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Increase the Navy—Cuba Must be Free.

SPEECHES
OF
HON. ALSTON G. DAYTON,
OF WEST VIRGINIA,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
March 24 and 26, 1898.

Thursday, March 24, 1898.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 9378) making appropriations for the naval service for the fiscal year 1898-99—

Mr. DAYTON said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Inasmuch as this bill now presented for the consideration of the House increases appropriations something more than \$3,000,000 over the bill of last year, it is well for the House to clearly understand the provisions that make up that increase. Generally stated, three items constitute it.

First, the increase of the force of 2,000 men and boys, made necessary by the manning and putting into actual service of the ships; second, the increase in the number of vessels that shall hereafter constitute our Navy and provided by this bill, viz, the 3 battle ships, 6 torpedo-boat destroyers, and 6 torpedo boats. In addition to this, the bill has provided for the rebuilding of a gun-boat to take the place of the one substantially disabled upon the lakes. The third principal item which has helped to make up this increase is the provision of the bill for the five dry docks that it has been deemed necessary to build at Portsmouth, Boston, League Island, Algiers, and Mare Island.

Mr. Chairman, every thoughtful citizen of the Republic will agree with the Secretary of the Navy that this country is to be congratulated upon the fact that we do not need either the vast military or naval armament required by the other great powers. Our forefathers, chastened by the deadly and protracted struggle of the Revolution, builded better than they knew, and when by the Monroe doctrine they established the principle as one of fixed national policy that we would not allow ourselves to become entangled in the meshes and network of European politics, but that our interests and our action should center alone in the Western Hemisphere, we made way for the dismissal of armies and gave full sweep to the tide of development and national progress that has come to us beyond the wildest dream of one hundred years ago.

Separated as we are by vast seas, we can rest in security and tranquility, notwithstanding the "armed peace" of Europe, with its Franco-Russian alliance, its triple alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy facing each other, while England, with her characteristic energy, maintains singly and alone a naval armament equal to and able to cope with that of either of the alliances in case it shall become necessary.

We need no navy to protect foreign colonies or to enforce our rule in distant empires. We are not interested in the questions of the East, nor will we be affected if China in the future shall seek to revenge her recent humiliation at the hands of Japan.

But, Mr. Chairman, while we may rejoice in our favorable location and conditions, this sense of security should not cause us wholly to overlook the wise truth proclaimed by the great German chancellor, the man of "blood and iron," Count Bismarck, that the best means of securing and maintaining peace is being prepared, in a measure at least, for war. We must not forget that while oceans intervene between us and other great nations, those oceans are now underlaid with strands of cabled steel, by which communication can be had in a few minutes, and that we are, therefore, necessarily in much closer touch with foreign powers than in years gone by.

We must not forget, either, that the obligation is upon us, not alone from considerations of national pride and the maintenance of the American spirit of self-respect, but also from that of the proper protection of our citizens abroad, to not wholly ignore our naval armament. I am fully persuaded of one thing, and that is, constituting, as we do, a body of 70,000,000 brave, self-reliant, and intelligent people, wholly wedded to the principle of self-government and having proved beyond peradventure that such government can be, and by us is, made as strong, stable, and enduring as any other on earth, we need have little fear of hostile invasion.

Exercising the intelligent freeman's right to agree and disagree upon questions of internal policy, but always ready, when danger from outside threatens, to bury on the instant all differences, to respond with one voice, to follow one flag, to know but one tie—that of American brotherhood—I say, under such conditions as these we need have little fear of being assailed at our own fire-sides. Too many self-constituted "minutemen" and sentries will spring up to allow that.

I submit, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that any future danger must be met almost altogether by naval forces and naval defenses, and that it is therefore wise policy for us to be liberal to our naval establishment and respond promptly and effectively to its needs and requirements. I submit further, Mr. Chairman, that it is also wise for us as an original proposition, wholly independent of present emergency necessities, to establish a fixed policy of increasing our Navy to a point where we will not be ashamed of it, or, in case of necessity, be compelled to scamper over the globe to buy vessels to meet it.

Mr. Chairman, that being true, I hope—especially after having devoted these long weeks to consideration of the subject—that no one will be misled by the recommendation made by the Secretary of the Navy that we should build but one coast-line, first-class battle ship. The committee must understand that that recommendation was made under other than present circumstances;



and I here state, personally, that the Secretary of the Navy is in entire accord with the committee in the recommendation that there shall be three instead of one. I have made this statement after a personal interview with him in regard to the matter. I have made it, too, in order that the three (it seems to me) important features in this bill may not be assailed here upon the question of economy, which is sprung so often in this House.

Mr. Chairman, the other subject, that of dry docks, has been considered long and thoroughly by the Committee on Naval Affairs. Its consideration has been based not only upon the recommendations of the Department, not only upon the report of the board appointed to ascertain and determine how many of these dry docks should be built, but it has been based upon the independent examination made by the committee itself from other and outside sources.

A very strange thing has occurred in this House in the sessions that have gone by. It is to my mind a remarkable thing that heretofore we have been retarded in building dry docks by the fact that points of order have been made against this provision as being new and independent work, and therefore outside of the provisions of the regular appropriation bill.

I sincerely hope and believe that when this measure comes to be considered upon its several provisions there will not be a man in this House who will attempt to raise this point of order and place himself in the strange position of saying that we are authorized to build new battle ships, to build new navy-yards, to build new tool houses and machine shops, to purchase the machinery necessary to build ships, but we are not authorized to erect, as it were, the scaffold upon which they are to be built, repaired, and cleaned. It seems to me that the day for that kind of economy has passed and that the time has come when we must not only furnish our Navy with the navy-yards, tools, and material necessary to repair our vessels, but must also furnish them with the docks to dock them.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I insist that the necessity for this increase in our Navy has been made thoroughly apparent, not only by the incidents and facts which have been transpiring within the last few years, but that the necessity is emphasized by a comparison of the Navy of this great nation of ours, the proudest, the noblest, the most civilized nation of the world, with the navies of the powers. This comparison emphasizes the fact I am insisting upon, that it is wise for us to pass, it is good policy for us to pass, and we shall not be true to the American spirit unless we do pass, almost, I might say, without question, the reasonable, prudent increase authorized by this bill.

I have also a statement—slightly different, I think, from that filed by my colleague from Louisiana [Mr. MEYER]—in regard to the naval equipment of the world. Gentlemen will understand that naval vessels are divided into different classes according to the different uses to which they are to be put. First, as to battle ships and other vessels that are capable for the line of battle.

While England has 75 already built and 13 building of these that can go out into the broad sea to furnish the line of battle; while France has 46 built and 11 building; while Russia has 30 built and 10 building; while Italy has 20 built and 6 building; while Germany has 22 built and 4 building, the United States has 13 built and 5 building. Of the commerce protecting and scouting vessels that are designed to protect commerce, England has 119

built and 17 building; France, 51 built and 8 building; Russia, 23 built and 2 building; Italy, 17 built and 1 building; Germany, 18 built and 7 building; the United States, 27 built and no others building.

Take it all the way through. Take the coast-defense vessels: England has 60; we have 13; France has 26; Russia, 34; Spain, 13; Germany, 13. Of the torpedo boats, England has 308 built and 13 building; France has 257 built and 36 building; Russia, 161 built and 14 building; Italy, 192 built and 16 building; Germany, 151 built and 1 building; Spain, 60 built and 3 building; Japan, 29 built and 22 building, and we have 8 built and 15 building.

The total navy of England includes, of all these different kinds of vessels, 632 built and 48 building; France, 482 built and 57 building; Russia, 303 built and 26 building; Italy, 266 built and 13 building; Spain, 189 built and 13 building; Japan, 74 built and 13 building; United States, 85 built and 20 building. I insist that when it is stated publicly—and I get this information from reliable sources—that in this coming year England proposes to spend \$127,000,000 in the increase of her Navy, Russia will spend for ships alone \$83,333,000, Germany will spend \$95,000,000, while France will build one battle ship, 8 cruisers, 8 destroyers, and 6 torpedo boats, and Japan will build 3 battle ships, 5 first-class cruisers, 6 second-class cruisers, 3 torpedo vessels, 8 destroyers, and 12 torpedo boats, every self-respecting American citizen must desire that we shall not be so far behind even Japan as we are in this work. [Applause.]

Other important information is contained in this statement. I have not time to read, but will incorporate it in the RECORD, by the leave of the House, for the consideration of the committee, as a part of my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, a few more words, and I am done. I have always deeply deplored the custom so much indulged here, under the license of general debate, of discussing questions foreign to the bill under consideration. I would not for one moment express myself as I am about to do if I did not believe that not only the argument in behalf of the increase of our Navy but also other extraordinary and exceptional reasons justify me.

It is needless for me to call attention to the fact that we now have one less battle ship than when we last discussed in this House a naval appropriation bill. This bill provides for a new *Maine*, but the American heart has not ceased to thrill with horror because the original *Maine* lies a wreck in Habana Harbor with 266 of her brave men buried beneath her. We can not, no matter how hard we may try, believe otherwise than that it would have been impossible for this condition of things to be a stern reality confronting us in any other harbor in the world.

We talk as we will about an accident, and yet the time when and the place where it occurred brings the full realization that there is one nation, or at least one individual, who would destroy us if possible; and while I am in entire accord and sympathy with the wise and patient, yet prompt and patriotic, course pursued by the President in this matter; while I rejoice that nothing has been done in anger and haste, but a full investigation has been ordered by a board selected from the best, bravest, and most sensible body of naval officers to be found on earth, one member of which board I am proud to count as a constituent of mine, nevertheless, while our hearts may be full of sadness and indignation over this *Maine* tragedy, let us not for one moment forget that it is but an incident

in a greater and more horrible tragedy transpiring daily before our eyes, and which, I insist, this great, enlightened, Christian nation must stop. [Applause.]

Two hundred and sixty-six brave men are dead to-day as a result of the *Maine* tragedy. Over 200,000 are dead in Cuba and 255,000 more, largely helpless women and children, are being held in imprisonment and starved to death there to-day. We do not know as yet that the Spanish authorities blew up the *Maine* and destroyed the lives of our seamen, but we do know that Spanish authority is responsible for this wholesale deadly murder in the first degree going on within a hundred miles of our shores. [Applause.]

And do not forget, Mr. Chairman, that the only cause for this—the only crime that these pitiful dead and dying have been guilty of—is that, inspired by our example, they have longed and sought for free self-government. And do not forget also, Mr. Chairman, that when this House, almost by unanimous vote, followed by the Senate, declared in favor of belligerent rights for this distracted isle, had Mr. Cleveland acted promptly, at least 100,000 lives would have been saved, Cuba would have been free, and in all human probability the *Maine* would not be to-day a dismantled wreck, but would be peacefully cleaving the sea, manned by men now dead, and flying the proud American flag. [Applause.]

Do not spare in our remembrance, too, Mr. Chairman, that other fact that when the question of belligerent rights was discussed in the Senate, by far the strongest, most earnest, and affecting words in behalf of such recognition came from the lips of the noble, venerated statesman who stands to-day at the head of President McKinley's Cabinet.

Let us look at this question fairly and squarely. Under the Monroe doctrine, if Eastern powers should seek to settle the affairs of Cuba, we would regard it either as humiliation or an affront. The obligation is upon us. In this case we are our brother's keeper, and the blood of dead thousands cry aloud to us out of Cuba's ground.

I do not want war if it can be avoided. I want peace, but with honor and with a sense that I can look my wife and boy at home in the face and feel I have some heart and humanity left in me. I do not want them to think that I can stand by and see other wives and children starved and strangled without a word of protest. With food and raiment in one hand and with its strong power backed by the righteous will of 70,000,000 of freemen, this Administration must intervene, stop this horror, and give Cuba her freedom.

This intervention may be done, I hope, peacefully. If so, God be praised; but if not, and it can only be done by war, let it come. Humanity, mercy, charity, and all the attributes of God Himself will be with us, and Cuba will be free. [Applause.]

Comparative summary of the principal fleets of the world, built and building

Classes of vessels.	British Empire.		France.		Russia.		Italy.		Germany.		United States.		Japan.		Spain.		Chili.	
	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.	a.	b.
Fit for the line of battle.	A	29	9	12	5	10	6	6	2	4	3	4	5	2	3	1		
	B	12		4		4								1				
	C	11		5						3		1						
	D	5		13		6				8		6						
	F	18	4	12	6	10		3	4	1		2		4	4	5	4	1
Commerce protection and scouting	G	17	4						1									
	H	46	3	16					3	6	11		8	3		3	1	1
	I	11		6				1								6		
	J	21	10	14	3	1		8	1	7	3		3	1				
	K	23						3		1	1	8					3	
Coast defense	L	1		13	1	20				6	3		3			5		1
	E	11		12		21			11	13						2		
	N	49		14		13			2				6		11			
Torpedo attack and defense	M	33	6	13	2	8		14	2	9			1		11	3	4	
	O	99	6		6	1	14	1	9	1		3		8	6	4		
	P	51		43		67		104	13	65		7	8	2	1	10		6
	Q	30		145	23	6		4		53		4	22	13	25		1	
	R	104		56		99		69		16		1		4		7		12
Summary:																		
Line	75	13	46	11	30	19	20	6	22	4	13	5	7	7	8	4	4	
Cruisers	119	17	51	8	23	2	17	1	18	7	27		15	4	12	6	4	2
Coast defense	60		26		34				13		13				13			
Torpedo flotilla	308	12	257	38	181	14	192	16	151	1	8	15	29	22	60	3	27	
Unclassified vessels	70	6	102		35		37		18		21		17		96		10	
Total	632	48	482	57	306	26	266	23	222	12	85	20	74	33	189	13	45	2

- A. First-class battle ships.
- B. Second class battle ships.
- C. Third-class battle ships.
- D. Seagoing coast-defense ironclads.
- E. Nonseagoing coast-defense ironclads.
- F. Armored cruisers.
- G. First-class protected cruisers, 6,000 tons and over.
- H. Second-class protected cruisers, 3,000 tons to 5,999 tons.
- I. Second-class unprotected cruisers, 3,000 tons to 5,999 tons.
- J. Third-class protected cruisers under 3,000 tons.
- K. Third-class partially protected cruisers under 3,000 tons.
- L. Third-class unprotected cruisers under 3,000 tons, not including old and slow ships.
- M. Torpedo gunboats.
- N. Gun vessels, third class, mounting heavy guns for coast defense.
- O. Torpedo-boat destroyers.
- P. Torpedo boats, first class.
- Q. Torpedo boats, second class.
- R. Torpedo boats, third class.

The unclassified vessels comprise all armed vessels not included in the above-mentioned classes, and consist of gunboats, special-service vessels, old and slow cruisers, small-gun vessels, and armed dispatch vessels.

Under each nation column *a* contains the number of vessels completed; column *b* the number of vessels building, and shows the present activity in naval construction. Columns *a* may be taken as the present naval strength of each nation; columns *a* and *b* combined as the strength in 1900.

Proposed naval expenditures, 1898.

England proposes to spend.....	\$127,750,000
Russia will spend for ships alone.....	83,333,400
Germany will spend.....	95,000,000
France will build—	
Battle ship.....	1
Cruisers.....	8
Destroyers.....	8
Torpedo boats.....	6

Japan will build—	
Battle ships	3
First-class cruisers	5
Second-class cruisers	6
Torpedo vessels	3
Destroyers	8
Torpedo boats	12

Now, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. ARNOLD].

* * * * *

Saturday, March 26, 1898.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. Chairman, any member of the Naval Committee who would seek to answer the argument of the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CANNON] in the five minutes allotted to him must necessarily labor under serious disadvantages; but as a member of that committee I do not desire that these remarks shall pass wholly without observation from the members of that committee.

I want to call the attention of the House to the fact that the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations—and I say it kindly—has a weakness for finding fault with the appropriations that do not come from his own committee room, no matter how much or how little they may be; and I want to call attention further to the fact that while this House promptly voted to put \$50,000,000 at the disposal of the President for the emergency which it was thought, and which the gentleman himself stated to us, threatened the country, yet this same gentleman springs up in opposition when the Naval Committee, in the discharge of a plain duty, asks that a few millions be appropriated to prevent such emergencies springing up before the country in the future. [Applause.]

It is not a wise policy, gentlemen, for us to be in that position where these emergencies can arise, and while a man may stand here and proclaim his patriotism, I want to say that the broader, the nobler, the greater patriotism of an American citizen is to provide liberally for the American defense, so that emergencies can not arise to make it necessary to scamper all over God's green earth, under a special appropriation, to buy the battle ships that can not be bought. [Applause.]

A nation looks at the future as an individual does, and we must lay our plans and we must have our policies; and it is a very strange thing for a great leader of a party in power to stand here, it seems to me, after having asked for a great emergency appropriation, to oppose a broad policy that would make every American citizen proud of the American Navy, proud of the fact that the American flag upon an American ship, protected by the wholesome fear of American power, can go in peace into any harbor in the world without the vessel that bears it being blown up and destroyed.

But, Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as this amendment proposes to meet the question of dry docks, I want to call attention to the weakness of the position that has been taken by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. I want also to call attention of the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. DOCKERY] to the fact that



he has not, it seems to me, comprehended the care and the diligence and caution exercised by the Naval Committee in fixing these appropriations and in fixing the points where these dry docks are to be built.

He must remember that the Secretary of the Navy, under the Bunce board that was appointed to investigate this matter, suggests that there shall be built six dry docks in various portions of the country and that certain other repairs should be made, which would involve a total expenditure of \$5,725,000: and, on the other hand, that that board and the Secretary of the Navy, too—for he has adopted it—have recommended that for adequate docking facilities in addition there should be built four or five more, the total cost of which would be \$5,400,000.

Therefore, if we should follow out the recommendations of the Secretary of the Navy, there would be a total expenditure of over \$11,000,000 on this one item of dry docks, while the total expenditure authorized for the five docks carried in this bill is \$4,250,000 only. This has been brought about, gentleman of the committee, by the thorough examination of the Naval Committee, and the ascertainment by that committee that substantial, efficient wooden docks can be built at these five places at a considerably less cost, and the expenditure of a million and a half dollars less than recommended by the Secretary of the Navy.

[Here the hammer fell.]





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