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### Buffalo Foreign Policy Association Union of Buffalo

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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## AMERICAN FAR EASTERN POLICY.

In the matters of foreign policy, the American people are generally more concerned with the affairs of Europe than with those of Asia. This emphasis is not difficult to understand. Most of us are descendents of Europeans. Our political institutions derive largely from Europe; and strong economic and cultural bonds link the United States to that continent. Perhaps most important, the European countries have provided a powerful thrust in the shaping of recent world history, so that isolation from their influence--for good or for evil--has not been possible for us. In the years that lie ahead, Europe is likely to remain for a long time the principal focus of American concern in foreign affairs.

The time has come, however, to give increased consideration to our position and policies in the Far East. For, while our attention has been concentrated on Europe, the drive of American civilization has been carrying us steadily westward; first across a continent to the Pacific; then beyond, to the ocean islands; and finally, to the shores of Asia where we now occupy Japan with a force of more than 100,000 Americans.

This westward projection of the United States is a development that dates from the earliest days of the Republic. During most of the 19th Century, however, it found expression within the continental limits of North America in the forging of the nation. In the Far East at the time, our major concern was the safety of our missionaries and the rights of our shippers and traders. Even these limited interests, however, led us to initiate the opening of Japan by Admiral Perry.

After 1900, American interests in the Pacific began to spread and multiply. The recent war, of course, precipitated this process; and today, we are plunged more deeply in the Far East than ever before. There is



little likelihood that our involvement will diminish in the future and every indication, that it will increase. We are, even at this moment, considering a new Aid-plan for China.

To meet the situation in which we now find ourselves in the Far Pacific, it is imperative that we develop and apply intelligent Far Eastern policies. This is not a simple assignment. The region is immense and extremely complex. China, Japan, Korea, Southern and Southeast Asia--while they contain many factors in common with which we must reckon--also present us with individual problems of foreign relations. They are, in effect, separate challenges to our resourcefulness which must be met with separate responses. But even more, these specific policies must be devised within the pattern of our universal foreign policy which, stated generally, is to provide adequately for the security of the United States; to preserve world peace; and to establish mutually beneficial commercial and cultural relations with the other nations of the world.

In the remainder of the discussion, I propose to consider briefly those principal sub-divisions of the Far East which I have mentioned and the course of our relations with each of them. These are the components, the main divisions, of what is termed American Far Eastern policy.

China is of major importance. It is the country with which we have maintained the longest, and in some respects, the most significant relations. Our Chinese policy has evolved slowly over the course of a century. Traditionally, it has been based on such concepts as the "Open Door" and the maintenance of China's "independence and territorial integrity.". This policy was adequate while contacts with China were limited and we were primarily interested in the protection of commercial interests. It was a comparatively simple and inexpensive policy to operate.

However, the rapid ascendancy of Japan to dominance in East Asia after



World War I challenged the "Open Door" and China's "independence and territorial integrity.". Furthermore, it became increasingly evident--especially after the invasion of Manchuria in 1931--that not only the business interests of American nationals in China were menaced by Japan's actions but the very security of our country was involved. Successive Secretaries of State--in Democratic and Republican administrations alike--sought through various means to blunt the headlong rush of Japanese aggression and to reassert the traditional pattern of our policy in China. It was only after the shattering of this policy that Japan entered irrevocably on the path that led to the War in the Pacific.

The end of the recent conflict found us more deeply involved in China than at any other time in history. With our soldiers still scattered throughout China and with continuing commitments to the Central Government, immediate withdrawal was impossible. Furthermore our hopes for world peace were based in part on the belief that a strong and independent China could act as a stabilizing influence in East Asia. But China, exhausted by the war, was on the verge of economic collapse and in imminent danger of renewed civil war.

Under these circumstances, it was evident that we could not easily revert to the prewar pattern of our China policy. Elaboration was essential to meet the new situation and it was forthcoming in a statement by President Truman on December 16, 1945. In this pronouncement, the President called for a "strong, united and democratic China." He said that the United States would continue to recognize the Central Government and to cooperate with it internationally, but that we would not intervene militarily "to influence the course of any Chinese strife." In addition, the President held out the promise of American aid as the Chinese moved towards peace and unity. General Marshall was sent to China to assist in furthering this policy.



For the year that he served in China, the General sought through mediation to bring about a "Strong, united and democratic China.". Marshall's most determined efforts, however, proved unavailing in the face of twenty years of mutual hatred, mistrust and suspicion on the part of the Chinese Kuomintang and Communist leaders. Our attempts to promote a settlement earned us nothing but the mounting hostility of large sections of the war-weary Chinese people who vented the bitterness of their frustrated hopes for peace on the peacemakers.

Since General Marshall's return, early in 1947, the United States has continued to support Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Government in international matters, giving him diplomatic backing against Russia on the reparations issue in Manchuria and on the question of restoring Chinese sovereignty in the cities of Dairen and Port Arthur. At the same time we have sought, as far as possible to extricate ourselves from the civil war situation. In other words, the United States had not changed its policy of desiring a "strong, united and democratic China," but was awaiting a more propitious moment for furthering it.

In recent months, however, the situation in China has been growing very tense. The position of the Central Government has deteriorated very rapidly. Production is at a practical standstill. Inflation, speculation and food shortages--particularly in the large cities--have occasioned severe hardships for the Chinese people. Inefficiency and corruption corrode the machinery of government and incompetent officers and inadequate organization devitalize the army.

Chinese Communists now hold most of Manchuria and are becoming stronger throughout North China. A massive struggle for power goes on, and the common people of China, whose strongest yearning is for peace, are steadily crushed by an ever-increasing weight of economic chaos and military devastation.



The question, which naturally arises, is whether or not there is anything that can be done to alleviate the situation. More specifically, is there anything we can do? Any attempt to answer this question should begin with a consideration of what we have already done. Since 1937 we have made available loans and grants totaling \$3 billion. Of this amount, almost half has been extended since V-J day. In addition, we have transferred to the Chinese at a fraction of cost large quantities of surplus properties including some arms and munitions, and provided a nucleus of 271 small ships for the Chinese navy.

There is now under consideration a China equivalent of the E.R.P. which the State Department estimates will cost \$570 million through June 30, 1949. If the plan is adopted, the Central Government will be given loans and grants, not for military equipment and supplies, but to check the disintegration of the civilian economy, to bring some direct relief to the hard-pressed populace. \$60 million of the total is earmarked for the rehabilitation--particularly of transportation--in areas removed from the civil war zones. In his transmittal of the program, the President emphasized that it was not intended as a cure-all for China's ills. In his own words, "The proposed program of aid to China represents what I believe to be the best course this Government can follow in the light of all the circumstances. Nothing which this country provides by way of assistance can, even in a small measure, be a substitute for the necessary action that can be taken only <sup>by</sup> the Chinese Government."

The assistance which we are extending through various channels to the Chinese is not inconsiderable but there has been, nevertheless, some demand for more "positive" help. "Positive," in this sense, means of course, grants of guns and ammunition for the Central Government.

However laudatory the objective of fighting Communists may be, let us examine just two of the many possible ramifications of such a "positive"



policy. In the first place, we must recognize honestly that military aid would almost certainly lead to the return of American troops in ever-increasing numbers to Chinese soil. first as instructors, then as advisors and technicians and ultimately perhaps as combattants. In this connection, let me recall the wide-spread demonstrations against the presence of American troops in China during the late 1946 and early 1947--troops which were there for the peaceful purpose of attempting to maintain the Nationalistic-Communist truce. What would be the reaction of the war-weary Chinese people if the function of American soldiers in China were expressly to assist one faction in the civil strife against the other?

In the second place, such a program of "positive" aid would flaunt arrogantly two of the strongest sentiments of the Chinese--nationalism and the desire for peace. It would place us in the unenviable position which General Marshall has urged us to avoid--that is" of being charged with a direct responsibility for the conduct of the Chinese Government and its political, economic and military affairs."

If we embark on such a course, we must be prepared to take on for ourselves the same heritage of hatred the Russians are constructing for themselves in Dairen and Port Arthur.

If we wish to avoid this reaction, we can do little more, at present, than to assist, through whatever peaceful avenues are open to us in the alleviation of human misery and in checking economic disintegration. We cannot, however, add to the physical wreckage and the slaughter of fratricidal strife and expect to be thanked for our trouble.

In contrast with China, where our course is determined by ourselves along on the basis of a long historical experience, the pattern of the American occupation of Japan derives from inter-Allied agreement and constitutes a new ramification in our Far Eastern policy.



The broad aim of the Occupation is to insure the establishment of a peaceful, democratic Japan, able and willing to cooperate in building a stable world. The means by which we propose to bring this change about were stated broadly in the Potsdam Proclamation of July 26, 1945, adhered to by the major Allies. They include the full demilitarization and democratization of Japan. They do not include the permanent enslavement of the Japanese people or the total destruction of the Japanese industrial economy.

In the creation of machinery to carry out the purposes of the Occupation, the United States sought to preserve the leadership which we had exercised throughout the war in the Pacific and, at the same time, to give adequate recognition to the interests of the other Allies who participated in the struggle. The appointment of General MacArthur as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers--of SCAP as it is abbreviated--to accept the surrender, insured the continuity of our primary war position into the Peace. Our Allies share in the occupation through an Allied advisory body which works with General MacArthur in Tokyo and through an eleven-member Far Eastern Commission which meets here in Washington. The latter body has authority to formulate occupation policy, but its powers are circumscribed in such a manner as to insure the continuance of the dominant influence of the United States in both policy formulation and execution.

This primacy, however, carries with it corresponding responsibilities, heavy, both in terms of costs and effort and in terms of the future peace of the Pacific. It is incumbent upon us to attempt to transform a feudal Japan into a new State capable of peaceful and progressive survival in the modern world. The basic measures through which we hope to carry out this responsibility--that is, the SCAP directives, designed to work far-reaching changes in the military, political, economic and social structure of Japanese society--have been promulgated. Our major remaining task is to see that they



are carried out.

The greatest progress in implementation is discernable in the field of demilitarization. Japan's capacity to wage war has been practically obliterated through the physical destruction of military material; the demobilization of the armed forces; the purge from public life and in some cases, the criminal trial, of war leaders.

Political reform in Japan has made considerable gains. A new constitution is now in operation, embodying a very liberal "Bill of Rights". It establishes a sound legal basis upon which a genuine democratic government can be constructed. An interesting feature of the Constitution is the renunciation by Japan of the right to maintain either an Army or Navy.

SCAP's economic directives are designed to break up excessive concentrations of power and to diversify the control of Japan's wealth. Measures have been introduced to eliminate the monopolies of the Zaibatsu--the great family trusts, and to spread the ownership of land and industry. Both trade unionism and agricultural cooperatives have been encouraged and have experienced a phenomenal growth.

These measures, however, are not adequate to establish a self-supporting Japan. With its population of 75 million now compressed into an area roughly equal in size to Montana and far less opulent, Japan must develop a substantial foreign trade or remain a permanent charge on the United States. While SCAP is making determined efforts to increase Japanese exports, the problem is an extremely difficult one. Many of the Allied members of the Far Eastern Commission fear the competition of Japan's industry abroad, particularly in textiles; there are unsettled demands for reparations which leave the Japanese uncertain as to which lines of production to develop; and finally, the demand for the most important Japanese export--raw silk--has been drastically curtailed by the growth in the world-use of synthetics.



It may be that the genuine rehabilitation of the export trade must await the signing of a peace treat . This event, however, could be long delayed. On July 11, 1947, the United States proposed a conference of the members of the Far Eastern Commission to discuss the terms of a peace settlement. But Russia has denounced the procedure proposed and China has expressed some reservations.

In the field of social reform, the most important SCAP directives seek extensive redirection of Japanese education; the abolition of State Shintoism--that is emperor worship; and the equalizing of the status of women. With respect to the latter, I might mention that women have been elected to the Diet for the first time in Japanese history.

To all outward appearances, the American occupation of Japan has been a great success. The foundations for a peaceful and democratic Japan have been firmly established. While the Japanese give every indication of approving the many changes introduced, there is no accurate measure for determining how deep-seated their acceptance has been.

In the long run, whether democracy flourishes in Japan depends upon the Japanese people themselves, on the one hand, and the United States and the United Nations on the other. The former must demonstrate the eternal vigilance so essential to the preservation of a free society. For ourselves, we must end the occupation as quickly as possible and then maintain a careful supervision over Japan to prevent a recrudescence of a militarism which might once again be turned upon us. At the same time, we must continue, together with the other United Nations, to strive for the sort of world in which Japan can provide itself with decent living standards through normal trade; and unarmed, stand as a symbol of the capacity of the United Nations to preserve peace, rather than as an open invitation to invasion by aggressors



Our occupation of Korea may best be described as a reluctant one. We entered the southern half of the country at the conclusion of the war to disarm the Japanese forces there and to provide an interim administration. At the same time, the Russians advanced into the north. The 38th parallel latitude was intended as a temporary, convenient line of division, first of military and then of temporary administrative responsibilities. We hoped that a provisional, all-Korean government could be established quickly and that, in due course, the full independence of Korea would follow. But for two and a half years, the Korean people have waited for the promised independence or at least a unified provisional Government. They have received neither. Instead, they have witnessed the military division of their country grow into a rigid political partition. The economic effects of the cleavage at the 38th parallel have been catastrophic. The equilibrium between the industrial north and the agricultural south has been distorted; and Korea, which as a unit, could be reasonably self-supporting, now finds itself cut into two insufficient segments. The damage is probably more severe in the American zone, since the normal population there has been swelled by an influx of several million refugees from the north and from Japan.

For two years the United States adhered to a policy of seeking the immediate breakdown of the unnatural economic barrier through the middle of the country, and of promoting a unified, democratic, All-Korean government. Our efforts, in both instances, were completely blocked by the Soviet Union. The Russians sealed themselves within their zone and frustrated negotiations on the formation of an interim government by refusing to consider the inclusion in it of any Korean political groups other than those approved by the Communists.

In the fall of 1947, the United States admitted, in effect, that bilateral negotiations with the Russians could not solve the Korean dilemma when it requested the U. N. Assembly to consider the problem. Over strong



Soviet opposition, the United Nations dispatched a Commission to Korea with a view to supervising the holding of elections in both zones preliminary to the formation of a unified government. The Commission was welcomed in the South. Its request to enter the North was ignored. Instead, the authority of the U. N. body was flaunted by the Communists who were reported to be forming in the Northern Zone an "all-Korean People's Republic."

The United States is also considering the formation of a separate government in the Southern zone. The arguments in favor of the plan are based in part on the contention that since the South contains two thirds of the population, a government for the area would have a strong legal basis for claiming to represent the entire country. A majority of the members of the United Nations Commission on Korea, however, do not believe that such a step at this time would contribute to the unity or independence of the Korean people, but, nevertheless, the Little Assembly has ordered the Commission to supervise elections in the south.

The United States must face the fact that if the Russians withdraw their occupation forces in accordance with their announced intention, there will be left behind a well-organized North Korean communist government and a large, communist-dominated army. Our position in the South then would be extremely critical. To continue the status-quo of military administration while awaiting a possible all-Korean solution might well provoke the hostility of the Korean people. The Korean communists undoubtedly will point out that since Russia has withdrawn, only imperialist America stands in the way of full independence and self-government. We have no right to assume that the Koreans in the South are less likely to accept this explanation of the situation than our own.

On the other hand, we may withdraw our forces at once. In that case, the well-organized and armed minority in the north could probably seize con-



trol of the South and destroy the possibilities of forming a genuine democratic Government.

The other alternative is to proceed immediately with the formation of a representative government in the South. We should be aware before we initiate such a government however, of what the undertaking entails if it is to be more than a mere gesture. It would mean, first of all, economic assistance on a far greater scale than the present "disease and unrest" appropriations. Unless the economic ills are corrected and the area is rendered reasonably self-sufficient, the existence of a South Korean government would depend upon American military backing. In addition, firm steps will have to be taken to root out the corruption which has seeped into the Korean civil service and to end the free reign of extreme rightist and leftist terrorism which has already claimed the lives of two outstanding moderate leaders by assassination.

In sharp contrast to the chaos and instability which extends over so much of Asia and the Far East, the Philippines are far advanced in internal rehabilitation and have achieved a distinct and independent place in international society. Yet a year and a half ago, on July 4, 1946, when the independence of the Islands was proclaimed, there were many who questioned the wisdom of the act. The Philippines had been burned and gutted by some of the most intense combat of the entire war. Many of its cities were in ruins. Production was at a standstill. Law and order had largely broken down in many sections of the country.

In the face of these multiple obstacles, the Philippines have staged a magnificent recovery<sup>CO</sup>. It is significant that this year a balanced budget has been achieved and the largest item is for education. The great measure of credit for this comeback, of course, is due to the Philipino people. They



have demonstrated a capacity for persistent, constructive endeavor under their own leadership. But some small part of it is due, perhaps, to the cooperative policy which we are following with respect to the Islands.

This policy, a natural outgrowth of our 48-year relationship with the Philippines and the deep sympathetic interest of the American people in their welfare, has been given a number of tangible expressions. Various legislation has been passed by the Congress appropriating more than half-a-billion dollars for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Considerable quantities of surplus property has been transferred to the Philippines; and a preferential trade act was passed by the previous Congress which will permit a gradual transition of the Philippine to a more balanced economy.

The policy of cooperation with the Philippines is a long-term one. It extends into the international field, where we are working together through a military base agreement to provide for our mutual security and in the United Nations for the peace and general well-being of the world.

The fact that our policy of cooperation led to the successful launching of the Philippines as an independent State has had its profoundest repercussions in the last section of the Far East which I shall consider-- Southern and South-eastern Asia.

This vast rich area of many races and more than half a billion human beings, is, in the fullest sense, the frontier of our Far Eastern Policy. Prior to World War I we had few contacts of any kind with the region; and even up until the outbreak of the recent conflict our major concern was with certain key commodities such as petroleum, rubber, tin, and quinine, important both to our domestic economy and to world trade in general. Political control of the area was largely in the hands of the European colonial powers and we did not question the arrangements.



However, the needs of the war with Japan and developments since V-J day have compelled a more careful consideration of our relations with Southern and Southeast Asia.

A base for our policy with the area was established by Cordell Hull on March 21, 1944. The Secretary of State declared:

"There rests upon the independent nations a responsibility in regard to 'dependent peoples' who aspire to liberty. It should be the duty of nations having political ties with such people...to help the aspiring peoples to develop materially and educationally to prepare themselves for the duties and responsibilities of self-government, and to attain liberty."

Since the end of the war, we have in general sought to expand this base, without however, challenging directly the authority of the Colonial Powers who exercise legal sovereignty in various of the territories. This policy has been expressed primarily through full cooperation with those specialized and subsidiary U. N. agencies concerned with the economic and social betterment of the region. An interesting development has been the negotiation of a number of air-transport agreements which permit our airlines to link the great cities of Southern and Southeast Asia with our own for the first time.

In political matters, our policy has been extremely cautious. With those countries whose independence is of long-standing or far advanced through constitutional processes, we are, at present, establishing more intimate and cordial relations. Thus, in the case of Siam, Nepal, Burma, India and Pakistan, cultural and commercial contacts are being enlarged.

We are faced with difficult decisions of policy in two Southeast Asian countries--Indo China and Indonesia. Both of these areas have flared into revolt against the return of the prewar colonial powers. At first we sought to maintain a policy of non-involvement. However, such a course, particularly in the case of Indonesia, soon became impossible. American



equipment transferred originally for use in the war against Japan, was being used by the Dutch against the Indonesians in an effort to restore their authority. Furthermore, the conflict was of large compass and seriously impaired the flow of critically needed raw materials. Most significant in the long run perhaps, was the open manifestation of sympathy for the Republican cause on the part of many neighboring countries, particularly India, the Philippines and Australia. These nations were closely watching our attitude with respect to the Indonesian situation.

In devising policies to meet the situation the United States has had to consider our relationship with the Netherlands and the importance of that country in Western Europe. At the same time it has been impossible for us to ignore the rising tide of nationalism in the East. Under the circumstances, a middle course has been attempted. We have acknowledged the justice of Indonesian aspirations for freedom but have urged a pacific settlement of the dispute which would protect legitimate Dutch interests. It is still too early to determine how successful this policy has been since the entire question is before the Security Council of the United Nations.

In our relations with all the areas which I have considered, a common theme is evident. We are seeking, in general, the gradual evolution of peaceful, stable and democratic societies in the Far East and the maintenance with them of friendly and mutually advantageous relations. In a broader aspect, we want these countries to be economically and politically capable of sharing with us and with other nations the responsibilities of building a secure and prosperous world society.

The course which we have set for ourselves in the Far East is essentially a cooperative one and it takes into consideration the dignity and



rights of the peoples with whom we come into contact. It is not an easy course to follow. The going will become even more difficult as our involvements deepen but we must persist in it. To do so will require patience in the face of many problems and provocations. We must reconcile the course of cooperation with the legitimate security needs of the United States in the Far East. We must harmonize it with our policies in other parts of the world. We must defend it from opponents both inside and outside the United States.

But we must, at all costs, follow the way of cooperation not only in Asia and the Far East, but everywhere in the world. The only alternatives are imperialism or isolationism. Imperialism is abhorrent to every premise upon which our free society stands. Isolationism becomes, at best, extremely perilous when we are scarcely 24-hours airtime distance from Tokyo, Hong Kong or Manila.