

# Liberty

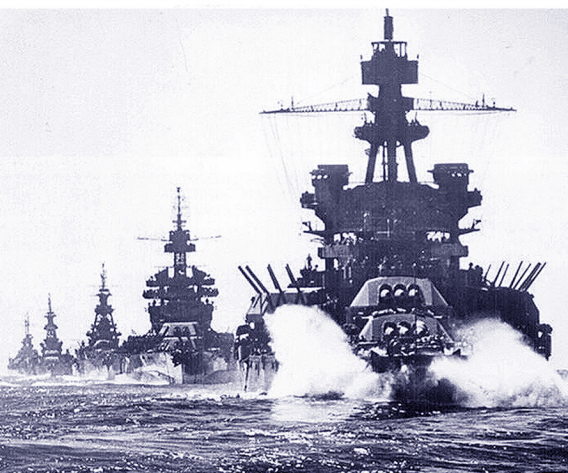
JUNE 30, 1945

The United States has achieved the global power for which Caesar, Napoleon, and Hitler tried and failed.

This article pictures us as other nations see us—

## The

## American Menace



**BY GUY RICHARDS**

**W**HEN the smoke of battle lifted from the remnants of the Japanese task force fleeing Mindoro last December 27, it was evident to every nation that the United States of America had achieved the first global power in the history of the world. Two weeks later, from more than 800 ships, this power expressed itself fully by pouring ashore on the Lingayen beaches, half a world distant from American beachheads in southern France and Italy. And as the Philippine sun outlined our new might, it cast a shadow that would better have slanted from the figure of Genghis Khan or Caesar, Napoleon or Adolf Hitler. It was the shadow of a menace, a shadow such as every military figure casts in proportion to its stature.

Most Americans, naturally peace-loving, have scarcely noticed this new shadow. But make no mistake, it has been noticed with consternation and awe in every enemy, Allied, and neutral capital of the world. For in these capitals are professionals who know that the basic requirements for world power have at last been assembled by a single nation. It is well to remember that the United States has not only perfected triphibious power, or sea, land, and air power; we have demonstrated that we can deliver it anywhere. Not even a strong navy, a strong army, a strong concentration of land-based aircraft, can keep it from coming ashore and setting up shop for further expansion.

Thus the three big questions, headache-provoking for other nations, are:

1. Will America keep and use her triphibious force?

2. If she does not use it for military conquest, will she use it as a threat to assist the economic and diplomatic conquest of the world?

3. Will some other nation some day copy the formula and employ the result for world domination?

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It is the purpose of this article to show how in three years we have broken the shackles of all but one of fifteen classic limiting points of warfare, and to show what this means from the point of view of other nations.

Why is this moment, in 1945, the time to bring up the subject of the American menace? The answer is that no such thing as the American menace existed, so far as the professionals are concerned, until the Philippines were invaded successfully from staging areas beyond effective range of America's land-based aircraft. Never before had any nation's forces come from a great distance, virtually outside the reach of land-based tactical air, using only what could be carried in the hull of a ship, and blazed their way ashore against strong naval, air, and ground opposition.

That happened in the Philippines. The reverberations are still shaking the world's capitals. At Leyte, protected only by carrier aircraft, we moved a big invasion force right under an awning of land-based Jap planes from more than 200 enemy airfields. We got our foot in the Philippine door, opened it, and fought our way inside.

The professionals rubbed their eyes in wonder. They watched Leyte for weeks to see if the Japs could erase the meaning of this achievement. We had pulled a fast one, but could we stay? Before we could spread anywhere else, what would the enemy's navy do to us? What would his carrier planes do to us?

Our answer was Mindoro. By moving there, we proved that we had become so well entrenched that we were getting ready for the kill at Manila. We were inching our fighter planes into range.

Two weeks later Luzon was invaded by troops from more than 800 ships. Carrier planes from Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet promptly swept up and down the China Sea as though it were a practice area in the Great Lakes. They pounded enemy planes, shipping, and harbor installations at Saigon, Hong Kong, Amoy, Swatow, Formosa, bobbing up some days close to 1,000 miles from where they were the day before.

Clearly here was a phenomenon to make anyone sit up and take notice—a new kind of military machine, a new kind of global power which apparently we could deliver anywhere.

**SINCE** this new machine of ours has triumphed over classic limitations of warfare, let's take a glance at these limitations. They represent the obstacles which another nation would have to surmount in order to checkmate and overcome us. Heretofore, these main limiting points always have prevented the realization of global power:

### NAVAL

1. Cruising radius of a ship in terms of fuel carried.
2. Fighting radius of a ship in terms of ammunition carried.
3. Feeding radius of a ship in terms of rations carried.
4. Drinking radius of a ship in terms of water carried.
5. Maximum radius of a ship in terms of machinery fatigue.
6. Maximum radius of a ship in terms of human fatigue.
7. Distance to minor repairs, replacements, supplies, and ammunition.
8. Distance to major repairs and major replacements.
9. National capacity to add and replace with new units and new crews.



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## AIR

Identical with the above for both shore-based and carrier-based aircraft, with variations only in emphasis.

## GROUND FORCES

10. Mobility by land.
11. Mobility by sea.
12. Accessibility of supply train to the expeditionary forces, by land, sea, and air.

## COMBINED FORCES

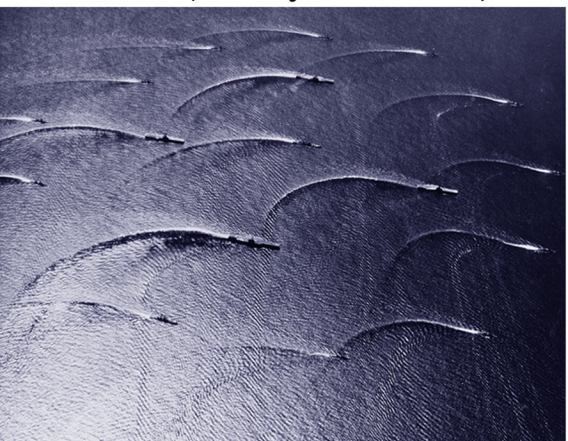
13. Adequacy of total force, plus reserves.
14. Ability to deliver total force at objective.
15. Ability of total force to defeat all possible combinations, everywhere and anywhere.

Our forces have proved their ability to measure up to all these requirements except the last. This, we hope, will remain forever in doubt. However, of this much we are sure: At our present level of mobilization, we pose the certainty of defensive invulnerability against any nation or possible coalition. But the very speed with which we changed our own status in the last three years should teach us how quickly our relative position can change if we allow our power to deteriorate while others rise.

Typically Yankee are the achievements that changed us in three years from global pushover to global power. In fact, if we wake up one day to find ourselves invaded, the chances are that the invader will get here by Yankee inventions and will gain his beachhead victories by tricks cooked up in the land he has come to attack.

From the fifteen items listed it can be seen immediately that tricks of the sea and the beachhead have won our present leadership. Sharing the laurels is our record for production. And coming a close second are tricks of the earth-moving and road-building machines which have made it possible to exploit our landings speedily, keep supplies up to our assault waves, and make new air strips operational from four to twenty days after invasion. None of our achievements has the stature of a world-shaking secret weapon. On the contrary, what we have contrived is a bagful of a thousand little tricks. Most of them have to do with ships and the bringing of shipborne forces ashore. For it has been on the sea that we have had to learn to pack, wrap, and ship our combined forces.

**G**LANCE once more at the nine limiting factors on naval warfare. In respect to other nations our new 65,000-ship Navy has freed itself from them all. Only Nos. 5, 6, and 8—machinery fatigue, human fatigue, and the need to return to yards for major repairs—still impose a ceiling on our naval operations. Because of our numerical superiority in ships, this ceiling does not hamper us, and it is unforeseeable that we, or any other nation, will



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ever eliminate the three factors that still impose it. The ceiling can hamper us only if we lose our numerical superiority in ships, or if the quality of our Navy declines. The other limitations we have simply rubbed out, as follows:

Coal, as fuel, always cut down a ship's cruising radius. Coaling at sea was impractical and often perilous; coaling in harbors or anchorages meant a major delay. By 1918 much of our Navy had switched to oil-burning furnaces, but a vessel still had to find a quiet anchorage and rendezvous with a tanker, or seek an American fueling port. The change to oil added little to the cruising range of a task force made up of varied units. The big change came with the big fast tanker which follows the fighting ships and refuels them at sea while under way. The Navy has enough of these priceless vessels to keep her warships at sea for months at a time. Their achievements alone have upset the calculations of the Japanese. Perfection of long-range hose and pumping equipment is strictly a Yankee triumph.

Until World War II, loading ammunition at sea had never been considered a healthy practice in any navy. In recent years, furthermore, the job was complicated by the new hazards of handling heavy aerial bombs. When a warship had "shot herself out," she went to a base for more powder and shells. Special apparatus, Yankee-designed, now transfers all naval ammunition, including 1,000-pound bombs, from supply ship to fighting ship while both are under way at sea. American warships can shoot themselves out today. Tomorrow—or in a few hours—they can be reloaded and ready to fight again.

The problem of rations has been solved by fast fleet-following supply ships of the same kind as those which carry the Navy's ammunition.

The water problem, which hounded all navies right up to World War I, has been solved by purifying plants installed on all our Navy's largest ships. They change salt water to fresh in such quantities that all hands may even enjoy daily showers.

The problem of minor repairs has been scratched off the list by special fast repair ships which stay with the fleet or within close striking distance. And American industry has kept ships and American manpower has kept bluejackets pouring into the service to triple its size since July, 1940, giving it eight task fleets totaling twenty-three battleships, 1,126 additional warships, and about 63,000 other vessels—an armada that no coalition of other navies would now care to challenge.

**A**LL that remain are the problems of fatigue, human and machine, whose limitations are being eased by new ship-board comforts for the men and by mechanical improvements in the engine room, and the necessity for badly damaged ships to return to navy yards for repairs. With our present numerical superiority in ships, none of these remaining problems could prevent our eight task fleets from operating for months, together or apart, on the opposite side of the world. Until others threaten to overtake our Navy's size and quality, the distances back to our own yards could never prevent us from exerting supremacy at sea and a constant menace as far inland as carrier aircraft can strike. This distance inland is constantly increasing. But although these back-to-the-navy-yard distances don't cramp our range right now, the growing rivalry of another navy could easily make them growing embarrassments. Development of land-based air





power makes it harder to pick distant harbors for navy yard facilities out of range of possible enemy bombings—but there are a few such likely harbors. We should hang onto them and exploit them in the years to come, protecting them fully by land-based aviation.

By building 75,000 to 100,000 planes yearly, and by improving planes and motors, we have emerged suddenly as an air power. Our land-based aircraft, teaming with the Navy and naval Air, could certainly defeat any present attempt at a seaborne invasion of the United States. On the other hand, as an offensive weapon from American bases, even our biggest bombers pose little threat to nations more than 2,000 miles away from us. Our own land-based aviation, like that of other nations, is still stymied by the old invasion problem of getting the toe hold, the first grip on the enemy's land.

Carrier aircraft have at last come to provide that missing toe hold—but, so far, only for us. No other nation has made a comparable investment in carrier aviation. No other nation would dare to put an expeditionary force to sea against a nation strong in carriers and land-based aircraft. Their only remaining course would be to pummel us with rocket bombs, then invade us by air. The very thought provokes a smile. Yet developments in aviation transport, gliders, rockets, and jet propulsion indicate that the air may yet be the medium that produces the second global power in the history of the world. In fact, much as we damn ourselves for having overrated aviation, it has won us our global power. Our enemies have been hit over the head by it once. Some won't wait for the second time.

Our mastery of the limitations on power is the pure magic of Yankee ingenuity. The services specified. The designers drew. American industry turned out the stuff—a bewildering array of highly specialized ships, vehicles, and weapons.

Along with our maritime and carrier-aircraft expansion, our unique development of landing craft has succeeded in smashing the most prohibitive of all the limitations—No. 14, the ability to deliver a total force at any objective. No other nation is within shouting distance here.

Our merchant marine — which has jumped from 11,600,000 tons to more than 51,000,000 tons, and from 16 per cent to more than half of all the world's tonnage —has served with our Navy and Air Force to solve the problems of mobility by sea, of keeping distant forces supplied. Railroad and motor transport have solved mobility by land.

**WITH** the object of defending ourselves, we have solved one problem after another until we have stumbled on a formula for conquering most of the world. But

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we are not the least interested in applying this formula to the whole world. Only in applying it to our enemies. They were interested in conquering the whole world, but their formulas didn't work—not even on their World War II enemies.

They did come very close, however. And now that the right formula has been found, it is going to be most fascinating to those who are more interested in war than we are or ever have been. They will note with satisfaction how fast we prepared and tested the formula. They will note that speed is its essence. They will rightly draw the inference that any nation which prepares the men and material and follows the formula can quickly whip any nation which knows the formula but hasn't assembled the men and material.

While we have both, other nations regard us as a rich ally, a poor and expensive target. With the formula but without the men or material, we become a poor ally but a rich target—indeed, the most luscious plum left to be plucked on the planet.

Our own performance in the last three years shows us and the world the pattern for successful conquest. It should amply notify us that the menace we have become may one day be the menace we will have to face.

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