

*I have been like an engine bucking a snow-drift . . . and finally I accumulated so much snow that I came to a halt and could not get through. . . .*

*I believe that there are a far larger number of men who would at once sink every other purpose, no matter what their convictions might be, for the purpose of smashing me once and for all. . . . I believe that the bulk of our people would accept my candidacy as a proof of greedy personal ambition on my part, and would be bitterly hostile to me in consequence, and bitterly hostile therefore to the cause for which I stood. . . .*

*I think the people have made up their minds that they have had all they want of me.<sup>100</sup>*

TR, 1906's Nobel Peace Prize winner, now longed for one last Rough Rider charge—if not up San Juan Hill, then to a mud-and-blood, artillery-wracked French no-man's-land. That June, he confided to Britain's Arthur Hamilton Lee, "I only wish I and my boys were beside you in the trenches. I am already planning to raise a division of mounted riflemen such as our old regiment. (It will fight in the trenches or anywhere else.) I have the brigade commanders and regimental commanders picked; but I do not believe Wilson can be kicked into war."<sup>101</sup>

But if America could not be kicked into war, it might be kicked into Preparedness.

## "Pretty boys who know all of the latest tango steps"

TO RAISE ANY DIVISION OF "MOUNTED RIFLEMEN," TR FACED INNUMERABLE obstacles. How might they coordinate with British or French contingents? How might he cajole a decidedly uninterested Woodrow Wilson to grant his request? And last but, practically, not least, how would Theodore Roosevelt stay on his horse?

The battered fifty-six-year-old Bull Moose of 1915 was not the jaunty Rough Rider of 1898. The years—and a foolhardy expedition into the Amazon jungle—had inflicted their toll. In May 1915, his children Ethel and Archie presented him with a new horse in honor of his splendid victory in the *Barnes v. Roosevelt* libel trial.<sup>1</sup> On Monday morning, May 27, it threw to him to the ground, breaking two of his ribs.<sup>2</sup>

"I am practically over the effects of the accident," he ruefully wrote Arthur Hamilton Lee in mid-June. "Of course, they were a little painful for two or three weeks. The simple fact is that I tried to ride a horse that was too good for me. I might just as well admit that I am old and stiff; and while I can sit on a horse fairly well, I cannot mount him if he misbehaves. This horse threw me before I got my right foot into the stirrup, and I struck the ground a good deal as if I had been a walrus."<sup>3</sup>

If some of his dreams seemed too personal and fanciful for his own good, others did not.

Prior to assuming the presidency, or even the vice presidency, TR had regularly employed the old West African proverb "Speak softly and carry a big stick."<sup>4</sup> By 1915, he hadn't spoken softly for a long time, but he still deemed "a big stick" necessary to national defense.

He also believed that had he held office in August 1914, war might never have erupted. Certainly, Wilson, distracted by a recent widower's grief, was not at his best. Even Colonel House took note of that, daring to write to the invariably thin-skinned Wilson on August 3, 1914, "Our people are deeply shocked at the enormity of the general European war, and I see here and there regret that you did not use your good offices in behalf of peace."<sup>5</sup>

True, TR would have brandished the gleaming sword of military might to secure that end, but it might have worked. The cheap sheen of Wilson's beatific weakness had not.

In the summer of 1915, Wilson chanced upon a little newspaper filler article indicating that "the General Staff is preparing a plan in the event of war with Germany."

Such news unhinged Wilson. With Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison out of town, he summoned Garrison's assistant secretary, Henry Breckinridge. When Breckinridge pled ignorance, Wilson ordered him to get to the bottom of the matter—and, if the report was true, to immediately fire every member of the General Staff and order them all out of Washington.

Breckinridge contacted Acting Army Chief of Staff Tasker Bliss. Bliss recalled,

*I told [Breckinridge] the law creating the General Staff made it its duty "to prepare plans for the national defense"; that I was President of the War College when the General Staff was organized in 1903; that from that time till then the College had studied over and over again plans for war with Germany, England, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, etc. I said that if the President took the action threatened, it would only make patent to everybody what pretty much everybody already knew and would create a great political row, and, finally, it would be absurd.*

*I think the President realized this in a cooler moment. Nothing further was said to him, about the matter, nor did he again mention it. But Mr. Breckinridge directed me to caution the War College to camouflage its work. It resulted in practically no further official studies.<sup>6</sup>*

A year or two later, Wilson had replaced Garrison with former Cleveland mayor Newton D. Baker. To Baker, he complained that the General Staff was still formulating contingency plans. Baker, new to his job and a confirmed pacifist, had no problem with that. "Mr. President," he calmly explained, "they have made war at the War College with every country in the world. The way they do it is to propose a problem. For example, suppose we had a war with France. Then a war is fought with France on paper, and the paper folded up and put away." Wilson pondered that. "That seems to me a very dangerous occupation," he commanded Baker. "I think you had better stop it."<sup>7</sup>

There was to be no planning—nor, for a long while, much Preparedness. "If this country needed a million men," William Jennings Bryan famously remarked in December 1914, "and needed them in a day, the call would go out at sunrise and the sun would go down on a million men under arms."<sup>8</sup> TR claimed to have heard a "Bryanite" senator do "The Great Commoner" one better, maintaining that "ten million freemen would spring to arms, the equals of any regular soldiers in the world."<sup>9</sup> TR countered that those ten million instant soldiers would possess "at the outside four hundred thousand modern rifles to which to spring. Perhaps six hundred thousand more could spring to squirrel pieces and fairly good shotguns. The remaining nine million would have to 'spring' to axes, scythes, handsaws, gimlets and similar arms."<sup>10</sup>

The country *was* unprepared for war. In early 1915, its army boasted a mobile force of only twenty-four thousand men—just twice the manpower of New York City's Police Department. It possessed barely enough ammunition for a day and a half of combat.<sup>11</sup> Army expenditures dropped by \$6 million from June 30, 1914, to June 30, 1915, and by another \$17 million in the following twelve months.<sup>12</sup>

Bryan, Baker, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels—pacifists all. This was a very strange cast of characters for an administration teetering on war's edge. Yet not all of Wilson's men harbored such feelings. Colonel House's diary for July 1915 contained this entry: "If we had gone actively to work . . . to build up a war machine commensurate with our standing among the nations, we would be in a position to-day to enforce peace. If war comes with Germany because of this submarine controversy it will be

because we are totally unprepared and Germany feels we are impotent."<sup>13</sup> A few days later, he warned Wilson directly of the "terrible gamble" that a policy of unpreparedness entailed.<sup>14</sup>

Wilson's first secretary of war, Lindley Garrison, favored a get-tough policy with Mexico, and when in early 1916 Wilson finally did proclaim his public support for Preparedness, Garrison advocated a "Continental Army Plan," a 140,000-man army augmented by 400,000 volunteer reservists.

Outstripping Garrison's enthusiasm for Preparedness was Franklin Roosevelt's.

From war's very onset Franklin grasped the magnitude of the responsibility—and the opportunity—to come. "A complete smash up is inevitable," he wrote to Eleanor on August 1, 1914, as Germany declared war on Russia. "These are history-making days. It will be the greatest war in the world's history"<sup>15</sup>—a war that would place him at odds not only with his superior, Josephus Daniels ("Mr. D. totally fails to grasp the situation"<sup>16</sup>), but also with much of the Wilson administration.

Franklin wrote to Eleanor the next day:

*Mr. Daniels [was] feeling chiefly very sad that his faith in human nature and civilization and similar idealistic nonsense was receiving such a rude shock. So I started in alone to get things ready and prepare plans for what ought to be done by the Navy end of things. . . . Some fine day the State Department will want the moral backing of a "fleet in being" and it won't be there. All this sounds like borrowing trouble I know but it is my duty to keep the Navy in a position where no chances, even the most remote, are taken. Today we are taking chances and I nearly boil over when I see the cheery "manana" way of doing business.<sup>17</sup>*

"I just know," he confided (or perhaps boasted) to Eleanor in April 1915, "I shall do some awful unneutral thing before I get through."<sup>18</sup>

Unneutral not only in foreign matters but also in those of a domestic nature. With remarkably little respect for Josephus Daniels, Franklin was not above surreptitiously reaching across the political aisle to pro-military

Republicans. In October 1914, with Daniels out of town, FDR took it upon himself to release a memo supporting allegations of naval unpreparedness levied by Henry Cabot Lodge's son-in-law, Massachusetts Representative Augustus Gardner.<sup>19</sup> Two months later, at a public debate at Times Square's Hotel Astor, FDR advocated universal military training as "just plain common sense."

"An able-bodied boy," argued Franklin, "is better from every standpoint than a wretched runt, including the standpoint of the man at war."<sup>20</sup> Three days later, Woodrow Wilson essentially opposed universal military training in his annual address to Congress.<sup>21</sup>

Franklin tread on hostile territory even among his own friends. Theodore, however, recognized the perils that his cousin faced and further recognized how he might only aggravate them. In October 1914, as TR campaigned across New York State for his faltering Progressive Party, Franklin's mother, Sara Delano "Sally" Roosevelt, invited him to stop off at their Hyde Park estate. TR's son Ted accepted the invitation, and Franklin himself seemed overjoyed by the prospect. "I am perfectly delighted to hear . . . you . . . will spend the night of October 5 here," he advised his uncle. "Nothing could give me greater pleasure and I am counting on seeing you."<sup>22</sup>

When he was not being warlike, TR could be intensely diplomatic. This occasion demanded TR's best behavior—and he provided it. He gently advised Sara,

*I am more than pleased at your letter. It was the first notice I had that we were to stay with you. Now, Sara, I am very doubtful, from Franklin's standpoint, whether it is wise that we were to stay with you and I have communicated with [Ted Jr.] to this effect. I shall be in the middle of a tour in which I am attacking the Administration, and I think it might well be an error, from Franklin's standpoint, if we stayed with you. If it were not during the campaign there is literally no place where I would rather go. And, of course, if the matter has been made public, it may be fine to go anyhow.*

*I hope you understand, dear Sally, that it is the exact truth to say that I am only thinking of Franklin's interest.<sup>23</sup>*

Sara rescinded her invitation, advised her son of events, and continued on with a bit of political observation: "Of course, it is very kind of him, but why he should go on a tour deliberately to attack the Administration, is what I cannot see the wisdom of. I think no one gains by pulling others down. It is not a noble or high-minded viewpoint."<sup>24</sup>

TR's concerns regarding Franklin's safety were grounded in a more fearsome reality than either Sara or Franklin knew. As he toured upstate in October 1914, TR still concentrated on excoriating Billy Barnes's GOP machine, but with Primary Day past, he turned his fire on Washington, on Democrats—and on Franklin Roosevelt's Navy Department.

"During the last twenty months," he charged later that month in a *New York Times* article titled "The Navy as Peacemaker," "there has been in our Navy a great falling off relative to other nations. . . . The President who entrusts the departments of State and the Navy to gentlemen like Messrs. Bryan and Daniels deliberately invites disaster in the event of serious complications with a formidable foreign opponent."<sup>25</sup>

Wilson did not appreciate criticism, either of himself or of loyal subordinates—particularly not of Josephus Daniels. At a January 1916 luncheon, he was advised of a new rumor besmirching his navy secretary. "Daniels is surrounded by a network of conspiracy and of lies," he roared, pounding his fist upon the table. "His enemies are determined to ruin him. I can't be sure who they are yet, but when I do get them—God help them."<sup>26</sup>

If Wilson had ever fully realized FDR's attitudes regarding his chief, Franklin might also have needed God's help.

For his part, TR thought Wilson needed divine intervention regarding his seemingly unending transmittal of stern but ultimately toothless notes protesting German U-boat policy. Discussing Wilson's latest diplomatic note with his daughter Alice, he asked, his voice dripping with sarcasm, "Did you notice what its serial number was? I fear I have lost track myself; but I am inclined to think it is No 11,785, Series B."<sup>27</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt was always the manly sort and advocated similar manliness in his four sons.

His standards had their price. At age eleven, his oldest son Ted suffered blinding headaches—perhaps a nervous breakdown.<sup>28</sup> He recovered, overcoming his own diminutive frame, to emerge as quite the physical bruiser at Groton and a battered but undaunted 126-pound football player at Harvard. An academic suspension and an altercation with a Boston police officer further marked his undergraduate career. "I would rather one of [my sons] should die," TR said even after Ted's breakdown, "than have them grow up weaklings."<sup>29</sup>

One Sunday at Oyster Bay, the Colonel asked his friend and adviser, the *New York Tribune's* labor correspondent John J. "Jack" Leary, how his own son was getting along. "All right," Leary answered, "only a little too much foot-ball and swimming and not enough school-work—almost too much boy." TR reassured him,

*That's all right. Don't let that worry you. Do you know you are fortunate in having a real boy? Some of the most splendid fellows I know have boys that if they were mine I'd want to choke them—pretty boys who know all of the latest tango steps and the small talk, and the latest things in socks and ties—tame cats, mollycoddles, and their fathers real men, and their mothers most excellent women! Throw-backs, I suppose. I'd feel disgraced beyond redemption had I such boys.*

*Mine, thank God, have been good boys, a bit mischievous at times, all of them, but every boy is. Honestly, if I had to take my choice, I'd rather have a boy that I'd have to go to the police station and bail out for beating a cab driver or a policeman, than one of the mollycoddle type. He might worry me, but he wouldn't disgrace me.*<sup>30</sup>

TR believed that all boys—and young men and some older men too—required training in the manly art of . . . war.

Nearly two months before the *Lusitania* tragedy, TR (thanks to Leonard Wood<sup>31</sup>) endorsed an organization called the American Legion, designed to provide a database of a quarter million experienced reservists poised to serve at the outbreak of hostilities. "Line" members were former military. "Specials" were those men (and occasionally women) possessing special skills needed by the military, everyone from nurses to steam fitters, mule packers to radio operators, hunters and trappers to photographers and pharmacists. Dues were set at twenty cents a year. Membership was limited to actual citizens between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five. Eschewing "militarism," cofounder Dr. John E. Hausmann, editor of *Adventure Magazine*, nonetheless freely admitted that the idea originally sprang from a prewar concept of "a legion of adventurers."

Among the Legion's founding cadre at New York's Adventurers Club was Theodore Roosevelt Jr. "I and my four sons will gladly become members," TR informed the Legion in late February. "I especially hope and pray that there will be no war; but the surest way to avert war is to be prepared for it."<sup>32</sup>

He was not always so pacific. In 1889, when German and American warships challenged each other in Samoa, he had confided to Cecil Spring-Rice, "Frankly, I don't know that I should be sorry to see a bit of a spar with Germany; the burning of New York and a few other seacoast cities would be a good object lesson on the need of an adequate system of coastal defences."<sup>33</sup>

During 1895's British-Venezuelan border spat, TR wrote Cabot Lodge, "I don't care whether our sea coast cities are bombarded or not. We would take Canada. . . . Personally, I rather hope that the fight will come soon. The clamor of the peace faction has convinced me this country needs a war."<sup>34</sup> He shifted gears, to war with Spain, not long afterward, confessing to his older sister, Anna Roosevelt "Bye" Cowles, "If it wasn't wrong I would say personally I would rather welcome a foreign war!"<sup>35</sup>

At the Naval War College in June 1897, he had thundered, "All the great masterful races have been fighting races; and the minute that a race loses the hard-fighting virtues, then . . . it has lost its proud right to stand as the equal of the best. . . . No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war."<sup>36</sup>

There lay within him a sheer bloodlust. In December 1892, he informed *The Cosmopolitan's* readers, "Every man who has in him any real power of joy in battle knows that he feels it when the wolf begins to rise in his heart; *he does not shrink from blood and sweat*, or deem that they mar the fight; *he revels in them*, and the toll, the pain and the danger, as but setting off the triumph"<sup>37</sup> (emphasis added).

Why such a martial strain?

The boy is father to the man, and the sickly asthmatic boy who built himself up into a cowboy and a Rough Rider provides a partial answer to the riddle.

But Theodore repeatedly averred that he considered his own father "the best man I ever knew."<sup>38</sup> Perhaps he was. Or perhaps TR protested too much, for there remained a singular blot on the escutcheon of Theodore "Thee" Roosevelt Sr.

The man was a draft dodger.

A *legal* draft dodger but nonetheless one who paid a substitute a then princely \$1,000 to take his place in the Civil War.

"Thee" Roosevelt was never proud of his decision.

And though he never mentioned it, his son likely wasn't either.<sup>39</sup>

Nor would he ever wish to emulate it.



In his early Washington years, TR acquired a lifelong friend and ally: "a playmate who fairly walked me off my legs; a Massachusetts man moreover, an army surgeon named Wood."<sup>40</sup>

Leonard Wood had battled Geronimo in the 1880s. He attended both Grover Cleveland and William McKinley as personal physician. He served alongside Theodore in Cuba and later as military governor of Santiago, Cuba, where he faced charges of improperly accepted gifts from Havana *jai alai* interests.<sup>41</sup> In the Philippines, he commanded anti-insurgent troops. In December 1909—partially to please TR—William Howard Taft designated him army chief of staff, an unprecedented appointment for a physician. He had climbed the rungs of power—and not entirely by accident. "His zeal for the public service always went hand in hand with his zeal for his own advancement," reflected journalist Oswald Garrison Villard. "Of

all the men I have known and studied, [he] seems to me to have been the most blindly ambitious. . . . [H]e would have been the ideal fascist leader."<sup>42</sup>

Wilson replaced Wood as chief of staff in 1914, but he remained on active duty, loudly echoing TR's Preparedness worldview. When the *Lusitania* sank, Wood confided to his diary, "Rotten spirit in the *Lusitania* matter. Yellow spirit everywhere."<sup>43</sup> To Wood, William Jennings Bryan was "an ass of the first class."<sup>44</sup> His public remarks were little better guarded. In December 1914, he informed Manhattan's New York Merchants Association, "A government is the murderer of its people which sends them to the field uninformed and untaught."<sup>45</sup> Woodrow Wilson was not amused.<sup>46</sup> Two secretaries of war eventually deemed Wood sufficiently insubordinate to merit court-martial—though neither dared to grant him public martyr status.<sup>47</sup> As a later historian observed, Wood was "a fine soldier but a poor subordinate."<sup>48</sup>

To ensure a trained officer cadre if war came, in 1913 Wood established two summer camps, at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Monterey, California. Middle- and upper-class males rallied to the idea the following summer at camps in Michigan, North Carolina, and Vermont. By 1915, fifteen young patriots (twenty-seven-year-old Theodore Roosevelt Jr. and TR's thirty-four-year-old son-in-law Dr. Richard Derby among them) gathered at New York's Harvard Club to petition Wood to institute a "Businessmen's Camp" at Plattsburgh, New York. A thousand men attended that summer's first session. Even more attended in 1916. Full-page advertisements in *Collier's Weekly*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *New Outlook* exhorted recruits, "Give your vacation to your country and still have the best vacation you ever had."<sup>49</sup>

To American Federation of Labor president Samuel Gompers, Wood described his Plattsburgh recruits as "a very typical American group."<sup>50</sup> Almost exclusively upper-class, they were anything but. Celebrity "rookies" included New York mayor John Purroy Mitchel, Mitchel's police commissioner Arthur Woods, *Vanity Fair* publisher Frank Crowninshield, legendary war correspondent Richard Harding Davis, TR's former secretary of state Robert Bacon, Harvard football coach Percy Duncan Houghton, Rhode Island Episcopal bishop James

DeWolf Perry, and New York assemblyman Hamilton Fish Jr.—as well as three Roosevelt offspring: Ted, twenty-five-year-old Kermit, and twenty-one-year-old Archie.<sup>51</sup> An emergency appendectomy shelved Franklin Roosevelt's plans to attend in 1915<sup>52</sup> but not his enthusiasm for the idea. In 1916, he instituted its naval version.<sup>53</sup>

"You feel yourself to be nothing—merely a cog in a powerful machine that is marching irresistibly on," Derby (a better surgeon than shot) wrote his wife, Ethel. "And then the tramp of 250 [marching] feet on the hard macadam road thrills you with a sensation entirely new. You are part of it, and you are glad and proud that you are, and are ever alert to make the whole as perfect as is in your power."<sup>54</sup>

Woodrow Wilson endorsed this "Plattsburgh Idea," but, like Gompers, Garrison, Taft, and Elihu Root, he categorically refused Wood's invitation to view its facilities. TR did not. On Tuesday night, August 24, 1915, he arrived not only to tour the site but also to address its recruits. Wood vetted his remarks—but not nearly enough.

The next morning, TR, attired in a tan suit, military-style campaign hat, and leather breeches, reviewed battalion exercises. He took midday "chow" with the men. He observed the camp's cavalry, engineering, and artillery units in action. All fourteen hundred trainees passed in review. After supper, with two thousand civilians crowding behind them, they assembled on the camp's drill plain to hear TR not merely flay the dangers of complacency and a soft life but also—at a federal military base—openly lacerate the Wilson administration.

*For thirteen months America has played an ignoble part among the nations. We have tamely submitted to seeing the weak, whom we have covenanted to protect, wronged. We have seen our men, women, and children murdered on the high seas without protest. We have used elocution as a substitute for action.*

*During this time our government has not taken the smallest step in the way of preparedness to defend our own rights. . . . Reliance upon high sounding words, unbacked by deeds, is proof of a mind that dwells only in the realm of shadow and of sham.*



*It is not a lofty thing, on the contrary, it is an evil thing, to practise a timid and selfish neutrality between right and wrong. It is wrong for an individual. It is still more wrong for a nation.*<sup>55</sup>

As he spoke, a little wire-haired Airedale terrier wandered by, seeking its master. Bewildered by the huge gathering, it raced back and forth. Bumping into TR, it lay flat on its back, paws pointed upward as the crowd convulsed with laughter. "That's a fine dog. I like him," TR exclaimed. "His present attitude is strictly one of neutrality."<sup>56</sup>

Wood ordered his friend's text softened before its distribution to the press. Instead, one of TR's aides circulated his unexpurgated remarks. Later that night, TR poured more gasoline on the fire, informing reporters,

*I wish to make one comment on the statement so frequently made that we must stand by the President. I heartily subscribe to this on condition, and only on condition, that it is followed by the statement "so long as the President stands by the country."*

*It is defensible to state that we stand by the country, right or wrong; it is not defensible for any free man in a free republic to state that he will stand by any official right or wrong, or by any ex-official. . . .*

*Presidents differ, just like other folks. No man could effectively stand by President Lincoln unless he had stood against President Buchanan. If, after the firing on Sumter, President Lincoln had in a public speech announced that the believers in the Union were too proud to fight, and if instead of action there had been three months of admirable elocutionary correspondence with Jefferson Davis, by midsummer the friends of the Union would have followed Horace Greeley's advice, to let the erring sisters go in peace—for peace at that date was put above righteousness by some mistaken souls, just as it is at the present day.*

*The man who believes in peace at any price or in substituting all-inclusive arbitration treaties for an army and navy should instantly move to China. If he stays here, then more manly people will*

*have to defend him, and he is not worth defending. Let him get out of the country as quickly as possible.*<sup>57</sup>

At 5:00 the next morning, Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckinridge learned of TR's Plattsburgh adventures. Hostile to General Wood to begin with, he raced to Lindley Garrison's home, determined to goad him into action. An enraged Garrison (who implausibly denied discussing the matter with Wilson) noted,

*It is difficult to conceive of anything which could have a more detrimental effect upon the real value of this experiment than such an incident. . . .*

*There must not be any opportunity given at Plattsburgh or any other similar camp for any such unfortunate consequences.*<sup>58</sup>

The Colonel's words shocked even many Preparedness advocates. Willard Straight, publisher of the recently founded *New Republic* (once rumored to be wed to Ethel Roosevelt<sup>59</sup>), complained of Roosevelt's "unfortunate habit of deterring a great many people from supporting a perfectly good cause."<sup>60</sup> The *Chicago Tribune* pronounced his speech in "bad taste or worse. . . . [It] has hurt the movement of national defense a little. It has hurt Mr. Roosevelt more."<sup>61</sup>

Wood's Plattsburgh volunteers stood solidly behind him. "There was not a dissenting voice in the matter,"<sup>62</sup> noted the *New York Herald*, but still General Wood had to swallow hard, salute, and agree with Lindley Garrison.<sup>63</sup> Colonel Roosevelt didn't, firing yet another salvo toward the Potomac: "If the Administration had displayed one-tenth the spirit and energy in holding Germany and Mexico to account for the murder of men, women, and children that it is now displaying . . . to prevent our people from being taught the need of preparation to prevent the repetition of such murders in the future, it would be rendering a service to the people of the country."<sup>64</sup>

Secretary Garrison tried heaping ridicule upon TR. Roosevelt derided Garrison's "buffoonery."<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he claimed that *he* was the man of peace in this great debate:

*I challenge [Garrison] to show where I have ever advocated going to war with any nation because of our preparedness.*

*During my service . . . as president not one shot was fired by any American soldier or sailor against a foreign foe nor was any American sailor or soldier killed by a foreign foe.*

*But while President Wilson was waging peace a score or two of American sailors and soldiers or Marines have been killed or wounded at Veracruz and on our own soil along the Mexican border and in Haiti. If we had acted properly in Mexico in all probability there never would have been an American ship sunk nor a single American murdered on the high seas by Germany.<sup>66</sup>*

#### Haiti.

Haiti was another of those decrepit republics-in-name-only located to our south that managed their internal affairs badly and their external financial matters not at all. In both 1897 and 1902, Germany had seriously interfered in Haitian internal affairs (in 1897 demanding an apology for the arrest of a German national in the form of a twenty-one-gun salute to the German flag). January 1914 saw German, British, and American troops land to protect order. The following year, outraged Haitians invaded the French embassy in pursuit of their latest repressive president. They tossed his corpse over the embassy fence before tearing it to pieces and parading the remains through town. A horrified Wilson dispatched 330 Marines and declared a virtual American protectorate over the essentially failed state.

"What is being done for Hayti . . . is to lift her out of the hands of her thieves," observed *Life* magazine. "It can be done for her, because her need . . . is so conspicuous, and because she is so small. It needs, apparently, to be done for Mexico also, but Mexico is bigger, her neighbors are more sensitive, her population averages several shades lighter in complexion, and her capacity for self-help, though not imposing, undoubtedly beats Hayti's."<sup>67</sup>

#### Mexico.

"Lord, I am feeling warlike with this Administration!"<sup>68</sup> TR wrote Cabot Lodge in February 1915, in part because of Mexico.

Mexican strongman Porfirio Díaz had provided decades of stability and economic growth to his nation. But his administration had also parceled out the nation's landholdings to his supporters. By early 1911, his increasingly unpopular regime offered scant resistance to a wide variety of revolutionary forces. From exile in America, wealthy ranch owner Francisco Madero provided an intellectual rationale for resistance. Regional insurgents Francisco "Pancho" Villa, Pascual Orozco, and Venustiano Carranza flourished in the north. Emiliano Zapata led a peasant revolt further south. In October 1911, the ineffectual Madero emerged as Mexico's new president but was soon overthrown and brutally murdered ("while attempting to escape"<sup>69</sup>) by General Victoriano Huerta. Huerta's May 1913 coup (and most likely Madero's murder) had been abetted by Taft's ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson.

Mexico descended into revolution and murder. Woodrow Wilson assisted its fall into absolute chaos. Deeply offended by Madero's killing, he sacked Ambassador Wilson, took the largely unprecedented step of refusing to recognize Huerta,<sup>70</sup> and "earnestly urge[d] all Americans to leave Mexico at once."<sup>71</sup>

In March 1912, Taft had embargoed all American arms and munitions from reaching Mexico. In February 1913, Wilson exempted Carranza—but not the embattled Huerta—from the ban. Even Madero's foreign affairs secretary, Manuel Calero y Sierra, observed, "Huerta was a usurper. But did it belong to the President of the United States to drive him from the place usurped? This was a matter that concerned exclusively the Mexican people."<sup>72</sup> And if Mexicans did not already resent Woodrow Wilson's campaign to make Mexico safe for democracy, they soon would.

"This was intervention," Roosevelt seethed, "and nothing else; it was such intervention as if in 1877 some European government had declined to recognize Hayes as President, and insisted upon the seating of Tilden."<sup>73</sup>

In April 1914, nine sailors from the U.S. Navy gunboat *USS Dolphin* went ashore at the Huerta-controlled oil and port city of Tampico to secure gasoline. Confused Huertista forces briefly arrested them. Though they were released within minutes, American naval forces demanded a



full apology and a twenty-one-gun salute to the U.S. flag. Huerta agreed to apologize but refused to salute the U.S. flag on Mexican soil.

Huerta agreed to arbitration. Wilson refused.<sup>74</sup> He demanded congressional authorization for "the employment of armed forces" against Mexico ("but not to make war on" her) to secure "unequivocal amends" for unspecified "affronts and indignities." The House acceded 337-37. The Senate followed suit 72-13, all opposed being Republicans, including senators Lodge, Root, and La Follette.<sup>75</sup>

New sparks flew at Veracruz when the German tank steamer SS *Ypiranga* arrived bearing arms and munitions for Huerta. Wilson ordered the city seized. Mexicans rioted. More U.S. warships—including the battleships *Utah*, *Florida*, and *New Hampshire*—arrived. Soon 19 dead and 70 wounded Americans littered Veracruz's streets; 126 Mexicans perished, with another 250 injured.

With U.S. forces occupying Veracruz through November 1914, anti-American feeling erupted throughout Mexico. Thousands of American citizens fled back across the U.S. border. Venustiano Carranza might be battling Huerta, who might be battling Wilson, but Carranza still had no use for American Marines shooting up Mexican streets. A move designed to portray America as a friend to Mexican democracy and reform thus only accelerated the growing anti-Yankee backlash.

At home, Bryan alienated Americans protesting the seizure of their land and property. "You seem," he pooh-poohed their concerns, "to be afraid that one of your steers will be killed and eaten by the Mexicans."<sup>76</sup> Joseph Tumulty curtly informed one American owner of Mexican property that "the President could not see every gink who came from Mexico. . . . I suppose you are another fellow who has lost a cow."<sup>77</sup>

TR held his tongue during 1914's midterms but scalded Wilson and Bryan in a December 6, 1914, *New York Times Magazine* article. Deriding claims that Wilson had "kept us out of war with Mexico," TR asserted, "Thanks to President Wilson's action . . . this country has become partially (and guiltily) responsible for some of the worst acts ever committed even in the civil wars of Mexico."<sup>78</sup>

Devoting much space to anti-Catholic outrages in war-ravaged Mexico, TR charged,

*Messrs. Wilson and Bryan . . . have assumed a certain undoubted responsibility for the behavior of the victorious faction in Mexico which has just taken the kind of stand . . . hostile to every principle of real religious liberty. . . . Catholic schools almost everywhere in Mexico have been closed, institutions of learning sacked and libraries and astronomical and other machinery destroyed, the priests and nuns expelled by hundreds and some of the priests killed and some of the nuns outraged. . . . [C]hurches have been profaned by soldiers entering them on horseback, breaking statues, trampling on relics and scattering on the floor the Sacred Hosts and even throwing them into the horses' feed; . . . in some churches the revolutionaries have offered mock masses and have in other ways, some of them too repulsive and loathsome to mention, behaved precisely as the Red Terrorists of the French Revolution behaved in the churches of Paris."<sup>79</sup>*

In a March 1915 *Metropolitan Magazine* article, "Uncle Sam and the Rest of the World," TR denied any sympathy for Huerta but derided any "endeavor to replace him with a polygamous bandit" like Pancho Villa. He decried Wilson's habit of condemning Huerta's actions while "ignoring" Villa's "far worse misdeeds" before shifting U.S. support from Villa to Carranza, "who was responsible for exactly the same kind of hideous outrages."

"Murder and torture, rape and robbery; the death of women by outrage and children by starvation; the shooting of men by the thousand in cold blood—Mr. Wilson takes note of these facts only to defend the right of vicious and disorderly Mexicans to 'spill' as much as they please of the blood of their fellow-citizens and of law-abiding foreigners."<sup>80</sup>

In newspapers across America, from New York to Boston to Atlanta to Emporia, *Metropolitan Magazine* purchased two-column display ads touting TR's article:

### Stop the Murders in Mexico —Col. Roosevelt

*In Mexico men like you, Americans, brothers to you by the same blood, have been murdered. American women like your wife and sisters have*

been outraged. American homes like your home, hallowed with the same dear associations, have been pillaged and burned.

Read Colonel Roosevelt's indictment of a government that has done nothing. Learn the menace that present-day Mexico is to our peace with the world.<sup>81</sup>

Yet, in one very real (albeit short-term) sense, Wilson's policy of Mexican "watchful waiting" had succeeded. Surrounded on all sides and without funds or materiel to wage war, Huerta fled the country in July 1914, first to Jamaica, then to Spain and the United Kingdom, and finally (and most ironically) to the United States. Fulfilling Wilson's hopes, Carranza replaced Huerta. Yet Carranza's rise could not prevent his nation's further fall. In revolutionary Mexico the game was simple: change partners and kill. Within weeks, Zapata, hungering for speedier and more ambitious land reform, turned on Carranza. By September 1914, so had Pancho Villa.

Influential Americans fell over themselves to flatter Villa. "His soldiers idolize him," gushed Bryan, "and he seems to have no ambition whatsoever except to see [land] reforms carried out."<sup>82</sup> Colonel House saw Villa as "the only man of force now in Mexico."<sup>83</sup> Hearst proclaimed,

*The one man in [Mexico] who has appeared to tower above all others in personal power and capacity, in the magnetism to lead, the mastery to command, and the ability to execute, is Francisco Villa.*

*If Villa is made president he will . . . establish a stable and reliable government. If another man is made president by foreign interference he will have to reckon with Villa and with the masses who believe in Villa.<sup>84</sup>*

Despite Hearst's warm words, as Villa and Carranza battled in Chihuahua Province in December 1915, two thousand Villistas invaded Hearst's 1,625,000-acre Barbicora ranch. Before Diaz's fall, Barbicora boasted seventy-five thousand head of cattle, six thousand sheep, and two thousand horses. By 1915, it had deteriorated sharply. But it remained a

tempting target for any starving army to loot—and the Villistas did. Over a fourteen-month period, Hearst lost somewhere between twenty-five and sixty thousand head of cattle—plus a thousand horses and mules. Villistas confiscated thirty-five thousand bushels of corn and beans and burned an equal amount. For good measure, they kidnapped four Hearst employees and killed the hacienda's bookkeeper.<sup>85</sup>

Some might have gloated that Hearst deserved whatever befell him. Not, however, because he exploited the Mexican economy or because he was fabulously wealthy or because his papers sometimes sensationalized the truth (or simply ignored it). No, it was because of Hearst's positions on war and peace, on Teutons and on Allies.

TR might have been one of those lacking sympathy for "The Chief," as Hearst's minions called him. For the Colonel regarded William Randolph Hearst as "the most sinister pro-German traitor in the country and much the ablest and most dangerous."<sup>86</sup>

To Theodore Roosevelt, there were far too many sharing Hearst's brand of treason.

He called them "hyphenated-Americans."