

# A Shadow Program

By Theodore Roosevelt

*Ex-President of the United States*

The program announced by President Wilson at the Manhattan Club dinner is assailed by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt in a statement made public on Nov. 11, 1915, as a policy of adroit delay and make-believe action put forward for political purposes. The statement is part of an article which will appear in the January issue of *The Metropolitan Magazine*. The ex-President's statement appears below.

**A**SSERTING that the proposed plan is entirely inadequate, Colonel Roosevelt calls upon the "ordinary citizens" to wake to their needs and "lead the should-be leaders" who have failed them. He advocates a regular army of 250,000, with enough officers to command an army of 1,500,000 if a crisis should arise, and immediate action to make our navy the second in the world. He also pleads for permanent munition plants west of the Alleghenies.

The question of expense is secondary, the Colonel asserted, as "five years hence it may be altogether too late to spend any money."

*Here is Colonel Roosevelt's statement:*

There are two immediately vital needs of this nation: 1. That our navy shall at the earliest possible moment be made the second in the world in point of size and efficiency. 2. That our regular army shall be increased to at least a quarter of a million men, with an ample reserve of men who could be at once put in the ranks in the event of a sudden attack upon us; and provision made for many times the present number of officers; and in administration, provision made for a combination of entire efficiency with rigid economy that will begin with the abandonment of the many useless army posts and navy yards.

Neither of these needs is in any way met by the President's proposals. I am sincerely glad that he has now reversed the attitude taken in his message to Congress a year ago, in which he advocated keeping this nation unprepared and helpless to defend its honor and vital interest against foreign foes. But I no less sincerely regret that he has not thought out the situation and is not prepared to

present a real and substantial plan for defense instead of a shadow program.

During the last three years our navy has fallen off appallingly in relative position among the nations. The Administration now proposes a plan, to be followed mainly by the next Administration, which, if hereafter lived up to, would perhaps replace the navy where it formerly was, in five years' time—a plan which in reality, therefore, is merely an adroit method of avoiding substantial action in the present. This will not do. There should be no policy of adroit delay and make-believe action. Our Government should make provisions this year which will insure the regaining of our naval place at the earliest possible moment. The work should begin on a large scale at once. This is of the first importance.

But it is also vital to bring the army abreast of national needs. The proposed plan to create a rival National Guard of half-trained or quarter-trained volunteers—for that is what the absurdly named "continental army" would amount to—if tried will prove very expensive, very detrimental to the existing National Guard, and entirely useless from the standpoint of meeting the real needs of the country. It would put a business premium on the unpatriotic employer, who would not permit his men to take part in it. It would be much wiser to spend the money in increasing the size and efficiency of the National Guard.

The proposed increase in the size of the regular army is utterly inadequate to serve any real purpose. It is one of those half measures which are of service, if at all, only from the political standpoint. Either we need to prepare or we do not.

If we do, then we should prepare adequately.

I should not regard as wise a proposal for doing away with the New York Fire Department—the wisdom of such a proposal being about on a par with the wisdom of the attitude of the professional pacifists as regards what they are pleased to call “militarism.” Yet it would not be materially less wise than a proposal to compromise by, on the one hand, having fire engines, but, on the other hand, not fitting them to throw a stream of water higher than the second story. The military plans of the Administration are on a level with plans for the New York Fire Department which should provide only for second-story hose; they go on the theory that it is desirable to try to put out a fire a little, but not too much. Now, it is always wise either to let a fire alone or to deal with it thoroughly.

I very earnestly hope that the ordinary citizens of this country, since their official leaders refuse to lead them, will themselves wake to their own needs and lead the should-be leaders. Let us at once take action to make us the second naval power in the world. Let us take the action this year, not the year after next. Do it now.

As regards the army, first and foremost let us have the plan of the General Staff made public. Let us know the ad-

vice of the experts. Then provide a regular army of a quarter of a million men. Relatively to the nation their army would be no larger than the New York police force is relatively to the City of New York. Provide a real reserve of enlisted men. Provide as many officers, active and reserve taken together, as will enable us to officer a million and a half of men in the event of war. Meanwhile do everything possible for the National Guard, providing the necessary Federal control to make it really efficient; and provide for many training camps like that at Plattsburg.

Drop the undemocratic continental volunteer army which discriminates between employer and employed, which would help the unpatriotic employe who refused to do as his patriotic rival was glad to do, and which would result merely in the establishment of an inefficient rival to the National Guard.

People speak in praise of volunteers. I also praise the volunteer who volunteers to fight, but I do not praise the volunteer who volunteers to have somebody else fight in his place. Universal service is the only way by which we can secure real democracy, real fairness and justice. Every able-bodied youth in the land should be proud to and should be required to prepare himself thoroughly to protect the nation from armed force.