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JAPAN AND RUSSIA

The war in the Pacific is just as important and more significant than the war in Europe. As Americans we must face this fact, understand our limitations and possibilities, and gauge the present and future as best we can. We can no longer ignore the greatest of the world's five oceans nor can we fail to understand and evaluate the nations living along its rim.

In this war the factor of distance is of great importance. The Pacific has an area of approximately 68,000,000 square miles. Fronting on this mighty mass of water are the British Dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, eleven American republics, excluding the United States, China, the Philippines, Netherlands East Indies, New Guinea, Hawaii, the Solomons and tens of thousands of other islands whose existence we are just now beginning to realize. In the far north the United States and the Soviet Union are the closest of neighbors, being separated from each other by a distance of 62 miles across the Bering Strait and by only 14½ miles between Little Diomede Island owned by the United States and Big Diomede Island owned by the U.S.S.R. In this same general area we find that Attu, our easternmost island in the Aleutian chain is only 250 miles southeast of the Soviet's submarine base in the Komandorskie Islands and 696 miles from Japan's advanced naval base at Paramushiro Island.

It is easy to see that the Pacific not only has size to commend it but interest as well. Wealth, trade routes, and future well-being are tied up with this area and before we are out of this war we are, as a matter of national policy and survival, going to know it and know it well.

Our main object in the Pacific is to defeat Japan. In the course of these remarks I would like to discuss some of the phases of that country's importance to us and at the same time throw some pertinent light on Russia, our greatest potential ally in that area.

Since 1853, Japan has made tremendous strides to achieve the position of a great power among the nations of the earth. Before that time she was virtually unknown due to her two hundred year policy of seclusion and exclusion during which time only a limited trade was carried on with China, Korea, and Holland by the Shogunate which then ruled Japan. One Dutch ship a year was allowed into Nagasaki and the Dutch maintained what could be called a resident consular merchant at Deshima in that harbor. The Dutch were always kept under close supervision and their every movement was watched by guards of the Shogun. On rare occasions, however, they were allowed to travel to Yedo or, as it was later known, Tokyo, the capital, and there as well as at Deshima, they acquainted the Japanese with developments in western medicine, armament, botany, and other fields. At one time during the Napoleonic wars when Holland had been occupied by the French emperor and its overseas possessions taken over by the British, the only place in the world where the Dutch flag was allowed to fly was at Deshima.

With the opening of Japan in 1853 by Commodore Perry the country was thrown open to the commerce of the world. Incidentally, one of the main reasons for Perry's visit was to compel the Japanese to give humane treatment to American sailors shipwrecked in Japan and taken captive by the Japanese. Hence, their treatment of Americans today is nothing new but the continuation of a practice which has been temporarily dormant. Extranationality or the dispensing of justice by foreigners to their nationals was allowed in Japan until 1894 when the Aoki-Kimberly Agreement between Japan and England was effected. Shortly after this time all other nations followed suit and gave up their special rights. During the period from 1853 onward, the Japanese made great strides and literally jumped the transition period between their medieval and modern eras. They thirsted for knowledge of all kinds, imported technicians and experts, and sent their sons abroad to the colleges of Europe and America. They bought warships from the British and hired Englishmen to
train their seamen; they engaged French army officers to train their soldiers and, after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, they replaced them with German officers. Since that time the Japanese army has been Prussian in its training and the Navy has been inspired to a great degree by British methods. It must be stated, though, that as soon as the Japanese felt that they had mastered the practices of the West they dismissed their foreign instructors, substituted their own men and began to build their navy and armaments in their own shipyards and factories. They clung to what they had learned, kept up with new practices, and added Japanese innovations. Today, as we all know, Japan has a highly trained, well-equipped and finely staffed army and navy which ranks with the best in the world. The lessons of Tarawa, the Solomons, and Iwo Jima will not be soon forgotten by us.

In the matter of education the Japanese were strongly influenced by the United States. The father of the empire's education system was David Murray, an American school teacher, who laid the foundation for a system of training which has made Japan one of the most, if not the most, literate nations in the world today.

While all these changes were taking place in the Army, the Navy, and education a significant change was working in the matter of government. The Shogun (Great Barbarian Subduing General) was displaced in 1867 and the Emperor - for hundreds of years only a figurehead - restored to real power. The Meiji Era, so called after the reign name of Mutsuhito, was one of great advancement. Meiji, as he was commonly referred to, had the abilities of a remarkable person at his disposal in Count Hirobumi Ito who studied the constitutions of America and Europe, decided the Prussian constitution of Bismarck's was the best, and came home and modelled one on that basis and put it into effect. Under this constitution all power was derived from the Emperor and graciously granted to the people. If anyone saw fit to disagree with this assumption, as did Professor Minobe in 1935 when he advanced the theory that the Emperor was an organ of government and not its source, he took his life in his hands. As a matter of fact, the Emperor is thought of as being of divine origin, being considered the 124th direct descendent of the Sun Goddess Ameratsu. The Nation at large is likewise considered to be descended from the gods and consequently superior to all other nations, Japan was held to be the country of the gods, and of all the earth it was nearest to heaven when the break between the two occurred.

One peculiarity of the Government worth mentioning is the position of the War and Navy departments. The head of each must be an officer on active duty. This gives the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Navy a direct voice in the Cabinet and makes the two Cabinet officers mentioned directly responsible to them. This control, coupled with their access to the Emperor's ear in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, gives power to the armed services as is exercised in no other country in the world.

Until the death of Prince Saionji in 1940 there was an extra-legal group made up of elder statesmen known as the Genro. This body was created during Meiji's time and, while only advisory, it had tremendous influence in dictating policies of state. The Genro has now been superseded by the highest ranking officers in the army and navy.

The Japanese Empire proper numbers approximately 80,000,000 people of whom some 20,000 are Ainu. These Ainu are a primitive people who were the inhabitants of the Japanese islands until driven northward by advancing Malays and Mongols. They are Caucasians, very hairy, with coppery brown skin and features that are on the whole, distinctly European. Today, they reside in Karafuto, Hokkaido and the Kurile Islands. They occupy a reservation status somewhat similar to that used in our care of the Indians.
The area of Japan is 148,756 square miles, or just slightly larger than the state of Montana. Not more than 20% of Japan's land is arable and the country is poor in natural resources. In this respect it will be recalled that on April 1, 1944 — almost a year ago — I made a statement on the Floor of the House that an agreement just signed between Russia and Japan, whereby Japan gave up its coal and oil concessions on Northern Sakhalin and received in return an extension of five years of her fishing rights in Russian waters was a good thing for Japan. At that time the press and radio generally hailed this agreement as a Russian victory. Mr. Speaker, because of the possibility that Japan will not be invaded but instead, blockaded, and because of the fact that she is dependent on outside sources — rice from the south and fish from the seas — to feed and sustain her people, I am inserting at this point in my talk the statement I made on April 1, 1944 regarding the Russo-Japanese agreement referred to above:

"Mr. Speaker: The abrogation by Russia of the Japanese coal and oil concessions in northern Sakhalin has been publicized in the press as a major Russian victory and on the radio as indicating that Russia has gained everything and Japan nothing. I wonder.

"In my view, this is not the case because the Japanese are now no longer dependent on Sakhalin for part of its oil and coal needs. There is no doubt but that Japan has been able to reopen the oil wells and reconstruct the refineries in the Dutch East Indies and that they are now producing to capacity and fulfilling all of our enemy's needs. Furthermore, the coal deposits in Manchuria alone have been and are more than sufficient for Japan's requirements in that respect.

"It is well to keep in mind that in giving up her coal and oil concessions, Japan is having her fishing rights extended from one to five years. As fish furnishes one of the two staple elements in her diet — the other is rice — the conclusion may be drawn that Japan is augmenting her food supplies at home and in return giving up concessions over coal products which at present are of little or no value to her. We must remember that prior to this war Japan could not supply more than 10 percent of her oil needs from the shale of Manchuria and the concessions in Sakhalin. The rest of her supply she had to get from outside sources, primarily from Dutch Indonesia and, to a lesser extent, from the United States. Now with complete control of the Indies oil fields she is independent of any outside source and what she has given up is indicative of her complete independence in the petroleum field.

"This new agreement between Russia and Japan is more significant than meets the eye at the moment. In my opinion it signifies a need for a staple food in the Japanese Empire being met; and as a concession she is giving up her rights in coal and oil which she no longer needs. Japan is, as a result, making herself stronger to defeat both at home and in her conquered territories. I fear this agreement goes far deeper than newspaper headlines and radio accounts indicate."

What I have said will, I hope, furnish food for thought as it indicates some of the weak points in Japan's economy. The important facts to keep in mind are as follows: Japan's population numbers 80,000,000 people; her area is 148,756 square miles; and the amount of land available for cultivation amounts to only 20% of this total. The result is too many people depend on too small a cultivated area and therefore must — in order to live — import fish and rice or dip. These are the factors which make consideration of a sea and air blockade of the Japanese islands proper a vital one in our future planning. The Japanese know this and, as a result, have been building up an industrial economy of no little importance in Manchuria and North China, where the finish of this war, now in its 14th year, will take place.
The above mentioned figures might explain, in part, Japan's policy of expansion although we should remember that expansion is nothing new with our enemies. They tried, during the third century of the Christian era, to expand into Korea, Manchuria, and China under the Emperor Jingo. In the 11th century Abe Yoritoko led a flotille up the Amur river. In the 16th century Hideyoshi invaded Korea with the thought of conquering China but he failed to fully complete his early victories. Incidently, a Korean Admiral, Yih Sun-sin, was able to defeat Hideyoshi's navy in a number of engagements through a remarkable invention known as the tortoise boat. This was, in reality, the first iron-clad warship and it superseded John Erickson's Civil War invention by over 250 years.

Perhaps the most remarkable statement about Japan's expansion policy was the Tanaka Memorial, the existence of which Japan has consistently denied. However, events to date have certainly followed the supposed Memorial and thereby lend a degree of authenticity to the idea. According to the Memorial which was first published in English in 1931 but which was said to have been presented to the Emperor of Japan on July 25, 1927 by Premier Baron Giichi Tanaka, it was the duty of Japan to conquer Manchuria and China, and when that was accomplished the South Seas area would be overcome, and when that was completed Japan would conquer the world. Whether the Memorial is a true statement or not, the fact is that the pattern has been closely followed out.

Japan is driven today by the might of the nations who confront her on all sides. She considers not only the present situation but she looks as far ahead as the year 2000. The term "one-hundred year war" has come from the lips of her leaders more than once. Japan entered this war in the firm belief that conditions could never be any more favorable, and she is determined to build a position which she thinks will make her invulnerable. Germany, her ally, means absolutely nothing to her. Her moves are tied up only with Japan itself today and in the future.

This, in brief, is the background of the people who would destroy us. They are ruthless, fanatical, and determined. They have never lost a war and they do not intend to lose this one. They have never had their cities invaded; they have not felt the weight of bombings of their industries and cities until recently; and they have never had a powerful foe set foot on their home soil. They have already conquered far more territories and people than they dreamed they could, and they are prepared to defend what they have to the last ditch. It is going to take everything we have to defeat them, and to do it we will, as a matter of necessity, have to consider the part Russia, perhaps, will play.

Russia, our partner in the European war, is only a potential ally in the Pacific. Many people wonder why Russia isn't fighting Japan, and of late there has been increased speculation throughout the country and in the press concerning this matter. Let us consider the situation.

Russia is today in the war with Japan even though her army and navy are not fighting our enemy. This statement is made on the basis that Russia has an army estimated at anywhere from 500,000 to 700,000 on the Manchukuo-Korean frontier. Facing this Far Eastern Army is an estimated force of 600,000 comprising the so-called Kwantung Army of Japan - an army made up of young, splendidly trained, and well-equipped soldiers who have not, except in rare instances, been used elsewhere. The Japanese cannot afford to withdraw this force because of the deep seated antagonism between the two countries and the possibilities of Russia's taking advantage of such a situation should it ever arise. There has been no lack of "incidents" between the two over the years; in fact, over 2700 minor cases of friction have developed along the Amur during the years since 1931 as well as two major battles at Changkufeng.
on the Korean-Siberian frontier and Nomonhan on the Outer-Inner Mongolian frontier. In both of these battles the Japanese were decisively defeated. They are, however, realistic people and will not go to war unless they feel that the odds are in their favor or that they are forced to.

The Japanese not only realize the threat of the Far Eastern Red Army but they also fear the Red air force and navy stationed at Vladivostok and Nikolaevsk. They know that Russia has from 80 to 100 submarines in the Far East and they are aware of the damage which they could cause in the Yellow and adjacent seas. They are aware of the underground airfields at Vladivostok and they appreciate the terrible destruction which could be brought to Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, and other industrial cities which lie in a seven hundred mile radius from Vladivostok. The Japanese know that striking at this industrial empire would be striking at the heart of Japan itself so they wait.

On the other hand the Russians know how defenseless Vladivostok is. Despite the fact that it has been heavily fortified it lies too close to Japanese army, navy, and air concentrations to hold out for long. The Japanese have built a powerful naval and air base at Bashin in the extreme north of Korea and there is no doubt in anyone's mind but that its sole object is to envelop and destroy Vladivostok when the "day" arrives. The chief naval base of the Soviets in the Pacific will very likely be Nikolaevsk, at the mouth of the Amur, far to the north and enough out of sustained bombing range to make holding it more feasible. Before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, the Russians were building a connecting link between Nikolaevsk and the Trans-Siberian Railroad by means of a double-tracked extension beginning to the east of Lake Baikal and describing a great arc northward to Sovetskaya on the Pacific. There have also been rumors to the effect that a road has been built from Komsomolsk up along the sea of Okhotsk, and over into the Kamchatka Peninsula and from there to the Bering Sea. No proof of this has ever been ascertained but the report appears occasionally.

Although the Soviets have never officially announced it, highways and numerous air fields have been laid out in eastern and northeastern Siberia. No nation has been so aware of the significance of the plans and its future as the U.S.S.R. and to prepare itself against all possibilities they have endeavored to build not only the necessary railroads and roads, but air fields as well.

Why has the U.S.S.R. gone to such lengths to maintain an army, air force, and a sizable navy in the Far East? The reasons boil down to two. First, to protect Siberia from its traditional enemy, the Japanese, and second, behind this protective curtain, to develop the huge and undeveloped resources of the country.

Few people seem to realize that it is in mid-Siberia that the Third Five-Year Plan has been functioning since 1938. In the region of Stalinsk great strategic plants have been developed at Krasnoiarsk and Novo Sibersk; to carry out the opening up of the country. This is necessary because of the hugeness of the area and the importance of Russia in the East. Russian Asia is the greatest area under one power on that continent, and the stepping stones used by the Soviets to open its eastern lands are the industrial developments it undertakes.
At Irkutsk, such natural resources as coal, iron, and water power are being developed, and because of their location are relatively free from concentrated attack by land and, to a lesser degree, by air. In the region north of Manchukuo, coal and iron has been discovered in great quantities and is now being exploited. If Japan ever cut into the Lake Baikal area she could not isolate the Far East industrially because of the rise of Komsomolsk, Khabarovsk, and Nikolaevsk. Khabarovsk is located at the junction of the Amur, Ussuri, and Sungaro rivers on the Manchukuo frontier and is not only an important city industrially but is also the headquarters of the Soviet’s Far Eastern Army. The Chita region is rich in tin, molybdenum, tungsten, and wolframite. Komsomolsk has petroleum refineries and steel mills. Nikolaevsk has shipyards as well as refineries and plants for the canning of food. In the Maritime Province there are many minerals of great importance such as copper, manganese, iron, zinc, graphite and gold. Vladivostok is extremely important for its smelters, shipyards, and textile mills.

The island of Sakhalin across from the Maritime Province is owned jointly with Japan. The Russian or northern part is rich in oil, coal, timber, and is quite important in the fishing trade. North of Sakhalin is the Kamchatka peninsula as yet largely undeveloped but offering a potential site for great events in the present conflict because of its nearness to the Kuriies, the Aleutians and Alaska.

Then there is the Arctic which has, for the first time in history, really been opened up, and, to a certain extent, developed. Professor Otto Schmidt, the great Soviet Arctic explorer, has likened the development of the Arctic to the discovery of America. Now the Soviets have established cities there such as Igarka on the Yenesei river and are operating weather stations along its entire area. During certain months of the year the Arctic can be kept open through the use of ice breakers and the Soviets look forward to the day when they can keep their northern sea open the year round. There have been reports that American supplies have gone to the U.S.S.R. by this route but due to military policy this cannot be definitely ascertained.

In addition to industrial development, many settlers have been sent in to till the soil which in many areas is extremely rich and capable of producing a variety of crops. Many units of the army operate farms and many civilians have been induced to settle in what would otherwise be wilderness areas. These farmers, in many instances, have been promised exemption from taxes. Another device to settle the Far East has been the founding of the autonomous area of Biro-Bidjan as a Jewish colony in the region west of Khabarovsk. To further rail and road construction convict labor has been used, and in this way the country was opened up and a stable population settled.

All these factors are significant in an understanding of Siberia. Our knowledge of this great, rich, undeveloped country is not all that it should be, but the times call for an understanding of its importance. The newness and the distances explain in part the difficulties which have faced the Soviets there and should give us some idea as to the problems which Russia must overcome. Siberia will, because of its location, play a very important part in settling the war in Asia. However, we cannot bank on that happening too soon because of the fight the Soviets are waging against Hitler’s legions in Europe. There Stalin’s forces are carrying on magnificently and successfully. Could they do as well if they had to maintain another front in the Far East? The people who are demanding that Russia give us Siberian bases or enter the Pacific War immediately would do well to ponder this question.
On the basis of past history a showdown must occur at some time between Japan and the U.S.S.R. Russia has not forgotten her defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the Japanese occupation of Siberia from 1918 to 1923, the almost forced sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1915, the numerous incidents on the Amur, or the battles of Changkufeng and Nomonhan. On the other hand, Japan has not forgotten Russia's acquisition of Port Arthur in 1895, Russia's old desire for Korea, or her loss of face at Changkufeng and Nomonhan.

I do not know what, if any, agreements concerning Japan have been entered into between Russia and the United Nations but I am certain, in my own mind, that the differences between Japan and the U.S.S.R. are too great to be overcome except by clash of arms. They are too close to one another, too distrustful of each other, and both feel that they have a score to settle. These two countries are going to war and it is not a question of "if" but "when". Of that we may be absolutely certain.

The time, however, will depend on circumstances which we cannot foresee at the moment. It is our hope, naturally, that the time for such action is not too far distant because it is our desire to achieve victory in the Pacific at the earliest possible moment. To do this and to build a solid and enduring peace in that area is going to take the combined efforts of the major United Nations. This will be accomplished only through mutual understanding and the quicker that is achieved the sooner the war in the Pacific and in Asia will be ended. United action and common efforts directed toward the defeat of our enemy, Japan, will not only shorten the war but it will save lives – American lives – and get our boys back to us that much sooner. That is what counts now.