

NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This concludes the series of editorials by Mr. Roosevelt on "Nationalism and Progress."—THE EDITORS.

A man must first care for his own household before he can be of use to the State. But no matter how well he cares for his household, he is not a good citizen unless he also takes thought of the State. In the same way, a great nation must think first of its own internal affairs; and yet it cannot substantiate its claim to be a great nation unless it also thinks of its position in the world at large.

The United States of America has not the option as to whether it will or will not play a great part in the world. It *must* play a great part. All that it can decide is whether it will play that part well or badly. And it can play it badly if it adopts the rôle either of the coward or of the bully. Nor will it help it in the end to avoid either part if it play the other. It must avoid both. Democratic America can be true to itself, true to the great cause of freedom and justice, only if it shows itself ready and willing to resent wrong from the strong, and scrupulously desirous of doing generous justice to both strong and weak.

There are of course very few people who will openly take the position that we are justified in doing what is wrong simply because it is to our interest. But in actual practice there are always plenty of men willing to condone and excuse any wrongful act which they think is advantageous. These men by themselves never form more than a minority, and usually a very small minority, of our people; but often the majority is supine, indifferent, or ill informed, and thus may give a free

hand to an unscrupulous minority. In making treaties, for instance, there must be give and take; and yet too often a treaty will fail simply because our people permit a small section of their number to insist that it shall be all take and no give. Again, as the Nation, and not the several States, have to deal with foreign powers, the Nation should have complete control over all questions likely to cause trouble with foreign powers, and therefore should have the complete and fully recognized ability to protect all aliens in their treaty rights. Yet in actual practice occasions have not infrequently arisen which have shown rather pitiable National shortcomings in this respect.

I do not think, however, that, on the whole, much blame rests on us so far as *action* of this kind is concerned. I wish it were possible for us always to say as much as regards *speech*. Too many, both of our public men and publicists, seek at times to gratify themselves or their constituents in unworthy fashion by the use of insulting language in reference to foreign powers. The better American a man is, the more confident he is in America's strength and standing, the more ashamed he must be at every such exhibition of international bad manners on the part of any representative of our people. Courtesy is as much the mark of a gentleman as courage. If we respect ourselves, we individually show both qualities; and, in our collective capacity, we should demand of our representatives that the Nation show both qualities in its dealings with other nations. We despise the coward; we despise no less heartily the loud-mouthed brawler. Bad manners and vituperation never yet won respect for either nation or individual. There is, however, a lower depth than is reached by those who merely show these shortcomings; that is, by those who, in addition to showing them, do their best to keep the country unprepared for the trouble which they are so lightly willing to provoke. Wantonly to insult a friendly nation is bad; to be unable ourselves to resist wrong is worse; but the lowest depth is reached by those who practice the policy of peace with insult, who are ever ready to join in measures or to use language extremely offensive to foreign powers, and who

nevertheless by their votes or speeches on the question of National defense show that they lack either the far-sightedness or the patriotism to take thought of the interest of the Nation in the years to come.

So much for those Americans who fall short of the proper standard of international good manners, and just and kindly treatment as regards foreign peoples. Now for the American who commits the even worse offense of endeavoring to make this Nation the derision and butt of other nations by refusing to allow it to take proper measures for its own defense. Unfortunately, many of those often well-meaning persons who claim a leading position among the advocates of international peace have harmed their cause in the eyes of all really far-sighted and patriotic citizens by advocating for America a position which would be abjectly unworthy of her standing among the nations. This category includes those who opposed our war with Spain, those who opposed the subsequent enforcement of law and order in the Philippines, those who opposed the building up of the navy, and those who now oppose the fortification of the Panama Canal. Some of these men are misguided men of good character; others, however, are merely men who do not possess any keen sense of international honor, and who are perfectly willing to see this Nation expose itself to the chance of discredit and disaster, because their own small souls would be unaffected by a National defeat which would make most Americans bow their heads with bitterness and shame. As regards these men, I should not have the slightest objection to their inviting the disaster that would come upon them if their wishes were fulfilled, were it not for the fact that the rest of us would unfortunately have to share in the disaster. It is somewhat exasperating to reflect that we have to protect these particular peace advocates of the crazy type from themselves, and, in spite of their shrieking protests, guard them and their children against suffering their share of the National humiliation they do their best to bring about. If these men were capable of learning any lesson from history, what has happened and is happening in China before their eyes would prove to them that a nation, however big, however industrious

and populous, which is incapable of self-defense, not only invites humiliation for itself, but is a fruitful source of discord and possible war as regards other nations. There was a period when our country was a menace of aggression to the countries south of us. That period has long passed. No nation in history has ever behaved with more scrupulous good faith than we have behaved towards Cuba; nor, to take a smaller but equally significant example, has any nation ever acted with more wise helpfulness than we acted when we put San Domingo on its financial feet by insuring the honest collection of the revenues and their administration in equal parts for the payment of Government expenses and for the payment of creditors. Cuba and San Domingo have benefited to a literally incalculable degree by our action of the last dozen years. It was entirely disinterested action on our part; or, if there was the slightest taint of self-interest in it, it was that lofty form of self-interest which realizes that the welfare of one's neighbor is from every standpoint desirable. And yet the loudest among the professional friends of peace either bitterly opposed, or were entirely lukewarm toward, the carrying out of the policy which has brought such a measure of prosperity to the two islands in question and has so redounded to the honor of the American name!

More recently, men of this type have opposed the fortifying of the Panama Canal. A few months ago they were loudly insisting that such fortification would be in violation of our treaty with Great Britain. The publication of the State Department papers deprived them of this excuse, for therein were found the written communications of the British Ambassador and the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs explicitly recognizing the right of the Americans to fortify the Canal. I may add that, while I was President, just before the treaty was submitted to the Senate, I personally saw Lord Pauncefoot, the British Ambassador, referred to the letters in question, and expressed my gratification at the good understanding which had been reached, especially in this matter of the fortifications; and he, in response, not only repeated, of course, what he had said in his letter, but added

that, as a matter of fact, his people had come to the conclusion that it was best that the Canal should be fortified by us as the only effective way of policing it and preserving order in case of trouble. So in our treaty with Panama we explicitly reserved the right to fortify. But it is not only our right to fortify; it is our duty. In my judgment, under the treaties, it is the President's duty to fortify the Canal without further authority, though, of course, he cannot adequately perform this duty unless the Congress makes a sufficient appropriation. Moreover, the best military thought is, I believe, coming to the conclusion that our vital naval base in Southern waters should be, not Guantanamo, but the Canal. Not to fortify the Canal would amount to getting it ready as a gift to the first nation that went to war with us. Be it remembered that no other nations except England and Panama are bound by treaty to regard the Canal as neutral. If we were ever engaged in war with any other Power, it would be justified in seizing the Canal at once; and it would do so without the smallest hesitation, and without the smallest effective opposition from any other Power.

It behooves a democracy to remember that one of the favorite taunts leveled against it by the representatives of great military monarchies is that a democracy will never prepare for war, and will rarely show wisdom in choosing positions valuable for national defense. Unquestionably it is true that a democracy has plenty of bad advisers. Among these bad advisers are the foolish creatures who try to prevent our having a big navy, and the equally foolish creatures who say that if we have a big navy there is no need of fortifications. As a matter of fact, fortifications should always be established on the land side as well as on the sea side; and one of their prime uses is to leave the navy foot-loose. If the Panama Canal were not fortified, in time of war we should either have to abandon it to any enterprising enemy, or else paralyze our fleet by employing it to defend the Canal. If it is adequately fortified, our fleet can absolutely disregard it save in so far as it fulfills the vital requisite of a first-class naval base. War-vessels are inefficient substi-

tutes for forts ; and the poorest way to use a navy is to string the vessels in small groups in the ports along a coast, for then the enemy's navy can get them in detail. An unfortified Panama Canal would be a great source of weakness to this country ; a fortified Panama Canal would enormously increase our strength. If our people are wise, they will hold those Senators and Congressmen who vote against the fortification of the Canal as unfaithful public servants who betray our country's interests at a vital point. With the possible exception of Hawaii, there is no other spot so necessary to fortify as the Panama Canal. We should have very few naval bases. These few should be thoroughly fortified and strongly held, and among them the two most important are those above mentioned.

One of the difficulties in dealing with foreign affairs is the queer tendency of many people to treat desire on our part to have an adequate navy and coast fortifications as equivalent to the statement that we believe there will be a war, and as justifying offensive war talk. Most certainly we see at times offensive, and therefore utterly improper, talk of war with some entirely friendly nation, now Germany, now England, now Japan. No one can regret such talk more than I do, and it is almost never indulged in by men who would themselves respond to the call to arms if war should unhappily come. A man who is of the type apt to be useful in war is usually of too serious a nature to talk with levity or brutality of war, or in such fashion as to provoke war. My hearty reprobation of this type of offensive agitation does not interfere in the least with my belief, in the first place, that war is unlikely with any power, and in the next place that we can render it still more unlikely, as well as guarantee ourselves against possible humiliation and disaster, by the exercise of moderate forethought and preparation. To the good people who, because we laugh at a war scare about the Japanese or Germans, think that therefore we should abandon the upbuilding of the navy and the proper care of the army, I feel inclined to put the question whether, if they own houses, they have them insured or not. If the house is insured against fire, it does

not in the least mean that the owner thinks it will be burned down ; he thinks it unlikely that it will be burned down, but, as a prudent man, he wishes to discount even the slight risk. It is just so with us. In my time I have seen war scares about England, Germany, and Japan. I should regard war with any of the three as an unspeakable calamity. I admire all three nations. To speak only of the nation concerning which there has been most recent talk of war, I not only have a great respect and admiration for the Japanese, but I very strongly feel that we have much to learn from them. I regard a good understanding between Japan and the United States as of capital consequence to this country, and as of the first importance from the standpoint of preserving peace in the Pacific. It would not be for the interest of either country to admit from the other country any considerable number of wage-workers, small farmers, or men engaged in small agricultural pursuits, and the wisest and most far-seeing men of both countries take the same view of this matter. But there should be the closest and friendliest relations between the two countries, conducted on a basis of absolute equality and of mutual regard and respect. An admirable article has recently appeared in the "Japan Times," a Tokyo paper, long a semi-official organ of the Japanese Foreign Office. It runs as follows :

In view of the revival of war talk in America, it will be interesting to recall some of the events which preceded our last two wars. In the case of both the Chino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars it was freely predicted abroad, and nowhere so confidently as in China and Russia, that Japan never really meant to fight. Nevertheless, hostilities broke out principally because, on the strength of the above supposition, Japan's modest demands for reasons of self-preservation were contemptuously ignored. Quite contrary is the case in that of the present war party of America, they being apparently convinced of the inevitability of a clash with this country, while, look where you will, there is not a single point of conflict on account of which Japan might prefer a demand on the ground of national safety. Hence, in virtue of the saying that it is the unexpected which happens, we complacently conclude that there will never be a war with America. Besides, let Japan be ever so wicked and unreasoning, as the American party choose to represent her to be, it would be difficult for us to find a chance to play a convincing game when the

other side is with eyes and ears on the alert. That is another reason why there will be no war. Then, it is popularly credited to General Kuroki that when asked what he would do if war broke out between America and Japan, he answered that he would flee. That is the attitude also of Japan towards the country to which she owes so much, and she would fight only when she is not allowed to flee. But, in all human likelihood, we see no reason why America should thus force us to fight. That is the third reason why there will be no war. In the fourth place, when the matter is searched to the bottom, there exists no real war party in America.

With every word of the above editorial I agree. The American democracy not only owes it to itself to be thoroughly able and ready to defend America against any possible foes, but it also owes to itself the duty of treating in a spirit of genuine courtesy and friendliness all foreign Powers; and as regards no Power is this duty more incumbent than as regards our great and friendly neighbor across the Pacific, that ancient empire which has all the most astounding vigor of youth—the Empire of Japan.

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