

## Legally Speaking



### **Peace in Our Time**

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Contributing Editor*

This June will mark the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I which started in Europe in 1914 and ended on November 11, 1918. The war grew out of power struggles in the Balkans and attempts by various European countries to expand their influence through military strength. On one side was Germany, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. The Austrian-Hungarian Empire controlled most of central Europe and the Ottoman Empire controlled what is today Turkey and much of the Middle East. On the other side was France and Britain with their extended global colonial empires, Italy and Russia. As the war dragged on, other nations of the world joined the war on one side

or the other. The United States entered the war in 1917 on the side of France and Britain.

World War I saw many firsts: the first wide-scale use of airplanes and trucks in war; the first tanks; and the first use of poisonous gas. Because tactics had not kept pace with technology, senior European commanders still ordered soldiers to charge across open fields even though machine guns made such charges suicidal. There were over 9 million casualties worldwide in the First World War. In Europe, the war destroyed almost an entire generation.

World War I also saw the first wide scale use of women in support of the American armed forces. Over 20,000 nurses were recruited to support the war effort. Most served as civilian workers. The nurses, combined with the military taking a deeper interest in the health of its soldiers, helped make World War I the first major war in U.S. history in which the number of deaths by enemy action outnumbered those by disease.

Women took over clerical jobs held by male servicemen thereby releasing the men to fight in the trenches. Because most of the women were considered civilian employees, they were not entitled to veteran's benefits even though they were, in some cases, exposed to combat related injuries. The Marine Corps and Navy, however, gave women military status. The navy alone recruited over 11,000 women. Those women became the first large body of American

women to achieve government-recognized veteran status. By the end of the war, more than 35,000 American women had served. More than 400 had died.

The fact that so many women went to war helped assure the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. The 19th Amendment gave women the full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote.

All of our World War I veterans have now passed on. Most believed they had fought a noble fight. They believed, as they had been told, that they were fighting the "war to end all wars."

There was no "victor" in World War I. Germany did not surrender. It signed an armistice which took effect on November 11, 1918 at 11:00 AM. Even though the armistice was signed, the fighting continued until the 11th hour on November 11th when the guns abruptly stopped firing. Many nations still celebrate November 11th as Armistice Day. In the United States, November 11th is celebrated as Veterans Day.

With the end of the fighting, the diplomats and politicians sat down to create a peace treaty. The French wanted to get even with Germany and her allies. The British wanted them to pay for the cost of the War.

Woodrow Wilson, the American President, wanted to reform the world along idealistic lines. He worked to create the League of Nations, a predecessor to the United Nations. He supported

the break-up of the Austrian-Hungarian and Ottoman empires to create new states out of their territories. “Self-determination” by ethnic minorities was the watch word. All over central Europe and the Middle East, boundaries were re-drawn. Austria and Hungary became separate nations. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria were some of the other new states created.

In the spirit of peace, and believing there would be no more wars, England, the United States and Japan entered into a treaty to limit battleships, the most powerful military weapon at the time. The American army was cut back to a size thought to be just enough to protect the continental United States.

Some people believed that if everyone gave up their weapons, the world would be a better and safer place. The problem was, although those who believed in disarmament could do away with their weapons, there was no way to guarantee that others would do the same.

The “Peace Dividend” of World War I was followed by the worldwide Great Depression.

In Europe, Mussolini was elected by the Italians to solve their national economic ills while Germany elected Hitler. Both men would bring their countries out of the Depression but would make themselves dictators. Promising to restore the past glory of Germany, Hitler began rebuilding the German armed forces.

In 1938, claiming that he had to protect ethnic Germans living in that part of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland, Hitler’s army marched into Czechoslovakia

with the intent of annexing the Sudetenland. Europe was appalled but did little, given a lack of will, a lack of military preparedness, and the strength of Hitler’s army. Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, met Hitler in Munich to discuss Hitler’s actions. Returning to London with an agreement which allowed Hitler to keep what he had taken, Chamberlain proclaimed to the press that he had achieved, “Peace in our times.”

In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland triggering World War II in Europe.

Any resemblance to current events and the events just described in which a nation with a once powerful military with global ambitions, fell on hard times, rearmed itself while the rest of the world disarmed, and then began invading neighbors on the excuse it had to protect persons of its ethnic nationality in those other nations—any resemblance between those events and current world events is—disquieting.

For thousands of years philosophers have speculated as to why some people do evil things. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes believed that some people will always do what is good; some will always do what is bad; while others will only be good out of fear of being punished for being bad. Plato made similar observations over two thousand years ago.

There is much to support their theory. Some people rush to a disaster to help while others go to loot and steal. Law alone, without the power needed to enforce the law, is incapable of maintaining peace or order. When the civil authorities are overwhelmed, such

as when there has been a natural disaster, the looters take over. When the police fail to work with the community to uphold the law, gangs control the streets. When schools fail to instill discipline in the student body, bullies rule.

Too much control also leads to problems. When power is consolidated in the hands of a few, there is a greater chance that the power will be abused because those holding power are less answerable to others. That is, the less a person fears punishment for doing bad things, the more likely he or she is to abuse his or her power.

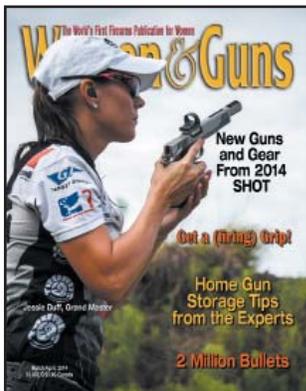
It was that realization which caused our founding fathers to form a government of limited power. Raw power was split between the states, the federal government, and the people. Within the federal system, the power of the presidency, Congress, and the courts was divided in a series of checks and balances intended to prevent any one person from obtaining too much power.

As it is with individuals, so it is with nations. The political left claimed that with the fall of the Soviet Union there was going to be a “peace dividend” and began downsizing the American military. As the American army was drawing down in Europe, Iraq invaded Kuwait thereby starting the first Gulf War. Kuwait had no military to speak of, thus giving its neighbor Iraq, the opportunity to invade.

The so-called “peace dividend” also resulted in huge cut backs in the British and American navies. The result is the growth of piracy on the high seas by lawless men in fast boats with machine guns and hand held rockets. They are

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willing to kill to get money. They are pirates because they can get away with it. They get away with it because there is insufficient military power among the responsible nations to enforce the laws against piracy or protect the shipping lanes. Law without force is incapable of maintaining peace or security.

Still, there is talk of further cutting back the American military to pre-World War II levels. Congress and the President should take a closer look at what the world was like back then. The first half of the 20th century was dominated by World War I and its aftermath.

They should also take a closer look at the world today. The Russian leadership is ambitious. There are close to three million active and reserve servicemen in the Russian military. The Russian military is technologically advanced. It sits in the heart of Europe. The Russian leadership apparently has territorial ambitions directed at the former members of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations.

The North Koreans are unpredictable. They have the ability to launch a missile attack against Japan, South Korea and the continental United States. Some claim North Korea has the largest ground force on earth with over 9 million active and reserve soldiers. South Korea has about 3.5 million active and reserve forces.

Total American military forces, active and reserve, are slightly over one million, of which about 15% are women. With our commitments in Europe and Asia, the number of troops available to be deployed to a trouble spot is limited.

Congress and the President are

planning additional deep cuts in our military forces despite warnings by those knowledgeable in military affairs that such cuts will hurt the military's ability to defend the United States. If the United States is perceived as being weak, then those who are "good" only because they fear the force of others, will be tempted to aggression. They will not care what we say about them because we have insufficient power to make a difference. The question might then become, will the world in the 21st Century go to war to protect the integrity of Poland or South Korea or to revenge the destruction of a Japanese or American West Coast city?

The same flawed reasoning that causes the American liberals to want domestic gun control, fuels the passion to disarm the nation's armed forces. The left believes that reducing the number of guns available to good people in the community will eventually reduce crime. They believe this even though gun restriction in Washington, D.C. and Chicago led to increases in the crime rate.

The flaw in their reasoning is that they identify the tool, the gun, as the cause of crime. Objects do not cause violence, people do. Some people, some leaders of nations, only behave out of fear of retribution by someone bigger or with more power. The key to peace is not being helpless, but in having a balance of power in which the chance of being rewarded for aggressive behavior is too small to be worth the risk. Perceived weakness incites violence be it in our own communities or in international affairs.

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