

# PREPAREDNESS WITHOUT MILITARISM

By THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## Seventh Article in His Series on What America Should Learn from the War

THE other day one of the typical ultra-pacifists or peace-at-any-price men put the ultra-pacifist case quite clearly, both in a statement of his own and by a quotation of what he called the "golden words" of Mr. Bryan at Mophok. In arguing that we should under no conditions fight for our rights, and that we should make no preparation whatever to secure ourselves against wrong, this writer pointed out China as the proper model for America. He did this on the ground that China, which did not fight, was yet "older" than Rome, Greece and Germany, which had fought, and that its example was therefore to be preferred.

This, of course, is a position which saves the need of argument. If the average American wants to be a Chinaman, if China represents his ideal, then he should by all means follow the advice of pacifists like the writer in question and be a supporter of Mr. Bryan. If any man seriously believes that China has played a nobler and more useful part in the world than Athens and Rome and Germany, then he is quite right to try to Chinify the United States.

In such event he must of course believe that all the culture, all the literature, all the art, all the political and cultural liberty and social well-being which modern Europe and the two Americas have inherited from Rome and Greece, and that all that has been done by Germany from the days of Charlemagne to the present time, represent mere error and confusion. He must believe that the average German or Frenchman or Englishman or inhabitant of North or South America occupies a lower moral, intellectual, and physical status than the average coolie who with his fellows composes the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population. To my mind such a proposition is unfit for debate outside of certain types of asylums. But those who sincerely take the view that this gentleman takes are unquestionably right in copying China in every detail, and nothing that I can say will appeal to them.

The "golden words" of Mr. Bryan were as follows:

"I believe that this nation could stand before the world today and tell the world that it did not believe in war, that it did not believe that it was the right way to settle disputes, that it had no disputes which it was not willing to submit to the judgment of the world. If this nation did that, it not only would not be attacked by any other nation on the earth, but it would become the supreme power in the world."

Of course, it is to be assumed that Mr. Bryan means what he says. If he does, then he is willing to submit to arbitration the question whether the Japanese have or have not the right to send unlimited numbers of immigrants to this shore. If Mr. Bryan does not mean this, among other specific things, then the "golden words" in question represent merely the emotionalism of the professional orator.

Of course, if Mr. Bryan means what he says, he also believes that we should not have interfered in Cuba and that Cuba ought now to be the property of Spain. He also believes that we ought to have permitted Colombia to reconquer and deprive of their independence the people of Panama, and that we should not have built the Panama Canal. He also believes that California and Texas ought now to be parts of Mexico, enjoying whatever blessings complete abstinence from foreign war has secured that country during the last three years. He also believes that the Declaration of Independence was an arbitrable matter and that the United States ought now to be a dependency of Great Britain. Unless Mr. Bryan does believe all these things, then his "golden words" represent only a rhetorical flourish. He is Secretary of State and the right hand man of President Wilson, and President Wilson is completely responsible for whatever he says and for the things he does, or rather which he leaves undone.

### We Should Look Facts in the Face.

NOW, it is quite useless for me to write with any view to convince gentlemen like Mr. Bryan and the writer in question. If they really do represent our fellow-countrymen, then they are right in holding up China as our ideal, not the modern China, not the China that is changing and moving forward, but old China. In such event Americans ought frankly to class themselves with the Chinese. That is where, on this theory, they belong. If this is so, then let us fervently pray that the Japanese, or some other virile people that does not defy moral, mental and physical impotence, may speedily come to rule over us.

I am, however, writing on the assumption that Americans are still on the whole like their forefathers who followed Washington, and like their fathers who fought in the armies of Grant and Lee. I am writing on the assumption that even though temporarily misled they will not permanently and tamely submit to oppression, and that they will ultimately think intelligently as to what they should do to safeguard themselves against aggression. I abhor unjust war; and I deplore that the need even for just war should ever occur. I believe we should set our faces like flint against

any policy of aggression by this country on the rights of any other country.

But I believe that we should look facts in the face. I believe that it is unworthy weakness to fear to face the truth. Moreover, I believe that we should have in us that fibre of manhood which will make us follow duty whithersoever it may lead. Unquestionably we should render all the service it is in our power to render to righteousness. To do this we must be able to back righteousness with force, to put might back of right. It may well be that by following out this theory we can in the end do our part in conjunction with other nations of the world to bring about, if not—as I hope—a world peace, yet at least a vital minimizing of the chances for war and of the areas of possible war. But meanwhile it is absolutely our duty to prepare for our own defense.

This country needs something like the Swiss system of war training for its young men. Switzerland is one of the most democratic Governments in the world, and it has given its young men such an efficient training as to insure entire preparedness for war, without suffering from the least touch of militarism. Switzerland is at peace now primarily because all the great military nations that surround it know that its people have no intention of making aggression on anybody and yet that they are thoroughly prepared to hold their own and are resolute to fight to the last against any invader who attempts either to subjugate their territory or by violating its neutrality to make it a battle-ground.

A Bishop of the Episcopal Church recently wrote me as follows: "How lamentable that we should stand idle, making no preparations to enforce peace, and crying 'Peace' when there is none! I have scant sympathy for the shortsightedness of those who decry preparation for war as a means of preventing it."

The manager of a land company in Alabama writes me urging that some one speak for reasonable preparedness on the part of the nation. He states that it is always possible that we shall be engaged in hostilities with some first class power, that he hopes and believes that war will never come, but adds:

### Full Preparation Is Nation's Only Insurance.

I may not believe that my home will burn down, or that I am going to die within the period of my expectancy, but nevertheless I carry fire and life insurance to the full insurable value on my property and on my life to the extent of my ability. The only insurance of our liberties as a people is full preparation for a defense adequate against any attack and made in time to fully meet any attack. We do not know the attack is coming; but to wait until it does come will be too late.

"Our present weakness lies in the widespread opinion among our people that this country is invincible because of its large population and vast resources. This I believe is true if, and only if, we use these resources or a small part of them to protect the major part, and if we train at least a part of our people how to defend the nation. Under existing conditions we can hardly hope to have an effective army in the field in less than eight or ten months. Today not 1 per cent. of our people know anything about rifle shooting."

I quote these two out of many letters, because they sum up the general feeling of men of vision. Both of my correspondents are most sincerely for peace. No man can possibly be more anxious for peace than I am, for if war ever came I would probably have to go to it myself, if I was not too old, and my four sons would certainly have to go. I ask those individuals who think of me as a fire-brand to remember that during the seven and a half years I was President not a shot was fired at any soldier of a hostile nation by any American soldier or sailor; and there was not so much as a threat of war. Even when the State of Panama threw off the alien yoke of Colombia and when this nation, acting as was its manifest duty, by recognizing Panama as an independent State, stood for the right of the governed to govern themselves on the Isthmus, as well as for justice and humanity, there was not a shot fired by any of our people at any Colombian.

The blood shed at Vera Cruz, like the unpunished wrongs committed on our people in Mexico, had no parallel during my Administration. When I left the Presidency there was not a cloud on the horizon, and one of the reasons why there was not a cloud on the horizon was that the American battle fleet had just returned from its sixteen months' trip around the world, a trip such as no other battle fleet of any power had ever taken, which it had not been supposed could be taken, and which exercised a greater influence for Peace than all the Peace Congresses of the last fifteen years. With Lowell I most emphatically believe that peace is not a gift that carries long in the hands of cowards; and the fool and the weakling are no improvement on the coward.

Nineteen centuries ago in the greatest of all books we were warned that who loses his life for righteousness shall save it, and that he who seeks to save it shall lose it. The ignoble and abject gospel of those who would teach us that it is preferable to endure disgrace and discredit than to run any risk to life or limb would defeat its own purpose; for that kind of submission to wrongdoing merely invites further wrongdoing, as has been shown a thousand times in history, and as is shown by the case of China in our own days.

Moreover, our people, however ill prepared, would never consent to such abject submission; and indeed as a matter of fact our publicists and public men and our newspapers, instead of being too humble and submissive, are only too apt to indulge in very offensive talk about foreign nations.

Of all the nations of the world we are the one that combines the greatest amount of wealth with the smallest ability to defend that wealth. Surely one does not have to read history very much or ponder over philosophy a great deal in order to

realize the truth that the one certain way to invite disaster is to be opulent, offensive, and unarmed.

There is utter inconsistency between the ideal of making this nation the foremost commercial power in the world, and of disarmament in the face of an armed world. There is utter inconsistency between the ideal of making this nation a power for international righteousness and at the same time refusing to make us a power efficient in anything save empty treaties and emptier promises.

I do not believe in a large standing army. Most emphatically I do not believe in militarism. Most emphatically I do not believe in any policy of aggression by us. But I do believe that no man is really fit to be the free citizen of a free republic unless he is able to bear arms and at need to serve with efficiency in the efficient army of the republic. This is no new thing with me. For years I have believed that the young men of the country should know how to use a rifle and should have a short period of military training which, while not taking them for any length of time from civil pursuits, would make them quickly capable of helping defend the country in case of need.

When I was Governor of New York, acting in conjunction with the Administration at Washington under President McKinley, I secured the sending abroad of one of the best officers in the New York National Guard to study the Swiss system. As President I had to devote my attention chiefly to getting the navy built up. But surely the sight of what has happened abroad ought to awaken our people to the need of action, not only as regards our navy, but as regards our land forces also.

Australia has done well in this respect. But Switzerland has worked out a comprehensive scheme with practical intelligence. She has not only solved the question of having men ready to fight, but she has solved the question of having arms to give these men. At present England is in more difficulty about arms than about men, and some of her people when sent to the front were armed with hunting rifles.

Our own shortcomings are far greater. Indeed, they are so lamentable that it is hard to believe that our citizens as a whole know them. To equip half the number of men whom even the British now have in the field would tax our factories to the limit. In Switzerland, during the last two or three years of what corresponds to our high school work, the boy is thoroughly grounded in the rudiments of military training, discipline, and marksmanship. When he graduates he is put for some four months in the army to receive exactly the training he would get in time of war. After that he serves eight days a year and in addition often joins with his fellows in practicing at a mark. He keeps his rifle and accoutrements in his home and is responsible for their condition.

Efficiency is the watchword of Switzerland and not least in its army. At the outbreak of this terrible war, Switzerland was able to mobilize her forces in the corner of her territory between France and Germany as quickly as either of the great combatants could theirs; and no one trespassed upon her soil.

The Swiss training does not to any appreciable extent take the man away from his work. But it does make him markedly more efficient for his work. The training he gets and his short service with the colors render him appreciably better able to do whatever his job in life is, and, in addition, benefit his health and spirits. The service is a holiday, and a holiday of the best because of the most useful type.

There is no reason whatever why Americans should be unwilling or unable to do what Switzerland has done. We are a far wealthier country than Switzerland and could afford without the slightest strain the very trifling expense and the trifling consumption of time rendered necessary by such a system. It has really nothing in common with the universal service in the great conscript armies of the military powers. No man would be really taken out of industry. On the contrary, the average man would probably be actually benefited so far as doing his life work is concerned. The system would be thoroughly democratic in its workings. No man would be exempted from the work and all would have to perform the work alike. It would be entirely possible to arrange that there should be a certain latitude as to the exact year when the four or six months' service was given.

Officers of course would need a longer training than the men. This could readily be furnished either by allowing numbers of extra students to take partial or short-term courses at West Point or by specifying optional courses in the high schools, the graduates of these special courses being tested carefully in their field work and being required to give extra periods of service and being under the rigid supervision of the regular army. There could also be opportunities for promotion from the ranks for any one who chose to take the time and the trouble to fit himself.

### Soldiers Must Have Actual Camp Practice.

THE four or six months' service with the colors would be for the most part in the open field. The drill hall and the parade ground do not teach more than 5 per cent. of what a soldier must actually know. Any man who has had any experience with ordinary organizations of the National Guard when taken into camp knows that at first only a very limited number of the men have any idea of taking care of themselves, and that the great majority suffer much from dyspepsia, just because they do not know how to take care of themselves.

The soldier needs to spend some months in actual campaign practice under canvas with competent instructors before he gets to know his duty. If, however, he has had previous training in the schools of such a type as that given in Switzerland and then has this actual practice he remains for some years efficient with no more training than eight or ten days a year.

The training will be given in large bodies. It is essential that men shall get accustomed to the policing and sanitary care of camps in which there are masses of soldiers. Moreover officers are wholly

useless in war time unless they are accustomed to handle masses of men in co-operation with one another.

There are small sections of the population out of which it is possible to improvise soldiers in a short time. Men who are accustomed to ride and to shoot and to live in the open and who are hardy and enduring and by nature possess the fighting edge already know most of what it is necessary that a soldier should know and they can be taught the remainder in a very short time if under the right man. Morgan's Virginia Riflemen, Andrew Jackson's Tennesseeans, Forrest's Southwestern Cavalry were all men of this kind; but even these men were of real use only after they were trained for many months or else if their leaders were born fighters and masters of men like Morgan, Jackson, and Forrest. Such leaders are rare. The ordinary dweller in civilization has to be taught to shoot, to walk, (or ride if he is in the cavalry,) to cook for himself, to make himself comfortable in the open and to take care of his feet and his health generally.

It may well be that the Swiss on an average can be made into good troops quicker than our own men; but most assuredly there would be number of Americans who would not be much behind the Swiss in such a matter. A body of volunteers of the kind I am describing would of course not be quite as good as a body of regulars of the same size, but they would be immeasurably better than the average soldiers produced by any system we now have or ever have had in connection with our militia.

### Average American Not Interested in Army.

OUR regular army would be strengthened by them at the very beginning and would be set free in its entirety for immediate aggressive action; and in addition a levy in mass of the young men of the right age would mean that two or three million troops were put into the field who, although not quite as good as regulars, would at once be available in numbers sufficient to overwhelm any expeditionary force which it would be possible for any military power to send to our shores. The existence of such a force would render the immediate taking of cities like San Francisco, New York or Boston an impossibility and would free us from all danger from sudden raids and make it impossible even for an army corps to land with any prospect of success.

Our people are so entirely unused to things military that it is probably difficult for the average man to get any clear idea of our shortcomings. Unlike what is true in the military nations of the Old World, here the ordinary citizen takes no interest in the working of our War Department in time of peace. No President gains the slightest credit for himself by paying attention to it. Then, when a crisis comes and the War Department breaks down, instead of the people accepting what has happened with humility as due to their own fault during the previous two or three decades, there is a roar of wrath against the unfortunate man who happens to be in office at the time. There was such a roar of wrath against Secretary Alger in the Spanish war. Now, as a matter of fact, 90 per cent. of our shortcomings when the war broke out with Spain could not have been remedied by any action on the part of the Secretary of War. They were due to what had been done ever since the close of the civil war.

We were utterly unprepared. There had been no real manoeuvring of so much as a brigade and very rarely had any of our Generals commanded even a good-sized regiment in the field. The enlisted men and the junior officers of the regular army were good. Most of the officers above the rank of Captain were nearly worthless. There were striking exceptions of course, but, taking the average, I really believe that it would have been on the whole to the advantage of our army in 1898 if all the regular officers above the rank of Captain had been retired and if all the Captains who were unfit to be placed in the higher positions had also been retired. The Lieutenants were good.

The lack of administrative skill was even more marked than the lack of military skill. No one who saw the congestion of trains, supplies, animals, and men at Tampa will ever forget the impression of helpless confusion that it gave him. The volunteer forces included some organizations and multitudes of individuals offering first-class material. But as a whole the volunteer army would have been utterly helpless against any efficient regular force at the outset of the '98 war, probably almost as inefficient as were the two armies which fought one another at Bull Run in 1861. Even the efficiency of the regular army itself was such merely by comparison with the volunteers.

I do not believe that any army in the world offered finer material than was offered by the junior officers and enlisted men of the regular army which disembarked on Cuban soil in June, 1898, and by the end of the next two weeks probably the average individual infantry or cavalry organization therein was at least as good as the average organization of the same size in an Old World army. But taking the army as a whole and considering its management from the time it began to assemble at Tampa until the surrender of Santiago, I seriously doubt if it was as efficient as a really good European or Japanese army of half the size.

Since then we have made considerable progress. Our little army of occupation that went to Cuba at the time of the revolution in Cuba ten years ago was thoroughly well handled and did at least as well as any foreign force of the same size could have done. But it did not include 10,000 men, that is, it did not include as many men as the smallest military power in Europe would assemble any day for manoeuvres.

This is a new thing in our history. If only we were willing to learn from our defeats and failures instead of paying heed purely to our successes, we would realize that what I have above described is one of the common phases of our history. In the war of 1812, at the outset of the struggle, American forces were repeatedly beaten, as at Niagara and

Bladensburg, by an enemy one-half or one-quarter the strength of the American army engaged.

Yet two years later these same American troops on the northern frontier, when trained and commanded by Brown, Scott, and Ripley, proved able to do what the finest troops of Napoleon were unable to do, that is, meet the British regulars on equal terms in the open; and the Tennessee backwoods-men and Louisiana volunteers, when mastered and controlled by the iron will and warlike genius of Andrew Jackson, performed at New Orleans a really great feat. During the year 1812 the American soldiers on shore suffered shameful and discreditable defeats, and yet their own brothers at sea won equally striking victories, and this because the men on shore were utterly unprepared and because the men at sea had been thoroughly trained and drilled long in advance.

Exactly the same lessons are taught by the histories of other nations. When, during the Napoleonic wars, a small force of veteran French soldiers landed in Ireland they defeated without an effort five times their number of British troops at Castlebar. Yet the men whom they thus drove in wild flight were the own brothers of and often the very same men who a few years later under Wellington proved an over-match for the flower of the French forces. The nation that waits until the crisis is upon it before taking measures for its own safety pays heavy toll in the blood of its best and its bravest and in bitter shame and humiliation. Small is the comfort it can then take from the memory of the times when the noisy and feeble folk in its own ranks cried "Peace! Peace!" without taking one practical step to secure peace.

We can never follow out a worthy national policy, we can never be of benefit to others or to ourselves, unless we keep steadily in view as our ideal that of the just man armed, the man who is fearless, self-reliant, ready, because he has prepared himself for possible contingencies; the man who is scornful alike of those who would advise him to do wrong and of those who would advise him tamely to suffer wrong.

The great war now being waged in Europe, and the fact that no neutral nation has ventured to make even the smallest effort to alleviate or even to protest against the wrongs that have been done, show with lamentable clearness that all the Peace Congresses of the past fifteen years have accomplished precisely and exactly nothing so far as any great crisis is concerned.

Fundamentally this is because they have confined themselves to mere words, seemingly without realizing that mere words are utterly useless unless translated into deeds and that an ounce of promise which is accompanied by provision for a similar ounce of effective performance is worth at least a ton of promise as to which no effective method of performance is provided.

Furthermore, a very serious blunder has been to treat peace as the end instead of righteousness as the end. The greatest soldier patriots of history, Timoleon, John Hampden, Andreas Hofer, Koerner, the great patriot statesman-soldiers like Washington, the great patriot-statesmen like Lincoln, whose achievements for good depended upon the use of soldiers, have all achieved their immortal claim to the gratitude of mankind by what they did in just war. To condemn war in terms which would include the wars these men waged or took part in precisely as they include the most wicked and unjust wars of history is to serve the devil and not God.

### We Should Resist Aggression, Not Be Aggressors.

AGAIN, these peace people have persistently and resolutely blinked facts. One of the Peace Congresses sat in New Jersey at the very time that the feeling in California about the Japanese question gravely threatened the good relations between ourselves and the great Empire of Japan. The only thing which at the moment could practically be done for the cause of peace was to secure some proper solution of the question at issue between ourselves and Japan. But this represented real effort, real thought. The Peace Congress paid not the slightest serious attention to the matter and instead devoted itself to listening to speeches which favored the abolition of the United States Navy and even in one case the prohibiting the use of tin soldiers in nurseries because of the militaristic effect on the minds of the little boys and girls who played with them!

I advocate that our preparedness take such shape as to fit us to resist aggression, not to encourage us in aggression. I advocate preparedness that will enable us to defend our own shores and defend the Panama Canal and Hawaii and Alaska and prevent the seizure of territory at the expense of any commonwealth of the Western Hemisphere by any military power of the Old World.

I advocate this being done in the most democratic manner possible. We Americans do not realize how fundamentally democratic our army really is. When I served in Cuba, it was under Gen. Sam Young and alongside of Gen. Adna Chaffee. Both had entered the American Army as enlisted men in the civil war. Later as President I made both of them in succession Lieutenant Generals and Commanders of the Army.

On the occasion when Gen. Chaffee was to appear at the White House for the first time as Lieutenant-General, Gen. Young sent him his own starred-shoulder-strap with a little note saying that it was from "Private Young, '61, to Private Chaffee, '61." Both of the fine old fellows represented the best type of citizen-soldier. Each was simply and sincerely devoted to Peace and Justice. Each was incapable of advocating our doing wrong to others. Neither could have understood willingness on the part of any American to see the United States submit tamely to insult or injury. Both typified the attitude that we Americans should take in our dealings with foreign countries.

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[Mr. Roosevelt's article in next Sunday's Times will be on "The Navy as Peacemaker."]