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The Baseless Fear of War

By Andrew Carnegie

[To counteract the growing menace of militarism in this country and to promote constructive measures leading to the substitution of law for w a r has been for many years one of the chief aims of THE INDEPENDENT. *We take special pleasure, therefore, in presenting to our readers this article showing the absurdity of taxing o u r people under the pretext of averting an impossible invasion. No living man is better qualified to write on this subject than Mr. Carnegie, who has freely expended his energy and money in promoting the ideals of international peace a n d justice, as shown in the endowment of the peace movement, a n d in the building of t h e* Peace Palace *at the Hague, t h e* Pan-American Union *at Washington a n d t h e* Central American C o u r t of Justice *at Cartago, Costa Rica. -* EDITOR]

Officials under the present administration have recently become prominent in surprising efforts to increase our naval and military forces, the latest and most startling being Colonel Goethals's estimate of no less than 25,000 soldiers as necessary to guard the Panama Canal, strongly fortified against naval assault as it is. Under present conditions no sensible man would object to adequate protection of our whole country by the army and navy, but surely this is madness.

The pending demand is for three battleships this session, but General Wood tells us that the Canal once opened is to require more battleships than hitherto, differing in this from the President, who has assured us that only one battleship per year would be required after the Canal was opened, because our fleet could then be transferred either to the Atlantic or Pacific as required, thus doubling its efficiency.

Mr. Roosevelt holds "that there is but one way to maintain international peace, and that is by keeping our army and navy in such a state of preparation that there will be no temptation on the part of someone else to go to war with us." "Someone else" is indefinite indeed. Our Republic has no one who wishes to go to war with her to-day, and has not in our day had one desirous of doing so, altho Mr. Roosevelt when President was once strongly frightened. He had proclaimed his policy to be one battleship a year, not to increase the present navy, but only to maintain its efficiency, but he applied for four warships next session of Congress. The dreaded foe has

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not yet appeared. His fears were groundless. It is stated that we, remote as we are from danger, are now spending about 70 per cent of our total expenditures upon army and navy, including pensions, while Britain, in the very center of the only strong military and naval powers, spends only 43 per cent of hers on army and navy, which seems incredible. It is high time we should look into this.

No one ventures to name the nations or nation that has the faintest idea of quarreling with us, nor have we any idea of quarreling with any. All we have to do is to show our confidence in the continuance of present happy relations with all and cease expanding either army or navy.

Our military and naval officials fight imaginary foes when they think of possible invasions of enemies. The Republic, having no designs of territorial acquisition nor powerful neighbors, has no enemies to fear. It is the reverse with European lands joined together, each armed against the other as probable invaders. We expect those of our military and naval circles to dwell in their dreams upon possible attacks, devising counter measures of attack and defense —"'Tis their vocation." But to any proposal of increast army or navy we hope our President-elect's response will be—"Pray tell us first against what enemy you need this further protection. Name the power or powers and tell us what object they can have for attacking us, how they can benefit therefrom—what end in view." There are today only two navies greater than our own, those of Britain and Germany. We rank third. Does any sensible man, Naval and Military officers excepted,

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fear war between the two parts of our speaking race? Is not this unthinkable? As we have outgrown the duel so have we outgrown homicidal war. English speaking men are never again to assail each other. That day has past. Has there ever been danger of war between Germany and ourselves, members of the same Teutonic race? Never has it been even imagined. America, Britain, Germany in China marched their united forces under a German general to Peking, and so will these three Powers some day unite again when danger requires. We are all of the same Teutonic blood and united could ensure world peace. The fourth naval power is our ally of the Revolution, the sister Republic of France. Could even an American admiral or commanding General succeed in believing that war was possible between the two Republics? This would be found beyond even the wildest flights of his vivid imagination. The Taft treaty submitting all questions to arbitration was signed by three of these Powers, Britain, France and ourselves, Germany thru her Ambassador in Washington by order of his government assuring us of her desire to become a party to a treaty.

This would have been the beginning of the end. These Powers, once united for Peace thru arbitration, intimating to any civilized Powers threatening to break world peace that such action would not be favorably considered and asking that their policy of peaceful arbitration be adopted instead, would not, could not, pass unheeded and peace would be preserved, and the foulest blot upon Civilization would thus have been erased. The treaty failed unexpectedly to get the required two-thirds vote in the Senate, but let the peacemakers be of good cheer. We hope and believe that the incoming administration is to renew the effort and succeed. There can be no such word as fail in a cause so noble.

Let Wood, Mahan, Goethals and others, admittedly the rite men in the rite places, indeed rarely equalled, give us one good reason why any nation should desire war with us. When they do this to the country's satisfaction we should listen, but not till then. To name our probable invaders and describe their means of invading us would banish all ground for anxiety. Think of a European power having to transport an army and its supplies across the Atlantic to attack us, always keeping in mind the question why and with what object. Thanks to our Constitution, if we must repel invasion we shall have the advantage of a civilian commander-in-chief in the President and not a professional theorist, incapable of judging questions of gen-

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eral policy. Here we are reminded of an axiom in business, "beware the expert," especially those whose life work is dreaming of wars which seldom or never happen. Our naval and military officials must dream of wars since most of them never even see one. They resemble our warships, few of which ever fire a hostile shot, but parade round the world showing their guns as peacocks display their feathers, always ornamental, but seldom useful. Lincoln with a Stanton, a Grant and a Sherman, is the ideal —not one of whom but came direct from civil life to defend his country. It would possibly be our best policy to invite our invaders to land; guide them into the interior as far as they would go—getting in they would find easy, but when it came to the question how they would get out it would be another story—surrounded as they would be by hundreds of thousands of sharp-shooters from every quarter of the compass.

Our Republic, soon to number 100,000,000 of free and independent citizens, our men old and young ready with their rifles to do or die for their country if attacked, surely every man, even the narrow professional soldier in his sane moments, must realize that no such hair-brained madness as invasion will ever be attempted. Our harbors could easily be torpedoed before the enemy could prepare and arrive.

Men who refused today to walk abroad without lightning rods down their backs with a ground connection, because men have been struck with lightning, would be the counterparts of those who fear invasion. The first risk, however, being much greater than the second, insurance companies would make huge profits by selling even at a dollar a head life policies against invasion—all would be clear gain less cost of printing. Falstaff's foes, both in "Buckram" and in "Kendal green," were scarcely less imaginary than the fears which apparently surround and appal most of our present professionals, able men as these are in their respective fields. Not one of the three additional warships demanded this year, if built, in all probability will ever fire a shot against a foe, but rust into uselessness—forty-five millions of dollars needlessly squandered. What a waste of capital that could be put to useful ends in improving for the masses the conditions of life. There is to be an end of this folly some day. A man's profession is his hobby; therefore if generals are to decide how many soldiers we are to maintain, and admirals how many fifteen-million-dollar battleships we are to build to rust away, farewell to common sense, for there are no extremes to which men's hobbies may not lead them.

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True, few if any of our officers of today have ever seen war, and thank God fewer still are ever to see it, but the professional hobby takes root early and grows apace. The writer believes that the President-elect will prove a man of sound judgment; that his first care will be to guard our country from present obvious dangers, while consigning imaginary dangers of the future to the future they belong to—that future in which so many of our imaginary troubles vanish. A story told the writer in his youth has been and is still fruitful. Condoling with an old man upon his numerous misfortunes the reply came, "True, I have had many grievous ills to bear, and the strange thing is that nine-tenths of the worst of them never happened." So with our Republic. She bears a charmed life and all works for her good. Would that her officials of today had proper confidence in her future and more faith in her star. She has not an enemy in the world, nor need she have. The rulers have no cause of complaint against her. The masses of the people in all civilized lands see in her the standard to which they fondly hope to attain and they love her. Hence an army and navy, maintained at present standard, are ample and more than ample. We have no enemies, all nations are our friends and we are friends of all.

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