

SEA POWER AND DISARMAMENT

BY CAPTAIN A. W. HINDS, U. S. N.

WHEN the Five Principal Powers gather at the Conference for Limitation of Armament, at the invitation of President Harding, there will open the most important gathering of the kind that has taken place in the history of the world. The significance of the Conference is due mainly to the fact that there is good prospect that it may bear fruit in preventing war, at least during one or more generations.

Hope that these great Powers may be able to reach an amicable arrangement, and reduce the expense of armament, is nourished by a condition which has never existed before when measures for prevention of war have been brought forward. This condition is that the world is deathly sick of war, and the people of every land are tired beyond measure of paying huge taxes for the costly armies and navies they support to-day.

To illustrate the enormous debts contracted during the World War, the following table, taken from the *World Almanac*, shows the national debts, in dollars, of the Five Principal Powers before and after the long struggle with the Central Powers:

	Pre-War Debt	Post-War Debt	National Wealth	P.c. of National Wealth Owed
United States.....	1,028,564,000	24,299,321,467	350 billions	7%
British Empire.....	3,485,818,000	39,314,000,000	120 billions	33%
Japan.....	1,241,997,000	1,300,000,000	23 billions	4%
Italy.....	1,475,272,000	18,102,000,000	35 billions	52%
France.....	6,346,129,000	46,025,000,000	92 billions	50%

Notwithstanding these huge debts, Japan is spending about 48% of her national income on armament, whereas Germany, when she considered herself ready to whip the rest of the world, was spending only 31% of her national income on the Army and Navy.

The probability that some practical results may be derived from the Conference is increased by the comparatively small number of nations to be represented. We need not be discouraged because the League of Nations is generally admitted to be a failure. There never was the ghost of a chance that such a great number of nations, possessing such a diversity of interests and such inequality in national power, could agree on anything.

The likelihood of reaching an agreement in such a conference is in inverse ratio to the number of Powers represented, and in direct proportion to their community of interests. On the face of it, it would appear that the original number proposed by Senator Borah gave better promise of doing practical business, in the way of reduction of armament, than the increased number now invited to the Conference; but the President, no doubt, had good reason for inviting France and Italy to join in the discussion. The reason for increasing the number at the Conference table, by these two nations, may have been the military one that France and Italy undoubtedly control the situation on land in Europe; or it may have been because Mr. Harding and his advisers estimated that the interests of France and Italy run parallel with those of America, and that, by including them, the power for enforcing peace and partial disarmament would be increased by having representatives from these two Powers—for, after all is said and done, the whole agreement must be based on the power, both moral and physical, of the conferring nations to enforce the conclusions of their representative.

That America will have a tremendous influence, in regard both to settlement of Pacific Ocean policies and to actual disarmament, can be seen from a casual glance at the preceding table of liabilities and assets. The greatest soldier that ever buckled on a sword, Napoleon, once said, in effect, that what is needed to carry on a successful war is money, money and more money. If we assume that the world's greatest strategist was correct in this statement, then by subtracting post war debts from national assets we shall see that the remaining available sinews of war are: America, 325 billions; British Empire, 80 billions; France, 46 billions; Japan, 22 billions; and Italy, 17 billions of dollars. In other words, if we, as a people, are as patriotic as those of other

countries and are willing, if need arises, to spend our last dollar in a righteous war, we have available for the purpose nearly twice as much as all the other Principal Powers combined.

Referring again to the number of Powers represented in the Conference, the strong ones, when international influence is considered, are those possessing sea power.

It takes only a little knowledge of the world's history to force home the conclusion that the international trade arteries, fed by the world's commerce, can be controlled only by those nations which possess armed sea power; and as far as naval might is concerned, the British Empire, Japan and America are in a class by themselves. Italy and France wield a great influence on European politics and, when added to the Conference on Limitation of Armament, their moral effect will unquestionably have great weight, but their power at sea and consequent influence outside of Europe for peace or war cannot be compared with the influence of the three Sea Powers.

TABLE OF NAVAL ARMAMENT

TYPE	Great Britain			United States			France			Italy			Japan		
	Built	B ¹ d ^g	Total	Built	B ¹ d ^g	Total	Built	B ¹ d ^g	Total	Built	B ¹ d ^g	Total	Built	B ¹ d ^g	Total
Dreadnought Battleships (14" guns & up).....	14	..	14	11	10	21	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	4	8
Dreadnought Battleships (smaller guns).....	14	..	14	8	..	8	10	..	10	5	..	5	3	..	3
Pre-Dreadnought Battleships.....	28	..	28	21	..	21	6	..	6	3	..	3	12	..	12
Battle Cruisers (14" guns & up)...	4	..	4	..	6	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	2	6
Battle Cruisers (smaller guns).....	4	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Light Cruisers.....	62	7	69	3	10	13	11	..	11	20	2	22	10	3	13
Destroyers.....	190	..	190	287	30	317	88	..	88	50	..	50	99	..	99
Submarines.....	98	..	98	100	66	166	36	4	40	39	..	39	13	..	13
Plane Carriers (fast).....	4	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	4
Plane Carriers (slow).....	7	..	7	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1

¹ Many of these are to be scrapped.

The list of fighting ships possessed by the Powers at the opening of the Conference will read about as above.

This table was compiled from Brassey's *Naval Annual*, and Jane's *Fighting Ships*; it is probably slightly in error now, but

it gives a very good idea of how the representatives will be armed when they enter the Conference.

While the table gives a rough measure of the comparative naval fighting power of these nations in home waters, it might easily be misleading to a Conference delegate who lacked a knowledge of naval strategy. Unfortunately there are not many of our leading statesmen who have a good foundation in the principles of sea warfare. There have been many interesting books written on this subject, and the late Admiral Mahan is probably acknowledged to be the world's greatest authority; but his books have been much more widely read in England, Germany and Japan, than in America.

It is no disparagement to our public men to state that they are not versed in naval strategy, for they have led busy lives along other lines. The case of the geographical strategic centre of the West Central Pacific Ocean, our little island of Guam, serves to show the very faulty ideas of naval warfare held by the members of the American Congress.

Suppose we assume that a modern fleet can steam 2,000 miles, fight an action, and return to its base for the repairs that all naval history has shown to be a necessity after a battle. Now take the map of the Pacific Ocean, with Guam as a centre, and describe a circle with a 2,000 mile radius. It will be seen that this circle cuts the northern island of the Japanese Empire, crosses Korea, China, Borneo and Australia, and that Guam is clearly the naval strategic centre of the Western Pacific.

From Guam, prepared as a naval base, the influence of the American fleet would be felt from Kamchatka to the Straits of Singapore. Guam is one of Nature's Gibaltars; yet, notwithstanding the fact that we have owned the island twenty-three years, Congress, in its lack of knowledge of naval strategy, has left the island in such a defenseless state that a corporal's guard could take it.

Admiral Jellicoe's worries over a base for the Grand Fleet during the recent war point out plainly that a modern fleet cannot wage war successfully unless there is a convenient base at which it can repair and rest and "gird up its loins" for battle. Congress may or may not realize the necessity for a base near

where the fleet may have to fight, but no provision has been made for naval bases elsewhere than on our own coasts and in the Hawaiian Islands.

The digression I have just made shows the necessity for the presence in the approaching Conference of American representatives who can look at the Table of Naval Armaments through the eyes of naval strategists. In the study of the table at the Conference, it is highly essential for the safety and protection of American interests that the American representatives should understand the value of a well-balanced fleet; and the advantage of strategical position must also be kept in mind. Let us assume, for instance, that an agreement will be reached by which naval armament will be reduced in a certain ratio. Then, for the sake of study of comparative armaments, let our imagination carry us further to a point where our national policy is directly opposed to the policy of a nation across the sea, and neither nation will yield in its policy. Both common sense and history teach us that the matter must be settled by force. In a case like this, if America should be forced to fight across the sea where she has no bases, then her naval force must be superior, by long odds, to that of her adversary.

While the Table of Armaments looks rather favorable to America in point of number of fighting ships, it must be kept in mind that it requires a long time to take a modern man-of-war, tied up to the dock with only caretakers aboard, and beat her into shape to join the battle-line. Estimated roughly, the personnel provided by the last appropriation bill will man about half our ships. A partial disarmament will naturally tie up more ships to rot and rust, and in a disarmed condition the other two great sea powers have an advantage over us in that a larger percentage of their population are seafaring men. On a call to arms they have ready-made seamen, while we must train our men as seamen, in addition to the much more complicated task of training them as men-o'-war-men.

No nation can afford to send untrained men to fight its battles at sea. In 1904, Russia tried it at the Straits of Tsushima, and lost her fleet. A hundred and nine years ago Captain Lawrence, one of the most promising officers in our young Navy, sailed out

of Boston with a green crew in the *Chesapeake* to do battle against the well drilled crew of the *Shannon*. The ships began to fight at 5.50 p. m. and at 6.02 p. m. the British ship captured the *Chesapeake* by boarding. Lawrence, in his death throes, uttered those immortal words "Don't give up the ship!" but the green crew hauled down the flag just the same.

As to the handling of questions of national policy in the Conference, a naval officer has nothing to say, for these questions belong to our statesmen. If our policies can be brought into amicable agreement with those of the rest of the Five Principal Powers, it will be a splendid achievement for the Conference, and there is probably no other class of people in this land who would more gladly see the sword beaten into the plowshare than the sea-going personnel of the Navy, provided it can be done with safety. We do hope, however, that the agreements reached in council will be conservative so far as our first line of defense is concerned—for if we are ever needed at sea, with untrained crews like that of the unfortunate *Chesapeake*, it will not be the representative who makes unsound agreements at the disarmament table who shoulders the blame. The blame will be laid on the shoulders of the unhappy Commander-in-Chief defeated at sea—and his will be the court-martial.

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE AFTER THE WAR

BY HON. CHARLES H. SHERRILL

DURING the Boer War, Mr. Lloyd George made himself unpopular in many quarters by favoring a generous policy towards those doughty foes, urging that it afforded the only sound basis for amicable relations after the victory. Recent events have strikingly vindicated the wisdom of his policy. It was chiefly to General Smuts, the former Boer leader and now Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, that Lloyd George owed the acceptance by Eamonn de Valera and the Dail Eireann of the British invitation to a conference at Number Ten Downing Street, the hub of the British Empire. It is a *secret de polichinelle* that when there assembled in London in June, 1921, the governmental chiefs of the several Dominions, among their very first recommendations was that early adjustment of the Irish problem be reached on almost any terms except the granting of absolute freedom to an Irish republic. This was especially urged by General Smuts and by Mr. Meighen, the Canadian Premier, and it does not require much Yankee guessing to conclude that it was to the former that Lloyd George turned for assistance in that crisis. It certainly was the South African General who went over to Dublin and conferred with Mr. de Valera and his friends, and was promptly followed back to London by the Irish chief, when there began the conferences which Lloyd George had thitherto been unable to arrange. Certain it is that General Smuts was the obvious man for that diplomatic task, not only as friendly recognition of the British statesman's pro-Boer attitude in the past, but also because he alone of all the Dominion leaders could say, "The British promised us, who are not British and who fought them, complete self-government, and they have kept their promise. You too are non-British, have fought them, and want self-government. Take my advice and come into conference with them for that purpose. We gained the end for which we fought