

# OUR MILITARY POLICY IN ECLIPSE

BY MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM HARDING CARTER

PUBLIC opinion in America, whether the result of propaganda or deliberate individual judgment, is so decidedly against compulsory military training that it seems a waste of time just now to advocate it. Whatever state of preparedness the nation may fix upon as its goal must be achieved along lines of less resistance or not at all. The nation acquiesced in the selective draft as the only fair and righteous way to raise armies in war, but the thought of preparing a nation in arms in peace is simply intolerable in the minds of the people, heartily sick of war and its train of consequences.

The nation has never been prepared for any of the wars to which it has been committed, and it is quite certain that the legislation placed upon the statute books since the close of the World War gives no assurance of entering the next conflict under conditions materially different from past experiences, so far as the nation at large is concerned. For more than a hundred years Presidents have periodically invited the attention of Congress to the fact that unless a system for organizing and equipping our military forces shall be adopted in time of peace, the legitimate consequences may and probably will be initial defeat, humiliation, and higher cost of preparation, after war has been declared.

After every war, there is a tendency to place reliance upon the trained veterans of the past to safeguard the future. It is not presumed that those who live under the flag and profit by so doing will continue to pin their faith to any such system, for it tends to excuse the large number of young men reaching the military age annually. At the time when practically every member of Congress was a veteran of the Civil War, the subject of a military policy was under consideration by a committee of the House of Representatives and after hearing all the prominent Generals then living, a conclusion was reached, that:

Our army is viewed as a nucleus wherein is to be acquired and preserved military knowledge, and from which should radiate the elements of instruction and discipline, thus to form in time of war a complete force endowed with talent to direct it as a whole, and provided with agencies capable of grasping the responsibility, organization and distribution of numerous supplies necessary to the conduct of successful military operations.

Notwithstanding this policy Congress reduced the military establishment to so low a state as seriously to jeopardize the success of operations against Indians, which continued for a quarter of a century after the close of the Civil War, and nothing was ever done to provide the agencies essential to carrying out the policy recommended by the committee. Under the present somnolent condition of public opinion the nation will soon drift back to that state unless something unforeseen occurs.

Patriotism is a state of mind, whether considered as that aroused spirit which induces men to offer their services in defense of their country, or that other emotion excited by numerous so-called drives to make people buy Liberty Bonds of the Government at par when they are selling for less on the market.

America has never had any policy demanding readiness for war beyond insistence upon the Monroe Doctrine, and a presumed determination to have fair play in her association with other nations. There is no such thing as military policy separate and distinct from the civil policy of a nation. The maintenance of large armies and navies on a war footing demands an expenditure, to be met by taxation, which is appalling and seemingly contradictory to the civilization of the present age. Some recent utterances of the President on this subject suggest the wisdom of facing the facts of history, and meeting the contingencies arising therefrom in a manner befitting our normal good sense:

I believe with all my heart we are coming to a time when we are going to diminish the burdens of armament. I think there will be less of armies and less of navies. I wish it with all my heart, but there never can come a time when there is not a requisite agency for the maintenance of law and authority and for national defense. It is perfectly futile to think there may never be conflict when you stop to consider that in 2,000 years of Christian civilization and 4,000 more of pagan civilization concerning which we are informed, we have only lately come to a real civilized state of armed warfare, and that

doesn't apply quite to all of the nations of the world. There should never be a conflict between civilized nations, and there never will be if there are men in authority who will insist upon a full understanding first. The Administration seeks for America fullness of understanding with the peoples of the world, and if we have that, there will never come a time when we will be drawn into a conflict that all Americans cannot answer with a fullness of the heart and the depth of the soul.

This is the doctrine of peace with honor and fair dealing, and may properly be the corner stone of a new and serious military policy, akin to that pronounced by the Military Committee of Congress after the Civil War, but with insistent provisions that the young men of the nation should never be jeopardized again in modern battle without proper training. The lessons of the past are the only safeguards for the future so long as humanity remains the same. It is childish not to recognize that the most pacific policy on the part of the nation will not preserve it from being engaged in war at uncertain intervals.

There should be a common ground of unselfishness which would admit of removing irritating questions from the intercourse of nations by frank and full discussion. When patriotism rises above party politics and personal advantage, earnest men may get together and find a solution which will simplify and perfect a military policy in harmony with the true interests of America. Broadminded and practical men realize, however, that dreams of perfection in government are utopian. The play for partisan advantage is the rule always in evidence, and nearly all progressive laws for the betterment of government are but compromises, in which wise and patriotic legislators are compelled to make terms to the end that great public good may not be wholly sacrificed.

A recent illustration of this tendency to give and take occurs in the National Defense Act of 1916. War had been raging in Europe for two years. Nothing had been done by the Administration to prepare the nation for its own defense in case it should be drawn into the maelstrom. The patriotic chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate, foreseeing the probable course of events and rising above party politics, undertook the preparation of a comprehensive law for the betterment of the military establishment, including the National Guard, military schools

and colleges, and training camps for citizens who volunteer to qualify for service. After months of hearings a bill was prepared which undertook to provide for a better and broader system of preparation for National Defense. During nearly all this period the Chairman received little or no encouragement from his political associates. In the meantime a widespread propaganda brought to the attention of the public that preparedness to defend the nation's interests was going by default, unless the Congress could be aroused. When it began to appear that a bill would be seriously considered there descended upon the Chairman a group of party associates of no mean influence, who laid before him a scheme for a nitrate and fertilizer plant, the estimated cost of which was \$20,000,000. The section was added to the bill and gained for it the support of all those interested in that particular feature. It seemed then a big price to pay, but those who were urging the enactment of the bill realized that the amount would seem a trifle if war came, and it would be saved many times over in the increased readiness of the first line under other provisions of the bill.

The lack of definite party accountability, in the absence from Congress of a responsible Ministry, leads many legislators and public officials to acquiesce in courses of action from which they would shrink in private affairs. When the political effect of any proposed action is a matter of doubt, the safe way for the holder of an elective office is to do nothing. There is not much responsibility in negative action, for one of the first lessons learned by the professional politician is to fix the blame for things not done on his opponents, and to secure the credit for all popular measures to his own party.

Economizing pretentiously in hopes of offsetting in some degree the riotous waste incident to our methods of making war, we are now quite as far away from an effective military policy, considering our recent experience, as we have always been in the past. At no time in our history has it been so easy to obtain applause in Congress, as in the recent past, by making a speech in criticism of the army in general, and the General Staff in particular. It cannot be expected that Congressmen will ever have the time to inform themselves on all proposed legislation re-

garding the national defense, but there ought to come a time when they may debate such questions without the prejudice arising from failure to secure the discharge of a constituent, or release of a military prisoner.

The late distinguished Speaker of the House, the Honorable Champ Clark, undertook to sound public opinion on the subject of our military establishment, after war broke out in Europe, and to that end interviewed people of every type and description encountered on his Chautauqua tours. He believed it the duty of Congressmen to discover just what the people were thinking about and to transmute their wishes into law. As a result he made the first and most inglorious failure of his long and useful public life, by descending to the floor and urging the passage of a bill prepared by the unfriendly and hostile chairman of the Military Committee, which utterly failed to meet the conditions existing in 1916.

When it is recognized that only a small number of educated men have information enough to discuss great public questions, the necessity for representative leadership becomes apparent. There comes a time when constituencies need informed leadership, because they cannot have the detailed knowledge of public policy essential if they are to dictate the course of their representatives. No questions should be so free from local direction or dictation as those concerning diplomacy and defense. The Constitution places upon Congress the duty of declaring war and raising armies, and they should exercise it as representatives in the interest of the whole nation, and not attempt to trim their sails to meet local conditions.

The past is water gone over the wheel, but in considering our military policy there is a long trail of continued effort to overcome inertia and indifference, which may be studied with profit if we would emerge into real light. The late General Emory Upton, after exceptional investigation and study, reached the wise conclusion that if we are to continue a military system based upon voluntary service, we must place dependence upon a body of National or Federal volunteers, localized in Congressional Districts. Long continued efforts to bring about the organization of such a military force were defeated by the National Guard

Association, because they feared it would interfere with the development of their own organizations. They ignored the prime factor that a body of volunteers organized in each district would result in a uniform distribution of force in proportion to population, and relieve the willing States from carrying the burden of those which do not provide properly for their State forces.

It was argued in Congress that a body of Federal volunteers in each district would constitute a military organization within each State not subject to a call of the Governor in an emergency, and that it would tend to reduce enlistments in the National Guard. It is certain that in any great war in the future we will again institute the draft, and it would greatly simplify matters to apply the draft in such manner as to assign men to their home organizations to start with. There is no reason why such Federal troops, to be called out by the General Government only in war, should not be made subject to the call of the Governors of States, for State purposes, and do away entirely with the National Guard. This would relieve the States of making appropriations for their National Guard organizations, and those who now devote their time and talents to the State forces would eventually accept similar service in the new units. All appropriations for defense would then fall where they belong, on the General Government.

Experience in the World War tends to show the impossibility of maintaining an army of Regular, National Guard, and National Army units, with replacements from a common source of drafted men, without jealousies and heartburnings detrimental in the highest degree to good service. This was all foreseen and commented upon during and after the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916, which, as amended in 1920, establishes the military system of the United States. Insistence in that Act, on separate and special representation of the National Guard in all War Department activities, shows an established and deep-seated distrust of association with Regulars, except on terms to be prescribed by the National Guard.

All the elements of the army in France know from experience that none holds the palm of courage, that all were supreme and



none superior, yet no American army of the past has been so victimized by distrust and grievances. So long as we continue the existing system history will repeat itself, and if we are engaged in a defensive war on American soil, politics will enter and destroy the efficiency of the army. Nothing saved it in France but the ocean and the censorship. The nation does not yet appreciate the tremendous qualities of the victories gained in France, and the failures that would have come had not General Pershing been given a free hand to make and remake his army as the panorama of the whole Western front unfolded to his unprejudiced vision.

The nation to-day has a wonderful reservoir of talented men experienced in modern war. Knowing that, Congress has not hesitated to cut and slash the army without regard to the system recently provided by its own acts, for dividing the country into military areas, wherein are to be developed all the elements of defense, provided volunteers may be secured for the purpose. The new system was a great stride on the road of progress. The rate at which officers are being trained for staff duty, and high command gives much assurance for the future, but all is blurred by the necessity for placing organizations on the inactive list, and undertaking a system of very uncertain tenure and one sure to undergo further modification in the near future. It smacks much of the former efforts to have manœuvres in the small Regular Army by posing decimated companies to represent battalions, and markers as brigades and divisions. With the strength reduced to the present numbers, the inactive organizations will eventually disappear, and the number of officers will be made to harmonize with what Congress may deem the size of possible war clouds. As in all our national life the Regular Army will carry on, making its sacrifices, yet rallying its elements around the only nucleus available to keep alive a knowledge of the art of war and the application of all the sciences to the murderous business of making war dangerous for one's enemies. Pacifist propaganda will again play its discouraging part and our military policy will remain in eclipse.

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# THE TER MEULEN CREDIT PLAN

BY W. F. GEPHART

THE need for devising a Ter Meulen or other similar extraordinary method of mobilizing credit cannot be understood unless one appreciates in what manner the credit structure of nations and international trading was affected by the World War. This disorganization of national and international credit appears to the ordinary person in its superficial aspects as depreciated exchange rates and inflated price levels in the various countries. The rate of exchange is simply the relationship existing between the basic value of the monetary units of two trading countries and is chiefly an effect and not a cause of the depressed industrial situation in a country.

Depreciated exchanges result primarily from currency and trade conditions. Whenever a nation begins to issue an unduly large amount of paper money for credit purposes, doubt is created in the minds not only of its own people but of international traders as to its ability to redeem this currency in gold, the standard unit of international values. As a result of such a policy, the circulating value of the currency becomes less than its face value in gold, both in the domestic and the foreign market, although there may be considerable discrepancy between its domestic and its foreign value. Likewise, if a nation imports a much greater volume of goods than it exports there is a deficiency of bills of exchange for sale in the country and a surplus of buyers of these bills. This forces up the rates, and thus, as in the case of any similar condition of mal-adjustment between supply and demand, the price of the article advances. In this case it happens to be the price of exchange, but the same condition would prevail in the case of an actual physical commodity or goods.

Under normal conditions, when there is a mal-adjustment between the demands for and the supply of bills, much can be done through an artificial method of creating bills by financial