

# THE MILITARY FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

By General Nelson A. Miles

WHAT ARMY SHALL BE MAINTAINED?

SYSTEMS OF THE WORLD COMPARED



As a mere powerful machine, a merciless, soulless force to gratify the caprice, selfish ambition or greed of a tyrant, a standing army is a menace to the liberties of the people. This is as true to-day as it was the day it was first proclaimed, yet our army, inspired by the same noble, patriotic principles that actuated our fathers, is now and ever should be, a guaranty of the liberties of the people.

Our army is maintained under the provisions of our Constitution to assist, when the occasion requires it, in the execution of the laws of the United States, to suppress insurrection (happily a remote contingency), and to repel invasion, which may occur at some later day, as our widening sphere of activity, both as a commercial power and a potential factor in world politics, may involve us in such conflict with one or more of the great powers, that may result in the invasion if not of our own shores, at least those of our dependencies.

Modern wars, as a rule, are brought on either by conflicting commercial interests, or a desire for territorial expansion, or by both; occur suddenly, often with little or no warning on the part of one or both of the belligerents; and terminate much more quickly than formerly, when they frequently lasted for years, when the defeated nation was completely prostrated and stripped of men, money and resources.

The average American, on account of the immense wealth and population of our country, is likely to confound our military resources with our military strength. Military strength is the resisting power that a nation can put forth on the field of battle, and no matter how great its military resources may be, if these cannot be utilized in time of need the nation is impotent. In the War of 1812, at the Battle of Bladensburg, after which disastrous defeat the Capital fell, the military strength of the United States was measured by six thousand untrained, inexperienced and undisciplined troops; at Bull Run, by thirty-five thousand of the same character. The military policy of the United States, or more properly, the lack of policy, has uselessly cost our country directly in times of peril thousands of lives and millions of money; while the direful influence of prolonged war on our commerce, manufactures and agriculture in our second war with Great Britain and in the Civil War are beyond calculation.

The United States and Great Britain are the only two of the great military Powers of the world in whose armies service is entirely voluntary. In all the great European nations all physically qualified men between the ages of twenty and forty-five are liable to service, and until they have passed forty-five form part of the army, which consists of the active army, or service with the colors and its immediate reserve, (*ersatz*) the first line of reserves (*landwehr*), and the second line of reserves (*landsturm*), or territorial army.

In Austria-Hungary military service begins at twenty-one years of age, with three years in the active army, which is common to both countries. The excess of the annual levy, determined by lot, passes into the reserves (*ersatz*) of the active army. After three years' service with the colors, the soldier passes, for three years, into the Austrian *landwehr* or the Hungarian *honvégsed*, and then serves for ten years in the *landsturm*, or territorial army.

In France military service begins with the twentieth year, and when a sufficient number to fill the annual quota in the active army are determined by lot, the remainder pass into the territorial army, where they serve for six years, and a similar term in the reserves of

the territorial army. The soldier who joins the active army serves for three years with the colors and ten years with the reserves of the active army.

In Germany service usually begins with the twentieth year. Two years are spent in the active army with the colors, and four with the reserves of the active army, after which the soldier serves five years in the *landwehr*, and then passes into the *landsturm*. Of the yearly levy for the active army, owing to the excess of the number qualified over the number allowed by the annual budget, the necessary quota are drawn by lot, and the remainder join the *ersatz truppen*, where they serve for twelve years, and then pass into the *landsturm*, which is composed of all able-bodied Germans between the ages of seventeen and forty-five who are not in the army or in the reserves. The *landsturm* can be called out only in case of the invasion of Germany.

In Russia, army service begins at twenty-one, with five years with the colors, when the soldier passes to the *zapas*, where he remains for thirteen years, and then serves five years in the *opolchenie*.

Japan has modeled her army after those of the European Powers, and military service is compulsory. The soldier serves three years with the colors, five years with the reserves, and ten years in the territorial army.

The system of compulsory military service takes annually over six hundred and fifty thousand or seven hundred thousand of the growing youth of the four great Continental Powers from trade, manufacture and agriculture, and diminishes by that amount of labor the productiveness of those countries. From a military standpoint, however, this system possesses the great advantage of making nearly every man in the nation capable of bearing arms, a trained soldier, ready to take his appointed place in a thoroughly organized system at the outbreak of war.

have had practically no military training or experience. It also is to be observed that our army costs more per man than that of any other army in the world. But this is to be expected, for where service is voluntary sufficient inducement must be offered in time of peace to induce men to enter the ranks, and this can be done only by suitably paying and providing for them. The American soldier is the best paid, best fed, best clothed and best cared for in the world; he also is the most intelligent and self-reliant, and, I believe, the best soldier on the globe. The unskilled laborer in this country receives much greater wages than on the continent of Europe, and the conditions of his daily life are much better. We consequently should expect the same for our soldiers.

The private in the United States Army receives \$13 a month; in Great Britain, \$7.14; in Germany, \$2.50; France, \$1.74; Hungary, 73 cents; Japan, 60 cents; and Russia, 12 cents.

A brief résumé of the strength of our army during the past century will show that the people never have realized the importance of a sufficient number in the regular army to form a nucleus about which to raise a sufficient force in time of serious trouble. This policy twice has threatened our national existence and needlessly prolonged war. In times of continued peace and prosperity the possibility of war always seemed such a remote eventuality as to cause the possibility to be completely neglected and the sound advice of "The First American"—"In time of peace prepare for war"—apparently had been overlooked almost entirely throughout the nineteenth century, although the attention of Congress and the people had been called to the condition of affairs by all the commanding generals of the army time and again.

When the Revolutionary armies were disbanded in 1783 there were left "eight privates and a due proportion of officers not to exceed the rank of captain," and the next year Congress decided: "As it appears absolutely necessary to have seven hundred non-commissioned officers and men properly officered, it is recommended to the following States, as most convenient to the posts to be shortly vacated by the British, to furnish from their militia: Connecticut, 165; New-York, 165; New-Jersey, 110; Pennsylvania, 260; to serve twelve months, unless sooner discharged." These troops were formed into a regiment consisting of eight companies of infantry and two of cavalry, and only slight changes were made in numbers and organization of troops, until the regular army was established by the First Congress, under the Constitution, by the act of September 20, 1789. By this act the army had a total strength of 46 officers and 886 men and in the following two years the strength was increased to 258 officers and 5,156 men. Succeeding Congresses changed the numbers

and organization slightly, generally reducing the strength, though sometimes increasing it slightly, and made no provision in advance of the War of 1812, though its occurrence was felt an assured fact for at least two years before the declaration of war.

By 1814 the regular army had been increased to a total of 62,674 officers and men, but immediately was reduced the next year to 12,383, and subsequently, in 1821, to 6,126. It remained practically at this strength for nineteen years, when it was raised to a total of 12,530. It remained at this figure until the Mexican War, during which its maximum strength was 30,865. At the close of the war the next year it was reduced to 10,000, but increased again in 1855 to 12,698, which was its authorized strength at the begin-

TABLE No. 1

COUNTRY	Area in Square Miles	Population	Budget	Total War Strength of Army	Peace Strength of the Regular Establishment	Number of men in peace organizations to each 1,000 of population	Relative size of peace organizations to 1,000 of inhabitants, the U. S. Army taken as unity
Austria-Hungary	241,333	44,651,468	\$61,907,893	2,580,000	323,668	7.25	0.2
France	207,054	38,961,945	120,030,826	4,350,000	578,003	15.34	19.4
Germany	208,830	56,367,178	137,037,782	5,240,000	581,621	10.32	13.1
*Great Britain	12,107	41,609,320	167,571,020	905,880	\$ 221,561	5.32	6.7
†Japan	139,000	44,805,937	10,904,692	632,000	167,629	3.74	4.7
‡Russia	2,095,616	106,264,136	169,910,761	5,258,000	1,110,000	10.35	13.1
**United States	2,970,230	76,085,794	77,740,813	1100,000	60,183	0.79	1.0

\*England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. †The principal islands. ‡Russia in Europe. \*\*Exclusive of Alaska and territorial dependencies. ††Exclusive of volunteers and militia. §Exclusive of the Indian Army.

The foregoing table gives the strength, both in peace and war, of the armies of the great military nations, their areas, population, military budgets, and the number of soldiers in the regular establishment per thousand of population, and a comparison of their strength with that of the United States army, based on the number of soldiers per thousand of inhabitants.

It probably will surprise the reader to know how much smaller our regular army is in proportion to that of England, which supplies her armies in the same manner as we do: by voluntary enlistment. It readily may be seen from this table how small a proportion of our entire population has had the experience of service with the colors, especially so when Table No. 2 is considered in this connection. As a nation our citizens