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American and Japanese Co-Operation

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AMERICAN AND JAPANESE CO-OPERATION ¹

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NO subject before the conference compares in interest for me with that of the United States and the Far East. A son of Japan and for the most of the years of my manhood a resident of the United States, enjoying her hospitality, entering into her wide fields of scientific research and her great domain of business, and taking with the years still dearer pledges of human good-will to America, it is natural that all matters tending to closer union and clear understanding between the two should be vital to me.

First of all I would lay down the undebatable principle that for the good of the world the bonds between the United States and the Far East should be close and lasting. Such bonds of union not only go toward maintaining peace and trade and commerce between the peoples of western Asia and the people of this great republic, but they rest upon the postulate that the Pacific Ocean shall be for all time a lake of peace, an open highway for binding mankind together and not a mere expression of the distances separating them. To make these conditions clear, to aid in their establishment, to bring them from the region of speculation into the realm of firm accomplishment would be worthy work for anyone; to me they seem of the greatest urgency. In a world now torn by a great war in which all the bases of civilization are at stake, in which all the old hard lines of demarcation between races and nations are in a state of temporary fluidity, in which the winning or the losing of one great battle may render the maps of a few years ago unrecognizable, how great a thing it would be to insure the stability of a full half of the world by a thoroughly reasoned understanding, a compact of intellect and enlightened

¹ Address delivered at the National Conference on Foreign Relations of the United States, held under the auspices of the Academy of Political Science, at Long Beach, N. Y., May 31, 1917.

interest between the United States and the powers and peoples of the Far East with a free Pacific Ocean between!

From the viewpoint of world powers this means primarily an understanding between the United States and Japan, with the benevolent attitude of Great Britain and France on account of their Asiatic possessions on one side, and of the Central and South American republics on the other. This is no dream. It is happily a present actuality and may with a little wisdom be made perpetual. What, then, stands as a threatening possibility in the way, and how can this possible obstacle be removed, and the path of peace made smooth and open for the coming centuries? On all vital and pressing matters the United States and Japan are in agreement as far as they are called on to agree. The attitude of Great Britain, based on her Indian possessions and her trading interests, is wholly benevolent. The same is true of France in her place as a colonizer and possessor of Indo-China. There remains, then, as a possible disturbance of the peaceful progress of our half of the world, the question of the vast dominion of China.

From China herself no threat of breaking the peace of the Far East comes. It is in the attitude of all the powers east and west toward China that the danger resides. Her weakness is an invitation to the predatory instinct. Over her hundreds of thousands of square miles of territory her population of four hundred million souls is slowly awakening to modern ideas and modern wants. Her traditional orientalism under the empire of the Manchus stood in the way of her absorbing the learning, the science, the intricacies of modern civilization as Japan has done in the past fifty years. She stands there, a field for education, offering an enormous, ever-growing market to the manufacturers and merchants of the world. Under her new republican government she will, it is to be hoped, wrestle with her educational and evolutionary problems in a becoming way. It is for the powers outside herself to say how her trade may be fostered and secured, how fair play may be the high condition for all—an open competition for her custom and good-will. On the part of China the required condition is the open door as defined by the American statesman, John

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Hay, carrying with it equal opportunity for all in pursuit of the development of the dormant resources of China. As the matter stands, the powers most directly interested—Japan, the United States, England and France—all stand pledged to both these conditions of open door and equal opportunity. What, then, lies beyond? A provision putting it permanently out of the program of the trading nations to intrigue for or seize upon Chinese territory; in other words, a pledge to respect the territorial integrity of China.

We have herein reached the heart of all that must be made secure to insure that perfect peace in the Far East on which I build such hopes of the future. I take it for granted, and I am sure that I am in accord with the members of this National Conference on Foreign Relations of the United States, in asserting that the land of Washington, Lincoln, Grant and Wilson has no designs upon the territory of China. With equal certainty I assert that Japan subscribes just as heartily to that stipulation. A multiplication of assertions to that end has been made by the most responsible statesmen of my country. Not only do the recent words of Prime Minister Terauchi voice this recognition that Chinese territory is outside the region of international rapine, but they are expressive of an active good-will toward the Chinese government and people which he is daily translating into acts. Notwithstanding the long line of such protestations on the part of Japan and Japanese statesmen and officials, and the indisputable evidence that the relations between Japan and the new government of the Chinese republic have been placed upon a footing of mutual trust, and of forbearance toward China on the part of Japan in events growing out of China's difficult transition period, there are still in America some open skeptics of Japan's intentions and motives. I have no doubt that these are mainly survivals of the wholesale and intemperate allegations and accusations hurled at Japan in a campaign carried on a few years since in America by the agents or partisans of the late ruler of China, who was aiming to make himself emperor, and who sought to set up Japan as the foe of America. It was easy to controvert and disprove the accusations, but the contradic-

tions did not reach all who may have been impressed by the original libels. Happily, the ground is now clear for full trust and confidence in the entire good faith of Japan as regards the United States and China.

I would not have taken such pains to restate the points of the Far Eastern situation as I see them, if I had nothing important to add to them. I have. One promising and profitable way to insure a durable peace in the eastern hemisphere is to secure joint action by the United States and Japan in trade and investment in China. Governmental unity through pledges stated or implied can profitably go no farther than at present; but individual and corporate activity and unity can go much farther. All the preparations and *pourparlers* are actually or apparently aimed at securing a fair competition for all nations in exploiting, developing and securing their share of trade in China. I would propose and support as far as possible joint enterprise between Japanese subjects or corporations and American citizens or corporations in the development of Chinese resources. Let us as far as possible direct our competition to the point of getting a share in the enterprises intended for trade or manufacture in China, whether the enterprises be of American or of Japanese origin, rather than holding these enterprises wholly apart and competing against one another in China. The material and moral advantages would at once become manifest. I do not mean to say that it would be necessary that all enterprises from either nation directed toward China should be so combined; but that the more the better, and for a very solid reason. They would so leaven the mass of competition as to insure a perfect evenness of opportunity, and to have the best brains of both nations at command. Co-operation can be realized in half a hundred lines of manufacture and in all lines of trading, from the treaty ports to the remotest cities of the interior of the China's wide-spread domain. I believe in it strongly as a strengthener of our mutual confidence. Much as they have achieved, my countrymen have much to learn, and Americans can teach them. And, similarly, there are not a few things of oriental nature which the Japanese can teach you.

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