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THE REBUILT NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.

[The Hon. Theodore Roosevelt has answered with the following letter the editor's request to read Lord Brassey's article, which appears on the preceding pages. What the United States is doing to fill the naval want which Mr. Roosevelt sees, and how the efforts of this country toward naval progress compare with those of the great foreign powers, are largely shown in the information culled from Secretary Long's current report, which we have printed following Mr. Roosevelt's letter.—THE EDITOR.]

I.—A LETTER FROM MR. ROOSEVELT.

ANY man who knows the needs of the American navy must read Lord Brassey's article with extreme interest; and in reading it, it is difficult not to feel a very keen regret at the contrast between the splendid energy and far-sighted patriotism which the British people display in building up their navy and the slow steps with which we in America are compelled to advance. I do not believe there is a more patriotic people in the world than ours, but I do not think our foresight is always as good as our patriotism, and as yet we are not sufficiently awake to the need of having a navy commensurate with our rank as a great power. If we really appreciated the benefit such a navy would be to us, and the terrible humiliation and disaster its lack may some day cause us, I do not believe the people would hesitate one moment to insist on its preparation.

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that though our navy is small it is highly efficient, both as regards the ships and as regards the men aboard of them. We stand in immediate need of additions to our force of battleships, and especially of torpedo boats; but when those now building are ready, we shall possess a fleet that will be formidable if opposed to that of any nation of continental Europe; and indeed I am tempted to say that this is already true, taking into account merely the ships we now have.

Any man who has personally witnessed the energy, intelligence, and zeal with which our officers have developed the to them untried possibilities of our battleships and torpedo boats, any one who knows how steady has been the improvement in the efficiency of the enlisted men, must of necessity feel an entire confidence in the *personnel* of our navy as compared with that of any foreign power, no matter how good.

The same thing is true of our ships. Personally I should entirely dissent from Lord Brassey's statement as to the alleged superiority in fighting power of British ships of the *Royal Sovereign* or *Majestic* class when compared, for instance,

with the *Iowa* and *Indiana*. Neither type of ship has actually been tried in battle against an equal antagonist; but it may well be questioned whether, against battleships, the rapid-fire 6-inch gun of the British ships is in any way as effective as the American 8-inch.

For Americans there is a peculiar interest in that paragraph of Lord Brassey's article in which he touches upon the sea-powers of the Pacific, and especially upon the energy with which the Japanese are turning their country into a first-class naval power. If the United States is to continue to hold on the Pacific the position to which its great sea-front and its wealth and population entitle it, then we must steadily go on building up our navy; and, above all, we must ratify the treaty of annexation with Hawaii which President McKinley has submitted. Hawaii cannot permanently stand alone; it must go to some power, and if we decline to take it ourselves we have no right to prevent its being taken by some other nation more keenly alive than we are to national self-interest. With Hawaii as a naval base we will have gone far to secure our own coasts from attack; but with Hawaii in the possession of a hostile power we would have before us the certainty of a long and doubtful struggle in order to regain the advantage which we had so foolishly cast away.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.