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tory does not rest on geographical  
facts. Ultimate victory lies in  
putting the enemy's armed forces  
finally out of action. The promise  
of victory lies in the possession of  
the instruments that will achieve  
military decisions of that order.

Germany's 'initial' plan in the  
War rested on that sound strate-  
gical principle. The scheme was,  
first, to put the forces of France  
out of action by a swift, irresist-  
ible, decisive blow, and then, to  
swing round and smite Russia.  
The plan failed. The Marne broke  
it. That is why the Marne is the  
most decisive battle in modern  
history.

#### The Second Phase.

The Aisne witnessed the initia-  
tion of the "second" plan, which  
was less sound in principle, but  
was forced on Germany by the  
situation as a whole. This plan  
was to break through on the  
northern sector of the west (while  
holding the rest of the front) and  
by a double movement to take  
Paris from the north and threaten  
Britain from Calais and her sister  
ports. The enormous superiority  
in munitionment that the Central  
Empires then held gave sufficient  
hope of the success of this plan.

How near the second plan came  
to success on the West the Allied  
peoples were never told, and even  
now have hardly understood. Only  
the men who survived the unspeak-  
able strain of the battles of Ypres  
know—and they cannot express it.  
The German forces stormed against  
a British Army of less than a fifth  
of their own numbers, and with  
still less adequacy in artillery. The  
tension was so terrible that the line  
was all but snapped. Yet, by that  
miracle of spirit which inspires  
free men in supreme emergency,  
the high-tempered steel held.

#### The Third Phase.

The Kaiser, who had personally  
watched this contest with intent  
interest, put up his field-glasses  
and turned away. The "third"  
phase opened.

Baffled on the West, the German  
tide—though it covered Belgium  
and most of industrial France—  
surged Eastward. The Central  
Empires threw their strongest  
forces upon Russia. Smitten at  
Tannenberg, the sweeping Russian  
advance in East Prussia and Gali-  
cia had been checked, and now  
ebbed. Hindenburg's breakers  
swept Russia from Galicia. War-  
saw fell, and with the fortresses  
went guns that Russia could not  
spare. By consummate skill, she  
again and again extricated her

armies when it seemed that the  
German forces had all but gripped  
them in its giant trap. But Poland  
was submerged. Russia was con-  
stantly in retreat, but a military  
decision was never actually  
reached. Russia at last stood her  
ground. The third plan had  
failed.

#### The Fourth Phase.

So there opened the "fourth"  
phase, a tremendous and confused  
wrestle, swaying to and fro, that  
finally extended in one vast arc in  
the East from Riga through the  
Carpathians to the Black Sea.

The oriental ambitions of Ger-  
many involved "hacking a way  
through" to Constantinople. In  
this direction also all looked bright.  
Turkey had entered the war in  
October, 1914, lured by the  
dangling of glittering prizes along  
the north coast of Africa. Bul-  
garia, secretly a member of the  
Central Alliance, was preparing to  
join in the stabbing of Serbia and  
to share the plunder. Our diplo-  
macy in Greece and elsewhere was  
confused and paralysed by many  
subtle influences. Our lines on the  
Gallipoli peninsula held up a  
Turkish force, gave Bulgaria pause  
and probably relieved Egypt of a  
strong Turkish offensive, but failed  
to compass its immediate military  
objective. The control of the ad-  
vance into Mesopotamia moved  
from muddled daring to unmiti-  
gated disaster. Egypt stood on  
the defensive. In South and West  
Africa alone we had achieved  
victory.

#### Allied Offensives.

In the meantime, at Loos and  
elsewhere, we attempted advances  
for which our preparations were  
still (as the event proved) inade-  
quate. Following the German  
blockade of Britain and France,  
our own sea blockade was con-  
fessedly incomplete.

The wealth of our man-power  
was, it is true, potentially decisive.  
But though our armies were trained  
with what would, in advance, have  
been described as incredible swift-  
ness, neither they nor their muni-  
tions were yet available in adequate  
force for the field. Worst of all,  
while the Central Empires had  
throughout acted under a unified  
High Command, the Allied military  
effort was on the whole, uncorre-  
lated, without unity, either of aim  
or direction—a series of brave but  
doubtful experiments inadequately  
conceived, carried through spora-  
dically at high cost and backed up  
ineffectively.

Looked at as a whole, these draw-

backs were inherent in a situation  
in which Powers that had directed  
their thought for decades to the  
problems of such a war, and that  
were fighting on interior lines in  
a war made on their own initiative  
and at their own time, met other  
Powers fighting on external lines,  
divided from each other by  
enormous distances and by enemy  
and neutral territory, whose sep-  
arate High Commands had never  
envisaged as a whole the problems  
of strategy, diplomacy, man-  
power, munitionment and econo-  
mics.

#### Preparedness.

The benefits of preparedness are  
most obvious at the beginning of a  
war. By the end of the first year  
these benefits began to lose their  
effect, and throughout the second  
year the advantages of lack of pre-  
liminary preparation began to be  
visible. Fully conscript nations  
are powerful in a short war, but  
if they can be held through the  
early days their very preparedness  
creates drawbacks. As their man-  
power diminishes and their men  
become stale and lose morale, the  
flower of less military peoples  
comes freshly into line. That is  
precisely what began to happen in  
1916 and is developing with in-  
creasing momentum.

(To be continued)

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