demonstrate that the press aggravated the relationship between Britain and Germany apropos invasion scares and imperial ambitions.

The thesis will demonstrate that government officials in Britain and Germany were open to the idea of an Anglo-German 'understanding'.<sup>8</sup> However, through the use of the British Newspaper Archive and multiple sources the thesis will argue that public opinion on both sides of the North Sea were opposed to any such proposal. This was exacerbated by newspaper articles published in both Britain and Germany. Public opinion became increasingly important throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Three political events led to an increase in public participation in government affairs in Britain. In 1883, legislation passed to rein in electoral disruption which was subsequently followed by the 1884 redistribution of parliamentary seats. Moreover, the 1885 Third Reform Act extended the franchise paving the way for men over the age of thirty, with a property, to vote in general elections. These events led to increased anxiety in parliament, which prior to the reform acts was a partisan world apropos defence. The fear in Parliament revolved around how public opinion would shape defence matters. The political events of the 1880s coincided with the industrialisation of Germany and warfare. The term 'Dreadnought Era' is characterised by the commissioning of HMS *Dreadnought* into the Royal Navy in 1906 [appendix 4]. This revolutionary battleship will be discussed in further detail in Chapter IV.

Reform acts in late nineteenth-century Britain led to increased fears in the imperial minded Conservative party viz. naval defence. Increased public participation in government policy led to the advent of the Navy League in 1894. The Navy League provide one of the leading examples of political pressure groups in the Dreadnought Era. The League informed the public of Royal Navy events and topical news. 'There was a belief in the Navy League that

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<sup>8</sup> Head of the German Navy League, Admiral von Köster on the British. Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/2

there is a working man to be converted. The working man's club echo with socialist denunciations and detractions of an imperial policy. He is only half convinced of the value of our Empire'.<sup>9</sup> How could pressure groups such as the Navy League convert and garner support of the lay man?

*The Times* introduced the British public to the notion of Germany's 'risk fleet' theory in 1906, noting that 'Germany must have a fleet of such strength that even for the mightiest naval power a war with her would involve such risks as to jeopardise its own supremacy'.<sup>10</sup> The 'risk fleet' theory was calculated by Admiral Tirpitz in 1897, who believed the policy would furnish Germany with political leverage.<sup>11</sup> The Anglo-German arms race is an era defined by populism and press barons. Press barons were aware of the financial gain and political leverage they wielded. The rise of press barons coincided with a new wave of journalism and presentation styles. The thesis will explore the concept of 'new wave journalism' and press barons in further detail whilst providing context viz. newspaper readership, circulation and demographics in Chapter II.

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The Anglo-German arms race has been discussed *ad nauseam*, however as this thesis will demonstrate there is a lacuna in the historiography.<sup>12</sup> German foreign policy in the early twentieth century had been to 'increase military capability through expansion whilst utilising diplomatic means to placate the British and demonstrate Germany as a friendly power'.<sup>13</sup> However, according to Foreign Office papers, the pan-Germanic press did not tow the official line and instead aggravated the situation, drawing criticism from the Imperial Government and British press. Furthermore, a series of British novels produced between 1871 and 1914 under the banner of so called 'Invasion Literature' arguably agitated public imagination. The publications began with a novel titled *The Battle for Dorking* (1871) which captured the imagination of the public. Further novels were turned in to publications in the press. Invasion literature raised genuine fears of German invasion in the British psyche. Decades of European peace were induced by the post-Napoleonic policy of a European 'balance of power'.

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<sup>9</sup> Coetzee, F. (2011). *For Party or Country*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. p.23

<sup>10</sup> "The Naval Question and Anglo-German Relations." *The Times*, 11 Jan. 1906, p. 9. The Times Digital Archive,

<sup>11</sup> Mahnken, T., Maiolo, J. and Stevenson, D. (2016). *Arms Races in International Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.22 – see chapter I for an in-depth analysis of Tirpitz plans and historiography of the Anglo-German arms race.

<sup>12</sup> Key historians include, Arthur Marder, Jon Sumida, Christopher Bell and Matthew Seligmann. *Vide* the literature review for further context.

<sup>13</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912. p.344

Local branches of the Navy League initiated new schemes to garner public support for the Royal Navy. Consequently, according to further Foreign Office reports, British press organs and political pressure groups were accused of Machiavellian duplicity by the German press. Public interest in the Royal Navy and foreign affairs had lapsed throughout the nineteenth century, signified by the fall of Napoleon in 1815.<sup>14</sup> One policy of the Navy League was to reignite passion for the navy by celebrating Trafalgar Day. For many, the Royal Navy was a force for good in the world, but the patriotic sentiments of Trafalgar were a distant memory. This was due in part to a limited threat of invasion which was enjoyed by Victorian Britain. The Navy League raised awareness of the stagnation in the Royal Navy, which appalled the public, who in turn pressurised the government to stop the rot. The strain between domestic and foreign politics threatened at points to derail the Liberal Party. The party was elected in 1905 on the pledge of adopting a series of social welfare programmes, including pensions, creating fiscal tensions when naval expenditures could not be checked.

As stated, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the ability of the press to distort foreign policy and examine whether the IR model of misperception can be used in the context of the Anglo-German arms race. By providing a systematic approach, the paper will also address how influential political and naval figures leaked information to selected confidants in the press to sway public opinion. The thesis of this paper is split into a series of chapters, ranging from the relationship between the press and the public, scandals and imperial defence. There are well documented cases of the exuberant Admiral John Fisher utilising the press for his own goals by feeding close confidants such as W. T. Stead pertinent information to sway public opinion in his favour. Another famous case involved the malcontent Lord Charles Beresford, disenfranchised by Admiral Fisher's reforms, sending a damning letter to the Prime Minister which was published in *The Times* in April 1909. The letter claimed that Fisher's reforms were leading the country into jeopardy and led a public inquiry. The fallout of the letter split Admiralty and public opinion and demonstrated how newspapers could be used as an intra-departmental weapon, which is examined further through newspaper articles discussed in Chapter IV. Throughout the era, Fisher, *primus inter pares* at the Admiralty, utilised his contacts in the press to 'convert' the laymen of the country back to the Admiralty.<sup>15</sup> The diary of Charles Scott, the former Liberal MP, journalist and

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<sup>14</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. p.243

<sup>15</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. Marder provides evidence of Admiral Fisher providing certain information to W.T. Stead at *Pall Mall*. Admiral Fisher *primus inter pares* at the Admiralty, was one of the most influential naval figures of the twentieth century, his relationship with press and journalists will be discussed in detail.

proprietor of the *Manchester Guardian* highlights internal division in the press. Scott's diary has been consulted for the purpose of the thesis.

The intrusion of non-diplomatic forces in politics, chiefly the press, were to blame for exacerbating an Anglo-German misperception. Focusing on the private papers of key journalists and politicians is a key aspect of the thesis. Valentine Chirol, *The Times* military and foreign affairs correspondent, *au courant* with German and Continental politics, had shared numerous trips with a young, impressionable, Winston Churchill prior to his political career.<sup>16</sup> By researching the key differences between private papers, Cabinet papers and Admiralty memos, it provides the opportunity to assess what was published in national and regional newspapers.

The bulk of the research was undertaken at the National Archives in London, and the Parliamentary Archives at Westminster Palace. Hansards Parliamentary Papers, *The Times* Digital Archive, the British Library and the National Newspaper Archive have all been consulted. The thesis seeks to demonstrate the malign relationship between the press and the public. Public opinion combined with the press often exerted its influence on foreign policy. In the words of British diplomat, Charles Hardinge, public opinion formed 'the most serious danger to our relations with Germany'.<sup>17</sup> The issue of 'spy mania' and the 'invasion bogey' which gripped Britain and Germany throughout the era will be addressed in Chapter IV. The thesis incorporates local, regional and national newspapers.

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The advent of a unified Germany in 1871 was welcomed in Britain. Aside from dynastic and religious ties, Germany acted as a bulwark against France and Russia. However, as early as 1897, Germany appeared on the British radar as a potential threat to national security.<sup>18</sup> Two major war scares in 1885 and 1893 had demonstrated that the French and Russian military threat was not as serious as first thought and public imagination turned to German naval ambitions. By 1904 the French threat had been all but eliminated by the signing of the *entente* and Asiatic issues had been shored up by the Japanese Alliance. The *de facto* American naval sphere was respected by the Admiralty and Russian naval ambitions had been checked by the Japanese at Tsushima, leaving Germany as the *bête noire*. Edward Grey noted in a speech to parliament in 1912 that the 'reassertion of the maintenance of

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<sup>16</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912 p.73

<sup>17</sup> Otte, T. (2011). *The Foreign Office Mind*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. P.325 – forms part of the Hardinge papers located at Cambridge University.

<sup>18</sup> Vide the literature review for differing interpretations and historiography concerning the advent of German naval power.

British friendship with France and Russia as the starting point, or, as Mr Bonar Law preferred to put it, as the key note of British foreign policy'.<sup>19</sup> With the Anglo-Russian Convention ratified in August 1907, relations with the two former foes significantly improved.

How did Anglo-German antagonism reach fever pitch in the Dreadnought Era? The Japanese and Americans strove economically and challenged British hegemony. Britain managed these threats by signing an alliance with former and decrying any agitation with the latter.<sup>20</sup> Did the Japanese and Americans pose a threat to Britain? Geographically no, but economically yes. However, the polemics of the British press were never directed against these powers and the threat of invasion, non-existent. The German press declared the British people 'unaccountable and exceedingly prejudiced, and obstinate as mules in lending no ear to both sides of a question'.<sup>21</sup> The research will provide examples of jingoistic nationalism in British and selected German newspapers and highlight political scandals, calamities and misdemeanours, such as the Kaiser's interview with the *Daily Telegraph* in October 1908. One limitation of the thesis is that it does not consult a wide variety of German sources due to language restrictions.

British naval policy throughout the nineteenth century has become synonymous with the 'two-power standard', a term first coined by Lord Hamilton in 1889.<sup>22</sup> The policy enabled Britain to maintain a fleet larger than the next two powers combined. However, this policy altered throughout the Dreadnought Era due to the German threat and is now viewed as a political rather than military policy.<sup>23</sup> The challenge of the Franco- Russian *Entente* and subsequent rise of Germany as an economic naval power began to strain British finances. The dearth in war experience for nearly a century severely hampered the Royal Navy's technological and strategic understanding of modern warfare.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the growing strain of imperial security and home defence seriously hampered the British economy. Friedberg's weary titan theory asserts that Britain experienced a period of relative decline throughout the

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<sup>19</sup> "Sir Edward Grey's Speech." Times [London, England] 12 July 1912: 5. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 12 Nov. 2018

<sup>20</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. The economic competition provided by the United States strained tensions, but any thought of hostility was viewed by the British as incestuous.

<sup>21</sup> Otte, T. (2011). *The Foreign Office Mind*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. P.326

<sup>22</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. Marder p.105

<sup>23</sup> Lambert, N. (2003). *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. 1st ed. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. P.17

<sup>24</sup> Seligmann, M. (2018). A Service Ready for Total War? The State of the Royal Navy in July 1914. *The English Historical Review*, 133(560), p. 107 All major works on the pre-Dreadnought Era Royal Navy appear to charge the Admiralty of becoming technologically inferior to Germany. See Marder's *Anatomy* for further context.

period of 1895 to 1905, due to external economic pressure and domestic reforms.<sup>25</sup>

Conversely, arguments have been made suggesting that throughout the Dreadnought Era, Britain was simply rebalancing and readjusting in the fall out of the Boer War. Either way, it is evident that the Dreadnought Era was a liminal period which witnessed the transformation of the Royal Navy from an antiquated force into a modern fighting fleet.

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The main methodological issue faced throughout the research concerns bias. Dealing with bias has been a generational challenge faced by historians. It is evident in *The History of the Times* that there is open bias throughout the Dreadnought Era. The literature claims the paper had made friendly overtures to Germany and that there was a 'sincere desire' for a 'permanent friendship'.<sup>26</sup> However, it is evident from the research that publications in *The Times* caused agitation in Germany. By 1897, George Saunders, Berlin Correspondent at *The Times* foresaw the hostility of German foreign and naval policy. Saunders believed that Germany and Britain were on an unavoidable collision course, stating that 'England must reckon with these things and answer German naval expansion with energy and speed'.<sup>27</sup> The subsequent course of events would prove these fateful words correct. The German naval bills were a tocsin of German imperial ambitions.

The thesis will demonstrate through the use of British documents and newspapers that the German naval policy towards Britain was not a linear policy. In fact, it was multifaceted. Germany was not only concerned with British foreign policy, on the contrary, Germany were also concerned with French, Russian, Japanese, Italian, Austro-Hungarian and American policies. The powerful French and Russian armies that sat to the east and west of Germany caused alarm inside the state. Moreover, the Italian foreign policy vacillated between the Triple Alliance and closer ties with Britain. Therefore, the theory that German naval planning was simply aggressive is flawed and the gamut of German foreign policy, multi-faceted. Moreover, in response to the actions and policies of its adversaries, Germany misperceived British actions as attempted encirclement. With the benefit of hindsight, historians are able to draw inferences from the evidence presented to them. As discussed in Wilson's *The Policy of the Entente*, British statesmen were unable to deduce inferences from the information

<sup>25</sup> Friedberg, A. (2010). *The Weary Titan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. A paragraph in Chapter III is dedicated to the issue of bias.

<sup>26</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912 p.73

<sup>27</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 2. (1947). London. The Tradition Established 1841-1884 p.299  
*Private correspondence between George Saunders and Wallace.*

provided to them when studying German foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> However, for the decision makers at the time it was decisively harder for them to draw the same inferences from the information presented to them. Therefore, the axiom that German naval policy was solely aggressive is misguided.

It is not the purpose of this paper to enter into the current contemporary debate between revisionist and post-revisionist arguments concerning the Dreadnought. It is hoped that the paper contributes positively to the understanding of the Dreadnought Era through an interdisciplinary approach. With the recent centenary of the First World War it provides a poignant opportunity to explore a new angle of the Anglo- German naval arms race. The thesis is split into four chapters providing context to Dreadnought Era through a press angle.

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<sup>28</sup> Wilson, K. (2009). *The Policy of the Entente*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



## Historiography

The Dreadnought Era provides a surfeit of historiographical debate, laid out on a *tapis* for the historian to indulge in. The literature review will begin by assessing the seminal works of Arthur J Marder. Marder produced his ground-breaking literature *The Anatomy of British Sea Power* (hereafter *Anatomy*) in the 1940s and was privy to certain documents which are no longer available. By the 1980s the orthodox interpretation of the Dreadnought Era was critiqued by a group of revisionist historians. Nicholas Lambert shifted the focus of the debate onto the financial limitations of the British, suggesting that Marder ignores the financial aspect of the era. Lambert also suggests that throughout the Dreadnought Era, France and Russia were always Britain's primary threat.

The most contentious historiographical debate revolves around when Germany was perceived to be Britain's primary naval threat. The orthodox opinion suggests that Fisher's reforms were designed to meet the threat of Germany. However, Lambert and his revisionist cohort claim that Fisher's reforms were financially motivated and that instead Fisher was more concerned by Franco-Russian ambitions and imperial defence. Post- revisionist historians have recently challenged the revisionist interpretations of the Dreadnought 'revolution' and instead view the era as an 'evolution'. Moreover, the role of the press has received scant attention in shaping British and German foreign policy. Although addressed by several historians, focus on this relatively new discipline has received insufficient scrutiny.

### ***Orthodox Interpretation of the Dreadnought Era***

Marder's *Anatomy* attempted to provide context to British naval ideology over the period of 1880-1905. Throughout the course of his career, Marder instilled himself as the doyen of British naval history. His epoch set out by outlining the causes of naval expansion and evolution of naval architecture. Marder provided ample footnotes which assist the reader with deciphering the long chronological narrative of the period. Marder had privileged access to certain Admiralty documents and was 'granted special access by the Admiralty to a number of confidential printed policy papers from Fisher's time'.<sup>29</sup> One of the core themes of the book concerns Admiral Fisher's reforms. Marder picked his way through the numerous

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<sup>29</sup> Sumida, J. (1995). Sir John Fisher and the Dreadnought: The Sources of Naval Mythology. *The Journal of Military History*, 59(4), p.628

war scares of the era with great efficiency and detail. Further events discussed include the Fashoda Incident, the 'Invasion Bogey' and Dreadnought Scare.

The British press viewed German naval expansion as a direct antagonism to Britain, even at this early stage. The press did not believe that Germany needed a large fleet for 'defence'.<sup>30</sup> Parenthetically, the Teutophobic nature of the press led to an invasion scare over the winter of 1904-1905 in Germany, suggesting the press had the ability to create misperceptions. The invasion scares in Germany led to Christmas leave being cancelled and the fleet stationed in the Orient to be recalled to the North Sea.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, *The Sun* called for the Royal Navy to 'Copenhagen' the German fleet, reminiscent of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>32</sup> The conservative and radical press organs asserted that a Copenhagen style attack on the German Fleet would lead to a peaceful Continent. Further chapters are dedicated to how public opinion was reflected in naval ideology and discusses 'starvation theory' and naval league propaganda.

Although pre-dating the Dreadnought Era, Marder provided a brilliant analysis of the rise of the German threat. *Anatomy* clearly defined how Germany became the primary threat to Britain and attributed Fisher's reforms to the ratification of the German Naval Bills. *Anatomy* also addressed the Naval Defence Act of 1889. The chapter discussed how W. T. Stead's, close confidant of Fisher, articles in *Pall Mall* helped shape public opinion in favour of the Royal Navy. Marder asserted that in 1888, France was still the *Bête Noir* of Britain. Marder then navigates Anglo- German and French relations at the turn of the twentieth century, the 1904 *Entente* with France, German naval expansion, *Weltpolitik*, and the risk fleet theory. Marder concludes *Anatomy* by summing up Anglo-German 'estrangement', asserting that German foreign policy was the root cause.<sup>33</sup>

Marder's second publication is titled *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* (hereafter *Scapa*). Volume One of *Scapa* is split into two fundamental themes. Firstly, Marder focuses on Admiral Fisher and his reforms. The book then meanders through various events including the Beresford Inquiry, in which, as described by Historian O. Hale, 'the author is solidly but judiciously on Fisher's side'.<sup>34</sup> Beresford's use of the press to attack Fisher led to

<sup>30</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; A History of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. p.341

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 'German War Scare' p.250

<sup>32</sup> The Second Battle of Copenhagen will be discussed further in the main chapters. For further reading, Alexander Grab's *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* provides a fantastic insight to the Battle of Copenhagen.

<sup>33</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; A History of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf

<sup>34</sup> Review. Hale, O. (1962). From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904-1919. Arthur J. Marder. *The Journal of Modern History*, 34(4), pp.458-459.

a public inquiry, in which the complaints of Beresford were dismantled, the Beresford Inquiry will be addressed in Chapter IV. Marder also provided context to the various war scares and the 1909 Dreadnought crisis. Secondly, Marder moves on to the Anglo-German naval arms race, including principal themes of the Agadir Crisis, Haldane Mission and Churchill's naval holiday plan.

Marder utilised a wide range of sources to draw his conclusions. *Scapa* benefited from Marder's vast wealth of knowledge viz. the personalities of military officers and politicians. Marder negotiated the period by using sources from the British press, personal memoirs and German papers from the Ministry of the Marine. Not only did Marder utilise official papers, he scrutinised personal memoirs and papers of several key officers including Fisher, Jellicoe, Churchill and Asquith. *Scapa* is a sound, authoritative read that is full of scholarly sagacity. However, revisionist historians have critiqued Marder's approach to documentary evidence labelling him a 'scissors and paste' historian, one that could only read and make no interpretation of what was in front of him.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Revisionist Account of the Dreadnought Era***

Jon Sumida's *Sir John Fisher and the Dreadnought: The Source of Naval Mythology* (hereafter *Mythology*) published in 1995, challenged the pre-revisionist account of the naval arms race. Sumida claimed that the primary evidence utilised to support the argument is flawed. Sumida asserted that to most historians, the narrative of the *Dreadnought* and Fisher's policies behind the capital ship were straightforward. However, revisionist studies shed a different light on Fisher's capital ship policy, namely the advent of the battlecruiser.<sup>36</sup> *Mythology* challenged the long-standing theories of the Dreadnought Era. Sumida asserted that the major pre-revisionist accounts utilise three main sources.<sup>37</sup> Sumida claimed that the pre-revisionist primary sources and narrative 'appears to be upheld by a compelling body of primary evidence'.<sup>38</sup> Sumida then questioned whether historical research is plagued by the same issues as described above. Sumida asserted that the financial difficulties faced by the Admiralty were far more complex than illustrated through parliamentary debates, which depicts an ideological battle between left and right in political terms. Sumida argued that the debate surrounding the Dreadnought did not occur in Parliament due to the leadership of the parties supporting the policy in general. Instead Sumida insisted the debate raged in the

<sup>35</sup> Seligmann, M. and Morgan-Owen, D. (2015). *Evolution or Revolution? British Naval Policy in the Fisher Era*. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, p.937-940

<sup>36</sup> Sumida, J. (1995). *Sir John Fisher and the Dreadnought: The Sources of Naval Mythology*. *The Journal of Military History*, 59(4), p.621

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p.621

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p.621

public sphere, citing that 'Fisher's critics were thus compelled to mount their main attacks in the press'.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Sumida conceded that the press had a role in British naval policy.

*In Defence of Naval Supremacy* (hereafter *Supremacy*) traced the relationship between the Admiralty and technology. Sumida suggested that Fisher favoured the construction of battlecruisers over battleships.<sup>40</sup> Sumida discussed issues of Aim Correction (AC) which had plagued the Royal Navy for years. Sumida negotiated the technical aspects of the invention and the financial aspects which hindered its progress. Effective AC plagued the navy due to the pitch, roll and yaw of the new all-big-gun ships. The narrative revolved around Arthur Pollen and his invention, the Argo Clock. Sumida outlined the long battle between the Admiralty and Pollen apropos commission, reliability and funding. Sumida shone a spotlight on the technological ambivalence shown by the Admiralty, especially towards AC. The other notable finding of the literature concerned public opinion and *The Times*. A number of publications under a pseudonym were published in support of the Argo Clock in an attempt to galvanise public interest. The publicist, John Walter, was a shareholder in both *The Times* and Argo, Pollen's company. This demonstrates that journalists and newspaper proprietors were financially motivated and utilised the press to increase their sales. The thesis hopes to build on the findings of Sumida.

Nicholas Lambert attempted to redefine the historiography of the naval arms race between Britain and Germany by focusing on the financial aspect of the era.<sup>41</sup> *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (hereafter *Revolution*) was first published in 1999 followed by *Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence 1904-1909* (hereafter *Flotilla*) provided a revisionist account of the arms race.<sup>42</sup> Lambert asserted that Fisher's reforms were motivated primarily by financial limitations imposed by the Liberal government. Lambert argued that Fisher's redistribution of the fleet was not motivated by increases in German naval capability. A critique of Lambert concerns his methodology. By focusing on domestic and financial limitations, he ignores the ascension of German naval power. However important domestic factors were, it is deplorable to ignore the ascension of Germany as a naval power. Another notable historian connected with the concept of 'flotilla defence' is Richard Dunley. Dunley produced an article in 2017 titled *Invasion, raids and army reform:*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p.624

<sup>40</sup> Sumida, J. (2014). *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

<sup>41</sup> Lambert, N. (2003). *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. 1st ed. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. P.102

<sup>42</sup> Lambert, N. (1995). Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence, 1904-1909. *The Journal of Military History*, 59(4),

*the political context of 'flotilla defence'*, which argued that the Admiralty's new strategy was simply a political ploy to secure naval funding from the government.<sup>43</sup>

*Revolution* outlined a historiographical debate concerning Britain's primary naval threat in the Dreadnought Era. Lambert asserted that pre-revisionist historians, such as Marder, generally agree that there was a definitive shift in Britain's diplomacy viz. Germany 1902-1906. This shift in policy is to be regarded as the moment when Germany became the *bête noir*. A revisionist group of scholars have tried to alter this interpretation and instead suggest that Russia was the primary threat to Britain in the Dreadnought Era. Lambert suggested that imperial considerations outweighed domestic affairs. *Revolution* stated that new evidence, which Lambert failed to outline, suggested that Fisher had greater imperial ambitions than first thought.<sup>44</sup>

Lambert's work contained sweeping statements and contentious views which are not furnished with adequate citations. Moreover, there was a lack of sources deriving from Germany. Lambert asserted that the redistribution of the fleet in 1904 had no strategic purpose. Instead Lambert suggested that it was simply an economic consequence of the dismal financial outlook facing the Unionist government. However, Lambert frequently linked strategical concerns of the era back to Germany and then addresses the German threat in chapter nine. Following these assertions Lambert then disengages from the debate and suggested that his work will not enter the debate.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Lambert claimed that previous historians had not fully developed the historiography of the Fisher-Beresford feud, even though Marder devoted a chapter on the subject.<sup>46</sup>

Lambert suggested the Admiralty were not technologically impaired, as charged by Sumida, but then provided evidence contradictory to his initial claim.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Lambert critiqued Marder's work but did not provide ample citations to back up his statements, examples of this is evident throughout Chapter VIII.<sup>48</sup> Lambert discussed Churchill's attempts to initiate reductions in naval expenditure by directly approaching Germany for a 'naval holiday'. The appeal to Germany fell on deaf ears and consequently the government received a stark

<sup>43</sup> Dunley R, 2017, 'Invasion, raids and army reform: the political context of 'flotilla defence', 1903-5', *Historical Research*, vol. 90, pp. 613 - 635

<sup>44</sup> Lambert, N. (2003). *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. 1st ed. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. P.102

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press.p.71

<sup>47</sup> Lambert, N. (2003). *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. 1st ed. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. P.101

<sup>48</sup> Sumida, J. (2014). *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

warning of a planned expansion of the High Seas Fleet, the *Novelle*.<sup>49</sup> Lambert then proceeded by explaining the subsequent abandonment of planned cuts to the Royal Navy and redistribution of the fleet to meet the German threat. A further revisionist historian of note is Keith Wilson who produced *The Policy of the Entente* in 1985, which will be addressed throughout the thesis.<sup>50</sup> It is evident from this that the traditional historiography concerning the period still merits attention.

### ***International Relations Theory***

*Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (hereafter *Misperception*) focused on US-Soviet relations throughout the Cold War. Jervis attempted to explain how both countries misperceived the other's intentions as aggressive. The theory is based on how the two superpowers 'perceived' one another, Jervis asserting that the discipline had previously received scant attention.<sup>51</sup> The model of misperception being utilised for the purpose of this thesis is the 'spiral model'. *Misperception* addressed the spiral and deterrence model along with numerous alternative IR theories. Jervis suggested that the 'problem' facing policy-makers is forming an accurate perception of the other because the other's behaviour is usually ambiguous, and deception is an ever-present possibility'.<sup>52</sup> The second edition of *Misperceptions* utilised for the thesis began with a ninety-page preface in which Jervis addressed a few key issues. Jervis asserted that if he were to reproduce the book, the majority of the text would remain unchanged, however, he would provide further insight into the role of emotions and motivated reasoning.<sup>53</sup> In the context of the Anglo-German Arms Race, Jervis asserted that 'British leaders had exaggerated the threat from Wilhelmine Germany and failed to see the extent to which their own behaviour in aligning with France and Russia had contributed to German insecurity'.<sup>54</sup> Historian Richard Lebow described Jervis' *Misperception* as an attempt at marrying up psychology and foreign policy.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lambert, N. (2003). *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. 1st ed. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. P.101 for further information on the *Novelle* and Churchill's plans at the Admiralty see, pp.25-29 Mahnken, T., Maiolo, J. and Stevenson, D. (2016). *Arms Races in International Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>50</sup> Wilson, K. (2009). *The Policy of the Entente*. 2nd ed. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>51</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press p. xvi

<sup>52</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press p. xvi

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p.lxxxviii

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. xv

<sup>55</sup> Lebow, Richard Ned. *Naval War College Review* 30, no. 1 (1977): 146-47. For further reviews concerning *Misperception* vide Zinnes, Dina A. *The American Political Science Review* 72, no. 2 (1978): 793-94. and Eldridge, Albert. *The Journal of Politics* 39, no. 4 (1977): 1106-108.

Moreover, Lebow asserted that Jervis' literature provided valuable insights in to numerous foreign policy failures.

The deterrence concept suggested that 'great dangers arise if an aggressor believes that the *status quo* powers are weak in capability or resolve.'<sup>56</sup> Although German naval policy is viewed by a variety of historians as aggressive, the theory that misperception, facilitated by the press, is still viable. The spiral model asserts that 'arms procured to defend can usually be used for attack.'<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is entirely possible that press organs on both sides of the North Sea misperceived the foreign policy of the other. Moreover, 'the drive for security will also produce aggressive actions if the state requires a very high sense of security of feels menaced by the very presence of other strong states.'<sup>58</sup> Ergo, if Germany felt menaced by British sea power and Franco-Russian military power, it may have produced a deleterious effect on German foreign relations and led to an increase in naval production. One limitation of Jervis' theory is that he fails to attribute any of the tension between Britain and Germany to the press. There is a lacuna in the literature concerning the press and its involvement in the Anglo-German antagonism, which will be addressed throughout the thesis.

### ***Contentious Debates Concerning the Dreadnought Era***

Debates over naval policy remain lively. Recent debates mainly derive from the '*War in History Journal*' with regular critiques from historians. The main contributions to the current historiographical debate include Matthew Seligmann, Christopher Bell and Nicholas Lambert. The articles contain a debate between the revisionist and post-revisionist historians over the proposed naval 'revolution' that was due to take place in July 1914. Lambert suggested that the Admiralty were planning on reducing the number of capital ships in favour of submarines; a theory that the majority of historians decry. This forms the backbone of Lambert's interpretation of the Dreadnought Era. Further topics include imperial defence and the evolution of the Royal Navy. Bell suggests that Lambert's assumptions are unfounded, which provides the essence of the historiography.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. p.58

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p.59

<sup>58</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. p.59

<sup>59</sup> Bell, C. (2011). Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered: Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, 1911-1914. *War in History*, 18(3), pp.2-3

A critique of revisionist methodology concerned the 'starting-point' of their argument. Post-revisionists stated that ascertaining Fisher's views on future naval strategy and trying to assess Admiralty policy from it is insufficient. Historian David Egerton calls this 'anti-history', by trying to explain an event, which is unnecessary, because it never happened.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, Fisher had not induced a naval revolution but had built on pre-existing ideas and that there was transformative paradigm shift. *Evolution* also utilised a series of six articles used to provide the critique of the revisionist stance. One article deals with the relationship between Churchill and Fisher, and Fishers 'supposed' influence after his retirement in 1910. Seligmann asserted that Bell proves Churchill was his own man and made his own policies, regardless of Fisher's influence. Seligmann critiques the revisionist works of Nicholas Lambert and Sumida and suggests that 'British documents are consistently used in a selective fashion'.<sup>61</sup> *Evolution* also suggested that the Admiralty had instead opted to use long-range gunnery over the revisionist suggestion of rapid fire at medium-range.<sup>62</sup>

Christopher Bell argued that Admiralty plans between 1911-1914 were focused on the development of autonomous Dominion navies. *Sentiment vs Strategy* (hereafter *Strategy*) provides a post-revisionist account of the Dreadnought Era. The article focused on two separate but closely related themes, Imperial Defence and the navies of the Dominions. Bell suggests that Churchill planned that additional Dominion ships would allow the Royal Navy to focus its attention on the North Sea and meet the threat of Germany. If the Dominions could produce autonomous navies, it would also allow the Royal Navy to keep a presence in the Mediterranean. Christopher Bell provides a fresh interpretation of the Admiralty demonstrating that Churchill and the Admiralty had been planning for a war in the North Sea. Bell asserts that Churchill's imperial plan failed and that by the eve of the war, the Dominions had not produced the desired fleets. Bell suggested that the historiography is dominated by the Anglo-German arms race and imperial defence is left under-researched.

*Strategy* traced the challenges faced by the Admiralty apropos imperial defence. *Strategy* also provided a critique of Nicholas Lambert and Sumida. Bell accused Lambert of using unsubstantiated evidence concerning the deployment of battle ships to the Pacific in 1914. Bell asserts no such plan existed and that the Royal Navy was not on the verge of a 'revolution' as argued by Nicholas Lambert. Bell produced a second work titled *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered* (hereafter *Reconsidered*). *Reconsidered* introduces

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p.939

<sup>61</sup> Bell, C. (2011). Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered: Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, 1911-1914. *War in History*, 18(3), p.942

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p.939



secret plans to cancel the construction of two battle ships from the 1914-15 naval estimates in favour of flotilla craft. This would have meant Fisher's revolutionary take on naval strategy had been adopted in the Admiralty under Churchill. Bell argues that this revisionist viewpoint is difficult to sustain, and that the Admiralty were far more conservative than Lambert predicts. Bell suggests that two critical errors made by revisionists. Firstly, that battleships and flotilla craft were inseparable. On the contrary, Churchill was planning on decoupling the two and utilising flotilla defence solely in the secondary theatre of war.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, that the Admiralty had a single naval standard throughout the period. The only standard likely to be abandoned in 1914 was in the secondary theatre of war. Bell asserts that this does not signify a mistrust in battleships but a reaffirmation of the standard in the primary theatre of war, the North Sea. Moreover, the abandonment of the two-power standard in favour of a sixty per cent preponderance over Germany demonstrates that Russia and France were not the primary threats to Britain throughout the Dreadnought Era.

Churchill believed a naval agreement with France was the only way of securing the Mediterranean. Britain would be able to secure French interests in the North Sea and Channel in return. Bell asserts that revisionist historians have failed to appreciate the true strategy of the Admiralty. The abandonment of the Mediterranean for flotilla craft only reaffirms the Admiralty's faith in the battleship, especially to meet the German threat in the North Sea. Bell asserts that the submarine was not intended for the sole use as a tool of asymmetrical warfare, its actual purpose was to supply the main battle fleet with a decisive edge over its counterparts. Bell argues that Lambert's sources regarding the naval 'revolution' are contradictory and do not stand up to close scrutiny. Lambert's assertion that the navy had cancelled two battleships of the 1914-15 estimates is therefore founded upon 'problematic evidence'. The argument concerned a piece of evidence suggesting that only two-gun mounts were ordered. However, Bell suggested that these were allocated for the 'accelerated' battleships. Additional gun mounts were months away, due to the staggered nature of the building programme.

Matthew Seligmann entered the historiographical debate viz. Royal Navy strategy and tactics in 2008. One of Seligmann's seminal works is the aptly titled *A Service Ready for War? The State of the Royal Navy in July 1914* (hereafter *War*). Seligmann attempted to fill a lacuna through a systematic analysis of documentation relating to a meeting due to be held in August 1914. Sumida claimed that the historiography of the arms race is heavily focused

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<sup>63</sup> Bell, C. (2011). Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered: Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, 1911-1914. *War in History*, 18(3), pp.2-3

on the threat Germany posed to British home waters.<sup>64</sup> Seligmann suggested that there should be a greater focus on the threat posed to British lines of communication. Seligmann maintained that to reveal what the Admiralty were thinking and planning, it is necessary to examine the service on the eve of the First World War. *War* re-evaluates whether the Royal Navy was ready for the challenge of total war that loomed in 1914. Seligmann asserted that the documentation he relied upon 'offers an excellent even unparalleled, perspective on the state of naval thought at the time'.<sup>65</sup> Seligmann argued that although the Admiralty may have not had the answers to some of the challenges it faced, it had a remarkable degree of prescience.

Seligmann began with an analysis of the preparedness of the Army in 1914, he then turns his attention to the Royal Navy. The senior service avoided the immense scrutiny the Army endured, due to the fact, Seligmann argued, that the navy was not embroiled in an attritional war.<sup>66</sup> Seligmann then outlined the historiography of the Royal Navy's pre-war experiences followed by the revisionist interpretation. Sumida believed that new evidence demonstrated the Admiralty was far more technologically minded than previously thought. Seligmann then addressed two historians, John Beeler and Iain Hamilton, who attempted to prove that the mid-Victorian Era navy was not in a state of stagnation. Seligmann discussed the 'test mobilisation' of the fleet which enabled all flag officers to be concentrated in home waters. In early 1914, Churchill called for a general meeting of all the Admirals and Commodores of the Home Squadrons. Although the meeting never convened due to escalating tensions in Europe, naval officers did submit planned topics for the meeting. This provided historians with a clear view of what concerned the Admiralty at this crucial point on the eve of the First World War. However, some of the concerns were omitted to keep the conference to a suitable length.

### ***Press Historiography***

It is now appropriate to provide a brief outline to the press historiography of the Dreadnought Era. One influential work was produced by A.J.A Morris in 1984, titled *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament 1896-1914*. Morris set out to research whether the British press intentionally portrayed Germany as a threat to further their own purposes.

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<sup>64</sup> Seligmann, M. (2018). *A Service Ready for Total War? The State of the Royal Navy in July 1914*. *The English Historical Review*, 133(560), p. 107

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Seligmann, M. (2018). *A Service Ready for Total War? The State of the Royal Navy in July 1914*. *The English Historical Review*, 133(560), p. 104

Morris argued that the image of a Germany determined to achieve world hegemony was promoted by the press, journalists and editors to gratify their own intentions, namely the restoration of the Conservatives and benefit from financial gain. Morris noted the incestuous relationship between journalists, politicians and military officers as 'they sought new techniques of persuasion appropriate to an age of emergent mass politics.'<sup>67</sup> However, Frans Coetzee claimed that Morris' conclusions were 'inconclusive' and did not answer the questions he posed in his preface.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the nature of press histories has changed considerably since 1984 and Morris did not include any aspect of IR theory. Therefore, a renewed attempt to research the role of the press in the decade preceding the First World War is necessary.

The *History of The Times* was published in 1947 and comprised a series of three volumes. The epoch benefited from access to manuscript collections at Printing House Square. The first volumes outlined the repeal of the taxes on knowledge and outside competition. To combat the threat of competition *The Times* fixed its prices from 1861 to 1913 at 3d, which allowed the newspaper to maintain *The Times* as a 'class paper wielding unique national influence.'<sup>69</sup> The third volume, *The Twentieth Century Test*, was utilised for the thesis. Volume three described the acquisition of the paper by Lord Northcliffe and introduced the reader to some of the most revered journalists of the late Victorian Age, namely Valentine Chirol and George Saunders.<sup>70</sup> One of the main methodological issues of the volumes concerns bias. The author failed to attribute any of the blame for the Anglo-German estrangement on to the journalists working at *The Times*, even though it is well documented that some publications published in the paper were inflammatory.<sup>71</sup> Similarly to the work produced in the *History of the Times*, Alfred Gollin's work on *The Observer* between 1908-1914 identified the incestuous relationship between the press and politicians. Gollin highlighted the unique relationship between Admiral Fisher and the editor of *The Observer* J.L. Garvin. Gollin demonstrated that Fisher utilised Garvin to undermine the Liberal government he served under.<sup>72</sup> Polemics in the British press will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

<sup>67</sup> Coetzee, Frans. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 17, no. 3 (1985): 360-62. p.362

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Hale, Oron James. *The American Historical Review* 45. no. 2 (1940): 388-89. p.388

<sup>70</sup> Chirol and Saunders' role in the Dreadnought Era will be discussed further in Chapter III.

<sup>71</sup> "Anglo-German Relations." *The Times*, 1 Jan. 1906, p. 5. The Times Digital Archive.

<sup>72</sup> Taylor, A. (1961). *The English Historical Review*, 76(301), 754-755.

In the early 1980s, Stephen Koss produced *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*.<sup>73</sup> Koss set out to provide a chronological analysis of the relationship between politicians and the press. The literature suggested that even though a removal of taxes on knowledge allowed for greater freedom, political ties grew stronger throughout the late nineteenth century. One minor critique of Koss' work is addressed by Joel Wiener, who stated that due to the chronological order of the literature, there were some 'dull stretches as hundreds of minor journalists and scores of newspapers put in brief appearances only to be shunned off the stage in favour of star performers.'<sup>74</sup> More recently, Mick Temple's *The British Press*, traced the evolution of British newspapers from the English Civil War to modern empirical concerns. To build on the significant contribution of Koss, Temple and Morris it is necessary to explore an inter-disciplinary approach to the Dreadnought Era by incorporating press histories and IR theory.<sup>75</sup>

### **German Foreign Policy**

There is a vast wealth of histories concerning German foreign policy throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One seminal work titled *The Navy and German Power Politics 1862-1914 (hereafter Power Politics)* was produced by Ivo Lambi in 1984. *Power Politics* was designed to provide context to German naval planning and foreign policy from pre-unification to the eve of the First World War. Of particular importance to the thesis are the chapters navigating the Anglo-German Arms Race. Chapter XI, titled *Diplomatic Background to Naval Operations 1899-1904*, is of specific interest. On numerous occasions Lambi suggested that German naval policy towards Britain was indecisive. This would suggest that German foreign policy towards Britain was not linear but in fact multi-faceted and appeared to vacillate in response to international events. Lambi discussed Holstein's policy towards Britain. asserted that Holstein 'sought improved relations and an eventual, truly reciprocal, alliance with her [Britain].'<sup>76</sup> Lambi also addressed Germany perceptions of British policymakers. Lambi claimed that the traditional enemies of Germany laid within the Dual Alliance of France and Russia. 'The diplomatic situation as perceived by German

<sup>73</sup> There have been recent entries to press historiography, vide Mösslang, M. and Riotte, T., 2013. *The Diplomats' World*. 2nd ed. London: German Historical Institute. Chapter VI, titled *The Public Challenge to Diplomacy* is of particular interest.

<sup>74</sup> Wiener, Joel H. *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (1983): p.113

<sup>75</sup> For a wider sense of German press history vide. Dominik Geppert (2007) *Ambassadors of Democracy: British and German Foreign Correspondence in the Age of Imperialism*. Munich. & Bösch, F., 2015. *Mass Media and Historical Change: Germany in International Perspective, 1400 to the Present*. 1st ed. New York: Berghahn.

<sup>76</sup> Lambi, I. (1984). *The Navy and German Power Politics, 1862-1914*. 1st ed. London: George Allen & Unwin. p.176

leaders from 1899 to 1905 justified naval planning against Great Britain, the United States and Japan.’<sup>77</sup>

Lambi suggested that German naval planning towards Britain was indecisive and the German hierarchy differed in opinion. If this was true, then a case for misperception can be argued. Moreover, the term ‘operational planning’ does not necessarily denote aggression. A great power needs to be prepared for different eventualities. For example, the United States had drawn up war plans envisaged against all the major powers throughout the era. The US war plan against Britain was titled ‘war plan red’ but had no real interest in such a disastrous war. Lambi tackled the issue of German war planning throughout *Power Politics*. Of particular interest is the second line of the reserve fleet which would be utilised in the latter stages of a war against Britain in the eventuality that the main fleet had been defeated or severely weakened. A Reichstag Budget Committee memorandum concluded that the second line would provide ‘the only security that we would have in case of war against England.’<sup>78</sup> What is telling about the memorandum is the terminology. Arguably, the term ‘security’ is not the language of a power that is intent on solely aggressive actions.

On the notion of German armaments and naval planning, historian Berghahn suggested that even if one accepts that there was no aggression in the German fleet construction, Britain would perceive it as a naval confrontation.<sup>79</sup> Berghahn also asserted that the draft naval plans of 1903 would conceal the true might of the German fleet. It is evident from the evidence provided by Lambi that German naval policy was not necessarily aggressive. Moreover, Lambi’s theory supports the notion of misperception as the draft of 1903 would conceal the true number of the German fleet facilitating one of the key components of the spiral model, deception. By April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1912, the Kaiser stated that he wished no naval agitation between Britain and Germany, moreover, did not regard Britain as Germany’s main naval rival and sought an agreement based on neutrality and colonial understandings.<sup>80</sup> This point demonstrates that German naval policy was not wholly hostile towards Britain.

*An Improbable War?* edited by Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson is composed of series of essays. One key chapter by Michael Epkenhans, titled *Was a Peaceful Outcome Thinkable? The Naval Race before 1914*. Three key questions are pondered by Epkenhans

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p.186

<sup>78</sup> Lambi, I. (1984). *The Navy and German Power Politics, 1862-1914*. 1st ed. London: George Allen & Unwin. p.176. p.270

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* p.301

concerning the source of both Britain and Germany's naval ambitions, the naval arms race and the steps taken to alleviate the race. Epkenhans discussed the potential of a pre-emptive strike against Germany by the Royal Navy.<sup>81</sup> A case can be made that German naval policy may have been reactive to such threats. Certain British newspapers and politicians called for a pre-emptive strike on Germany, sparking an emergency in some German coastal regions. Arguably, some of the blame has to be attributed to the naval policy of Britain. Epkenhans suggested that both Nicholas Lambert and Jon Sumida viewed Germany's naval build as only a minor consideration.<sup>82</sup> To become a true global player, Germany looked towards Britain as the leading example, noting Britain's naval strength as the catalyst of its empire building. Furthermore, Epkenhans described the notion of German succession from Britain as the colonial powerhouse. The idea that Germany would succeed Britain in a linear fashion.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the axiom that fervent Anglophobia in Germany was 'universally present' did not necessarily translate into an aggressive naval policy. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein 'declared that Germany could not carry out her economic policy without possessing a power at sea which could protect us against the necessity of yielding to England at every turn.'<sup>84</sup> Epkenhans clearly outlined the disputes amongst the German hierarchy apropos German naval policy. Some factions inside the Imperial Navy were conscious of a British 'Copenhagen-style' attack, supporting the notion that German foreign policy was not linear. The 1909-1910 British naval budget included the building of eight capital ships. Epkenhans suggested that there is evidence that the information received by the Admiralty concerning the building rate of the German fleet was exaggerated. Moreover, Epkenhans suggested that there is evidence that the Admiralty had been generous when calculating Germany's building capability and had 'thus misled both the public and Parliament.'<sup>85</sup>

Epkenhans asserted that the 1909 Naval Scare highlighted the danger of false publications and their repercussions. Moreover, according to Epkenhans, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg foresaw that the planned *Novelle* of 1912 had the ability to cause irritation in Anglo-German relations and consequently 'tried to prevent the introduction of the *Novelle* as best he could.'<sup>86</sup> This demonstrates that states actors were aware of the deleterious effect naval

<sup>81</sup> Afflerbach, H. and Stevenson, D. (2007). *An Improbable War?* 1st ed. New York: Berghahn Books. p.113

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p.119

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p.116

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p.113

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p.121

<sup>86</sup> Afflerbach, H. and Stevenson, D. (2007). *An Improbable War?* 1st ed. New York: Berghahn Books. p.123

policy could exert over foreign relations. The heightened sense of British naval security, due to the disparity between British and German naval construction a thawing in relations.<sup>87</sup> What is evident from the historiography of German naval policy is that it is multifaceted and did not pursue one policy of aggression.

One theory outlined how domestic policies were the driving force behind German naval expansion. Tirpitz believed that without a strong navy or sea presence Germany would be relegated to a pre-industrial farming country.<sup>88</sup> A strong German navy would secure the economic future of the country. This theory ties in with the *Luxury Fleet* by Holger Herwig. Herwig aimed to provide the reader with a general overview of the recent historiography pertaining to the German naval build up at the turn of the twentieth century. Tirpitz never intended to attack the British fleets and that he relied heavily upon the notion of the 'risk fleet'. Herwig noted that Tirpitz designed the German fleet with Britain in mind. However, he also attributed the German naval bills with domestic pressure. *Au fond*, the naval contracts handed out to German manufacturers would stifle the attempts of the social democrats and liberals to increase the power of the Reichstag.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, Wilhelm II would also view the naval bills to his own personal advantage as the Imperial German Navy would provide a force 'relatively independent of parliamentary control.'<sup>90</sup> This suggests that German naval building was designed with a domestic purpose in mind.

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The secondary literature has provided the thesis with a sound contextual knowledge. As stated in the introduction, it is not the intention of this thesis to enter the current historiographical debate concerning the revisionist and post-revisionist dispute. However, it is hoped the thesis will contribute positively to the general historiography of the Dreadnought Era. It is evident from the literature review that Marder provided ample context apropos the press throughout the era, however, Marder failed to link these events to foreign policy or attribute it to the Anglo-German estrangement. Moreover, Sumida acknowledged that a debate concerning HMS *Dreadnought* raged in the public sphere, but again failed to link this back to IR theory or foreign policy. It is clear that there is a lacuna in the historiography of the Dreadnought Era. What follows is a chronological account of events that plagued Anglo-German relations in the Dreadnought Era incorporating IR theory and press history.

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* p.124

<sup>88</sup> Herwig, H. (2016). *'Luxury' Fleet: The Imperial German Navy 1888-1918*. 2nd ed. Routledge. p. 35

<sup>89</sup> Herwig, H. (2016). *'Luxury' Fleet: The Imperial German Navy 1888-1918*. 2nd ed. Routledge p. 39

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter II. The Anglo - German Press

*'If only we could have a perfect press, we might look for a perfect world'*<sup>91</sup>

The Anglo-German arms race was a cycle of misperceptions aggravated by the press. As noted by Joseph Maiolo, 'armed rivalry between political communities is ancient, but arms races are much more recent'.<sup>92</sup> In November 1906, whilst defending Germany's foreign policy in the Reichstag, Prince Bülow stated that there were no deep political divisions between Germany and Britain.<sup>93</sup> Bülow insisted that in many instances, for example in the arts and science, both countries were closely aligned. 'There have been misunderstandings between the two nations, unpractical and unreasonable misunderstandings, for which both sides are *equally* to blame'.<sup>94</sup> Attempts to secure British naval dominance coupled with Germany's pursuit of empire facilitated an unintentional misperception compounded by the press. Even without denying Germany's role in the arms race, the press magnified divisions between the two countries.

The chapter introduces some key concepts including notions of political psychology from Robert Jervis' *Misperception*. Political psychology studies the 'attitudes and behaviours of

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<sup>91</sup> Coetzee, Frans. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 17, no. 3 (1985): 360-362. P.362

<sup>92</sup> Mahnken, T., Maiolo, J. and Stevenson, D. (2016). *Arms Races in International Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. The term for 'arms race' in German translates to *Wettrüsten* and in French *Course aux armements*,

<sup>93</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/124 – see the appendix for a full list of principal characters.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/124



people toward things that are of relatively little concern to them'.<sup>95</sup> Jervis suggested that political events and voting are 'peripheral' to people's lives. Therefore, when dealing with journalists and politicians in the Dreadnought Era, it is important to remember that they were dealing with potential life and death situations, for their own personal careers and those of the people they serve. Politicians were also striving to maintain domestic support over foreign affairs. It is hard to judge a state's foreign policy without investigating its perception of its environment. It is also wise to take a step back and study the psychology of Germany's leaders: Did they believe Germany was secure or menaced by Britain? How do politicians draw inferences from what is presented to them, especially if that information is contradictory to their own views?

The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how press polemics in Britain and Germany facilitated an Anglo-German misperception. The chapter incorporates the IR theory of 'misperception' and comprises a range of sources from Foreign Office, CID and Cabinet Office papers. The thesis utilises extracts of official reports from British naval attaché Captain Dumas (RN) and Lieutenant Colonel Gleichen to British Foreign Secretary Frank Lascelles. Dumas asserted in his report that the British press had published a 'great mass of rubbish which has lately appeared in the English papers and magazines as regards invasion'.<sup>96</sup> It is evident from these reports that fears of a German invasion, which gripped Britain, were full of folly. Lest anyone fail to understand the importance of Dumas' report in dismantling the press.

The chapter will also demonstrate the negative impact amateur diplomats, chiefly journalists. Furthermore, the thesis will also explore the issue of inflammatory press publications in Britain and Germany from 1900 to 1914, which ultimately led to an Anglo-German misperception. 'The problem is that forming an accurate perception of the other is very difficult because the other's behaviour is usually ambiguous and deception is an ever-present possibility'.<sup>97</sup> Proprietors of newspapers stood to make a significant financial gain from an outbreak of war. How did personal feelings and prospects of financial gain distort the publications of newspapers and ideologies? Moreover, it is evident that relatively small and seemingly insignificant events could also perpetuate the idea of Anglo-German misperception which could endanger European peace. The chapter will finish with a case study of the Second Boer War to demonstrate the ability of the press to distort foreign policy.

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<sup>95</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P. xvii

<sup>96</sup> Commander Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1908. CAB 17/61/15

<sup>97</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P. xvi

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For the historian to grasp the era, it is worth noting the principal newspapers in circulation throughout Germany and Britain. This enables the historian to ascertain the nature of Anglo-German press relations and domestic situations. The basis of press history is formed from the seminal works of Stephen Koss on the British press. Koss' *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* and Mick Temple's *The British Press* provide ample material pertaining to the Dreadnought Era. It is evident from the research that the Imperial Government were inept at controlling polemics in the German press, especially when their broadsides were directed towards Britain.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a wave of 'new journalism' swept across Britain, which included new editing, presentation and selection. This phenomenon was orchestrated by a Victorian middle class who were hungry for information concerning the world they lived in.<sup>98</sup> A removal of 'taxes on knowledge' led to cheaper newspapers and an increase in literacy. A flurry of new newspapers emerged at the turn of the twentieth century, these new papers had the advantage of incorporating technological developments whilst avoiding the increased running costs of production.<sup>99</sup> The wave of 'new journalism' led to an era of press barons, notably Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) who led a revolution in the printed press. The price of advertisements and high running costs led to a closed newspaper marketplace which led to smaller, less influential papers to close down.

'New journalism' refers to the new style of journalism and newspapers that emerged post 1855 in Britain.<sup>100</sup> The term was coined by Matthew Arnold in 1887 whilst describing the work of W. T. Stead at *Pall Mall*. According to Arnold, the new wave of journalism was "full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy and generous instincts' but with one serious flaw – it was feather-brained."<sup>101</sup> Temple asserted that at the turn of the twentieth century 'a new generation of national newspapers was created, and local daily papers were established in all Britain's major towns'.<sup>102</sup> The British press enjoyed an enviable reputation which outmatched its continental and Atlantic models with 'a notable vitality, and, not least, an unmatched political authority'.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.22

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p.22

<sup>100</sup> This is not to be confused with the 'new journalism' experienced in the American press in the 1960s. This wave of new journalism included a more personal tone and human-interest stories.

<sup>101</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.24

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* p.23

<sup>103</sup> Koss, S. (1984). *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*. 1st ed. London: Fontana Press. p.440

Due to high running costs and advances in technology many 'radical' newspapers by the turn of the century had either disappeared or integrated into the mainstream British press. The radical presses also struggled due to many of them failing to appeal to wider audiences and failing to fulfil the needs of commercial advertising. It is worth noting that throughout the latter stages of the Victorian Era, a new readership sprang up from the lower middle classes and industrial bourgeoisie. According to Koss 'competition in the press steadily intensified, production cost soared, and the market – once considered illimitable – now seemed to have been saturated'.<sup>104</sup>

Dreadnought Era press outlets are defined by capitalist press barons and commercialism. Press barons such as Alfred Harmsworth had a disproportionate influence over political and public spheres. Prominent journalist, W.T. Stead, categorised the popular newspapers of 1904 into four categories descending in importance. According to Stead, *The Times* and *Westminster Gazette* were top tier newspapers and those ranked lowest included *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*.<sup>105</sup>

'The influence of the press upon the decision of cabinets is much greater than that wielded by the House of Commons'.<sup>106</sup> Stead's words rang true and garnered swift adjustments inside the world of politics. Politicians who were reliant on their performances inside the house and on family connections were becoming increasingly aware that their positions were under public scrutiny and more significantly, vulnerable from attacks in the press. The relationship between the press and politics at the turn of the century was intrinsically linked, with numerous politicians writing columns or becoming proprietors of newspapers. By the year 1910, up to thirty sitting members of Parliament were newspaper proprietors.<sup>107</sup> The principal British newspapers in 1910, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, include the new-wave newspapers of *The Daily Mail* (1896), *The Daily Mirror* (1903) and *The Daily Sketch* (1909). The established papers *Manchester Guardian* (1821), *The Daily Telegraph* (1855) and *The Times* (1785) still enjoyed extensive readerships in Britain. It is of note that certain newspapers were often formally tied to a political party, usually on a financial basis, thus the press was clearly not an impartial nor a neutral force.

One methodological consideration concerns bias within the documents. For example, the Foreign Office received translations of German publications which offers its own methodological and ethical issues. Who was responsible for selecting the pieces to be

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p.440

<sup>105</sup> Koss, S. (1984). *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*. 1st ed. London: Fontana Press. p.440

<sup>106</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.25

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* p27

translated? Were the translations competent? Those reporting back to the Foreign Office may omit certain documents or translations for their own agenda. Therefore, some of the resources may be taken *cum grano salis*. Moreover, 'the press on the continent is susceptible of a much larger measure of government influence and control'.<sup>108</sup> Reginald Tower's report was written in a period when numerous influential parliamentarians owned and controlled mainstream newspapers in Britain.<sup>109</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century journalists and papers alike were openly partisan and supported party lines. At the turn of the twentieth century there was a shift towards 'straight news reporting' although many papers still aligned themselves with political parties who also financially backed them. As the franchise grew, it became imperative for the press to appeal to the 'common man'.<sup>110</sup>

Alfred Harmsworth was the proprietor of the *Daily Mirror* and *Mail*. Northcliffe changed the face of British journalism forever when the arrival of the *Daily Mail* in 1896 sparked the wave of new journalism ushering in a new era of commercial and entrepreneurial enterprise. The *Daily Mail* was an immediate success. Although it had a relatively small circulation in comparison with well-established papers, it largely appealed to the growing lower middle classes. Northcliffe had managed to create a cheap and lively newspaper which captured the imagination of the British public.<sup>111</sup> Public opinion could arguably then be utilised and swayed by newspaper proprietors like Northcliffe. Moreover, the advent of 'new journalism' coupled with the advancements in suffrage altered the political landscape in Britain.

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German newspaper circulation is harder to ascertain as *The Times* correspondent George Saunders suggested that it varied considerably

and is not necessarily in proportion to the importance of the paper, especially as the system of quoting other papers prevails so extensively in the German press that an important article published originally in a paper that is little read may attain the widest publicity.<sup>112</sup>

The principal German newspapers in circulation throughout Berlin included the 'Official Gazette' of the Imperial Government the *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger und Preußischer Staatsanzeiger*. The *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger*, published once a day, featured a formal and

<sup>108</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1906. FO 371/166/16. TNA

<sup>109</sup> One of the key examples was the Liberal MP, Charles Scott, who was the proprietor of the influential *Manchester Guardian*.

<sup>110</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p28

<sup>111</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p28

<sup>112</sup> Memorandum on German Newspapers. George Saunders. FO 371/166/176. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1906.

informal section. The former filling the first few pages with new laws and decrees, the latter filled with general news, described by Saunders as somewhat tardy.<sup>113</sup> Other principal government newspapers in Berlin covered imperial news. For instance, the *Deutscher Kolonialblatt*, not to be confused with the non-governmental *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, was known to be critical of the German colonial policy. The *Deutscher Kolonialblatt* was edited by the Colonial Department of the Imperial Foreign Office. The two main contributors and editors of the Imperial Press Department were Dr Hammann and Herr Esterneaux.<sup>114</sup>

The arrival of Reuters news agency in 1851 reformed the way newspapers reported the news. The wire service was pioneering, utilising new technology available to report on news stories from around the world. The telegram and advent of transatlantic cables facilitated an increase in news reaching Europe from the Americas. Research conducted on German newspapers from 1865 to 1906 reported events in the previous 24 hours increased from 11 to 95 percent of a daily newspapers' content'.<sup>115</sup> According to Temple, it is likely that British newspapers would have experienced a similar increase. Outside of Berlin, the provincial newspaper *Kölnische Zeitung* was the prominent and highly popular choice, which was not limited to Rheinprovinz.<sup>116</sup> The *Kölnische Zeitung* was a tri-daily newspaper with a glowing reputation as a well-written and edited paper. Ideologically liberal, the newspaper had been utilised by the Imperial Government as a semi-official communique. The relationship between papers, journalists and government was incestuous. Freidrich von Holstein, head of the political department of the German Foreign Office, had a close confidant in the editor, Justizrat Fischer. The *Kölnische Zeitung* enjoyed a circulation of *circa* 200,000.<sup>117</sup> Outside of Rhenish Prussia, the radical *Frankfurter Zeitung*, in the region of Regierungsbezirk Frankfurt, was the paper's closest competition.

Regionally, Reginald Tower, a British diplomat, reported to Edward Grey in 1906 that the Bavarian newspapers were lacking in literacy discipline and that 'there is no single paper which can be regarded as reaching a high literacy standard'.<sup>118</sup> Tower, also questioned the wider literacy standard and discipline found in national newspapers throughout Germany. In a further report to Grey, Tower suspected that 'perhaps this may be said generally of the press in the German Empire, and it is certain that Bavaria does not produce the best, even

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Esterneaux was subordinate to Hammann, however, both held the title of 'councillor of legation'. Esterneaux was younger and possessed vitality, a trait lacking in his colleague.

<sup>115</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.24

<sup>116</sup> Memorandum on German Newspapers. George Saunders. FO 371/166/181. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1906. TNA the *Kölnische Zeitung* directly translates to the 'Cologne Times'.

<sup>117</sup> Memorandum on German Newspapers. George Saunders. FO 371/166/181. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1906. TNA

<sup>118</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup> 1906. Munich. FO 371/166/2

of German papers.<sup>119</sup> The prominent newspaper in the Bavarian region was the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. The chief editor was Dr Martin Mohr. Mohr frequently visited Berlin, from Munich, where he was regularly received by the Chancellor and Prince Bülow. The newspaper received a government subvention of 22,000 marks per annum.<sup>120</sup> Due to the subvention received from the Imperial Government, the newspaper was naturally imperialistic in its nature and generally supported imperial policy. Conversely, the *Neue Nachrichten* [see appendix 2] which received no such funding, was openly hostile towards Britain and critical of the Imperial Government foreign policy. The polemics were mainly driven by the editorial comments emanating from prominent diplomat and Orientalist, Dr Johannes Heinrich Mordtmann.<sup>121</sup>

Conservative newspapers in Germany enjoyed extensive circulations. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* was popular amongst landowners and military classes.<sup>122</sup> It generally supported government policy and was religiously orientated towards protestants. The foreign affairs editor, Dr Schiemann, enjoyed royal and official favour. The *Nottingham Evening Post* described Schiemann as the 'foremost exponent of German imperialism'.<sup>123</sup> The politics of Schiemann will be discussed in greater detail throughout the paper. Other newspapers of note were the 'semi-official' *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* [appendix 3] who supposedly received no funding from the government but closely toed the government line. One other prominent newspaper was the independent *Berliner Lokal- Anzeiger*, which had the largest circulation in Berlin, ca. 300,000 and claimed to be non- political. Saunders stated their aim was to publish general news in a non-partisan paper.<sup>124</sup>

The self-proclaimed 'central organ' of the Social Democratic Party of Germany', *Vorwärts*, had a circulation of ca. 93,000 in 1906.<sup>125</sup> Saunders claimed that *Vorwärts* had a small number of papers in circulation due to its intended working-class audience.<sup>126</sup>

Unsurprisingly, *Vorwärts* was vehemently opposed to government policy and hostile towards the upper and middle classes.

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/166/2

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/166/2-3 the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, translates in to 'General Newspaper' in English.

<sup>121</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup> 1906. Munich. FO 371/166/3 Dr Johannes Heinrich Mordtmann was a Turkish born- German diplomat and Orientalist. Mordtmann served the German Foreign Office for numerous years and lectured in various universities in the Near East.

<sup>122</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup> 1906. Munich. FO 371/166/2

<sup>123</sup> 'A Continental War'. *Nottingham Evening Post*. Nottingham, England. Thursday 31 December 1908. p.6

<sup>124</sup> Memorandum on German Newspapers. George Saunders. FO 371/166/181. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1906. *Vorwärts* translated into English is 'forwards.'

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum on German Newspapers. George Saunders. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1906. FO 371/166/180

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/166/181

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At the turn of the century there were numerous war scares in both Britain and Germany, a period which witnessed the blossoming of a relationship between Admiral Fisher and the journalist W.T. Stead. Stead was one of the pioneers of modern investigative journalism, who viewed the role of the journalist as central to social change.<sup>127</sup> Stead was also instrumental in crossheadings, illustrations and raising public attention to social issues such as child prostitution. There is also evidence of Fisher passing carefully selected and classified information on to close confidants in the press.<sup>128</sup> This phenomenon is mentioned in Marder's *Anatomy* although not in the context of 'misperception'. Prominent journalists and correspondents such as Valentine Chirol and George Saunders who worked at *The Times* as Foreign Affairs Correspondent and Berlin Correspondent respectively. Saunders *au courant* with German politics and public opinion, provides context to Anglo-German relations up to 1902. The 1900 Naval Scare, sparked by renewed French naval efforts, shook the Admiralty into a period of 'revolution' at the hands of Admiral Fisher, who earned his nickname 'radical Jack'. Fisher took radical steps to procure equipment, scrap obsolete vessels and prepare the Royal Navy for an engagement with Germany. Fisher assumed the role of First Sea Lord upon his return to Whitehall on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1904.<sup>129</sup>

In April 1904, Britain signed an *entente* with France, the *Entente Cordiale*. The congenial relations that developed alleviated the pressure on Britain, ending decades of fierce naval competition. Coupled with the Japanese Alliance, which was signed two years prior, it allowed for security in the Far East. By 1906, Britain was in a strengthened position owing to the defeat of Russian naval forces by the Japanese Navy at Tsushima. The Russo-Japanese War eliminated the Russian threat to Britain signified by the Anglo-Russian Convention in August 1907. Britain's primary threat was now the Imperial Navy, implied by Admiral Fisher's policy of redistributing the Royal Navy's assets to the North Sea.

A publication in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* stated that the Anglo-German estrangement was a 'mental disease' and hoped that Britain would come around to the German way of life.<sup>130</sup> The article concludes by asserting that in 'concert' with almost the

<sup>127</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.25

<sup>128</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf p.483

<sup>129</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf p.483 – Fisher had been Officer Commanding of the Mediterranean Fleet prior to his appointment at the Admiralty. Fisher formed most of his policies whilst steaming in the Mediterranean alongside his deputy, Charles Beresford.

<sup>130</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup> 1906. Munich. FO 371/166/4

majority of the German press 'the organ of the Wilhelmstrasse absolutely ignores the important part which certain leading papers in this country have played in bringing about the deplorable estrangement whose days, it is hoped, are past'.<sup>131</sup> Public opinion could prove hazardous to government foreign policy 'the fact that public opinion was seen as either uneducated or, worse, partially educated, and liable to be swayed by untrammelled sentimentalities or gripped by untameable passions'.<sup>132</sup> Politicians and civil servants alike were all too aware of how the press could be utilised for personal gain. British newspapers fuelled hostility against Germany, 'against such jingoistic propaganda, opposition to the war was commercial suicide for newspapers'.<sup>133</sup> The financial aspects of war were of the upmost importance for press barons and their newspapers. Emerging from the nineteenth century, the press developed into a powerful and influential tool and gained a notoriety for being named as the 'fourth estate' of the realm. By the end of the century the press had developed and

was firmly established at the centre of British political life and yet despite the clear economic and ideological ties to ruling class interests and often directly to political parties – still managed to represent itself as being above the fray, an independent arbiter of the struggles it observed<sup>134</sup>

Lord Northcliffe noted that the power of the press was relentless, every 'extension of the franchise renders more powerful the newspaper and less powerful the politician'.<sup>135</sup>

Throughout the Boer War, 1899-1902, sales of the *Daily Mail* peaked at a million sales a day demonstrating that 'war is always a boom time for the media'.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the press provided crucial information to individuals on both sides of the North Sea. The sagacious German naval officer, Admiral Buchsel, gained an intimate knowledge of the perpetual increase in British naval estimates and redistribution of the fleet. In conversation with naval attaché, Commander Dumas, Buchsel revealed he gained the majority of the information from '*The Times*, *The Naval & Military Record* and the *Western Daily Record*'.<sup>137</sup> A disparity between the Anglo-German arms race and US-Soviet relations throughout the Cold War concerns open source intelligence. Soviet and US officials were not able to accurately perceive what technologies the other side possessed. Conversely, throughout the

<sup>131</sup> Extract from *The Times*. David Lloyd George Papers. Nov 1904. B/3/3/72.

<sup>132</sup> Otte, T. (2011). *The Foreign Office Mind*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. P.325

<sup>133</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.31

<sup>134</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.19

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p.26

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* p.29

<sup>137</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Count de Salis. 12<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/104 TNA



Dreadnought Era, British and German officials were able to draw conclusions through the press and naval attaché reports.

Temple described the relationship between politicians and journalists in the early twentieth century has been as 'incestuous'.<sup>138</sup> The British press was utilised by politicians and influential figures as a vessel for vested political interest and both political and press spheres were described 'to all intents and purposes as concentric'.<sup>139</sup> The foreign policy of the *Kölnische Zeitung* was heavily influenced by an intimate confidant of Holstein, Justizrat Fischer striking similarities between Fisher and his close confidants.<sup>140</sup>

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A small group of men on both sides of the North Sea shaped Anglo-German foreign policy. By studying the correspondence between these men and the publications in the press, it will highlight the division and deception which led to an Anglo-German misperception. To summarise 'the spiral model holds that statesmen see hostility as indicating that the other is out to get them and believe that the best, if not the only way to cope with this threat is with negative sanctions'.<sup>141</sup> A case study of Anglo-German misperception compounded by the press is evident throughout the Second Boer War.

Between 1899 and 1902, British Armed Forces were involved in a conflict throughout South Africa known as the Second Boer War. The conflict straddled the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and provides the first example of Anglo-German misperceptions. There had been previous agitation between the British and German press in the form of the Kruger Telegram in 1896. Stephanus Kruger, leader of the Boer forces, was congratulated by the Kaiser for repelling six hundred British soldiers in the Jameson Raid. The telegram highlighted the enmity of German society towards Britain. In context of IR theory, the telegram was designed to agitate the British as part of a more hostile position taken by Germany to entice Britain into closer relations. The plan backfired dramatically as polemics against Germany filled the British press. Germany believed that Britain was in a 'weak' position, facing a war in South Africa whilst maintaining a dominant naval force. Germany sought to exploit this by acting as an 'aggressor' in an attempt to coax Britain closer to the Triple Alliance. *The Times* reported in 1908 that the telegram 'is now known beyond dispute to have been the

<sup>138</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.26

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* p.27

<sup>140</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912 p.312

<sup>141</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P.89

Emperor's own doing'.<sup>142</sup> The original telegram was drafted by the Kaiser and was toned down by his anxious political advisors.

The case study traces the root causes of Anglo-German agitations in the Dreadnought Era, introducing two key journalists, Valentine Chirol and George Saunders.<sup>143</sup> Both were influential journalists, active throughout the Boer War, who provided numerous articles on foreign affairs and Anglo-German relations. British journalists attracted attention in Berlin at the turn of the century, Bülow remarked that Saunders produced derogatory articles towards Germany, 'twice or three times a week he collects bitter criticisms of England and sends them to London omitting to say that they always come from agrarian and other trouble making papers'.<sup>144</sup> The research begins with Anglo-German relations at the turn of the twentieth century with the Boer War and visit of the Kaiser to Britain in November 1899. The visit attracted attention in the German press and also highlighted the differing opinions of *The Times* journalists, Chirol and Saunders. Chirol's views on German foreign policy began to align with those of his colleague with the announcement of the second German naval bill a mere three weeks after the visit of the Kaiser. Bülow's infamous 'hammer and the anvil' speech began to stoke Teutophobia in Britain. One strand of British foreign policy sought an 'understanding' with Germany which, they argued, would facilitate a shoring up of British security in the Persian Gulf and Far East. Informal and unofficial attempts were made to this effect, however the Imperial Government were not interested in an 'informal' understanding and pursued a formal alliance, by acting aggressively towards Britain.<sup>145</sup> In a speech to the Reichstag, Prince Bülow addressed German press attitudes towards Britain throughout the Boer War. Bülow attributed the hostility in the press to German *romanticism* and *idealism* 'that at that time it was not hatred against England which raised so much enthusiasm for the Boers, for even at that time such hatred did not exist'.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, the Chancellor wanted to 'restrain irresponsible scribblers in the press who did an infinity of mischief'.<sup>147</sup> It is evident that the temerity of the German press caused concern amongst German officials. However, the sentiments of the Chancellor were undermined as conversations were held between Russia, France and Germany over a possible intervention in South Africa. German officials were keen to exploit the situation in South Africa and suggested a multilateral agreement to

<sup>142</sup> (From Our Own Correspondent.). "The Kaiser and the Triple Entente." *Times*, 29 Oct. 1908, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>143</sup> For an in-depth analysis on the policies and articles of Chirol and Saunders, vide *The History of the Times*.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>145</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P.99

<sup>146</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/125

<sup>147</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test* 1884 -1912 p.333

increase co-operation. The Germans were rebuked partially due to pressure exerted on Nicholas II to solve the war in South Africa peacefully, after calling for the First Hague Peace Conference.<sup>148</sup>

Press polemics forged a state of enmity between the German public and the British state. George Saunders viewed the Anglophobia in the German press as emanations of the government. However, it is evident from German correspondence between the Foreign Secretary and Bülow that the 'government were pulling hard against the current of opinion'.<sup>149</sup> Anglophobia was entrenched in German society and nurtured by German press organs and journalists. Arguably, in the event of an Anglo-French conflict, the German press would form a *tertius gaudens* by exploiting the delicate situation and coaxing Britain into an alliance. Throughout the Boer War, the 'German nationalist press were naturally the more Anglophobe, while the government strove to maintain an attitude that was correct and neutral'.<sup>150</sup> The reviling Anglophobic nature of the pan-German press was laid out on a *tapis* and digested by the German public.

One aspect of the Boer War concerned publications outlining British 'atrocities' in the German press. The articles severely hampered Anglo-German relations throughout the period. Interestingly, an article published in *The Times* in 1908, claimed the Anglophobia witnessed in the German press during the Boer War could have been 'simply' resolved.<sup>151</sup> The article suggested the Emperor had received reports from German military attaches in South Africa claiming the British were behaving honourably. 'Had they been published at the time, calumny would have been silenced; but the Emperor who could have ordered publication, did not order it'.<sup>152</sup> It is evident that the Imperial government fuelled misperception by withholding key information from the public. The polemics in the German press caused a misperception of British foreign policy in Germany, in turn the British viewed the Germans as wholly hostile. The *Northern Review and Advertiser* reported that 'in Germany, the organised system of press lying set in motion at the outbreak of the war by Dr Leyds and his friends, completely blinded the mass of people to the steady progress we

<sup>148</sup> (From Our Own Correspondent.). "The Kaiser and the Triple Entente." *Times*, 29 Oct. 1908, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>149</sup> The History of the Times. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test* 1884 -1912. p.301

<sup>150</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test* 1884 -1912. p.305

<sup>151</sup> (From Our Own Correspondent.). "The Kaiser and the Triple Entente." *Times*, 29 Oct. 1908, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*.

were making'.<sup>153</sup> The same article charged the Germans with prolonging the Boer War and suggested that the Kruger telegram was the catalyst.

Examples of invective pouring from the pan-German press throughout the Boer War are plentiful. According to Foreign Office reports, publications often used provocative language such as '*Gottverfluchte Engländer*' (God-damned English) and proclaimed the Boer population as '*volksgenossen*' (people of the German nation). These polemics provide an example of the press perpetuating the misperception of Anglo-German relations at a time when Britain was looking to Germany as a potential ally. The report in *The Times* citing German government sources exclaimed that 'this tendentious method of reporting made it very difficult for us to keep up the good relations with England which were desired on many sides' ergo creating an impression of Anglo-German misperception.<sup>154</sup> The German government were all too aware of misperceptions suggesting that 'agitation to incite British public opinion to take counter-measures would be disastrous'.<sup>155</sup> Bülow blamed the correspondence of Saunders for creating obstacles and hindering progress in Anglo-German relations. Moreover, Bülow claimed that Saunders omitted the source of his evidence and only used 'trouble-making papers i.e. those that hate their own government more than England'.<sup>156</sup>

Valentine Chirol, foreign affairs editor at *The Times*, found the Anglophobia in the pan-German press to be lacking real sincerity and instead believed that Russian policies posed the greatest threat to Great Britain.<sup>157</sup> This view may have been influenced by Chirol's travels in the Far East. Moreover, other journalists did not hold Saunders's belief that Germany was the *bête noire*. British publications were furnished with pro-German sentiments and were sanguine in the face of the worsening situation in the Transvaal. Britain's solitary position in world affairs at the turn of the twentieth century stoked the German press into producing further scathing attacks on British foreign policy. Saunders believed that the only way the Kaiser could pass a larger naval budget through the Reichstag would be by increasing 'anti-British agitation' in Germany 'as the necessary means of inflaming patriotic emotion'.<sup>158</sup> It is evident that Saunders was using virulent anti-

<sup>153</sup> 'Mr Black'. *Forres Elgin and Nairn Gazette, Northern Review and Advertiser*. Moray, Scotland. Wednesday 11 June 1902. p.2

<sup>154</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912* p.305

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* 304

<sup>156</sup> Bülow to Hatzfeldt. *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912*. p.305

<sup>157</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912* p.304

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* p.299

Germanism as a tocsin of German naval ambition and highlights the opposing views of journalists.

Besides conflicting views on threat perception, the Boer War was also synonymous with scandal. In January 1900, a scandal arose in the British Foreign Office, which would strain Anglo-German relations. Valentine Chirol at *The Times* under information obtained through Cecil Spring-Rice, a close confidant of the American Secretary of State John Hay, informed Chirol of Germany's aim for US intervention in South African war. Chirol wrote to the Foreign Office offering 'authentic information' on the German Embassy in Washington applying pressure to the President to intervene.<sup>159</sup> The Secretary of State claimed that Germany was working towards the isolation of Britain, undoing the work of previous years, which had witnessed improving Anglo-US relations. The incident altered Chirol's view on Germany, having previously believed that Russia were still the greatest threat to Britain. Chirol wrote to Saunders exclaiming that 'I am afraid there is no longer any room to doubt the profound hostility and duplicity of Germany'.<sup>160</sup> It transpired that the Imperial Foreign Office made overtures to American journalists to promote Germany and the Emperor in the American press. However, it was later decided by German officials that America had limited diplomatic clout.<sup>161</sup> Public scandals are addressed further in Chapter IV.

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By 1906, the Anglo-German arms race began to strain diplomatic relations. British officials began to wonder where it had all gone wrong and looked toward the Boer War as the catalyst. In a report to Edward Grey, Reginald Tower described the hostility of the German press throughout the Boer War. Moreover, the report described a sudden change from hostility to grand gestures of friendship in the press. Tower suggested this shift was due to the control which 'appears to be effected by the press bureau at Berlin accommodated as it is in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs'.<sup>162</sup> This suggests that some form of control was exerted over the hostile press of Germany. The polemics issued by the German press throughout the Boer War had strained Anglo-German relations. German politicians and officials were anxious about the potential agitation caused by the press. The report demonstrates the power of the government over the press. Herr Hamann, Secretary of Legation, oversaw the correspondents of the country's newspapers. Newspapers had to pass information through him to be vetted. Hamann was also responsible for keeping the newspapers 'in line'

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.* p.314

<sup>160</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. *The Twentieth Century Test* 1884 -1912 p. 314

<sup>161</sup> George Saunders Report on the German Press and Newspapers. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906. FO 371/66/190

<sup>162</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup>1906. Munich. FO 371/166/2

according to Tower.<sup>163</sup> Tower's report to Grey stresses that the task is 'to provide the correspondents with such information as the government may wish published and to remonstrate, gently though efficaciously in case of opposition or contumacy'.<sup>164</sup>

Saunders served as Berlin correspondent for *The Times* from 1897 to 1900. Throughout his posting he published numerous articles warning the British public of German hostility, before it was common knowledge.<sup>165</sup> The Imperial Government were aware of the damage *The Times* correspondent could inflict on Anglo-German relations. Saunders caused such a stir that official representatives from Germany approached the British asking for Saunders to be removed from his position. Interestingly, Saunders had been a protégé of stalwart journalist W.T. Stead at *Pall Mall*. It was Stead who pushed Saunders towards the world of journalism.<sup>166</sup>

Several government documents were sent from Germany to Britain concerning the perception of international events portrayed in the German press. It is noted in numerous documents that the Royal Navy were usually the envy of the German public and press, evoking jealousy.<sup>167</sup> The documents also highlight how anti-German sentiments in *The Times* were expressed throughout publications. At the turn of the twentieth century the German government were all too aware of how the pan-German press could prove to be an obstacle in Anglo-German relations and actively sought to stem any polemics. However, Sir Fairfax Cartwright, a British author and diplomat, suggested that the German government failed to pass on semi-official statements to avoid anti-British comments to the press. Cartwright also stresses that 'the smallest incident which in any way affects Great Britain's position in the world at once gives rise to comments and criticisms in the German press, generally of a character unfriendly to ourselves'.<sup>168</sup> The sentiment of the letter reflects the hostile nature of the German press towards Britain, Cartwright asserted that this is usually due to envy and jealousy. It is evident that Mr Cartwright *au courant* with German public opinion and press attitude towards Britain. Marder's *Anatomy* mentions German press keeping Anglophobia alive due to their belief the British press were holding grudges.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* Munich. FO 371/166/2 Secretary of Legation in German translates to 'Geheimer Legationsrat'.

<sup>164</sup> Reginald Tower to Sir Edward Grey. March 16<sup>th</sup> 1906. Munich. FO 371/166/2

<sup>165</sup> *The History of the Times*. Vol. 3. (1947). London. The Twentieth Century Test 1884 -1912 p. 296

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid* p. 297

<sup>167</sup> Sir Fairfax Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey. March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1907. The National Archives. FO 371/259/95

<sup>168</sup> Sir Fairfax Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey. March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1907. The National Archives. FO 371/259/95

<sup>169</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf p.498

Cartwright was appointed to Vienna after his tenure in Berlin. He was later embroiled in a newspaper scandal and was relieved of his position in 1913.<sup>170</sup>

British politicians and Foreign Office officials attempting to trace the origins of the Anglo-German estrangement could pinpoint the polemics printed in German newspapers as the spark. The documents demonstrate that the German public and government were influenced directly by publications in British newspapers throughout the Second Boer War. German officials could have put an end to the polemics with ease. German officials withheld vital information from the public apropos British 'atrocities' in South Africa. Had they published the military attaché reports stating the British were acting honourably, the rumours could have been put to bed. The research also demonstrated the differing opinions of journalists, namely Chirol and Saunders at *The Times*. Saunder's warned his colleague of Germany's naval ambitions and drew criticism from Bülow and the Kaiser over his publications.

### Chapter III. The Dreadnought & Deteriorating Relations

*'It is not always easy for a man to trace the inward path and steps by which he reaches his own conclusions, so much of the working of the mind is subconscious rather than conscious. It is difficult to be sure of one's own mind, one can only guess at the processes in the minds of others'*<sup>171</sup>

Addressing the Reichstag in 1906, Prince Bülow asserted that 'there is certainly an economic competition and rivalry between Germany and England. Such competition need however raise no political differences not to speak of inflaming a war'.<sup>172</sup> Bülow argued that Britain had close economic rivalries with the United States and Japan which had not led to agitation. Similarly, Germany's relationship with Italy and Austria-Hungary were not affected by similar economic competition. The spiral model indicates that both Britain and Germany were worried by the threat of a mutual-first strike capability and a reciprocal fear of a surprise attack.<sup>173</sup> This forms the basis of what Jervis terms as 'spiral dynamics'.<sup>174</sup> The objective of the chapter is not to provide a chronological account of the Anglo-German arms race, but

<sup>170</sup> Otte, T. (2011). *The Foreign Office Mind*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press p. 319

<sup>171</sup> Sir Edward Grey on deliberations. Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P. liv Sir Edward Grey, was the longest serving British Foreign Secretary to date, serving the cabinet from 1905 to 1916.

<sup>172</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/124

<sup>173</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P.95 for further reading see - Steinberg, J. (1966). The Copenhagen Complex. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1(3), pp.23-46.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*. p.95

instead outline press relations from 1905 to 1912. This will be done by highlighting salient events throughout the defined era and demonstrating that the press played a vital role in the deterioration of Anglo-German relations. Moreover, the chapter introduces principal characters such as John Francis Charles who served as Berlin *chargé d'affaires* from 1906 to 1911.<sup>175</sup> The private correspondence between Edward Grey and Charles provide a crucial insight into Anglo-German relations. Charles held numerous meetings with the likes of the Prince Bülow and often entertained the Kaiser.

The Anglo-German arms race of 1897 to 1914 underpinned the feeling of mistrust and anxiety that plagued Anglo-German relations in the early twentieth century. Edward Grey stated that 'great armaments' will always lead to war, 'while one nation arms, other nations cannot tempt it to aggression by remaining defenceless'.<sup>176</sup> Although German politicians stressed on numerous occasions that the German navy bills were not designed to challenge British naval prowess, there were feelings of mistrust and consternation in British society. Bülow stressed that 'our [Germany's] building programme, which is fixed by law, is exclusively regulated by our requirements of self-protection'.<sup>177</sup> Bülow's statement must be taken *cum grano salis*, as it is clear that the Germans did pose a serious and credible threat to Britain. Numerous politicians and German journalists decried any rumours or headlines of aggressive German naval ambition. However, certain German press organs issued oblique attacks on the British. In a *tête-à-tête* between Prince Bülow and William Goschen, it was revealed that some in the Imperial Government wished to silence the polemics in the press.<sup>178</sup> Thus there was awareness that the press increased misperceptions.

Meanwhile in early twentieth century Britain, the German naval menace had become the *idée fixe* in the British mind. The *Hampshire Telegraph* reported in mid-1908 that Lord Esher claimed British naval supremacy had ended with the advent of German naval power; 'so rapid has been the acquisition of naval strength by Germany and so formidable are her fleets in being, that she has forced upon England a concentration which has thrown the control of the Pacific into other hands'.<sup>179</sup> The comments in the British press did not go unnoticed in Germany. The Kaiser complained bitterly to Lascelles about criticisms of Germany in the

<sup>175</sup> John Francis Charles is known by his peerage as Count de Salis.

<sup>176</sup> Mahnken, T., Maiolo, J. and Stevenson, D. (2016). *Arms Races in International Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.2

<sup>177</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/5

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/7 It is evident from the research that some officials in the German Foreign Office and high command worried that only Britain stood in the way of German naval ambition and sought to keep the polemics in the German press to a minimum.

<sup>179</sup> 'German Naval Menace'. *Hampshire Telegraph*. Hampshire, England. Saturday 02 May 1908. p. 10



British press in early 1908. He argued that British articles were full of pejoratives towards Germany.<sup>180</sup> Lascelles enjoyed a close relationship with the Kaiser but resigned his post as British Ambassador to Germany in 1908 as he disliked the policies of Bülow. Lascelles, succeeded by Goschen, continued to exert influence over Anglo-German relations post-resignation as a *éminence grise*.<sup>181</sup>

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British naval prowess had been gathering pace throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Bank of England was created in 1694 to facilitate parliamentary borrowing and spending, a structure that other European competitors lacked.<sup>182</sup> By 1805 Britain had acquired the largest naval force in the world after defeating the combined Franco-Spanish fleets at Trafalgar. Towards the 1880s, Britain witnessed a resurgence in the *Marine Nationale* which provided a prelude to the aforementioned Fashoda Incident, pitching the two foremost imperial powers against one another.<sup>183</sup> The French withdrew from the Sudan as a consequence of British naval power, leading to a thawing in relations.<sup>184</sup> Coupled with the Russian defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1905, Germany was now firmly Britain's primary naval competitor.

The term 'Dreadnought Era' is defined by the revolutionary ship, HMS *Dreadnought*. Following the success of the Japanese Navy in the Russo-Japanese War, the Admiralty turned its attention to an 'all-big-gun' warship. The Dreadnought had firmly captured Fisher's imagination.<sup>185</sup> HMS *Dreadnought* was five hundred and twenty-seven feet of sleek cemented armour, painted in Admiralty Grey. With a uniform armament, propelled by two sets of steam turbine engines, HMS *Dreadnought* revolutionised naval construction. Fisher championed the idea of speed and all-big-gun ships.<sup>186</sup> The decision to pursue an all-big-gun ship was a controversial policy in the Admiralty as some believed it would level the playing field and eliminate the British numerical advantage. However, the Dreadnought had the benefit of paralysing foreign competitors and gave the Royal Navy an advantage over their German rivals.

<sup>180</sup> R to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24th June 1910. FO 881/9708/7

<sup>181</sup> Otte, T. (2011). *The Foreign Office Mind*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. P.321

<sup>182</sup> Sumida, J. *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. P.5

<sup>183</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf p.320

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* p.320

<sup>185</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p. 105

<sup>186</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf p.515

Aside from the commissioning of HMS *Dreadnought*, the era was defined by other reforms enacted by Fisher. One key reform was the nucleus crew system. Implemented by Fisher, he dubbed the nucleus crew system the greatest improvement of modern times.<sup>187</sup> Under the reforms, vessels in the Reserve Fleet would be complimented with 2/5 of a full crew. If the ship was deployed, a full crew would join the original compliment. This would allow for the skeleton crew to keep the ship fighting fit and maintained, with the added benefit of being able to rapidly deploy when called upon. One *cause celebre* was the scrapping of obsolete vessels under the reforms. All ships commissioned prior to 1887 and ships slower than 23kts were scrapped.<sup>188</sup>

In Bülow's 1906 speech to the Reichstag, he addressed the issue of German naval armaments. Bülow questioned why Germany should be scolded for building up a fleet similar to that of Britain's competitors. France, Italy, Japan and America had all acquired similar fleets. Bülow also suggested that Germany's path was one of peace, citing that Germany had not been at war with any of the great powers since the establishment of the German Empire and that any war would not be initiated by Germany, 'it is clear from our attitude during thirty-five years that Germany pursues an eminently peaceful policy'.<sup>189</sup>

The Emperor believed that the British press were blaming Germany as the source of the naval agitation and expansion.<sup>190</sup> On a subsequent occasion, the Emperor 'pointed out that the misconceptions and mis-statements of the British press constituted a distinct menace to the relations between Germany and Britain'.<sup>191</sup> According to the annual report of 1908, a concerned Kaiser sent a letter to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Edward Marjoribanks, who reassured him of Britain's friendly intentions and provided Britain's annual naval budget which was to be presented to parliament.<sup>192</sup> The friendly exchange demonstrates that officials on both sides of the North Sea were working towards an 'understanding' and that the press were causing an agitation and misperception of foreign policy. The primary concern of the Kaiser was that the German public would read the inflammatory British press articles and conclude that Britain regarded Germany as an enemy. This in turn would lead to public pressure on the Imperial Government to increase naval expenditure, an outcome the Kaiser could not accept. William Goschen described these events as 'fatal' in Anglo-German

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, p.37

<sup>188</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf

<sup>189</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/126

<sup>190</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1908. 7<sup>th</sup> August 1909. FO 881/9518/2

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*. FO881/9518/2

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*. FO 881/9518/5 Edward Marjoribanks' peerage title was Baron Tweedmouth.

relations.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, Goschen noted in 1908 that ‘with the presses of the two countries arguing the question and railing at each other, it was not to be expected that there would be an increase in the good will felt on either side’.<sup>194</sup>

There was a belief in Britain that German officials were using commercial expansion as a guise, enabling Germany to build up a fleet that could one day pose a risk to Britain. British Army officer, Lt. Col. Gleichen, believed that

under the cloak of purely commercial expansion, an *aggressive* imperial policy is not unknown. Rumours appear in the press, which at once are emphatically denied, only to be brought forward after a short lapse of time with further evidence of their reality<sup>195</sup>

Prince Bülow stressed to Goschen that he had made attempts in the Reichstag to ‘make it clear that both he and the Imperial Government as a whole were sincerely desirous to make Anglo-German relations as friendly as possible’.<sup>196</sup> Bülow suggested that the British and German press exacerbated the issue through their use of ‘injudicious language held by members of the German Navy League (*Flottenverein*) and reproduced with emphasis by the press of both countries’.<sup>197</sup> It is evident from the correspondence between Bülow and Goschen that the press contributed to misperception.

According to Foreign Office documents, on several occasions, Herr von Bülow stated that he wished the *froideur* would dissipate between Britain and Germany and assured Goschen that his successor would do everything within his power to foster an Anglo-German ‘understanding’.<sup>198</sup> Bülow’s successor, Baron Schoen, expressed similar sentiments. Although he deplored the hostility of the English press, he understood why the British took umbrage with German remarks. Schoen made especially disparaging remarks on the Navy League calling it an ‘evil spirit’, while ‘meetings of fire-eaters, at which the word ‘invasion’ was far too freely used, bellicose articles in the press and long-winded essays from warlike professors “did the rest”’.<sup>199</sup> Schoen then reported that he realised the cost of the German Dreadnought programme had caused a great deal of concern with the British public and

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9518/3

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9518/3

<sup>195</sup> Lt Colonel Gleichen to Sir Frank Lascelles. 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1905. P.151

<sup>196</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/11

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/11 – ‘*Flottenverein*’ is the direct translation for the name of the German Navy League.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/11

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

stressed that not all those who were passing through the Reichstag were in favour of Germany building the ships.<sup>200</sup>

Schoen asserted in private correspondence that by 1909 the German 'people were sick of the troubles in which their naval expenditure involved them, and that the one wish of the Imperial Government was to allow for good relations with England and settle the naval agitation'.<sup>201</sup> Schoen's claims coincided with the agitation caused by the Blatchford Report in *The Times* and further polemics in the British press. In a conversation between the new Chancellor and the Emperor, the Emperor claimed that he was never happier than when he was on English soil and that he was very fond of the English people. 'I am always held up as a monster of duplicity, and the English people are taught to believe that I harbour warlike designs against them'.<sup>202</sup> This provides a further example of how the press may have aggravated a misperception, in this instance against the Emperor by inciting unfounded fear.

Prince Bülow was forced to defend German naval policy on numerous occasions following scathing attacks in German socialist newspapers. The socialist press attributed British naval expansion to the threat posed by the German naval bills, supporting the notion of the spiral model.<sup>203</sup> This theory was refuted by Bülow, 'how often have I stated that the idea that the enlargement of the German fleet is directed against England is nothing else but foolish'.<sup>204</sup> This demonstrates a misperception in Anglo-German relations and that Bülow's public statements were not always credible. According to the 1909 Foreign Office report, German financial affairs dominated proceedings inside the Reichstag for the first six months of 1909.<sup>205</sup> Yet 1909 was the year of the 'naval scare' stoked by H.H. Mulliner which increased British naval production, supporting the argument of Keith Wilson that the Foreign Office and government created a German threat.<sup>206</sup> If attentions on state finances dominated proceedings, did the pan-Germanic press produce hyperbolic publications to facilitate an agitation with Britain?

Arguably spurred on by potential financial gain, Harmsworth and the editors of the *Daily Mail* produced 'fictional serials and often fanciful news stories that stoked up the German menace

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/12

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24th June 1910. FO 881/9708/19

<sup>204</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/125

<sup>205</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24th June 1910. FO 881/9708/19

<sup>206</sup> Wilson, K. (2009). *The Policy of the Entente*. 2nd ed. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press.

and many critics saw Harmsworth and the *Daily Mail* as *major* contributors to a climate of opinion in which war with Germany began to appear inevitable'.<sup>207</sup> In recent years, the historiography has turned sour against Harmsworth. He was described as wielding 'power without responsibility' by the former Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin.<sup>208</sup> The press were largely pro-war and anti-German, when war seemed inevitable papers which were not previously pro-war lost readership. As the wave of patriotism swept over the country, the potential of financial gain for the pro-war papers became ever apparent as circulation increased. Temple suggests that 'next to the Kaiser, Lord Northcliffe has done more than any other living man to bring about war'.<sup>209</sup>

Ernest Cassel, a British merchant and close confidant of King Edward VII, visited Berlin in 1909 to discuss the possibility of an Anglo-German 'understanding'.<sup>210</sup> Cassel's visit came against the backdrop of the inflammatory Blatchford Report in *The Times*, which will be addressed in Chapter IV. Aside from the hostile pan-German tabloids, Cassel's visit was warmly received by the German press. However, it was generally accepted in the German press that an 'understanding' with Britain could only occur if the German naval programme was not deviated from. Towards the end of 1909, rumours to circulate that Germany was to come to a naval understanding with Britain.<sup>211</sup> The terms of the agreement were rumoured to include several crippling stipulations including a suggestion that Germany had agreed not to complete her naval programme. The fabrication was quickly thwarted by the German Government, citing that the headlines would lead to a misbelief in Britain that Germany would entertain the idea of altering the naval programme.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, Bülow claimed that it was a necessity for Germany not to deviate from the programme citing the need to protect German commerce and overseas possessions. He then insisted that 'we [Germany] don't intend to build a fleet as strong as the British, but we have the right and the duty to maintain a fleet corresponding to the proportion of our trade'.<sup>213</sup>

According to the annual Foreign Office report of 1909, Prince Bülow utilised his close relationship with the editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to quickly dispel any rumours apropos German naval aggression; 'anyone who understands the conditions and trend of our policy

<sup>207</sup> Temple, M (2008) *The British Press*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p29

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* p.30

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.* p.32

<sup>210</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/12 Cassel was of Prussian decent, moving to Britain when he turned 17 years old.

<sup>211</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/12

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/13

<sup>213</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/125 TNA

must realise that the renunciation of our ship building programme is quite out of the question'.<sup>214</sup> The false rumours published in the German press had clearly irritated the Imperial Government. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* article also contained comments on the meeting of the Kaiser and King Edward VII who had apparently approached the Kaiser about a potential 'understanding', but the Kaiser had rejected any advances on curbing the German naval programme. William Goschen reported that by 1908 the

naval question has got out of hand and now so dominates and colours every other question that no good can be found to exist in the nation whom Germans have so long been taught to regard as wishing to place every obstacle in the way of the development of their power at sea.<sup>215</sup>

It was hoped that the meeting between the two monarchs would have a restorative effect on Anglo-German relations. However, in a report to Edward Grey at the Foreign Office, Count de Salis produced translations of hostile press publications in German press organs. The *Tägliche Rundschau* and the *Hamburger Nachrichten* published a series of polemics directed at Britain.<sup>216</sup> The articles were written by a German Naval officer and vehement nationalist, Ernst Graf zu Reventlow. The articles published in the papers were openly hostile towards Britain, one being titled '*The English Menace*'.<sup>217</sup> Reventlow continued 'we have grown accustomed to being regarded as *Germania est Delenda*\*'.<sup>218</sup> Count de Salis noted that these articles would 'expound that great change in public opinion' which Salis noted had increased in hostility and anxiety against Britain in the nine months since his arrival in Berlin.<sup>219</sup>

Reventlow claimed that the British press and politicians 'failed' to name the 'enemy' in their publications, but stressed that anyone with a map and a knowledge of British naval stations can easily deduce that Germany is the 'enemy'.<sup>220</sup> There were further claims that the British naval stations in Gibraltar and Malta were becoming superfluous whereas Rosyth, Dover and Portland were to become the new centres of British naval activity. Moreover, Reventlow labelled the Anglo-French naval redistribution as 'aggressive'. He reasoned that if a foreign power stationed soldiers along another country's borders it would be considered an

<sup>214</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/13

<sup>215</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1908. 7<sup>th</sup> August 1909. FO 881/9518/5

<sup>216</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/13

<sup>217</sup> Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/118 - Reventlow would go on to serve as a Nazi politician under the Third Reich.

<sup>218</sup> Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/119 – \**Germania est Delenda* – Latin term for 'Germany must be destroyed'. The term was first used by the British press in a series of articles published in the 1890s.

<sup>219</sup> Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/119

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/120

‘unfriendly act’.<sup>221</sup> Moreover, the vessels floating in the North Sea posed a military threat due to their mobility and fire power over conventional soldiers, ‘therefore any movement of this sort is, in a sense, of still greater military and political importance’.<sup>222</sup> Reventlow produced further articles directed at Britain. ‘Two years ago the English press recognised the then reorganisation or shifting of the centre of power to the North Sea, as directed against Germany, but the Admiralty gave it also simply and drily as a motive’.<sup>223</sup> Reventlow also claimed that he was ‘sure’ there was an Anglo-French military convention aimed at Germany. He also stated that the French were redistributing their two fleets to home waters.<sup>224</sup> It is interesting to note that the press and the Admiralty took different lines viz. the redistribution of the fleet. If the Admiralty wished to avoid German agitation, the press did not receive the memo.

In stark contrast with the affable nature of Bülow’s speech in the Reichstag, numerous venomous articles were published in Germany. Prince Bülow called for ‘the establishment of friendly and confidential relations between England and Germany’ but it would ‘require time and patience, for behind us lives a long period of misunderstandings’.<sup>225</sup> The article also reported on a speech made by an Admiralty official wherein he stated that from that time forward ‘the fleet would be able, and in a position to strike the first blow, and that it would appear on the enemy’s coast before the press of that country had even published hostilities had broken out’.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, the publication claimed that the press wielded their power to procure an increase in naval armaments. The inflammatory articles in the German press facilitated misperceptions of German foreign policy. Reventlow then suggested that German officials were warned not to arm energetically to deter the British as it may irritate them.<sup>227</sup> Reventlow warned the readers of the publication against the ‘deception’ published in English Conservative press organs, ‘*bona* or *mala fide*, give out that the new organisation means a reduction of the English fighting force. Just the opposite is the case.’<sup>228</sup> It is evident from the language employed by Bülow that he was aware of the power wielded by the press. The damage inflicted by polemics led him to state that he hoped ‘journalists of both countries

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/121

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/120

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Extract from the November 1906 ‘Speech to the Reichstag’. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/126

<sup>226</sup> Extract from the *Hamburger Nachrichten*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/120

<sup>227</sup> Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 1<sup>st</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/121. TNA

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

have learnt to know one another not only as men but also as gentlemen, and that, with all patriotism of their future polemics, hatred and mala fides will be avoided.'<sup>229</sup>

Between 1909 and 1911 the deeply divided Liberal Party found itself in a perilous position. In early 1909, Churchill (Board of Trade) and Lloyd George (Chancellor of the Exchequer) were strongly opposed to the idea of a German naval menace. Agitation stirred by the press and public pressure heaped hardship upon the already burdend Liberal Government. Instead of the four ships proposed by Churchill and George, McKenna pushed for six, and some polticians advised eight. Britain built eight Dreadnoughts much to the disappointment of the liberal-minded Scott. Supporting the spiral model of misperception, aggrevated by the press, resulted in Britain building a much larger number of Dreadnoughts than needed.<sup>230</sup> Such dissonance and discord infected the Liberal Party. During the 1909 Dreadnought saga, Reginald McKenna had threatened resignation on nuermous occasions.<sup>231</sup> The 1909 Dreadnought 'scare' will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

In 1906 there was a major redistribution of the fleet under Admiral Fisher concentrating the majority of the Royal Navy in the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. However, by 1912, British naval officials weighed up the German naval threat and reconsidered its position adding woe to the perilous position of the Liberal Party. One of the crucial phases of Churchill's tenure as First Lord concerned Mediterranean policy. The construction of Dreadnoughts by Austria-Hungary and Italy altered the security environment, making it difficult for Britain to match capital ship fleets in two seas. On numerous occasions Churchill suggested that only flotilla craft should be operated in the Mediterranean as a solution. The idea that Britain should abandon the 'Latin Lake', harming the countries prestige and proving the wider issue of imperial defence was a *cause celebre*. There were also questions as to whether the dominions should provide warships for their own defence, which would allow the Royal Navy to free up its assets to face Germany.

The Admiralty were presented with three options to match the German naval ambitions. Firstly, to enter a binding alliance with France which would shore up and alleviate naval pressure on the Channel and Mediterranean Squadrons. Secondly, increase the naval budget, which as addressed, was against the policy of the Liberal Government or thirdly, do nothing and wait. The debates in Parliament would cause hyperbole in the British press

<sup>229</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/125

<sup>230</sup> Moll, K. (1965). Politics, Power, and Panic: Britain's 1909 Dreadnought 'Gap'. *Military Affairs*, 29(3), p.133.

<sup>231</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; A History of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. P.502



stoking nationalist fires. The politico-naval storm attack on Churchill by Lloyd George in the press over the naval budget increased tensions further. The security dilemma retained its importance, as Britain sought to shore up its security, it had the adverse effect on Germany.

Churchill hung his hopes on the promises of the Canadian Prime Minister. Churchill believed that 'with the help of our children beyond the seas we trust we shall yet maintain unshaken our old place upon the waters'.<sup>232</sup> The Canadian Prime Minister, Robert Borden, promised Churchill that the Canadians would provide a number of Dreadnoughts that would be at Britain's disposal in a time of need. However, the bill failed to pass through the Canadian Senate due to the high expenditure.<sup>233</sup> After further deliberation, backed up by the press and public pressure, it was decided that Britain would maintain a 'one-power standard' in the Mediterranean. The fleet would be kept at Malta while the Atlantic fleet would be stationed at Gibraltar, able to steam towards either the North Sea or Mediterranean at will. The repercussions of the expenditure saga demonstrated the relationship between the press and imperial defence. The press pursued the British government into maintaining a naval force in the Mediterranean demonstrating the power and influence of the press. Captain Faber, MP for West Hants, spoke at a public event in November 1912 claiming that abandoning the Mediterranean was a dangerous idea. *The Scotsman* reported that within six months of the proposed reduction, eight ships of the Mediterranean Fleet were steaming towards Constantinople to save European lives, 'that alone would justify our having a fleet in the Mediterranean'.<sup>234</sup>

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Charles Scott sat as a Member of Parliament for Manchester North East and was subsequently re-elected to the seat of Leigh (Greater Manchester) in 1900, despite his opposition towards the Boer War. By 1911, Scott had been editing the *Manchester Guardian* for nearly forty years and became the proprietor from 1907 to 1932. The *Guardian* was unapologetically catered for the liberal left of society, espousing the cause for female suffrage and a pacific foreign policy. Throughout the Boer War, the stance of the newspaper became pro-Boer and anti-imperialist. Scott had many personal connections including Winston Churchill, Reginald McKenna and Lloyd George. Scott's career epitomises the intrinsic relationship between the press and politics.

<sup>232</sup> "The Naval Position." *Times* [London, England] 24 July 1912: 7. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web.

<sup>233</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press.p.9.

<sup>234</sup> Captain Faber, MP, 'On Mediterranean Policy'. *The Scotsman*. Midlothian, Scotland. Monday 11 November 1912. p.8

Scott left Parliament after the landslide Liberal election victory of January 1906, at a point when many of his close confidants and former colleagues had won prominent positions on the Government benches and had naturally hoped to gain his journalistic support. When Scott visited London after relinquishing his seat, he sought knowledge of Government policies and where he may be able to influence their course.<sup>235</sup> Scott was under the impression in 1912 that Germany had been trying to befriend Britain for at least three years and that she had rebuked at every turn.<sup>236</sup> The Political Diary of C.P. Scott highlights how Scott was predominantly on the side of Lloyd George viz. the Liberal feud with H.H Asquith.

By March 1905, French imperial ambitions in West Africa paved the way to the First Moroccan Crisis. The Kaiser visited Morocco proposing a defensive pact with the Sultan and pushed for a conference to secure Moroccan independence. French foreign secretary, Delcasse, refused a conference leading to increased tensions. Under the terms of the 1904 *Entente* with France, Britain was inclined to support the French in Morocco. The Algeiras Conference was convened to resolve the situation and the Germans eventually backed down.<sup>237</sup> In April 1911, the French deployed a vast army to the interior of Morocco to complete their partial take over. Germany responded by sending a gunboat, the SS *Panther*, to the Moroccan coast and demanded compensation in the way of territorial gains in the Congo sparking the Agadir Crisis. The Agadir Crisis was a *casus foederis* that had the potential to escalate into a full-blown European war. Under the *Entente*, Britain was under obligation to support French imperial ambitions in Morocco. Marder noted that Admiralty documents suggested that Britain would intervene in the event of a German attack on the French.<sup>238</sup>

The Moroccan Crisis provided a further attempt for Germany to estrange Britain from France. The spiral model suggests that German actions throughout the crisis had the undesired effect of pushing France and Britain closer together.<sup>239</sup> This theory also explains German attempts to estrange Britain and the United States, a relationship which the Americans were previously dubious about. There was a belief in Germany that economic competition might lead to Anglo-American hostility. The Moroccan Crisis drew similarities

<sup>235</sup> Wilson, T. (1970). *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*. 1st ed. London: Collins p.23

<sup>236</sup> Diary Entry of CP Scott 'Notes on a conversation with Loreburn at his home (Kingsdown House)' *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*. P60

<sup>237</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Anapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p.23

<sup>238</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; A History of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. P.502 The Agadir Crisis is also known as the Second Moroccan Crisis.

<sup>239</sup> Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 2nd ed. Woodstock: Princeton University Press. P.95

with the 1898 American-Spanish War, where Germany sent a fleet to Manila to impress their American counterparts, the results were counterproductive as the Americans viewed the German actions as hostile.<sup>240</sup> Consequently, the Americans viewed the British naval squadron in the region as a necessity. German gun-boat diplomacy clearly failed throughout the Dreadnought Era.

The Agadir Crisis threw a spotlight on German naval ambition. If Germany controlled the coast of Morocco, it could endanger Britain's main trade routes to India and the Far East. This proved to be a red line for the nationalist British press and the Navy League which viewed the '*Latin lake*' as a traditional sphere of British influence. The Navy League stressed that Germany could not be afforded a naval base in the vicinity of any British interests. In a Foreign Office report on the Spanish press, it was stated that throughout the Russo-Japanese War the Russian Government had tried to influence the Spanish press in their favour. It is interesting to note that during the First Moroccan Crisis 'it does not appear, at the present moment, either Germany or France are using the Spanish press for political purposes.'<sup>241</sup> Due to the geographic nature of Spain, it is surprising neither Germany or France actively sought to influence their journalists.

Interestingly, in 1906 an article appeared in the February edition of the now defunct *National Review* titled '*Ignotus*'. The article claimed it had 'proof' Germany were the aggressors in the First Moroccan Crisis by stating that in Spring 1905, 'the Emperor delivered three war like speeches'.<sup>242</sup> The Review also claimed the Emperor was doing everything in his power to avoid an Anglo-French rapprochement and break up the '*Entente Cordiale*'.<sup>243</sup> The German press reacted angrily to these claims, with the *Norddeutsche Zeitung* labelling the claims 'grotesque'.<sup>244</sup> Frank Lascelles noted that the claims in the *National Review* were false and that, in fact, the speeches made by the Emperor were in the Spring of 1904, a full year before the Moroccan Crisis.

The agitation in the press caused by the aforementioned article in the *National Review* contradicted the pleasant nature of meetings held between officials. A meeting took place between Commander Philip Dumas and the German Emperor, in which the Emperor was pleasant and cordial, wished Dumas a pleasant stay in Berlin and that he would remain on friendly terms with his German counterparts.<sup>245</sup> It is interesting to note that the Liberal press

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<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* P.100

<sup>241</sup> Sir Maurice Bunsen to Sir Edward Grey. 8th April 1906. FO 371/166/26

<sup>242</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey. February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906. FO 371/77/2

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/77/2

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/77/2

<sup>245</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1906. FO 371/77/110

organs in Britain were not suspicious of German policy in Morocco, 'it is generally recognised that her [Germany] policy of the open-door in Morocco has even been of material service to us and that there would be any deadly danger to our interests in her acquiring a West African port would be wholly disbelieved'.<sup>246</sup> Charles Scott even goes as far as believing a German naval base on the coast of Morocco would alleviate pressure on the British naval budget which paved the way for less money to be spent on Dreadnoughts to combat the threat.<sup>247</sup>

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In June 1909, the *Manchester Courier* reported that Krupp were increasing their production of gun-mounts and suggested that the government were covering up when the intelligence was received. 'In spite of all the efforts of Ministers to conceal the real state of naval affairs, the truth is gradually being disclosed'.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, the *Londonderry Sentinel* reported in December 1911 that the Germans were pushing to accelerate their naval programme, without furnishing their report with any evidence.<sup>249</sup> The article stated that Britain should respond accordingly by accelerating its own programme. This is just one minor example of inflammatory articles published in the British press. Further inflammatory articles alluding to Britain's naval position are prevalent throughout the Dreadnought Era. Schiemann's article, reprinted in the *Nottingham Evening Post* asserts that 'it is not difficult to believe that the ultimate objective of British policy is a Continental war, which would run parallel to a projected attack against the German navy'.<sup>250</sup> It is evident from the language of the publications that the German naval threat affected the entirety of Britain, geographic location did not prevent fear trickling through the press.

An extract from *The Times* dated January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1906, stated that 'from Brazil to Japan, from Madeira to Kaio-Chan there was not a corner of the globe where German intervention had not made the Germans appear to be less the promoters than the obstructors of humanity'.<sup>251</sup> Whilst there was no want for war in the Liberal cabinet, nor amongst its officials, the nationalist and radial newspapers caused a stir in Britain. Scott noted, 'I can imagine no

<sup>246</sup> Scott to Asquith. July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1911. Agadir Crisis. *The Political Diaries of C P Scott*. P. 44

<sup>247</sup> Diary entry of C P Scott. July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1910. Wilson, T. (1970). *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*. 1st ed. London: Collins. p. 46

<sup>248</sup> 'German Naval Expansion'. *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*. Manchester, England. Friday 18 June 1909. p.10

<sup>249</sup> 'German Naval Expansion'. *Londonderry Sentinel*. Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Thursday 14 December 1911. p.3.

<sup>250</sup> 'A Continental War'. *Nottingham Evening Post*. Nottingham, England. Thursday 31 December 1908. p.6

<sup>251</sup> 'Anglo-German Relations.' *The Times*, 1 Jan. 1906, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

more foolish war and none more fatal alike to party and to national interests than one with Germany on this matter'.<sup>252</sup> These extracts demonstrate the contrast between the liberal and nationalist press.

The Royal Navy were faced with asymmetrical force structures throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. French naval policy throughout the nineteenth century leaned towards industrial warfare. A *Guerre de course* revolved around the strangulation of British commercial interests. German war plans included a proposal to adopt a 'risk fleet', in which Germany would build up a large enough fleet to act as a deterrent. If Britain were to engage the Imperial Navy, it would severely weaken the Royal Navy and leave Britain open to attack from a *tertius gaudens*. Chillingly in 1908, Fisher predicted that a war with Germany would occur in October 1914, this is when the Kiel Canal widening was due for completion. Fisher's thoughts were reciprocated by cabinet meetings in 1912.

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The chapter highlights the cycles of misperception that plagued Anglo-German relations throughout the Dreadnought Era. Journalist and politician, Charles Scott, exemplifies the connections between politics, foreign policy and the press. The personal diplomacy between the two monarchs of Britain and Germany, although cordial, was strained extensively by the press. Moreover, it is well documented that Bülow utilised his personal connections in the press to dispel any rumours of German naval aggression. Bülow used his speeches in the Reichstag to denounce any agitation with Britain but consequently faced scathing attacks in socialist and pan-Germanic publications. It is evident that the role of the press was instrumental in the deterioration of Anglo-German relations throughout the Dreadnought Era. However, for the historian to understand the roots of German hostility towards Britain, war scares, spy mania and scandal in the press needs to be addressed.

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<sup>252</sup> CP Scott to Herbert Asquith. July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1911. Agadir Crisis. *The Political Diaries of C P Scott*. P. 44

## Chapter IV. War Scares, Spy Mania & Public Scandal

*'Germania est delenda'*<sup>253</sup>

The issue of 'home defence' had plagued the War Office (WO) since the 1890s.<sup>254</sup> The initial fear concerned the threat of a potential Franco-Russian invasion in the late nineteenth century. The Franco-Russian threat was superseded by the perception of hostile German foreign policy and a potential invasion of the British Isles. Agitation caused by the 'invasion bogey' paved the way for establishment of the British Expeditionary Force and redistribution of the fleet. Tensions heightened between 1899 and 1902 when Britain found itself facing multiple threats. The Boer War in South Africa combined with the defence of India led to a fear that Britain was becoming overstretched militarily.<sup>255</sup> Growing imperial concerns led to a rift between the hierarchies of the Royal Navy and the Army on how to cope with the issue of home defence. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the press wilfully disregarded the truth apropos invasion fears and fabricated tales of spies operating in Britain.

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<sup>253</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. *Prince Bülow*. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/124

<sup>254</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. p.65

<sup>255</sup> Morgan-Owen, D. (2017). *The Fear of Invasion*. 1st ed. Croydon: Oxford University Press. p.73

Throughout 1909 and 1910 the fear of invasion was exacerbated by the press which published sensationalist articles concerning German spies operating in Britain. This misperception of German foreign policy led to a public frenzy. The British press were prognosticating a German invasion with little or no evidence. As 'spy mania' gripped Britain, Teutophobia gripped the press. Commander Philip Dumas (RN), naval attaché to Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands wrote a series of reports from the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1906 to 1<sup>st</sup> August 1908, aimed at providing a detailed analysis of German naval preparation and ability. Dumas asserted in 1908 that 'public opinion in Germany is always, to my mind, wholly adverse to war and wherever it could exert any influence would certainly make for peace'.<sup>256</sup> If Dumas' assumption was correct, why did the British press whip up agitation? It is clear misperception played a crucial role in Anglo-German relations.

Previous war scares in Britain had amounted to nothing. Notable examples include the French war scare in 1900. Navalists in Britain were suspicious of French naval ambitions and believed an invasion might be possible.<sup>257</sup> Rumours that the Reserve Fleet has been put on standby combined with hostile publications in the French nationalist press exacerbated the issue. Images of a sanguinary campaign against the French caused mass hysteria. However, it was common knowledge in the Admiralty that the French were underprepared for a naval campaign against Britain and by the winter, the invasion scare fizzled out.<sup>258</sup>

The question of home defence had paralysed British policy making since the mid-nineteenth century. Palmerston's Follies were a series of fortifications installed in the English Channel and coastal areas to protect Britain from a possible French invasion. The fortifications were vastly over budget and by the time they were completed the threat had subsided with the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War. In early twentieth century Britain, there were two main schools of thought on naval matters. The "blue water" school and the "bolt-from-the-blue school".<sup>259</sup> The policies of the two schools will be discussed throughout the chapter. The rising threat of Germany and of invasion reignited the debate concerning home defence. There was a strong belief in Britain that the German naval trajectory would enable them to become a first-class naval power by 1906, second only to the Royal Navy.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1908. CAB 17/61/7

<sup>257</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. p.65

<sup>258</sup> Marder, A. (1940). *The Anatomy of British Sea Power; a history of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*. 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf. p.380

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* p.380 see chapter XVII for further context on the matter.

<sup>260</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p.102

Throughout the winter of 1908-1909, deviating from the opinions Admiralty experts, reports surfaced that Germany were increasing their naval programme.<sup>261</sup> The reasoning behind the rumours pointed to increased nickel purchases to construct naval turrets. Further rumours suggested that Germany would be producing an increased number of ships, which would threaten the two-power standard. The reports led to public anxiety followed closely by a war scare. Polemics in the British press came against the backdrop of the Second Bosnian Crisis. The *Kilburn Times* reported that in an event of a German attack 'food supplies would be stopped, and the country starved'.<sup>262</sup> However in Goschen's annual report of 1909, he highlighted an article in the *Vossische Zeitung* which claimed that only a small number of military and naval officers had contemplated the idea of invading Britain. The contradictory nature of the reports is commonplace in the Dreadnought Era. Public agitation was exacerbated by reports flooding in from Germany of increased production of Dreadnoughts and gunnery efficiency. Moreover, throughout the saga the *Daily Mail* claimed that Britain was forsaking her naval supremacy for old-age pensions.<sup>263</sup> Throughout the Dreadnought Era, Lord Northcliffe, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, introduced a system of serials, usually 100,000 words in length. The introductory publication would usually be ca. 5,000 words, then broken into 1,500 word per day. In 1906, a publication titled the '*Invasion of 1910*' was released in the *Daily Mail*.<sup>264</sup> The serials were written by novelist William Le Queux and the publication sanctioned by Northcliffe personally. The serial depicted in great detail an invasion of Britain one year in the future. Arguably, Lord Northcliffe would profit from increased newspaper sales in the event of a war. Moreover, the invasion literature was provocative and against the backdrop of invasion fears, irresponsible. The publications had an electrifying effect on British public imagination.

The Liberal Party faced a grave dilemma throughout the Dreadnought Era, balancing social reform against the ever-increasing defence budget. The government performed this balancing act whilst facing mounting pressure from the conservative press and the Navy League. Moreover, reports surfaced that German manufacturer Krupp could produce gun mounts three times quicker than their British counterparts, sparking angst in the Royal Navy.<sup>265</sup> Britain only faced one real competitor, but one that could increasingly compete on equal terms. Consequently, the Dreadnought Era saw an aberration from the two-power

<sup>261</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/12

<sup>262</sup> 'Hampstead Parliament'. *Kilburn Times*. London, England. Friday 26 March 1909. p.6

<sup>263</sup> Thompson, J. (2000). *Northcliffe*. London: J. Murray. p.120

<sup>264</sup> Thompson, J. (2000). *Northcliffe*. London: J. Murray p.123

<sup>265</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p.157



standard.<sup>266</sup> A discussion was held apropos a policy of laying two keels for every one laid by Germany.<sup>267</sup> Alternatively, Britain could maintain a preponderance of sixty per cent over Germany. During a naval debate in the House of Commons in March 1909, a third option was suggested by Edward Grey, by diffusing the arms race, through attaining mutual attaché reports between Britain and Germany. However, Germany were not interested in this proposal.<sup>268</sup>

Sensationalist reports in the British press stirred up anxiety, the *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser* stated that 'reports had also been circulated that German officers regularly drank a loving cup to "the day of reckoning with England"'.<sup>269</sup> The same article also reported that during naval budget debates in the Reichstag that 'German naval administrators had divided England into districts under the supervision of an officer'.<sup>270</sup> The threat of German invasion was not limited to southern England, as demonstrated in an article published in the *Dundee Courier*. Exclaiming that Captain Brown of the local Territorial Army spoke at a public meeting, 'in the event of an order to mobilise, to sanction the ringing of the town's bell for fifteen minutes'.<sup>271</sup> The article then claimed that if German naval forces were to sail up the River Tay, they could silence the town's churches.

Following the resignation of Bülow in 1909 until the publication of ten inflammatory articles in the *Daily Mail* by Robert Blatchford, Anglo-German relations had improved. However, Blatchford's provocative articles led to further misperception of British intentions towards the Germans. The German press had previously commented on the recent cordial relations that had allowed for a consensus on Anglo-German cooperation in the Congo. Herr von Schoen claimed that there was a consensus in the German public, that the Imperial Government should pursue a naval 'understanding' with Britain. The Blatchford articles devastated the improved atmosphere in Anglo-German relations. Goschen reported that 'since the new chancellor came into office repeated and increasing signs have shown themselves that the efforts to remove the tension existing between Germany and England are being undertaken in the right way'.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>266</sup> The Two-power standard was the long-standing policy of the Admiralty.

<sup>267</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p.57

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* p.57

<sup>269</sup> 'German Invasion Phantasies'. *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser*. Saturday 12 December 1908. p.2

<sup>270</sup> 'German Invasion Phantasies'. *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser*. Saturday 12 December 1908. p.2

<sup>271</sup> 'Forfar Council and the German Invasion'. *Dundee Courier*. Thursday 27 January 1910. p.6

<sup>272</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/12

Following the release of the Blatchford Report in the *Daily Mail*, which had caused the 'greatest indignation' in Germany, German born banker and close confidant of Asquith, Ernest Cassel, visited Berlin. The timely visit of Cassel, which was noted by William Goschen, went some way to repair the damage inflicted on Anglo-German relations caused by the press.<sup>273</sup> The general feeling in Britain at the time was that an Anglo-German 'understanding' was only possible if Britain were to recognise German naval ambition, following the historic German principle of *do ut des*. The visit of Cassel to Berlin demonstrates that officials on both sides of the North Sea strove to maintain peace. Blatchford, a socialist journalist, after writing the infamous articles in the *Daily Mail*, claimed that the British were not at fault for the agitation, "in all my reading of the subject in the British press, I have never come across a single article which could be twisted into a threat of an attack on Germany."<sup>274</sup> Although Blatchford maintained he could not find examples of polemics in the British press directed at Germany he stated that

Britain was in grave peril of an attack from the German Empire and calling for the immediate introduction of compulsory military training of school boys over the age of ten, and a significant expansion of the Royal Navy.<sup>275</sup>

Schoen produced an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* stating, 'the great mass of people has long been permeated with the feeling that senseless mischief making by a small number in both countries is a great misfortune'.<sup>276</sup> Naval attaché Commander Dumas, claimed that the press was 'a potent force in maintaining this [hostile] atmosphere'.<sup>277</sup>

There is a surfeit of evidence in the British press concerning the German naval threat. The subject of a German invasion is discussed in great depth by the naval attaché Philip Dumas. Dumas' expertise allowed him to dismantle the argument and dispel the 'invasion bogey' in its entirety by outlining which German ports could be used for an attempted invasion. Dumas concluded in his report that 'what it therefore amounts to is that while a raiding expedition is possible, an invasion is almost impossible'.<sup>278</sup> Therefore the anxiety running through the British press and public, although not entirely misplaced, appears futile.

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9708/13

<sup>274</sup> 'Mr. Blatchford and the German Invasion'. *The Cornishman*. Thursday 27 August 1908. p.6

<sup>275</sup> Johnson, M. (2013). *Militarism and the British Left*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p.101

<sup>276</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24th June 1910. FO 881/9708/12

<sup>277</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. 13th February 1908. CAB 17/61/13

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.* 13<sup>th</sup> February 1908. CAB 17/61/14

The invasion scare fizzled out by 1909, as it later transpired that Germany had only built nine Dreadnoughts to Britain's seventeen. It is evident from the fiasco that the polemics in the press perpetuated the misperception of German naval policy. Moreover, the report of Commander Dumas stated that there was little or no threat from the German Empire and that Blatchford's report caused misperception of German naval ambition. The fear of invasion was not confined to Great Britain. In a letter to Admiral Fisher, the influential writer and editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, J. A. Spencer, informed Fisher that he had become a 'bogey' figure in Germany.<sup>279</sup> Whilst Spencer was visiting Germany he was repeatedly questioned by officials and members of the public, whether Fisher intended 'to snap up their fleet before it got too big, to repeat the Battle of Copenhagen'.<sup>280</sup> This supports the theory of Epkenhans who believed British press agitation led to genuine fear in Germany.<sup>281</sup> The agitation at Kiel amounted to children being kept off school by their parents for fear of a British attack. Moreover, Spencer informed Fisher that there were further fears in Berlin of a British invasion.<sup>282</sup>

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Beyond invasion scares, 'spy mania' gripped Britain throughout the Dreadnought Era. There is an abundance of polemics in the press in which some alarmist publications claimed that up to 50,000 German spies were operating in Britain at any given time.<sup>283</sup> Some of these rumours were dispelled by the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, which suggested that if Germany paid their spies just £200 a year, it would cost them tens of millions to operate the spy network in Britain alone.<sup>284</sup> Articles stating such high numbers of German spies operating in Britain were the cause of much consternation. Moreover, reports in the *Northern Whig* suggested that German spies were monitoring Royal Navy manoeuvres in the North Sea and that two German spies were caught watching from a bridge. According to an undisclosed source, German 'spies are at almost every seaport, and very clever and wily are they in their disguises and methods'.<sup>285</sup> It is easy to imagine how quickly polemics in the press filtered through society.

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<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> Copy of letter from J. A. Spencer to Admiral Fisher. February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1908. David Lloyd George Papers MSS. Parliamentary Archives. London. B/1/3/3

<sup>281</sup>

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> 'German Spies'. *Dundee Evening Telegraph*. Dundee, Scotland. Monday 18 September 1911. p.4

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> 'Are there German spies?'. *Northern Whig*, Antrim, Northern Ireland. Thursday 23 July 1908. p.7

Moreover, the *Belfast Telegraph* reported that a female spy had been detained by French authorities whilst trying to return to Germany. The article claimed that the spy had operated on British soil and was said to be working out of a 'nest' of spies in Rosyth.<sup>286</sup> Rosyth naval base in Scotland was a natural target for would-be spies and consequently members of the public would be nervous about such reports. The language used by the publicist is inflammatory and designed to instil fear into the public. This was emphasised during a speech by Major A.J. Reed of the Perthshire Navy League branch, who stated that the NID estimated that there were 1,500 spies operating in Scotland and up to 5,000 in England. The *London Evening Standard* reported that the spies operating in England were mainly clustered along the southern and eastern coastlines.<sup>287</sup> 'Spy mania' gripped Britain to such an extent that ordinary civilians were being arrested for spying. The *Derby Daily Telegraph* reported in 1911 that three workers from Wearmouth Coal Company sent to check and photograph gauges along the coast were reported and arrested.<sup>288</sup> This demonstrates that the press were agitating the public and fuelling Teutophobia in Britain.

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Against the backdrop of the 'invasion bogey' and 'spy mania', it is well documented that there were numerous attempts made by British politicians to come to an 'understanding' with Germany. Advances made by Britain to form an Anglo-German understanding were not widely published in the German Press at the time; this was due to the Imperial Government withholding the information. The advances made by British statesman to their German counterparts were informal and unofficial. However, the Liberal press believed that the Imperial Government should have taken advantage of the situation. William Goschen reported that 'the advanced Liberal press was of course extremely bitter in its criticisms of the refusal of the Imperial Government to meet the advances of His Majesty's Government'.<sup>289</sup>

The liberal paper of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), *Vorwärts*, attacked the German government by taking the 'latter course; and it cannot be denied that such an agreement would have been of great value, not only because both British and German nations would

<sup>286</sup> 'Nest of German Spies'. *Belfast Telegraph*, Antrim, Northern Ireland. Saturday 26 February 1910. p.5 A nest assumes that German spies were animals. Provocative language such as this would surely increase agitation throughout Britain.

<sup>287</sup> 'German Spies'. *London Evening Standard*. London, England. Wednesday 27 January 1909. p.7

<sup>288</sup> 'Arrested as German Spies'. *Derby Daily Telegraph*. Derbyshire, England. Monday 27 November 1911. p.3

<sup>289</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24th June 1910. FO 881/9708

have been thereby spared immense burdens'.<sup>290</sup> The SPD paper published articles aimed at the Imperial Government in the hope that Anglo-German relations would improve. The Liberal paper believed that relations needed to improve, otherwise social reform programmes in both nations would be halted due to the strain of armaments. Chillingly, the paper predicts that if a solution or understanding is not met, 'a bloody war may be the result; should that occur the responsibility will fall upon the Imperial Government'.<sup>291</sup>

## Public Scandal

Reflecting on previous chapters, it is now pertinent to address scandals in the press and study the effects of political pressure groups. It is important to assess how public scandals and political pressure groups fostered Anglo-German misperceptions. Scandal could contribute directly to the naval arms race and derail improving foreign relations. Moreover, scandal could curtail political careers and endanger intra-departmental relations in the Admiralty.

Scandal could contribute directly to the arms race. One of the most intriguing and scandalous public affairs in the Dreadnought Era concerns H. H. Mulliner. Mulliner, chair of Coventry Ordnance Work, was alarmed by decreasing naval expenditure. Mulliner attributed the decrease to the policies of the newly-elected Liberal government. In an attempt to stem his decreasing order books, Mulliner deceived Parliament and the public over German naval ambitions. His deception led to the 1909 Dreadnought scare. Mulliner's rhetorical pyrotechnics were published in leading newspapers, such as the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* and had the temerity to play on nationalist sentiments.

According to Anthony Morris, Mulliner was guilty of stoking up public anxiety by writing Teutophobic publications to create new orders for his company, supporting the theory outlined by A.J.A Morris in *Scaremongers*.<sup>292</sup> Shockingly, Mulliner writes comprehensive articles to press outlets, culminating in a series of publications in *The Times*. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1909 a diary titled '*Diary of the Great Surrender*' was published alongside a detailed article outlining the government's naval policy.<sup>293</sup> Mulliner attacks the government asserting their

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> Morris, A. (1984). *Scaremongers (RLE The First World War)*. 1st Ed. Routledge.

<sup>293</sup> H. H. MULLINER. Clifton Court, near Rugby, Jan. 1. "The Naval Policy of the Government." *Times* [London, England] 3 Jan. 1919: 4. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web.

naval policy 'from the first has been one either of culpable or criminal neglect'.<sup>294</sup> It is evident from these publications that Mulliner was able to use his position as leverage in the press to garner support for his policy. It is indisputable from CID meetings that the government were not neglecting Britain's naval policy.<sup>295</sup>

The hyperbolic publications written by Mulliner led to a campaign to increase naval estimates, an increase in the building programme and an acceleration of the current building programme. Interestingly, the actions of Mulliner draw parallels with the theory provided by Herwig that German antagonists aimed to increase their order books through fear. The polemics in the press also led to parliamentary outbursts from numerous MPs who wanted to increase the annual naval budget. Cries of 'we want eight and we won't wait', rang around the house throughout 1909.<sup>296</sup> Marder's *Scapa* provided criticisms of Mulliner's actions and subsequent name he acquired, the 'merchant of death'.<sup>297</sup> It is evident from the research that Mulliner was falsifying claims and directly antagonised political and public thinking by implying that Britain was at risk of German attack. It has been demonstrated by reports issued by Commander Dumas that it would be nearly impossible for Germany to launch an invasion of Britain. Mulliner's actions exacerbated the issue of Anglo-German misperception playing on nationalist sentiment and further alienating both British and German publics. When his role was exposed, the resulting scandal led to the resignation of H.H Mulliner, with the full backing of the board. Mulliner received a pay out of £100,000.<sup>298</sup>

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Scandal could be used to derail attempts at improving foreign relations. One of the prominent scandals of the Dreadnought Era involved an interview with Kaiser Wilhelm II on October 28<sup>th</sup> 1908. The article, published in the *Daily Telegraph*, outlined a supposed interview with Kaiser Wilhelm II and produced a *cause celebre* in Germany. The Kaiser was described by reports as having an unusual frankness about him, brandishing the English

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> CAB 17/61 'Report on German Navy 1907'. The report provides a detailed insight into German Naval affairs in 1907 and 1908. It is clear from these reports that Mulliner is factually inaccurate when charging the Admiralty with incompetence. For further reading on naval intelligence see Seligmann, M. (2006). *Spies in Uniform: British Military and Naval Intelligence on the Eve of the First World War*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press.

<sup>296</sup> 'The Burnham Schools'. *Weston-Super-Mare Gazette, and General Advertiser*. Somerset, England. Saturday 04 September 1909. p.7

<sup>297</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press pp.158-160

<sup>298</sup> Warren, K. (1998). *Steel, ships and men*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. Pp. 140-146

'mad as march hares'.<sup>299</sup> *The Times* correspondent reported that the original purpose of the interview was to allay the fears of Englishmen. The Kaiser suggested in the interview that his task was not easy as the 'prevailing sentiment among large sections of the middle and lower classes of my own people is not friendly to England'.<sup>300</sup>

*The Times* labelled the Emperor as 'impulsive and passes so rapidly from one mood to another that he is himself often apt to forget in a later mood what he had done and thought in an earlier mood'.<sup>301</sup> According to German officials, the interview with the Kaiser was not intended to interfere with the recent cordial Anglo-French relations. The interview with the Kaiser also had the undesired effect of straining German-Japanese relations. Throughout the interview the Kaiser mentioned the 'yellow peril', alluding to the Japanese in the Far East, noting that the German naval build-up was intended to meet the Japanese naval program. The Tokyo correspondent for the *New York Herald* described the anger felt in Japan, stating that 'the Japanese press vigorously criticises the German Emperor's utterances'.<sup>302</sup>

Moreover, the Kaiser stressed that the official German stance on its naval programme was purely for commercial expansion and imperial defence and should not in any way be viewed by the British as a threat. According to Goschen, the scandal caused 'a great many violent expressions of opinion against Great Britain and especially her press'.<sup>303</sup> To combat the polemics, practically every political party inside the Reichstag came out in support of friendly relations with Britain.<sup>304</sup> It is evident from the correspondence and official stance taken by the Imperial Government that the views expressed in the interview were not the official policy of the government. The repercussions of the *Daily Telegraph* Affair sent shockwaves around the world. The embarrassment felt by the Kaiser was insurmountable as the scandal resulted in the alienation of France, Russia, Britain, Japan and the German public. The Kaiser suffered serious bouts of depression after the scandal; the interview deeply harmed the Emperor's prestige and subsequently never held the same influence over German foreign policy.

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<sup>299</sup> (From Our Own Correspondent.). "The Kaiser and the Triple Entente." *Times*, 29 Oct. 1908, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> 'Beater's Telegram'. East Anglian Daily Times. Tuesday 03 November 1908. Suffolk, England. P.8.

<sup>303</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1908. 7th August 1909. FO 881/9518/5

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* 881/9518/6

Scandal could be also used as a weapon in intra-departmental politics. On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1909, an article appeared in *The Times* which would threaten the credibility of the Admiralty and Admiral Fisher. The publication, outlined in Marder's *Scapa*, questioned the policies adopted by the Admiralty throughout Fisher's 'revolution'.<sup>305</sup> The infamous article was produced by Rear Admiral Charles Beresford, opposed to Fisher's reforms, and was originally destined for Asquith. The publication threw the Royal Navy in to disrepute and tore it into two camps, with a third neutral camp. Amusingly, those who backed Fisher were said to be swimming in the 'fish pond'.<sup>306</sup> The article successfully undermined the authority of Fisher and the Admiralty. The malcontent Beresford sat as a Member of Parliament for Portsmouth in the 1910 General Election, where he became increasingly critical of Admiralty policy and Fisher's obstinate behaviour. Competition for promotion provided the catalyst for the *froideur* between Fisher and Beresford, exacerbated by the disagreement over the 1906 redistribution of the fleet. Beresford's public attack was described by Marder as 'unparalleled' in naval history.<sup>307</sup>

Beresford noted in his article that he regretted making the letter public. 'As noted in my letter of July 20, it is deplorable that it is necessary to make public this correspondence, but I have no other means of protecting my brother officers'.<sup>308</sup> However, it seems that Beresford did not dwell on it for too long. The publication led to an inquiry into Admiralty policy and the leadership of Fisher. Beresford came under attack in the papers, the *Eastern Daily Press* suggested that 'Beresford has come home with the intention, if we may be pardoned, for employing a vulgar but finely descriptive phrase of 'making it hot' for the Admiralty and Sir John Fisher'.<sup>309</sup> The paper also stated that Beresford would use his political influence to pressurise the government into purchasing an increased number of Dreadnoughts. Conversely, the *Dundee Courier* defended Beresford's actions by suggesting that he was duty bound to 'tell the truth', even at the expense of discrediting Fisher and the Admiralty.<sup>310</sup> It is evident from the pyrotechnics in the press that the inquiry was a *cause celebre* in Britain. Moreover, the Fisher-Beresford spat split public and service opinion undermining service morale. The divisive affair left Fisher discredited and although he did not resign in the

<sup>305</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p.74 – Beresford believed that Fisher's revolution would severely weaken the Royal Navy and leave the country vulnerable.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.* p.71

<sup>307</sup> Marder, A. (2013). *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*. 1st ed. Annapolis [Maryland]: Naval Institute Press. p. 88

<sup>308</sup> Charles Beresford. Admiral, et al. "Lord Charles Beresford and the Prime Minister." *Times* [London, England] 25 Oct. 1909: 8. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>309</sup> Lord Charles Beresford. *Eastern Daily Press*. Norfolk, England. Friday 23 April 1909. p.4

<sup>310</sup> 'Lord Charles Beresford and the Navy'. *Dundee Courier*. Dundee, Scotland. Wednesday 21 April 1909. p.4



immediate aftermath, it soon transpired his position had become untenable. In late 1910 Fisher received his peerage and retired, only to be recalled in 1914 when war broke out. The scandal demonstrates the power of the press and how influential figures, such as Beresford, utilised newspapers for their own purpose.

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Numerous scandals plagued the German hierarchy at the turn of the century. One of the prominent scandals hit when it transpired that the Imperial Foreign Office had formerly employed the political section of the police to spy on journalists. The scandal widened when it was noticed that the political section of the police then hired journalists to write sensationalist articles which led to elaborate investigations against individuals.<sup>311</sup> George Saunders reported that 'the German journalist is usually so dependent upon the authorities for his daily bread in the shape of information that it is generally possible to use him for the government's purpose'.<sup>312</sup> Conflicting articles in the German press can also be attributed to certain journalists taking aim at the hand that fed them. Semi-official newspapers would sometimes contain scathing attacks on government officials who had 'stumbled badly' and fallen foul of a journalist.<sup>313</sup> The number of 'tame' journalists began to dwindle throughout the early twentieth century as national and provincial newspapers such as the *Frankfurt Zeitung* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* became incredibly wealthy and independent from government favour and influence. This may exacerbate the wider issue of misperception as 'their anti-British sentiment is dictated by the feelings of their readers.'<sup>314</sup>

A further scandal came to light in 1906 when it transpired that 'many papers speak of plans for relieving the Chancellor and Minister President Bülow of his work'.<sup>315</sup> In a meeting with Frank Lascelles, Bülow notified the diplomat that 'such violent articles chiefly in the papers which had indulged in such vile criticisms of England during the Boer War'.<sup>316</sup> Bülow also stated that he hoped the attacks on himself and the Emperor 'would prove to the British people that the control which the German government could exercise over the press was not so complete as they supposed.'<sup>317</sup> A 'great change had come over the German press and that even in respectable newspapers criticisms of the Government and of the Emperor were

<sup>311</sup> George Saunders Report on the German Press and Newspapers. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906 FO 371/66/188-189

<sup>312</sup> George Saunders Report on the German Press and Newspapers. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906. FO 371/66/189

<sup>313</sup> George Saunders Report on the German Press and Newspapers. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906. FO 371/66/189.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey. 9<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/68

<sup>316</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey. 12th November 1906. FO 371/80/78

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/78

continually to be found'.<sup>318</sup> There were further attacks on the regime throughout the year, mainly occurring in the press after the summer break of 1906. Both liberal and conservative press organs attacked the government with the *Reichsbote* publishing an article hoping the Emperor would consider a thoughtful early retirement (*gedankenreiche Zurückhaltung*).<sup>319</sup>

In June 1910, the Imperial Government held its annual foreign office conference. The budget was a controversial topic in Germany. The German tabloids turned their broadsides on each other regarding the possibility of altering the German naval programme. The government and more liberal press outlets campaigned for an economic understanding with Great Britain. The nationalist press and navalists lambasted the liberals over a potential understanding with Britain. Government policy in Germany was attacked by the nationalists and likened the policies as 'feminine'.<sup>320</sup> Differing opinions regarding armaments also appeared in the press. William Goschen described 'a violent controversy which lasted months arose as to whether public opinion in Germany was in favour of a modification of the German naval programme'.<sup>321</sup> It is clear from the temerity and contradictory nature of the German press that the nationalist factions were far more Anglophobic than the government wished.

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This section has demonstrated that the IR theory of 'misperception' was fluid and multipolar, and that misperceptions of foreign policy were rife across the Continent. German relations with Denmark, Norway and Italy were all strained by fabricated publications in the press. This was particularly evident when an article in the British press attacking German foreign policy was blamed on the Belgian King, who was visiting London at the time. In correspondence to the Foreign Office, it transpired that the writer of the article was Professor Vambery. It is also evident that both the German and British governments utilised journalists for their own purposes and were aware of misperception. Prince Bülow's relationship with Stein being one of the vital links Bülow had with the press. The research also concludes that there is a clear distinction in the style of reporting from liberal and nationalist papers. Journalists throughout Germany also grappled with toeing the government line and their own personal feelings towards Britain. It is evident that the press caused a misperception through

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* FO 371/80/70

<sup>319</sup> Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/111

<sup>320</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/7 TNA

<sup>321</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1909. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1910. FO 881/9708/7 TNA

public scandal, however it is now pertinent to address the role of the press apropos 'spy mania' and the 'invasion bogey'.

It is evident from the research that public scandals had a profound effect on foreign relations, political careers and the Anglo-German arms race. This is perhaps epitomised by the *Daily Telegraph* Scandal and the Kaiser. The interview tarnished the Kaiser's reputation and also strained Anglo-German and also relations with Japan.<sup>322</sup> The Kaiser suffered serious bouts of depression and never fully regained the respect of his public. Moreover, Frank Lascelles report outlined the hostility of the German press towards the Kaiser and Chancellor. Furthermore, armaments manufacturer H.H. Mulliner used the press to fill the company's order books. Moreover, Mulliner mis-led the public and Parliament into believing Germany posed a greater threat than it did.

The research highlights the conflicting nature of the press when reporting on the Beresford scandal. Some journalists believed that Beresford acted in the best interests of the Senior Service by bringing his concerns to public attention, others did not. What is notable though, is that the scandal led to the retirement of Admiral Fisher, who had revolutionised the Royal Navy and it is clear that public scandal had a far-reaching effect on foreign policy.

The fear of invasion in Britain reached fever pitch in 1910. Moreover, the threat of spies operating throughout the British Isles caused great concern. However, it is evident that had Commander Dumas' report been published that the issue of the 'invasion bogey' would have subsided. Dumas asserted that Germany could only mount a raiding party and that Imperial Navy did not have the capacity to fulfil a full-scale invasion.<sup>323</sup> The research also indicates that the fear of invasion was not limited to Britain. Fears that Britain may launch a pre-emptive strike on Germany, reminiscent of the Napoleonic Wars, kept German schoolchildren from school and some families fleeing coastal regions. It is evident that Lord Northcliffe and his papers were guilty of stoking tensions by publishing invasion literature. Northcliffe personally commissioned a series of articles depicting the invasion of Britain, playing on the fears of the public.

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<sup>322</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey. 9<sup>th</sup> November 1906. FO 371/80/68 TNA

<sup>323</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1908. CAB 17/61/7

## **Chapter V. Conclusion**

The research conducted throughout this paper has traced the relationship between the press organs of Britain and Germany and foreign policy. The thesis provides an interdisciplinary approach to the Anglo-German arms race incorporating the IR theory of the 'spiral model' and the press. The thesis demonstrates that the polemics of both sides of the North Sea led to misperceptions in certain situations. Of note, was the spy mania which gripped Britain throughout 1909 to 1911. As mentioned, Britain's attempts to provide security and protect its trade routes, essential for the maintenance of its empire, left Germany in a state of

insecurity. Moreover, the navy laws passed in Germany designed to protect its imperial interests and secure its place in the world, left Britain in a state of insecurity. It is evident from a range of sources that the press exacerbated an Anglo-German misperception, which led to the belief in some German circles that the British were actively advocating a policy of German isolation and encirclement.<sup>324</sup> Although there were cases of misperception throughout the Dreadnought Era, it is evident that Germany did pose a naval threat to Britain, however the thesis demonstrates that the threat was exacerbated by the press.

British actions in the Balkan and Moroccan crises came under intense scrutiny in the German press which claimed that the British were seeking to curtail German power in the region. According to British diplomatic correspondence, the hyperbole in the German press caused such a stir that both the British and Russians were forced to explain the Anglo-Russian Convention to their German counterparts and reassure that their motives were not directed against Germany.<sup>325</sup> Schiemann at the *Kreuzzeitung* suggested that British had conjured up rumours of German aggression to justify their actions on the continent.<sup>326</sup> Moreover, numerous 'fringe' papers in Germany produced articles stating that the British were pursuing a policy of einkreisung which filtered through into the mainstream of the German press, influencing public opinion.<sup>327</sup>

The thesis began by outlining the Anglo-German naval arms race which underpinned the Dreadnought Era, providing a brief background of British naval power and the advent of the German challenge. The thesis then viewed the arms race through a press angle and argued that publications in the press exacerbated the situation. The Boer War which straddled the nineteenth and twentieth century is then addressed and demonstrates the Anglophobic nature of the German press throughout the conflict. Moreover, the research also highlights the issue of individualism apropos journalists. In Chapter II, the case study of the Second Boer War demonstrates that journalists held differing views on Germany, tying in with the theories of threat perception. Saunders and Chirol held opposing views on who they perceived to be the greatest threat to Britain.

The thesis utilised a mixture of national, local and regional papers to portray the hostility and polemics of the British press towards Germany. The thesis also addressed Anglophobic polemics in the German press which were included in transcripts in Foreign Office reports.

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<sup>324</sup> Extract from the November 1906 'Speech to the Reichstag'. Prince Bülow. Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey. 19th November 1906. FO 371/80/126

<sup>325</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey. 12th November 1906. FO 371/80/77

<sup>326</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. Annual Report 1908. 7th August 1909. FO 881/9518/4

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* FO 881/9518/3

Although not directly attributable to the outbreak of the First World War, the misperception caused by the press in Britain and Germany caused insecurity in both countries. It is also evident that the press distorted Anglo- German foreign policies and created an atmosphere of misperception. The new wave of journalism and their press barons put Germany and Britain on an unavoidable collision course. As discussed in the thesis, notable characters such as Lord Northcliffe stood to gain financially from war. There is a surfeit of examples of polemics in both countries' newspapers throughout the Dreadnought Era, which in some cases led to misperceptions.

Coupled with political pressure groups, such as the Navy League, the press formed a formidable opponent to peace, able to exert influence over public opinion and foreign policy. With politicians and press barons able to pursue their agendas through the medium of newspapers, it is evident that newspaper proprietors wielded immense power. One of the key examples of press hyperbole is demonstrated by the invasion scares and spy scandals that rocked the public. The polemics concerning spy mania in the British press led to a direct misperception of German naval ambition. The topic of the 1909 invasion scare differs from the concept of spy mania, in that Germany did pose a naval threat to Britain. However, this threat was exacerbated by the British press. The thesis provided numerous accounts of publications in the press accusing Germany of spying and planning to invade the British Isles. The fabricated publications are torn apart by Dumas, German naval attaché, throughout a detailed Foreign Office report on the Imperial Navy. Dumas asserts that aside from potential small-scale raids, it would be impossible for Germany to launch an invasion of Britain.<sup>328</sup> However, his expertise is overshadowed by hyperbole in the press, whipping up public agitation and fear as demonstrated in British articles. The fear created in the articles created a misperception of the German people, who were equally fearful that Admiral Fisher was planning on attacking Germany. Polemics issued in the German press sent panic throughout the city of Kiel that a British attack was imminent. Consequently, school children were kept at home and some families fled the city.

The case study dedicated to the Boer War, which introduces George Saunders, addresses the polemics in the German press towards Britain throughout the conflict. Moreover, Saunders provided a fantastic insight into the German press facilitated in a report. The report outlined the political leanings and circulations of national and regional newspapers in Germany. Moreover, the report contained information on any subventions German newspapers received from the government. The research demonstrates that some elements

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<sup>328</sup> Commander Philip Dumas to Sir Frank Lascelles. 13th February 1908. CAB 17/61/13

of the British press blamed Germany for prolonging the war and the Kaiser's telegram in 1896 as a catalyst.<sup>329</sup>

Numerous political scandals litter the Dreadnought Era. The Mulliner Scandal and Beresford Inquiry provide the starkest examples of how the press were utilised by individuals for the own purposes. The Mulliner Scandal provided a key example of misperception. The thesis outlined the relationship between the journalists and Admiralty figures such as Fisher and Stead. Moreover, the thesis sought to demonstrate the control the German government could exert over the press. As mentioned, one key concern of German officials was misperception caused by the press. According to Foreign Office reports and correspondence, the German government piled pressure on newspapers and journalists alike to curtail the polemics against Britain with wavering effect. There are numerous occasions where this tactic failed, and a strange phenomenon appeared where papers would openly switch between supporting and attacking the government, contradicting themselves entirely, sometimes in the same article. Papers which received government subventions were particularly susceptible to this phenomenon.

Other notable findings include the differing nature of nationalist and liberal papers. Arguably, the disputatious nature of the German press harmed Anglo-German relations and exacerbated rising tensions. One of the key methodological issues the thesis has had to overcome concerns bias. There is no easy fix as the historian can only utilise the resources to hand. The Foreign Office reports have been selected by individuals, as alluded to in the introduction, who may have wished to pursue a certain agenda. Issues of poor translation and motives of those selecting the articles are methodological issues that the historian has to be aware of. It is therefore difficult to firmly ascertain the nature of German press through these reports.

For historians, awareness of the press when researching IR theory is immensely important. The combination of IR theory and press history have provided a unique angle to the historiography of the Anglo-German naval arms race. The thesis has highlighted potential further areas of research including the relationship between the press and foreign policy throughout the First World War. Did the press protract the war? It would also be interesting to assess the spiral model and potential other models within the same methodological approach to the First World War. Despite the duplicitous nature of politicians and the press, Bülow's speech to the Reichstag in 1906 stated that he hoped Britain and Germany would never engage in a war on opposing sides. But despite the best efforts of diplomats and

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<sup>329</sup> Mr Black'. *Forres Elgin and Nairn Gazette, Northern Review and Advertiser*. Moray, Scotland. Wednesday 11 June 1902. p.2

statesman, by August 1914 Britain and Germany were engaged in one of the bloodiest wars in history. Tragically, Bülow stated in 1906 that he 'renewed the hope to which the Emperor gave expression at Kiel in 1904, that the flags of the two nations would never wave in hostility against each other'.<sup>330</sup>

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## *Appendix*

### Principal Characters

**George Saunders** – Saunders served as a journalist with *The Times* in Berlin. Saunders forewarned the British press about the hostile nature of the German tabloids. His presence in Germany was unwelcome by some German officials who believed his articles would cause a misperception.

**Sir Fairfax Cartwright** – served as Ambassador to Austria- Hungary prior to the First World War. Cartwright was a diplomat and author. His correspondence has been used extensively for the purpose of the paper.

**Sir Edward Grey** – Longest serving Foreign Office Secretary from 1905 to 1916. Grey was the main driving force behind British foreign policy throughout the Dreadnought Era to the First World War. The majority of Foreign Office files utilised for the research are addressed to Grey. Grey produced literature on foreign policy and his career.

**Sir Frank Lascelles** – Lascelles served as Ambassador to Russia and Germany for the Foreign Office. Lascelles oversaw the estrangement between Britain and Germany. He had always maintained cordial relations with the Kaiser but detested the policies of Bülow. He resigned from his position in 1908 but still held significant clout over Anglo-German relations.

**Valentine Chirol** – Chirol was described by *The Times* as a prolific journalist and author, Chirol was an ardent nationalist and believed firmly in the British Empire. He foresaw German expansionism and Muslim unrest as the key dangers to the empire.

**Admiral Fisher** – Lord Fisher served as Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Squadron before returning to England as First Sea Lord. His notable reforms of the Royal Navy, including redistribution, the nucleus crew system and scrapping obsolete vessels. His divisive reforms are still providing a historiographical debate to this day. Arthur Marder produced *Fear God and Dread Nought*, a book containing Fisher's private correspondence.

**Winston Churchill** – Known as the famous war time leader of Great Britain, Churchill served as the First Lord of the Admiralty... He was known to take an active role in naval matters unlike his predecessors. Churchill routinely toured ships and spoke to officers about naval tactics. Churchill would oversee the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign in the First World War.

**Bernard Heinrich von Bülow** – Bülow served as Chancellor of the German Empire from 1900 to 1909. Instrumental figure who oversaw German affairs until his resignation in 1909. On numerous occasions Bülow stated that he wished Britain and Germany could live side by side cordially. He maintained good relations with Sir Frank Lascelles throughout the period.

**Friedrich von Holstein** – Succeeded Bismarck in 1890 and spent thirty years shaping German foreign policy as head of the political department. Holstein believed that Germany would never be safe whilst they expanded the Imperial Navy. He therefore believed that an 'understanding' with Britain was key.

**Theobald Bethmann-Hollweg** - Bethmann-Hollweg succeeded Bülow as Chancellor of the German Empire. His tenure ran from 1909 to 1917. His main policy was to achieve a political and naval understanding with Britain, as he viewed the arms race as ruinous.

**Reginald Tower** – Tower was a British diplomat who served from the 1880s to 1920. Tower's reports from Munich on the subject of German newspapers proved vital to the thesis.

**Friedrich Rosen** – Rosen was a German politician and diplomat. His liberal views made him the ideal person to try and reach an 'understanding' with Britain. He served as the Foreign Minister in the Weimar Republic in 1921.

**Alfred von Kinderlen Waechter** – Waechter served as head of the German foreign office from 1910 to 1912. He oversaw the Agadir Crisis and was known to act recklessly. Throughout the crisis his sabre-rattling caused agitation in the nationalist press.

**Sir William Goschen** – Goschen was a British diplomat who served as Ambassador to Germany from 1908 to 1914, succeeding Frank Lascelles. Goschen previously served as Ambassador to Vienna and Copenhagen.

**Captain Philip Dumas (RN)** – Dumas provides a fantastic insight into the German Navy through a series of reports derived from his time spent as naval attaché to Germany. Dumas was an influential character who advised the government on the naval situation inside Germany.

**Captain Percy Scott (RN)** – Percy Scott was a Royal Navy officer who was committed to improving gunnery practice and aim correction. He pioneered new tactics and heavily influenced Admiral Fisher's view on gunnery practice. Scott published a letter in the press, criticising the lack of support he received from the Admiralty.

**H. H. Mulliner** – Mulliner was the proprietor of an armaments company, under Northcliffe's discretion, Mulliner produced a series of publications aimed at scaring the British public in to believing Germany posed an invasion threat. The public pressurised the government into increasing defence expenditure and the number of ships in the fleet, which Mulliner was all too happy to supply.

**Count Aehrenthal** – Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister who infamously duped his Russian counterpart Izvolsky apropos the First Balkan Crisis.

**Cecil Spring-Rice** – British diplomat who served as Ambassador to the United States from 1912 to 1918. He oversaw the end of American neutrality in the First World War. Spring-Rice married the daughter of Frank Lascelles, Florence Caroline Lascelles. He also oversaw the British response to the 1905 Russian Revolution and crafted the early stages of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention.

**Reginald McKenna** – Liberal politician who served as First Lord of the Admiralty. He also served as Chancellor of the Exchequer. McKenna was instrumental in avoiding cuts to the defence budget. He became a target of the liberal left who were not in favour of

**William Palmer, Lord Selbourne** – Selbourne was a British politician and colonial administrator. In November 1900, he served as First Lord of the Admiralty. He also served under Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary.

**Edward Marjoribanks, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Lord Tweedmouth** – Served as a British politician as a moderate liberal. Tweedmouth, also served as First Sea Lord of the Admiralty from 1905 to 1908. Tweedmouth found himself at the centre of a political storm when it transpired, he was discussing the British naval programme with the Kaiser.

**Frederick Campbell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Lord Cawdor** – Cawdor preceded Tweedmouth as First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, serving in 1905, his tenure was cut short due to the Conservative government losing power in December 1905.

**Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein** – Bieberstein was a German politician. He served as the State Secretary of the German Empire. A fierce nationalist who supported a strong German Navy, he led the delegation at the Second Hague Conference in 1907.

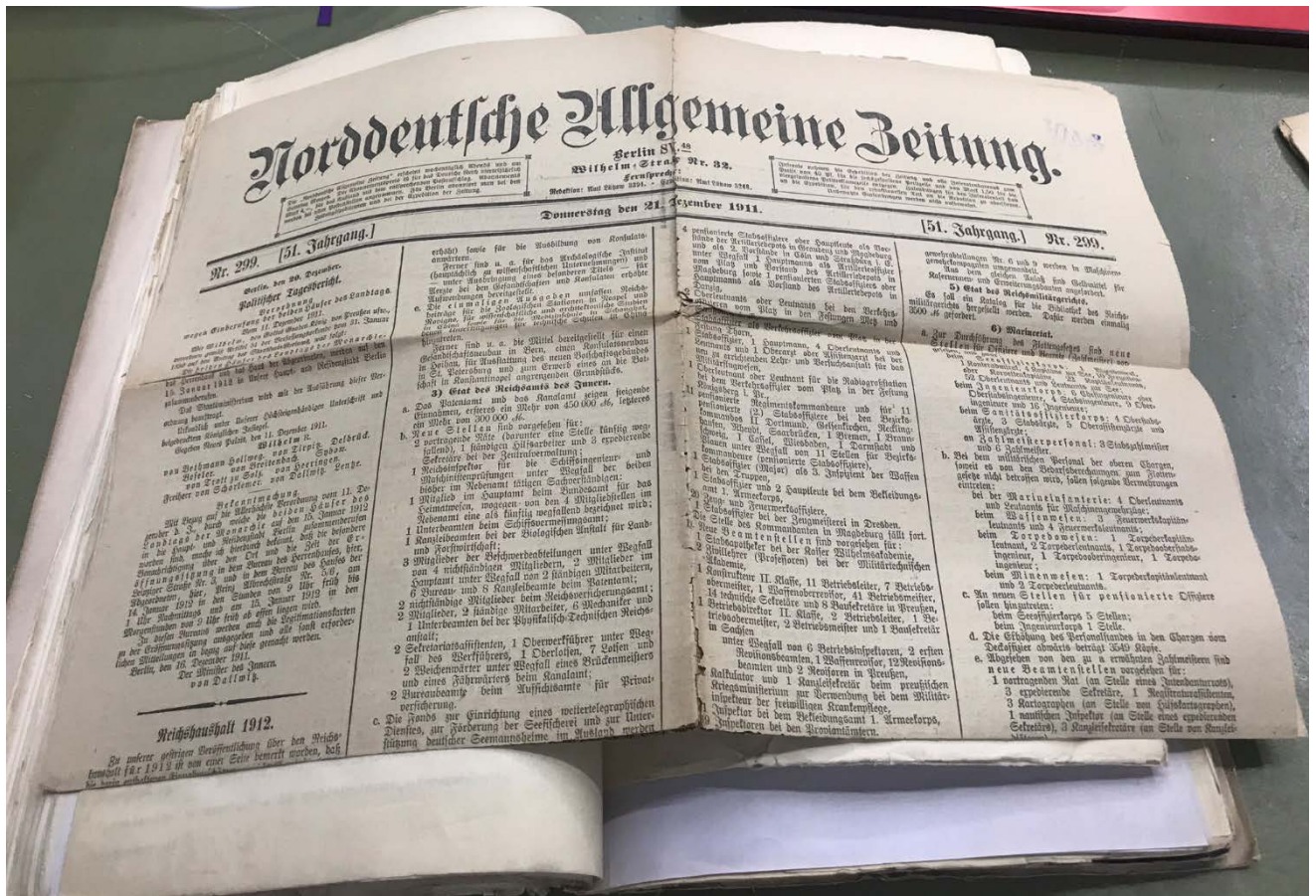
**Herr August Stein** – Stein was a journalist at the *Frankfurt Gazette*, the second largest newspaper outside of Berlin. Stein was a close confidant of Bernhard Heinrich von Bülow.

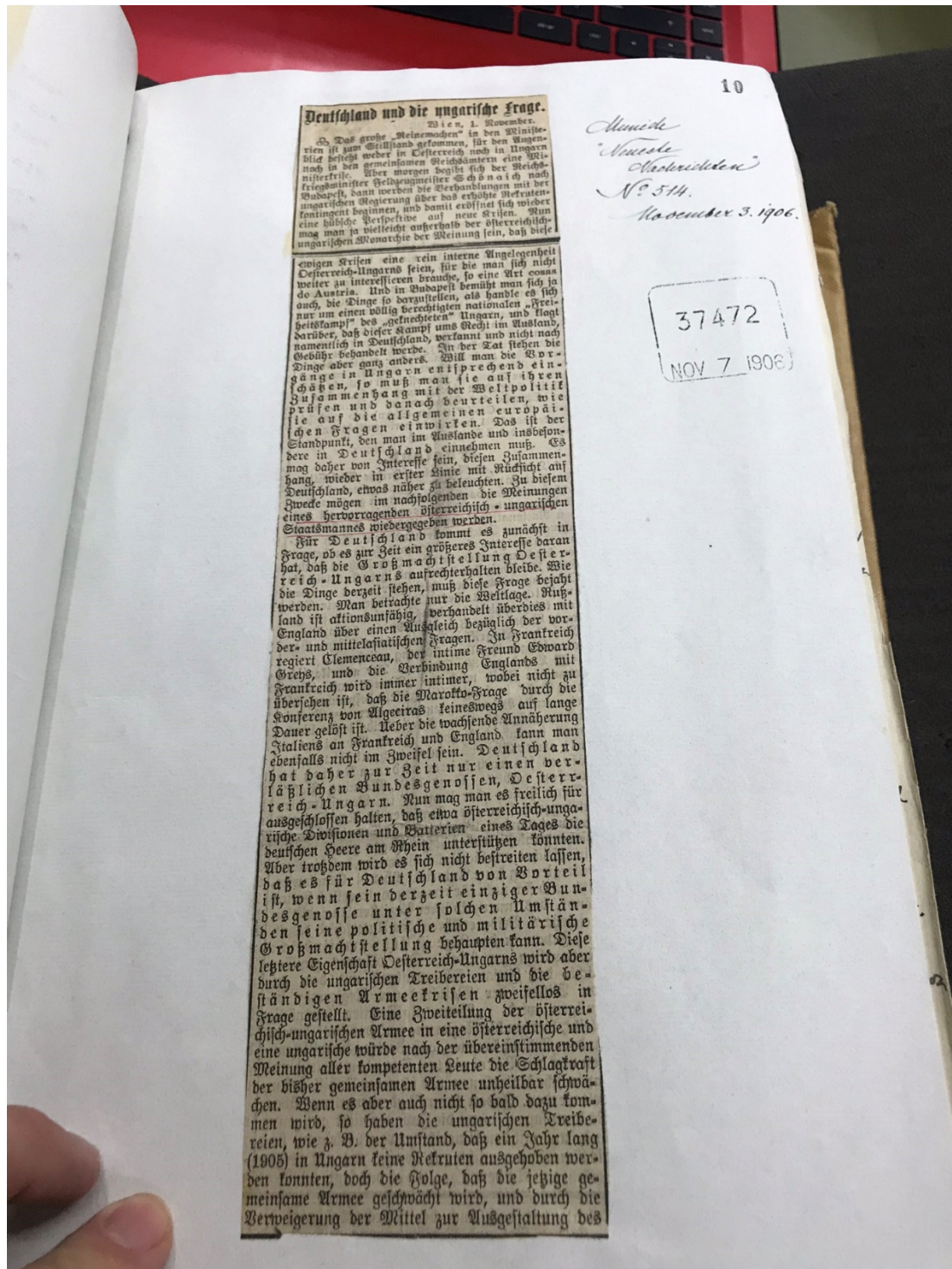
**John Francis Charles, 7<sup>th</sup> Count de Salis-Soglio** – John Francis Charles served as a British diplomat in a long and distinguished career.

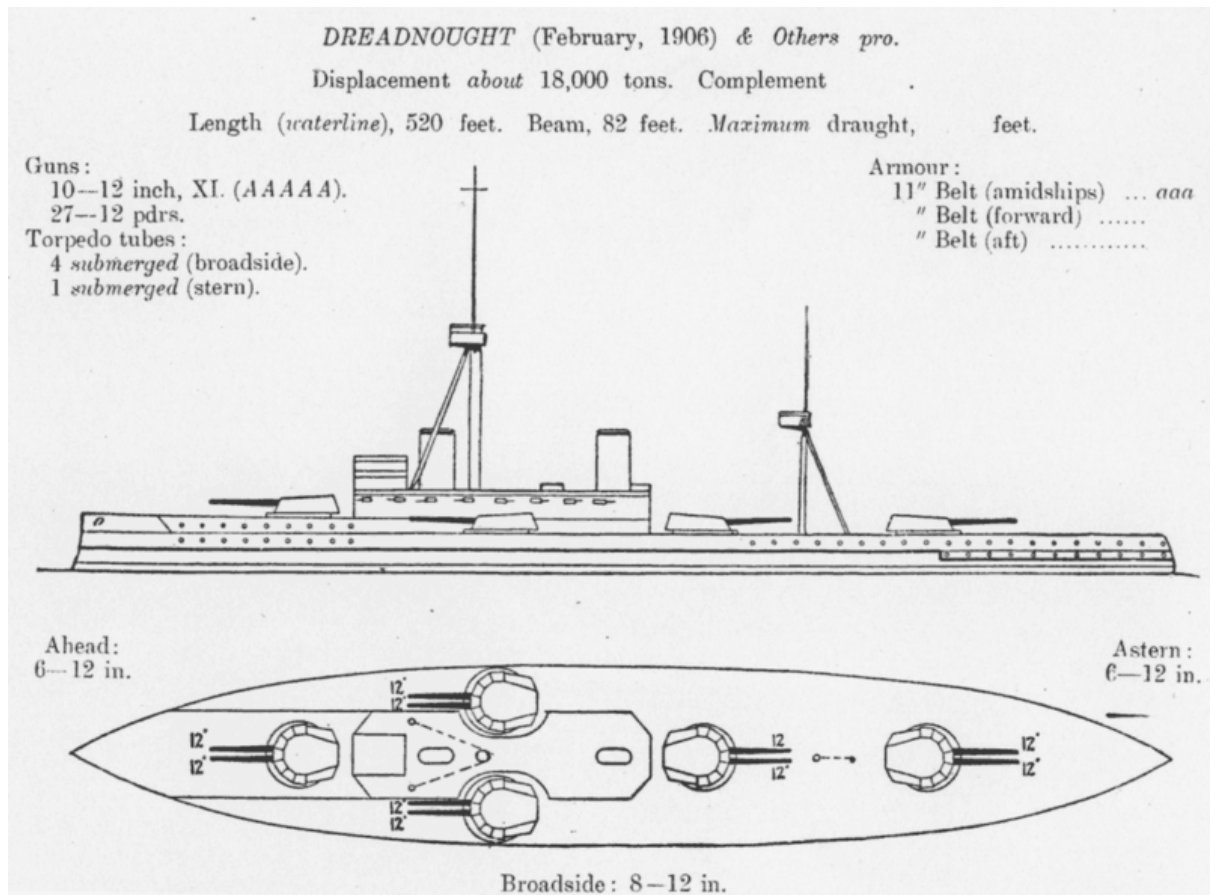


**Lord Charles Hardinge** – Hardinge served as Ambassador to Russia from 1904 to 1906. Upon his return to Britain, he received a promotion and served as the Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office. Hardinge refused a post to become Ambassador to United States and instead oversaw the transition of the Indian capital from Calcutta to Delhi in which an attempt on his life was made by Indian nationalists.

Appendix 2.

Title Page of the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December 1911

Copy of Foreign Office Extract of the *Neueste Nachrichten*

Appendix 4.<sup>331</sup>

<sup>331</sup> HMS *Dreadnought*. Jane's Fighting Ships 1906. "IHS Acquires Jane's Information Group". IHS Online Newsroom. 12 June 2007.



## Research Ethics Checklist

About Your Checklist	
Reference Id	22740
Date Created	16/10/2018 14:13:34
Status	Reviewed

Researcher Details	
Name	Joshua Rieser
Faculty	Faculty of Media & Communication
Status	Postgraduate Research (MRes, MPhil, PhD, DProf, EngD, EdD)
Course	Postgraduate Research - Media
Have you received external funding to support this research project?	No

Project Details	
Title	The Role of Media in the Anglo - German Antagonism 1900-1914
Start Date of Project	17/09/2018
End Date of Project	15/07/2019
Proposed Start Date of Data Collection	21/10/2018
Original Supervisor	Scott Keefer
Summary - no more than 500 words (including detail on background methodology, sample, outcomes, etc.)	
I will be researching the role of the media throughout the naval arms race between Germany and Great Britain and its impact on diplomacy. I will also be researching the reforms of Admiral Fisher in 1904/1905 and discussing its influence over British Policy making throughout the era. There is a rich historiography concerning Fisher's reforms and this research aims to provide another chapter.	

### Literature Review

Additional Details	
Will you have access to personal data that allows you to identify individuals which is not already in the public domain?	No
Will you have access to confidential corporate or company data (that is not covered by confidentiality terms within an agreement or separate confidentiality agreement)?	No

Storage, Access and Disposal of Personal Data	
Will any data be stored on the BU's Data Repository "BORDaR"?	No