WAKING UP AMERICA TO THE DANGER OF INVASION

Henry Breckinridge Tells Why the Nation Must Have a Strong and Perfectly Constituted Land Force

Since Mr. Breckinridge's articles began in THE SUNDAY SUN developments bearing on the question of national defence have multiplied rapidly. The nation is now awaiting the final word from Germany on the submarine issue. The seizure of the von Igel papers, revealing plots of German agents in the United States, has been made a diplomatic issue. Japan has again voiced her disapproval of discrimination in the matter of immigration. Our forces are still in Mexico. Meanwhile the joint committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives is debating whether the country shall have the degree of semi-preparedness provided by the Hay bill or the greater degree as embodied in the Chamberlain Senate bill. After the army's reorganization the Administration's preparedness programme is to bend every energy to hasten action on the navy bill now pending before the House Committee on Naval Affairs. At this juncture, and with the problem of defence the most serious, in the minds of a majority of citizens, that the nation has faced in many decades, THE SUN presents the following joint article by Mr. Breckinridge and Capt. W. S. Sims, one of the navy's most brilliant officers, on the vital needs of the land and sea forces as of the utmost importance.

By HENRY BRECKINRIDGE,
Formerly Assistant Secretary of War.

I HAVE talked with a great many persons who were sincerely interested in the preparedness issue and desired that everything reasonable should be done to give the nation adequate defence. But these well intentioned and patriotic individuals very naturally suffer a good deal of confusion of thought when it comes to working out in their minds a proper balancing of the elements of defence essential to a well rounded, efficient and economical military policy.

The first question I am always asked by such individuals is, "Why do we need an army at all if we have a large enough navy?" And my answer is that the question is a very natural one. It is conceivable that if we had a large enough navy we should need a very small army—large enough only to insure the integrity of organized government within our borders and to give us such small measure of protection as is required to meet such contingent dangers as might arise from Canada on the north and Mexico on the south. And then I go on to talk somewhat in the following vein:

We have heard much of late about the influence of sea power on history. We cannot hear too much. The influence of sea power on history has been immense. But this truth may be given too wide and too exclusive application. The navy is our first line of defence. It should be a great navy. The enormous length of our coast line, our numerous insular possessions, our great interests in the water borne commerce of the world (not in the merchant ships carrying that commerce), the existence of the oceans separating us from our potential enemies, all dictate the absolute, inescapable necessity of the maintenance of great sea power.

The navy is our first line of defence, and under no circumstances should it be less in power than to hold the second place among the navies of the world—yes, it is possible that we could have a navy great enough to constitute nearly our sole defence. But this is the age of coalitions, and such a policy would require that our navy be greater in power than the combined navies of the strongest coalition existing at any one time in the world.

The expense of such a policy would be enormous and would excite the keen and resentful suspicions of the nations of the earth. As a practical matter it can be put aside on account of the element of expense if for no other reason.

Furthermore, history has shown that wars which commence upon the sea end upon the land. We can be harassed upon the sea. We can be destroyed only upon the land. Great Britain is the only Western Power of great international importance that can be destroyed by sea power. She cannot feed herself, and access to her can be had only across water. And in this present war of the nations we see Great Britain, the greatest sea power of all history, driven to the necessity of raising armies numbered by the million to accomplish her military purposes.

As a rule, only by striking at the territory and treasure of an enemy, which by necessity are situated upon the land, can that conclusive injury be done that dictates the final determination of war. As I said, wars may begin upon the water but usually they end upon the land. The ultimate resources of nations cannot be brought to bear upon the water. They can be brought to bear only upon the land.

Modern war is a conflict of entire nations. A modern war can be fought out only where all the organized resources of nations can be brought to bear, and that is on the land. And in any life and death struggle that might ever come to this nation the final purpose for which sea power would be brought to bear against us would be so that mighty land forces might be transported to our shores for our conquest.

Now sea power is vital and must not be neglected. But sea power alone is not enough. Adequate sea power must be supplemented by adequate land power.

"But," my inquiring friend will ask, "if we have a big enough navy and then supplement the navy by plenty of coast defences, why will not such a policy be sufficient for our needs?"

Again I have to answer that it is conceivable that such a solution might answer. A cordon of fortifications might be built about our insular possessions and the coasts of continental United States that would render them practically impregnable. But such a solution must be based on the hypothesis that all the wealth in the world is at our disposal.

The present coast defences, or, more properly speaking, harbor defences, now existing in United States territory cost about $165,000,000. The coast line of continental United States is about 5,000 miles long. The guns in the harbor defences cover something over 300 miles of coast line in the immediate neighborhood of our most important strategic commercial harbors. And you can figure up for yourself the amount of money it would take actually to protect all our coasts from invasion.

The fabulous expense of any such policy constitutes its own elimination. The principles of economy and the logic of history dictate the necessity of having the national defence consist of sea power and land power and of having the organized land power of the nation divided up into two parts—coast artillery and mobile army. Each element should be adequate and the whole system of defence should be well balanced.

The navy is the great offensive arm of the national defence. It should be in a position to go where it will to search out the enemy and destroy it. When I say that the navy is the great offensive arm of the national defence, I mean offensive in the tactical sense and not in the political sense. By no means do I imply that the navy is to be the weapon of political aggression. The navy must not and cannot be tied down to the protection of great commercial harbors and cities, but must be absolutely free to go wherever tactical considerations may dictate the necessity of going.

It is to give the navy this essential freedom of action that the coast artillery finds its reason for existence. Coast artillery fortifications, with their detachments for strewing the harbors with mines, are supposed to be able to protect harbors and cities from fleet attack. They are not supposed to be able and are not able to defend themselves from land attack from the rear.

This is the function of the mobile army, that is, to meet whatever land forces may gain lodgment on our soil. Also it is the purpose of the coast artillery to afford a haven of refuge to which our fleets might come for safety and repair in case of necessity of temporary flight from an overpowering enemy or in case of having been roughly handled in an engagement with a more powerful enemy. Each arm of the national defence is essential and must be provided in proper amount.

It is an interesting thing to note how the fathers viewed the two arms of the service. Jealousy of standing armies was one of our Anglo-Saxon inheritances. In the Constitutional Convention there was considerable sentiment against giving the Federal Government the power to raise and maintain a standing army at all. The mother country herself had not had much more than a century of experience with standing armies; and that experience did not teach the people of England to love the institution. But the preponderating common sense of our great Constitutional Convention prevailed and the Federal Congress finally was given ample power to raise and support armies.

But the feeling with respect to armies found embodiment in a limitation that was placed upon the power of Congress to make appropriations for the army. The Constitution gives Congress absolutely unlimited power to provide and maintain navies. It also gives Congress the power to raise and support armies, but qualifies this power by providing that no appropriation for the army shall be available for more than two years. Thus it was planned to give added protection from militarism to our institutions by holding the purse strings tightly and continually in the hands of the Congress.

Armies had oppressed peoples, had set up governments and pulled them down. Navies had not and, except under exceptional circumstances, could not; though in recent times in Portugal and Brazil we have seen the navy participate in a prominent fashion in revolt against the constituted authorities. But no principle of American policy now is so well settled and in so little danger of disturbance as the principle of the absolute subordination of the military power to the civil within the State.

We have no need to fear our own army and navy. Any concern that we wish to indulge should be directed not to any potential oppressive power of our armed forces but to their inadequacy and to the undesirable probability that the General Staffs of the other armies and navies of the world stand in no more awe of them than do we.

"THAT SMOKE HAS ALMOST BLINDED ME TO THE TRUTH!"
From The Evening [illegible] February 7

CAPT. W. S. SIMS DESCRIBES NAVY'S PART IN DEFENCE

CAPT. WILLIAM S. SIMS, U. S. N., is a man with ideas. He is now in command of the navy's most powerful superdreadnought, the Nevada. He has rendered brilliant service not only in the regular course of his duties but also in telling the truth about the navy from his point of view. He stirs up discussions. His technical knowledge is thorough, his enthusiasm intense. When he appears before a committee of Congress that committee sits up and listens.

That is what happened when he testified before the House Committee on Naval Affairs not long ago. Then he told about the probable nature of the manœuvres that would be necessary against a hostile force equal or slightly superior to our probable defending fleet; of the night attack by the torpedo flotilla; of the uses of the battle cruiser as an adjunct of the fleet and the possibilities of the fleet submarine.

His testimony was so striking and so important that he was asked to enlarge upon it for the benefit of the readers of THE SUNDAY SUN. This he consented to do. His statement follows:

"The defence of the United States coast against invasion by a first class Power will be made not by submarines, dreadnoughts or mines but by the fleet—the whole power of our naval forces.

"Radio-telegraphy and improved fighting instruments have revolutionized methods in naval tactics and strategy, but as it has ever been so it remains: the power to control the seas rests with the fleet possessed of the greater potential energy applied to the better advantage.

"If the United States loses sea control through the destruction of its fleet the defence of the coast is lost, and an invader gaining such control can throw an expeditionary force upon the main Atlantic coast or against the isolated position of Panama. All the coast submarines we can build and all the mines we can plant will not stop it for with the control of the sea on the surface it will drive off the submarines and sweep out the mines, but with the sea control resting with our fleet no expedition against us can be successful and no strategist will venture the attempt.

"Such a force would probably be located and destroyed, although it might dodge in upon the coast; but if it did its naval support would soon be driven off by our superior fleet, and the expedition end disastrously. If it lost the control of the sea surface it would be open to night attacks by destroyers, attacks by fleet submarines and in danger from mines, which it would not be able to locate and drag out if they were protected by the fleet controlling the surface.

"The fleet, then, is the thing to which in case of war with a first class Power the country must look. If the enemy's naval power were greatly superior to our own the object of the defenders would be to delay the enemy's landing as long as possible, that the general resources of the country might be converted into means of national defence.

"If our fleet were sufficiently strong its object would be by destroying the hostile fleet to prevent its obtaining sea control, thus insuring the safety of the entire country, just as at the present time England, although within a few leagues of her bitterest enemy, is practically immune from invasion.

"But the fleet of this day, although in principle the same, is a very different instrument from that which Nelson knew. His was composed of line of battleships and some frigates. They carried guns which ranged nearly a mile, and when a ship was out of sight it was also out of communication.

"A modern fleet to get the maximum efficiency from its units has, although with many variations in each type, three classes of vessels—battleship or heavy fighters; cruisers, in which are all vessels used for scouting and screening purposes, battle cruisers, armored cruisers and swift light cruisers built especially for the purpose of seeking information, and the torpedo boats or those whose chief weapon is the torpedo, in which are included the torpedo boat proper, now almost obsolete; the torpedo boat destroyer and the fleet submarine.

"Each of these classes has its function in the fleet, as the infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineers have in an army. The land force lacking any of these branches is unbalanced and excellent infantry and artillery may be utterly routed if they be deficient in cavalry or similar mobile force to ascertain the enemy's location and movements. The navy in this respect is in no way different from the army, and in order to secure that balance indispensable to successful manœuvres the fleet must have a scouting force sufficient in numbers and in speed, radius of action and power to learn the enemy's position and movements.

"Assuming that reliable word were received by the commander in chief of the Atlantic fleet that a hostile force had left the other side of the ocean, the first thing for him to do will be to make an 'estimate of the situation' as it is called, by determining his own available forces and resources and those of the enemy and their possible and probable destinations, and in this connection he will consider his bases of supply and of protection.

"At this stage it is safe to say that he will be extremely grateful that he has spent months at the War College, where nearly every phase of the situation has been anticipated and discussed with forty other officers; and now he will not be staggered by the unexpectedness of things.

"His first active move will probably be to send out all available scouting vessels in every direction a thousand miles or more to sea, to observe and report by wireless everything which the trained observers on board think worth while, and the sum total of this information when analyzed will soon enable him to give the direction of the incoming fleet, and from that he must deduce its probable destination. Meantime he will have taken with his main force a position which will enable him to move to meet it in a manner as to thwart his enemy's plan. This will, of course, depend upon the other Admiral's objective, the strength of the respective fleets and the advance bases which either fleet desires to seize or hold.

"If the forces are about equal or the enemy's superiority not too great he will go out to meet the expedition, throwing ahead of his battleships a screen of cruisers and probably his flotillas of destroyers. This screen will spread out many miles and maintain positions at varying distances in advance of the fighting ships. The distance from the main fleet of this screen varies according to circumstances by possibly several hundred miles; but, generally speaking, it is supposed each day to steam ahead and clear out all submarines, destroyers or other hostile craft at least as far as the battleships will travel at night. According to reports gained from the far outlying scouts and the swift cruisers or battle cruisers, the commander in chief will regulate the position of the units and the general movement of his fleet.

"Meantime, guarded in much the same manner and taking similar precautions, the enemy will proceed on his way, until some of the vessels of the opposing screens come into contact, and then will follow a contest for scouting supremacy, involving all the skill and available forces of the opposing commanders. The result will be momentous.

"On land it is bad enough to lose touch with the enemy; but on sea it is much worse; for great advantage lies with the side gaining and holding supremacy in the area between and about the fleets. If the invader has that control he can evade contact and slip off in another direction, pass around his blinded enemy and, leaving him behind, go to his destination; but if he loses that advantage the defender maintains contact with his enemy and the latter cannot escape and proceed on his way without being subjected to night torpedo attack and brought to action when considered most advantageous.

"It is at this stage that the battle cruiser, of great speed, heavy armament and protective armor enough to defend it against anything but a battle ship, is indispensable to our fleet if the enemy has them. It is their especial function to catch and smash the enemy's cruisers and scouts, to fight, if necessary, its way through the screen to ascertain what lies behind it, and to sink every hostile cruiser which attempts to cut through our screen or to approach our main fleet to find out and report where it is.

"Eventually one side or the other will drive its opponent's screen upon its own battleship force for protection; and then the hour for the torpedo flotilla has come. Under such conditions the screening ships of the enemy, either in circle or rectangle, are formed about the battleships to protect them from what is certain to follow, the torpedo attack.

"As is generally known, a destroyer is quite a husky boat, very low and narrow, capable of making over 30 knots, or a speed approaching that of an express train. They are armed with a few quick firing 3 inch or 4 inch guns to beat off the light boats; but for destructive power they rely upon the torpedo, which will carry with surprising accuracy a distance of 12,000 yards, or six sea miles.

"A single torpedo hit will put a battleship out of action, if it does not sink her. Each destroyer costs about $1,000,000 and carries 80 men, so several of them can be sacrificed to destroy a battleship costing $15,000,000, carrying 1,000 men, and of a fighting energy perhaps sufficient to shift the superiority in battle line from one fleet to the other.

"If the other side has a preponderance of scouting forces and drives in our screen we become subject to destroyer attack at night. Our fleet covers a large area; but since we do not know whence the attack will be delivered we dispose our remaining cruisers and destroyers in a circle about the main fleet; and the enemy, who knows exactly where our fleet is—and is constantly receiving messages as to our speed an' course—will make a concentrated attack with his destroyers, sailing through our extended screen with one flotilla of destroyers after another until he breaks into our fleet. We would get some of them, but we would not get all, or even a majority of them; and I do not know of any attack more deadly than that which can thus take place at night.

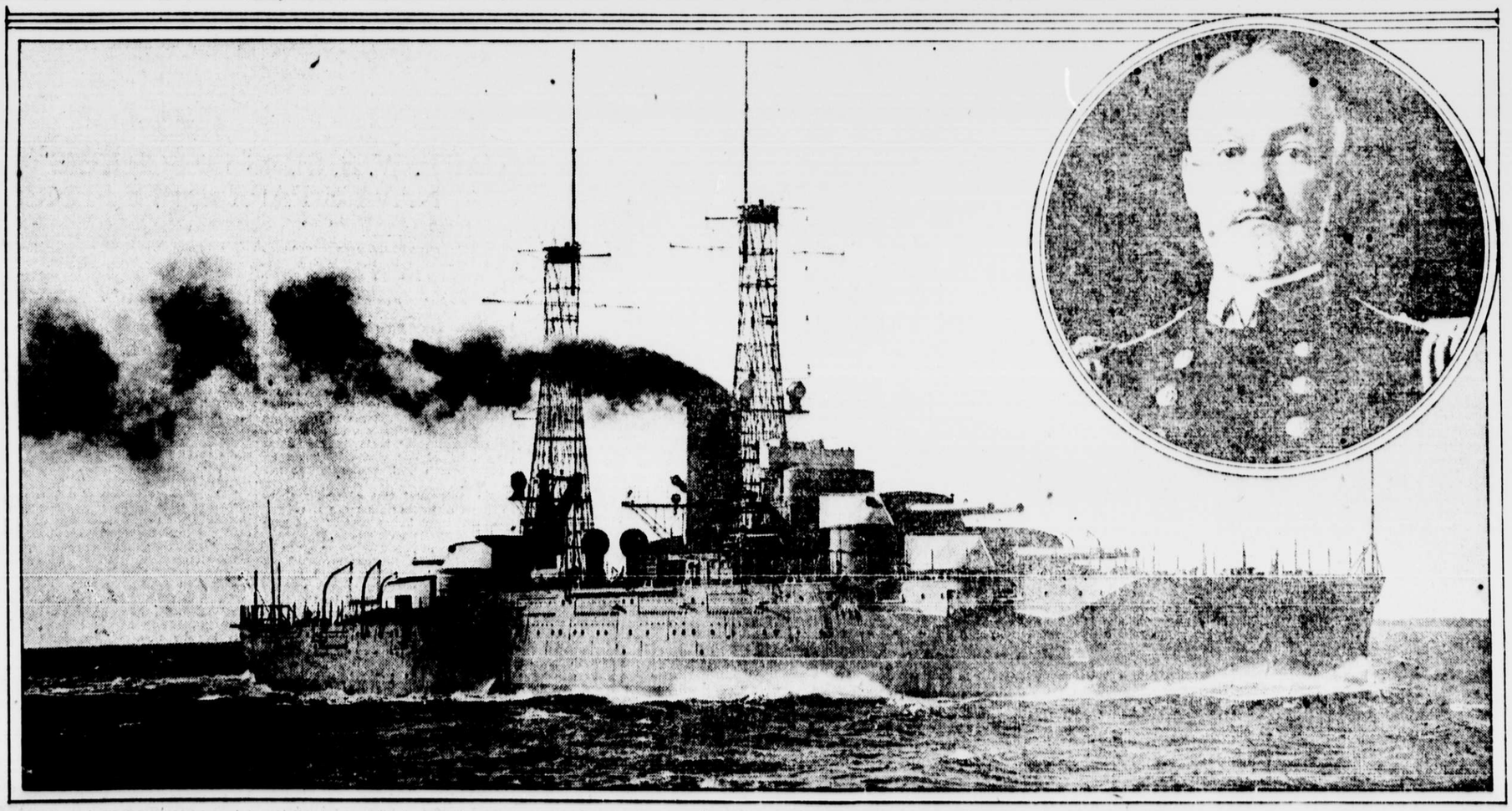
"In the West Indies last winter we discussed this subject very carefully, and Admiral Fletcher decided that we should try some very elaborate experiments. He assigned certain ships to represent the main body, and put two screens around them, with intervals of 1,000 yards between the ships of the screen, and directed the flotilla to attack under various conditions.

"One night the ships of the screen used searchlights from vessel to vessel, so that the destroyers would have to pass through a path of light to reach the main body. That was done the first night; it looked like a city on fire, and we could see the whole formation. On making the attack we found that the searchlight was not a good thing to use. Then we tried an attack upon the battleships where they did not use their searchlights unless they first discovered us, when by their light they would fire upon us with their guns; and we were very successful.

"As a final test we made the attack with actual torpedoes, with dummy heads of course, that is, heads that would mushroom when they struck the side of a ship. Nine destroyers carrying each two torpedoes and twenty not using them were engaged. We fired eighteen shots and made eleven acknowledged hits and perhaps more in reality; and most of the shots were fired within a range of 1,500 or 1,000 yards, which is way inside of torpedo range. We lost out of twenty boats engaged seven or eight. Further experiments made at that time demonstrated the effectiveness of mine planting in the course of the enemy's fleet when once his screen had been driven in and his main force located.

"The submarine is supposed to be unable to make night attacks, because her speed is too slow for a surface attack and her sight too defective to make a successful approach under water against a fleet steaming at a speed greater than the best the submarine can do. However, no one can say that if assisted and guided by friendly destroyers the more powerful

Continued on Fourth Page.



CAPT. WILLIAM S. SIMS, U. S. N., AND THE BATTLESHIP NEVADA, OF WHICH HE IS IN COMMAND.

Capt. W. S. Sims Shows How the Navy, as the First Line of Defence, Would Grapple With a Foe