

IS THE UNITED STATES PREPARED FOR WAR?

HAVE WE THE SHIPS, THE FORTS, THE GUNS, THE POWDER, AND
THE TRAINED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS THAT MUST BE READY
FOR OUR DEFENSE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY?

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FROM the days of George Washington to the present time we have had the advantage of good advice, from men well able to give it, on the subject of preparedness for war. Probably no one has ever put the matter so well as Admiral George Dewey, who phrases it thus:

"In times of peace prepare to maintain it."

To maintain peace means that we must be so well prepared for war that we can compel others to keep the peace, not only with us, but, if we take a broad view of our duties as a world power, with all other nations. How near we may be to fulfilling the requirements of this ideal position we can determine only after a careful review of our offensive as well as defensive preparations.

It seems plain that financial ability to stand the strain is the first great requisite for any nation that proposes either to fight a great and successful war, or to prevent another nation from doing the same thing. That we have this ability no one can doubt.

The next great requisite for the preserver of peace is possession of the implements necessary to persuade those disposed to make war that it cannot and must not be done—in other words, ships, forts, guns, military supplies, and, above all, a body of trained men ready at a moment's notice to prevent war, or, if need be, to defeat those who insist on having it. The nation possessing all these things will control the sea, and will thus insure her own peace beyond question, even if she does not care to play peacemaker for the rest of the world.

Let us look carefully at our state of pre-

paredness in these respects, and declare the results of our inquiry. In obedience to the naval regulations on the subject, which the writer wishes to respect and obey in every particular, he will give only such facts as have been made public in Congressional debates or in printed documents, and are therefore known to all governments.

HAVE WE SHIPS ENOUGH?

First, then, as to ships. The people of the United States are justly proud of their navy, and of what it has done, but if they are under the impression that we have a sufficient force to play peacemaker for the world, or to have any weight in such a rôle, without the assistance of some first-class naval power, they are sadly mistaken.

Even for the protection of our own coast, the force we have is inadequate. The battle-ships that we have built and designed compare most favorably, ship for ship, with those built or designed by any other nation; but can thirty battle-ships, even if we had all the necessary auxiliaries in the way of colliers, cruisers, torpedo-boats, submarines, and other necessary vessels—which we have not—be considered sufficient for the defense of our great extent of coast-line? The answer must certainly be in the negative; and it is plain that, at our present rate of building ships, this condition will not change, because the leading nations are building more rapidly than we.

The efficiency of our battle-ships is, beyond question, of the highest order. Let us examine certain details for a moment, and

see how long this condition would continue in case of a serious war.

HAVE WE GUNS ENOUGH?

The smokeless powder used in our naval guns is generally admitted to be equal, if not superior, to that manufactured by any other nation; and yet its action on the bore of the gun is such that professional opinion limits the life of our heavy guns to about one hundred rounds. This applies to the guns of all other navies as well. The damage to the gun is due to the erosive effect of the gases produced by the explosion of the charge. It is generally admitted that the erosive effect of the powder we use is less than that of the powder used by some other nations, and yet our experience has been that before reaching one hundred rounds the fire from our guns becomes inaccurate, because the projectiles will no longer take a true flight on account of the deformed condition of the bore.

It would, therefore, seem the part of wisdom to have a reserve supply of guns, so that we could in a few hours regun our ships. If it be found that we have no such supply, the question of continued efficiency in time of war seems to be answered. The opinion of the ordnance officials on this subject would give a severe shock to our confiding people.

It cannot be positively stated why the Japanese fleet did not destroy the Russian ships after the battle of August 10, 1904, off Port Arthur—the Japanese do not publish such things; but it is believed, in professional circles, that it was because of the damage to a large number of the twelve-inch guns of the Japanese ships. Admiral Togo, it is presumed, immediately regunned his vessels, and was again ready for action. He was fortunate in having the guns for the purpose, otherwise the battle of the Sea of Japan, in the following May, might have told a different story.

The question of our continued efficiency in the matter of guns must, therefore, be answered in the negative. Up to the present time all efforts to change this condition for a better one have failed, because the necessary money, though often asked for, has not been provided.

HAVE WE POWDER ENOUGH?

No matter how many or how good our ships may be, and no matter how many guns of the best quality they may carry, our fleet will be useless for war purposes, or as peace-makers, unless it has a bountiful supply of powder of the most reliable kind. Have we

this absolutely necessary supply? A little figuring will, I think, surprise the average reader, and give a rude shock to our dream of security.

Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that a battle-ship carrying twelve fourteen-inch guns finds it necessary to engage an enemy on the open sea. How much powder would she use in an hour? Without giving any details, but supposing her to use her guns to their limit, the answer is 500,000 pounds. Four such ships, or a division, would in the same time use 2,000,000 pounds, and a fleet of sixteen such ships would fire away, in the same length of time, 8,000,000 pounds.

These figures are undoubtedly startling, and the critic may say we have no such guns in service—which is true; but we hope to have them in the future. Let us, however, to be on the safe side, take the guns we have and the fleet that would be called on tomorrow, in case it became necessary, and see how the sum would work out for them.

The present Atlantic fleet would fire, from the twelve-inch guns alone, 2,500,000 pounds of powder in one hour, if the guns were fired twice each minute. The eight-inch guns, in the same length of time, would fire 1,505,000 pounds, and the seven-inch 1,336,000 pounds. This is supposing that all these guns would fire but two shots each minute; and as a matter of fact they would probably fire from two to three times as many.

It is evident, then, that the Atlantic fleet, in an engagement lasting one hour, and without using any except its heaviest guns, might use 5,360,000 pounds of powder. This is the expenditure for sixteen battle-ships only; no account is taken of the other battle-ships that would be in commission in time of threatened trouble, or of the many cruisers and torpedo-boats. If to this amount we add the powder that will be burned by the six-inch, five-inch, and three-inch guns, we find that the fleet, as at present constituted, would fire in one hour 6,243,000 pounds of powder.

HOW MUCH POWDER DOES THE NAVY NEED?

We must certainly have enough powder on hand to allow the fleet to fight for three hours, and this would amount to 18,729,000 pounds. If we allow an equal amount for the fleet in reserve, and for all other purposes, we find that we should require for use in a sudden emergency 37,458,000 pounds of smokeless powder.

To further illustrate this important subject, let us assume that the active fleet will be composed of sixteen battle-ships—one

division of four dreadnoughts, each carrying twelve twelve-inch guns; one division of four such ships, carrying ten twelve-inch guns; and two divisions of four ships each of the present Atlantic fleet. The fleet thus constituted would fire in one hour 7,038,600 pounds of powder, and in three hours, 21,115,800 pounds. If we allow the same amount of powder for the reserve fleet, and for all other purposes, we find that the government should have ready for use in a sudden emergency 42,231,600 pounds of the best grade of smokeless powder.

How long would it take all the powder factories in the United States to supply this demand, even if they worked day and night?

The critics will probably say that the second fleet, and the torpedo-boats, will not be engaged. We may admit this; but at the same time they must have the powder, even if they don't use it. They must be prepared to do so. In other words, unless we have at least 42,231,600 pounds of smokeless powder ready for use in an emergency, our navy cannot claim efficiency in this all-important respect. Indeed, it is the most important matter we have to consider—it is the keystone of the arch.

The objection will at once be made that if this amount of powder were fired out of our guns in the time specified—three hours—all the guns would be rendered useless. If this be granted, it only strengthens the argument in favor of a proper supply of reserve guns; for if the fleet cannot use its guns to their maximum capacity for three hours without spoiling them, our ships must be regunned immediately, and made ready for action at the earliest possible moment.

Fortunately for us, any enemy whom we may encounter will be no better off than we in the matter of the lasting quality of his guns. The fleet that can deliver the most hits during the first half-hour of an engagement will win the battle. Under the present wise practise of the Navy Department in the matter of target-practise, the hitting ability of our gun-pointers may be relied upon. Therefore, to meet the possible objections of those who hold that a fleet could not fire to the maximum capacity of its heavy guns for three hours, let us cut the period down to one hour, and see how much smokeless powder we should have on hand in that case. As I have already said, we find the amount to be 7,038,600 pounds.

How much we actually have on hand, and how long it would take to secure the amount necessary to make up the deficiency, if there

is one, are questions which for obvious reasons I cannot answer. It is safe, however, to say that the facts, if published, would startle the people of the United States.

HAVE WE POWDER FOR THE ARMY?

So far we have considered only powder for the navy. How much would be required for the army can be better estimated by some officer of that branch of the service; but taking account of the great number of guns mounted, including field-batteries, and assuming that at least two hundred and fifty thousand men would be ready for service outside the artillery branch, it seems probable that we should need at least as much for the army as for the navy. If the money appropriated by Congress for the purchase of powder be considered, and the price taken as sixty cents per pound, it will at once be apparent that we are very far short of what we should have.

If smokeless powder could be as quickly or as generally manufactured as was the black powder of former days, the situation would not be so hopeless; but it is well known to all professional men, our possible enemies included, that such is not the case.

Five powder factories are at present our visible sources of supply, and even if they were worked to their utmost capacity it would take them many years to supply the demand. Long before our magazines could be filled, the war would probably be over, and the bill for unpreparedness would have to be settled. What the amount of such a bill would be would depend entirely upon the pleasure of the party making the demand, but we may safely assume that it would be much more than the price of forty million pounds of smokeless powder. If the people generally understood the situation, there would be a demand for powder, more powder, and yet more powder.

OUR FORTS AND ARTILLERY

Now as to the other elements of preparedness. It seems to be the impression among the able officers who have charge of such matters that our coast is fairly well supplied with fortifications. That forts are necessary for the defense of important points goes without saying, but they can only be relied upon to defend the area within range of their guns. In other words, they are notices to an enemy to land outside that area; and this is what he will do unless we have field artillery in sufficient numbers to prevent it.

It is estimated that we could put into

service, at short notice, one hundred and fifty modern, up-to-date field-guns—which seems a small number when we recall the fact that the Japanese army used eleven hundred in one battle. If we had any such number, and tried to use them, where could we get the powder to make them effective? The question of continued efficiency for our coast fortifications and field-artillery must be answered in the negative, unless we can in some way provide them with the absolutely necessary amount of powder.

Our state of preparedness, or rather our state of unpreparedness, was clearly shown when the Spanish war was forced upon us. Officers were hurried abroad to purchase ships, guns, and supplies of all kinds. Merchant vessels, yachts, and tugs were purchased at home, and sent to the fleet to act as cruisers and guard-boats—duties for which they were, at best, but badly suited. Would not the same thing happen now if an emergency came?

When war had been actually declared, one of our strongest forts on the coast, with its outlying batteries, had on hand no more than three rounds of ammunition per gun. If a Spanish fleet had appeared, the guns would have fired away all the ammunition in less than five minutes. That such a condition may never exist again the country has a right to demand; and the demand can be obeyed only by supplying more shot and more shells and more powder. The records of the War Department might show that the fort referred to was not only the only one that has found itself in such deplorable condition as regards ammunition supply.

HAVE WE TRAINED MEN ENOUGH?

Next, as to the body of trained men to meet an emergency. For the navy we should at once require at least forty thousand men; and the question naturally arises, where would we get them? We have no national naval reserve to draw from, despite the fact that each year, for many years in succession, the Secretary of the Navy has asked Congress to authorize the organization of one.

Some officers think that the men who have passed through the fleet, and have been honorably discharged after their first enlistment, would flock back to the colors in case of trouble, and thus help to man our battle-ships. Past experience does not warrant them in this belief, neither does a common-sense view of the case. Most of the men who have left the service did so to better themselves, and a great majority of them are

married and engaged in some sort of business. Before they could reenlist they would have to make the necessary business arrangements, and settle their families somewhere. Then, undoubtedly, they would come to us in considerable numbers; but, having lost touch with the service and with its rapidly changing conditions, they would require a considerable period of instruction before their services could be of real value.

In an emergency, the importance of having men ready for immediate service cannot be overestimated, and it must be evident that they cannot be secured in sufficient numbers by reenlisting those who have left the service. There remains but one other source from which they can be drawn—the Naval Militia. Unless that organization can furnish them, we must resort to the enlistment of raw recruits—which can, at best, give us only the crude material out of which to make efficient fighting men.

The Naval Militia of the United States is an excellent organization, despite the small encouragement it has received from the national government and the several States. In case of emergency, this organization could give us eight or ten thousand fairly well drilled men, who would be far better, in all respects, than those we could hope to get by voluntary enlistment; but we should still be at least thirty thousand short of the required number.

We must therefore admit that, while the quality of the men in our fleet is all that we could ask, their number is small; and because we have no reserve supply to draw from, we cannot claim “preparedness” in the matter of trained men ready for an emergency. Even those that we have would wear out, like our guns, or be expended, like our powder, with no visible supply to draw from. In this case it is trained men we demand, and if they are supplied it only makes clear the necessity for guns and powder.

When the late lamented President McKinley directed that an army of one hundred thousand men be prepared for a campaign in Cuba, it was pointed out to him that there were not in the entire country enough small-arms cartridges to provide such an army with three rounds per man. We are assured that the case is not the same to-day; but suppose the demand were made for two hundred thousand men, in addition to the regular army, what would the answer necessarily be? Could we supply such a force with even ten rounds per man? And if we could do so, would not common prudence dictate that the

supply should be at least one hundred times greater?

If we admit that our volunteer soldiers are all that trained soldiers should be for active service, we are forced to the conclusion that they are very seriously handicapped by reason of shortage of ammunition, and, therefore, are not ready to defend the country in case of emergency.

Small-arms cartridges are as important for the infantry branch of the army as twelve-inch ammunition is for the navy. If the necessary amount of powder is on hand, the cartridges can be rapidly manufactured; but it must be always kept in mind that the time needed for making powder is greater than that for the rest of the cartridge. It seems imperative, therefore, that a full supply of powder should always be available. That such is not the case at the present time, however, is well known to all those who are interested in the subject.

It may not be out of place to state just what is the prospect of obtaining the necessary powder in an emergency. Five mills, each producing two hundred thousand pounds of powder per month, would give us one million pounds per month. It has been shown that we should have on hand at least forty-two million pounds. Let us assume that we have ten million pounds in store. Let us also assume that the five mills can double their output—in other words, that we require thirty-two million pounds, and that the mills can, at best, furnish two million pounds per month. How soon would our requirements be met?

It is as dangerous, in case of war, to overestimate your own resources as to underrate those of your enemy.

The situation is a grave one, involving vital interests for the country. The solution of the question rests in the hands of those who represent the people.

THE SONG OF THE GUNS

Do you know the glad song of the guns,
As they move to their marching refrain—
The creaking and straining of leather,
The *clink, clink, clink* of the chain?—

The roll of wheels in the roadway,
The stamping of teams in the dust,
The call of the bugle to drivers,
As we follow the leader we trust?

Do you know the wild song of the guns,
Crashing madly o'er furrow and brush,
Whirling through corn-field and stubble,
Coming up into line with a rush?—

The rattle as guns are unlimbered,
The patter of hurrying feet,
The clang of the closing breech-block,
The thunder of dancing hoof-beat?

Do you know the fierce song of the guns,
With each cannoneer at his post,
As Number One jerks the taut lanyard,
And the smoke fades away like a ghost?

Then the guns sing their grandest saga—
The steady, stern time-beat of war,
While the shells shriek their wildest chorus,
And burst, like an echo, afar!

R B. Clayton

DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES

BY WILLIS J. ABBOT,

MANAGER OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL PRESS BUREAU IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS
OF 1900 AND 1908

"AND so we say to you, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!"

Since the last words of that speech were spoken in 1896—a speech which subdued a hostile audience to his will—William Jennings Bryan has held the fortunes of the Democratic party in his hand.

To-day, for the first time since 1896, the Democratic party is approaching a national campaign in which the power of no one man will be all-controlling for either success or failure. In 1912 the national convention of that party will probably harken to arguments in behalf of at least half a score of possible nominees.

Beyond question the next national convention of the Democratic party will be asked to pass upon the Presidential availability of the following men—all, save one, widely known among Democratic politicians:

Judson Harmon, Governor of Ohio.

Thomas R. Marshall, Governor of Indiana.

Joseph W. Folk, former Governor of Missouri.

David R. Francis, former Governor of Missouri.

Champ Clark, minority leader of the House of Representatives.

Dr. Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton University.

William J. Gaynor, mayor of New York.

Don't think that I have made any effort to arrange these statesmen in the order of their probable preferment. There is quite time, during the coming two years, for the last to become first, or the first to become last, and even for some in the middle of the ladder to climb to its topmost round. Nor is it certain that there may not be hidden

in the political paddock some dark horse ready for the race, though I cannot guess his name or his colors.

One would hardly consider either Mr. Bryan or Mr. Hearst a dark horse. These gentlemen are more inclined to be bright and early in the field. To change my metaphor, neither one would think of hunting the nomination without a brass band, and a full retinue of shouters. As yet, no such political parade has put in its appearance, nor is the clash of brass to be heard, even faintly in the distance.

Personally, I am thoroughly convinced that Mr. Bryan will not be a candidate, though in accordance with his almost immemorial custom he refuses to state that fact explicitly. Neither do I believe that, if a candidate, he could secure the nomination, or that his influence will be all-dominant in the convention.

In 1904, Mr. Bryan was neither an open nor a receptive candidate. He frittered away much of his influence in the convention of that year by giving his support to ex-Senator Cockrell, of Missouri, whose nomination was recognized as impossible by the convention, by Mr. Bryan's friends, by Mr. Bryan himself, and, most of all, by the complimented Cockrell. There is reason to believe that the Bryan tactics in the next national convention will be much of the same sort.

JUDSON HARMON, OF OHIO

Within three weeks after the publication of this article the Presidential candidacy which seems most promising to-day will have received its decisive impetus or its crushing blow. The reelection of Judson Harmon to the Governorship of Ohio would, as political conditions are to-day, be almost equivalent to his nomination for the Presidency. The