

How Big a Navy?

A Debate

I—Keep the Navy for Defense!

by ERNEST LUNDEEN

United States Senator from Minnesota

I BELIEVE in an America strong enough to defend herself against any foe; I believe in a navy strong enough to make not only the United States but the Western Hemisphere forbidden ground for any invader. But I do not want to build a supernavy, for gallivanting in Europe and Asia.

I have supported every regular army and navy appropriation. This year our regular annual appropriations for the navy have been increased by one hundred million dollars. We have also largely increased our expenditures for the army, coast defenses, and aircraft. With such increases I have no quarrel. But to go beyond these appropriations is out of all reason, if defense is our objective.

I see no common sense in the proposed appropriations for a supernavy. The expense, according to present estimates, will run into one billion, one hundred twenty million dollars. As a matter of fact, high naval authorities admit that, owing to changed conditions and unforeseen events, the cost will reach the staggering total of two billion dollars. That is bad enough, but it is not all. Two billion dollars is only a beginning.

Once we launch a navy — not to protect America but to police the world, not to protect our form of government but to dictate forms of government to other nations — only the sky will be the limit of our expenditures. The American taxpayer, crushed to earth by unbearable tax burdens, will find himself staggering under a load such as the world has not seen before. For astronomical budgets demand astronomical taxes!

A supernavy, built in excess of common-sense requirements for defense, would denote the

definite entry of the United States into an international armament race. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that our armament program is intended to parallel or, rather, to complement, England's. Whether there is a written agreement with Great Britain or not matters little. We certainly act as if definite, fixed understandings of co-operation and joint action existed — understandings made without a mandate from the American people and without the knowledge and consent of the United States Senate.

America has a fixed foreign policy that runs like a golden thread down through the years, unbroken until the Wilson administration. It is interwoven with our destiny as a nation and it has been confirmed by every great president, irrespective of party. It was the policy of Washington and Jefferson, of Jackson and Lincoln. This fixed foreign policy, from which we can depart only with consequences disastrous to ourselves, is that of "friendship with all nations, trade with all nations, and entangling alliances with none." It obviously implies abstention from the quarrels of other nations which do not vitally and immediately affect the United States.

Once we build a supernavy, foreign powers will attempt by hook and crook to drag us into their alliances and "gentleman's" agreements. If we had a supernavy to place at the disposal of our ex-allies today, the chance for a New Deal among nations, a rational readjustment between the "haves" and the "have nots," would be slim indeed. War, likely to come in any case, would be inevitable. But, if the American people clearly demonstrate their determination to keep hands off, if we build a navy

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equipped primarily for defense, the war enthusiasm of those European powers who desire to safeguard their loot at our expense under the mask of collective security would cool off considerably.

Those now in charge of the British Empire take a more realistic view of world-wide events than those who advocate a "quarantine" of so-called aggressor nations. English ships, it is true, are found on every sea, but England has vital interests to protect in every quarter of the globe. We are in a different position. Nevertheless, our gunboats are patrolling Chinese rivers. Our navy frequents the war zone of Japan. Our wandering warships meddle and muddle everywhere. If they intrude themselves into lines of fire often enough, there may be another *Panay* "incident," with heavy loss of life to shock the American public. A stray torpedo may strike one of our ships; and who can trace the origin of the missile fired perhaps deliberately to embroil us in distant wars?

II

I AM BY NO MEANS a "Little American." If I were to demark our territorial waters, I should draw a line through the Bering Sea, the Hawaiian Islands, the Panama Canal, the Virgin Islands, and the north coast of Maine. Beyond that I recognize the duty imposed on us by the Monroe Doctrine. This doctrine excludes any foreign power from colonizing and maintaining by force any settlement or conquest in North or South America.

From time to time we have found it expedient to expel foreign powers from the Western Hemisphere. Spain was the last European power compelled by us to withdraw. It is not inconceivable that the tendency to disentangle the Western Hemisphere from the fortunes of Europe may go further. It may in time affect other powers. But we have no interest beyond this hemisphere. Our field is large enough to engage all our efforts and absorb all our energy. For that reason I notice with grave apprehension the propaganda that sweeps our country to divert us from home.

What right have we to lecture the rulers of other nations and to tell them how to govern themselves, when we do not seem able to take care of our own affairs? A recent investigation of unemployment, made under my direction, forced me to accept the terrifying conclusion

that unemployment in the United States exceeds by several millions the total unemployment of all other countries in the civilized world put together. Among our thirteen million unemployed, there are five million youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five who are out of school and out of work. It is more important for us to find work for these youngsters at home than to deliver sermons, oozing with righteousness, abroad.

There are some who know no better counsel than to make all these boys shoulder rifles. They see in a war a way out of the depression. I beg to differ. It is our business to enable these youngsters to earn their food instead of turning them into cannon fodder! It is our business to find work for all our unemployed and to devise ways and means for an adequate social-security program. These are problems that clamor for drastic action. They are more important than the moral satisfaction which some of us may derive from weeping on the shoulders of John Bull every time something goes wrong for him in Europe or Asia. These problems cannot be solved by sending our men to slaughter on far-off battle fields.

Yet death on far-off battle fields and far-off oceans is the destiny to which our young men are consigned by those who secretly promise Great Britain American aid to perpetuate her rule. Wilson urged us to make the world safe for "democracy." The champions of "collective security" want to make the world safe for "the democracies." There is no difference between the two catchwords except that one is singular and one plural. Both are equally menacing to democracy in the United States.

A wise man does not walk into the same trap twice; yet our world savers propose to repeat, step by step, the errors that led us into the World War. Let us curb our tongues and recall our wandering ambassadors-at-large before it is too late, before America is committed too deeply. Let us inoculate the internationalists with American patriotism. Let us make it perfectly clear that we want no *ism* except Americanism. Americanism means social security at home and neutrality abroad. It means the protection of American interests but no foreign adventure. It means a strong navy but no supernavy. It would be suicidal for Uncle Sam to give the collective-security boys a supernavy to play with!

II—An Inadequate Navy Is Worse Than None

by MILLARD E. TYDINGS

United States Senator from Maryland

I AM IN FAVOR of a navy strong enough for any conceivable emergency. An inadequate navy is worse than no navy at all. An inadequately armed country has the illusion of being protected, without being able to enforce respect for its rights in a crisis.

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered the World War.

With the seriousness of that step, the country naturally wondered whether it was prepared on land and sea to give the men who would do the actual fighting the weapons and support they required to achieve success.

We were not prepared.

I was a soldier in that war. My machine-gun company trained for a while with blocks of wood representing machine guns. When we reached France, machine guns were furnished us by the English. There, for the first time, we learned how to take them apart and put them together again, how to operate them under varying conditions day and night, and how to train them from maps to fire on areas which could not be seen.

Likewise, much of our artillery was supplied us by the French. So were trucks and airplanes to a great extent. In other words, we had the men, eventually, but we did not have the arms and equipment. These we obtained from foreign governments, and many of our soldiers became acquainted with them for the first time abroad. The result was that some men went into action not as well equipped to defend themselves as they might have been had we been prepared for that great struggle.

The lessons of that war left a deep impress on us all — those who went and those who stayed behind. The loss of life, the tremendous expenditure of treasure by our country created burdens of government many of which are with us today. As a result, there will be in the future, in my opinion, a very understandable reluctance to send our troops again to fight on foreign soil. I share this reluctance and trust that never again shall we be drawn into a conflict beyond our borders.

We do not maintain a large standing army.

Russia, Italy, France, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, China, Spain, and many other nations maintain larger standing armies than does the United States. While we need a good highly trained, perfectly equipped regular army, supplemented by the national guard and organized reserves, it is not necessary, in order to protect our shores, for us to match the tremendous military establishments of Europe and Asia. But, if we are not to have an army comparable in size and power with those of other nations, we must have an adequate navy which in case of attack can defeat the enemy or, at any rate, successfully hold him off until our army can be expanded to meet our defense needs.

If we do not have such a navy along with our comparatively small though effective army, we should be in a poor position to defend ourselves if one or more enemy nations should attack us.

This country has a coast line perhaps ten thousand miles in length. The Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean all bring our nation down to the sea. At present our navy, taken by itself, is about the size of Great Britain's and by the commonplace yardsticks, perhaps twenty per cent larger than Japan's.

Undoubtedly our navy could give a good account of itself against an equal, such as Great Britain, particularly if the conflict were on this side of the Atlantic. But, if another World War were to come and we were attacked or drawn into it, as we might well be, by a combination of several countries having strong navies, our security would be diminished.

We must keep in mind that this country of ours is about three thousand miles wide and that there are only two ways of getting from one coast to another by water — through the Panama Canal or around Cape Horn. In time of war, it is necessary for us to defend both east and west coasts, to say nothing of Alaska, Hawaii, and other possessions. Were the Panama Canal to be destroyed, there would be no means of getting our navy (or parts of it) from one ocean to the other, except around Cape Horn. In determining the optimum size of our