

# THE LIVING AGE

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## THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

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ILLUSIONS about America die hard; but as a rule it takes longer to kill them on this side of the Atlantic than on the other. For example, here the belief still lingers that the American Constitution, in striking contrast to our own, sprang Minerva-like from the brain of Zeus, or at least from the brains of the 'Fathers of the Constitution.' Mr. Gladstone lent his great authority to this illusion. Sir Henry Maine lent his to another, which is even now by no means dissipated: 'That the Constitution of the United States . . . is in reality a version of the British Constitution as it must have presented itself to an observer in the second half of the last (that is, the eighteenth) century.' The researches of Mr. S. G. Fisher, have effectually corrected these prevalent misapprehensions. They have shown that the American Constitution is not a copy of any 'original'; that it is preëminently native, and that, so far from being the result of sudden inspiration, many of its most characteristic features are as much the result of gradual evolution as the British Constitution itself.

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Not less persistent is the illusion, which has prevailed in England, in regard to the foreign policy of the United States. In no respect has America been more fortunate, so it is commonly believed and affirmed, than in the lack of anything which can properly be described as a foreign policy, and in the absence of any need for one. Even Lord Bryce, at any rate when he wrote *The American Commonwealth*, seems to have inclined to this view. Disposed as he was to criticize with some severity the arrangements for the conduct of foreign affairs — in particular the dual control of the Secretary of State and the Senatorial Committee on Foreign Relations — he argued, in effect, that the defects of constitutional machinery do not much matter because 'America is not Europe,' and 'in foreign policy . . . the United States has little to do.'

That this view has never been wholly accurate is clearly shown by Professor J. B. Moore of Columbia University. He writes:

As conventionalized in the annual messages of Presidents to Congress, the American people are distinguished chiefly by their peaceful disposition and their free-

dom from territorial ambitions. Nevertheless, in spite of their quiet propensities, it has fallen to their lot, since they forcibly achieved their independence, to have had four foreign wars, three general, and one limited, and the greatest civil war in history, and to have acquired a territorial domain almost five times as great as the respectable endowment with which they began their national career.

The point here emphasized is one which English commentators on American politics are curiously apt to overlook. No country in the world exhibited, during the nineteenth century, a more marked tendency to territorial expansion than the United States of America. The expansion was mainly, it is true, upon American soil, and the annexations were effected for the most part by purchase or other forms of peaceful negotiation — a fact which has largely contributed to the illusion to which reference has been made. Foreign critics have been disposed — perhaps too readily — to assign such transactions to the sphere of domestic politics, and consequently to minimize the part which foreign affairs — or affairs which would be ‘foreign’ in any country less ‘continental’ in character than the United States — have played in the politics of the American people.

A cursory glance at the course of American expansion in the nineteenth century will conclusively establish the truth of this proposition. The area of the territory formally ceded by Great Britain to the United States in 1783 was about 827,844 square miles. Of this considerably less than half belonged to the original thirteen colonies which occupied the narrow strip between the Atlantic and the Alleghanies. The larger half comprised the hinterland between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, out of which were carved the states of Kentucky (admitted 1791) and Tennessee

(1796), and the vast tract originally known as the Northwest Territory. This territory was for many years held by the United States as ‘federal domain,’ but was gradually, between the years 1803 and 1858, carved up into the fully constituted states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. Long before this process was accomplished the United States had taken the first of many steps on the path of territorial expansion, a step which involved the absorption of a considerable population of European origin, alien in blood and creed to the people of the original states. Planted and peopled by Frenchmen, and for more than a century one of the most cherished possessions of the French Crown, the great colony of Louisiana was handed over by France to Spain in 1763. Napoleon, intent upon reviving the Imperial glories of the old régime, recovered it in 1801; but, foreseeing that on the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, all the oversea possessions of France must fall to the mistress of the seas, he prudently pawned it to President Jefferson for \$15,000,000. That he intended to redeem it on the conclusion of a general peace can hardly be doubted; but the occasion did not arise, and the United States became, by a presidential act, as bold as it was unconstitutional, possessed in perpetuity of a territory which more than doubled her area. Out of this vast territory no less than twelve states were ultimately created.

To the purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon was added, in 1819, the purchase of Florida from Spain. The next two acquisitions belong to a somewhat different category, and ultimately involved the United States in hostilities which American historians betray no eagerness to justify. Texas was originally part of the empire of

Mexico, but in the third and fourth decades of the century it received a steady stream of immigrants from the United States; in 1833 it proclaimed its independence of Mexico, and shortly afterwards began to negotiate for admission to the Union. The slave states of the South were by this time beginning to discover that slave-culture, particularly the culture of tobacco, was peculiarly exhausting to the soil, and they clearly foresaw that, from economic causes alone, slavery itself was doomed to gradual extinction unless the slave owners could acquire virgin land apt for the production of those crops, notably cotton and tobacco, to which their slaves were accustomed, and which yielded a profitable return to slave labor. Hence the anxiety of the South for the admission of Texas; and hence, also, the opposition of the North.

The South prevailed. Texas was formally admitted in 1845, and the United States thus annexed a territory more than four times as large as England and Wales. But the annexation of Texas had even larger consequences. An acrimonious dispute as to the definition of the boundaries of the new state arose between its old masters and its new, with the result that Mexico was goaded into war, and President Polk had the satisfaction of bringing under the Stars and Stripes, the 'First Mexican Cession,' a territory nearly as large as France, Spain, and Germany combined, containing 591,318 square miles, and including the coveted auriferous soil of California. To this consummation another factor powerfully contributed. In Texas, Great Britain could claim no direct interest; but, partly from her strong conviction as to the immorality of slavery, she had disapproved of its annexation to the United States. In California, Great Britain

might feel a more material interest. Were its coasts not lapped by the waves ruled by Britannia? Was not San Francisco a promising harbor for the reception of the Pacific squadron? Was not California contiguous to the Oregon territory, which had long been a subject of dispute between the two governments? The Rush-Bagot convention of 1818 deliberately postponed a settlement of this thorny question by a timid provision that the whole region, 'so far as claimed by either Great Britain or the United States, should for ten years be free and open to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two Powers.' A settlement was again postponed in the conventions concluded in 1828, but the difficulty was at last composed in June, 1846, and the boundary between British North America and the United States was defined from ocean to ocean. Canada secured Vancouver Island and the navigation of the Columbia River; the United States acquired a large territory which is now represented by the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

One other big deal, but one only, remains to be recorded. Thus far the advance of the United States from ocean to ocean had been territorially continuous; each westward step was a natural sequel, if not a necessary consequence, of the previous one. The progress made was, therefore, the less noticeable, if not less substantial. The considerations involved seemed to belong rather to the domain of domestic than to that of foreign policy. The purchase of the Alaskan territory in 1867 from Russia was a more obvious demonstration of an imperialistic temper. Moreover, the fact that the newly acquired territory was separated from the United States by British North America, and that it brought the states into close contact

with Asiatic Russia might have seemed likely to involve America much more closely than heretofore in the politics of the old world. As a fact, the Alaska purchase led to a series of boundary disputes between Great Britain and the United States, which were not finally composed until the conclusion of the Arbitration Treaty of 1903. Nor is Canada even yet reconciled to the concessions then made to the American claims by Lord Alverstone. Alaska added more than 500,000 square miles to American territory.

This summary will at least suffice to show that the American record of expansion does not fall behind that of the principal European Powers in the nineteenth century. In less than a hundred years after the recognition of independence the United States was more than quadrupled in size. As Professor Ramsay Muir truly says:

The imperialist spirit was working as powerfully in the democratic communities of the New World as in the monarchies of Europe. Not content with the possession of vast and almost unpeopled areas, they had spread their dominion from ocean to ocean, and built up an empire less extensive indeed than that of Russia, but even more compact, far richer in resources, and far better suited to be the home of a highly civilized people.

Thus far attention has been concentrated upon one aspect of American foreign policy; the rapid territorial expansion upon the North American Continent. It is a remarkable fact that this westward advance was achieved almost without bloodshed. Yet it must not be forgotten that the advance was largely, though indirectly, responsible for the Civil War. That war might never have occurred had the United States been strictly limited to its original territory; had there been no opportunity of expansion. Otherwise, the only blood-

shed directly traceable to the movement was the Mexican War of 1846. Frequently, not to say continuously, were the relations between the United States and Great Britain severely strained, but the strain was due to causes only remotely connected with this development, and after 1814 the peace was never broken.

To this single breach of the peace between the two great English-speaking nations it is now necessary briefly to refer. That breach was almost accidental, and ought to have been avoided, yet the underlying causes, apart from the immediate occasion of the war of 1812, afford an apt illustration of the peculiar genius of American foreign policy. In American policy as in the American character a foreigner seems to detect a curious but striking blend of high idealism and shrewd practicality. The Declaration of Independence is pervaded by both qualities. On the one hand, the preamble is redolent of the abstract philosophy of Rousseau, and anticipates the language of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man; on the other, the laborious enumeration of grievances recalls the English Bill of Rights. Similarly in regard to foreign relations: the outbreak of war between the French Republic and Great Britain in 1793 seemed to offer to the young Republic of the West an opportunity of repaying some portion of the debt which, undoubtedly, it owed to France. The United States was, moreover, specifically pledged by treaty to defend the French possessions in America. In 1793 a French plenipotentiary, Edmond Genet, arrived in America to claim the fulfillment of the pledge. So outrageous, however, was the envoy's behavior that in 1794 Washington demanded his recall. Meanwhile, the American President had issued (April 22, 1793), a

declaration of neutrality. That declaration caused hardly more disappointment in France than in America, and chiefly served to stimulate the growing hostility against Great Britain. Supremely anxious to avoid a breach of neutrality Washington then dispatched Chief Justice Jay to London, and through his good offices a treaty of amity and commerce was concluded between the two countries in November, 1794. The Jay Treaty guaranteed the neutrality of the States, it adjusted some minor grievances on both sides, but, to the bitter chagrin of the Americans, it failed to touch any of the larger questions at issue between England and America: the right of search and the right of impressment, or the vexed question of paper blockades. Consequently, though Great Britain agreed to surrender the forts she still held on the Canadian frontiers, and to compensate American merchants for the damages they had suffered under the Order in Council of November, 1793, the treaty did little to appease the feelings of the anti-British party in the States.

Two years later George Washington bade farewell to office, and on doing so took the opportunity to lay down with precision the lines of the policy which he desired his countrymen to pursue:

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign Nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible. . . . Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables

us to pursue a different course. . . . Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice? It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.

Washington, it will be observed, drew a sharp distinction between the 'extension of commerce' and implication in the 'ordinary vicissitudes of European politics.' But at such a moment in world-history it was not easy to maintain the distinction or to avoid implication. The continued neutrality of the United States was bitterly resented by France, and the terms of the Jay Treaty were the object of severe and even vituperative criticism. Special envoys were sent from America to France to smooth over the difficulties, but the insulting treatment accorded to them by the Directory brought the two countries to the brink of war. Washington was summoned from his retirement to take command of a provisional army; a Navy Department was hastily organized; and in 1798 American squadrons captured several French ships in the West Indies. Serious developments were, however, avoided by the overthrow of the Directory and Napoleon's advent to power, and under the Consulate friendly relations between the United States and France were quickly restored.

On his accession to office in 1801, Jefferson reaffirmed in phrase even more trenchant, the maxims first enunciated by Washington:

Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.

About the same time the new President wrote to his friend, Tom Paine:

We shall avoid implicating ourselves with the Powers of Europe, even in support of principles which we mean to pursue. They have so many other interests different from ours that we must avoid being entangled in them.

Seven years later Jefferson insisted that the supreme object of the policy of the United States 'must be to exclude all European influence from this hemisphere.' It was easier to enunciate the principles of non-intervention and American isolation than in practice to maintain the corresponding policy. In 1806 the Jay Treaty expired, and all attempts to find a new basis of agreement between Great Britain and America proved unavailing. It would, indeed, have been marvelous had the attempts been successful, for the attitudes of England and America on an issue vital to both, were irreconcilably opposed. As an attractive phrase the 'freedom of the seas' appealed, as it always has, to American idealism, while a shrewd business instinct rendered the Americans reluctant to abandon, at the bidding of the dominant maritime and commercial Power, a carrying trade which was becoming increasingly lucrative. Great Britain, on the contrary, in a contest *à outrance* with Napoleon, was driven to enforce with increasing rigor those principles of maritime law to which she had long in theory adhered.

By an Order in Council of 1794 Great Britain prohibited direct trade between France and her colonies; in 1798 she issued a similar injunction in regard to trade between France, Holland, and Spain and their colonies. These orders cleared the ocean of enemy shipping, but in the earlier and less rigorous phases of the war they were worked to the advantage of neutrals. By the adoption of the device of 'transshipment,' or breaking bulk, the United States and other neutrals were

able to transfer much of the trade of belligerents to themselves. In order to put a stop to the practice on the part of the Scandinavian States, whose ships from the French or Spanish West Indies were in the habit of landing goods at French or Dutch ports as they passed, the British Government in 1799 declared the Dutch Coast under blockade. This did little to deter American captains, who shipped their cargoes in the West Indies, ran into Charlestown, obtained a clearance for their goods in an American port, and carried the colonial cargo to Europe, secure from any interference from British ships. In time, however, this colorable process was interrupted by a decision of the English Court of Admiralty which declared such voyages to be in effect 'continuous.' To evade this decision the Americans then adopted the practice of actually landing their cargoes at an American port and transshipping them, and after further litigation the English courts accepted the principle that transshipment 'broke' the voyage and legalized the traffic.

The causes of friction were not, however, removed, and after the rupture of the Peace of Amiens and the renewal of the war, fresh difficulties arose. Great Britain, relying almost entirely upon her sea power and her commerce to sustain the anti-Napoleonic coalition, saw her naval arm withered and her commerce destroyed by the legal ingenuity of the Americans. The result soon became apparent to the world. To quote the words of an American historian:

In two years' time almost the whole carrying trade of Europe was in American hands. The merchant flag of every belligerent save Great Britain almost disappeared from the sea. France and Holland ceased to trade under their own flags. Spain for a time carried her specie and her bullion in her own ships, protected by

her men-of-war; but this practice was soon abandoned, and before 1806 the dollars of Mexico were brought to her shores in American vessels. It was under the Stars and Stripes that the gum trade went on with Senegal, the ingots and dollars were exported from Vera Cruz and La Plata, that hides were carried from South America, and sugar from the ports of Cuba. From Cadiz, from Barcelona, from Lisbon, from Emden and Hamburg, Gotenburg and Copenhagen, from the ports of Cayenne and Dutch Guiana, from Batavia and Manila, fleets of American merchantmen sailed to the United States, there to break the voyage and then go on to Europe.

Great Britain retaliated by declaring a series of 'paper' blockades, and by refusing to recognize a 'break' of voyage which was merely colorable. Thereupon, the American Congress passed a Non-importation Act, which, however, remained in force only a few weeks. Nerves on both sides were further strained by the rigorous insistence upon the 'right of search' not only for goods but for men, and by the impressment of American subjects sailing aboard American ships. Over 1,000 cases of wrongful impressment were subsequently admitted by the British Government as having occurred between 1803 and 1810. But the fundamental cause of the war of 1812 was the almost insoluble crux of neutral trade. The struggle between Great Britain and Napoleon was then approaching its climax. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar was followed up by an Order in Council (May, 1806) which placed the whole coast of Europe from the river Elbe to Brest under blockade. Napoleon retaliated with his Berlin Decree (November 21). Great Britain replied with new Orders in Council (January 7 and November 11, 1807); Napoleon issued his Milan Decree in December, and neutrals, warned off by the British Navy from every port from which the British merchant flag was excluded, subject to confiscation by

Napoleon if they submitted to the right of search, found themselves in literal truth between the deep sea and the devil.

During the next few years the relations between Great Britain and the United States became steadily worse. If the Orders in Council pressed more hardly upon Americans than did the Decrees successively issued by Napoleon it was partly because England was in a position to enforce her orders while Napoleon was not, and partly because Napoleon was more ingenious in making a virtue of his impotence. As a result, the two English-speaking peoples drifted into the war of 1812. The details of that war are as foreign to the purpose of this paper as the causes of it are pertinent; but this much may be said. To England it was almost a negligible, though none the less a regrettable, incident in a titanic struggle. To American minds it loomed much larger at the time, and it left very bitter memories behind.

Nevertheless, despite frequent disputes as to the delimitation of boundaries, as to disarmament on the Canadian frontiers, and as to fisheries; despite many acute misunderstandings; despite the proverbial difficulty of keeping the peace between kinsmen; despite the specific difficulties which arose in the War of Secession — the recognition of the belligerency of the South, the blockade running, the affair of the Trent and that of the Alabama; despite many other issues that might have led to war, peace was preserved between Great Britain and the United States during the whole course of a complete century from the conclusion of the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. In the summer of 1914 preparations were well advanced for 'an adequate and dignified celebration of the impressive fact that for one hundred years the English-speaking peoples throughout

the world have been at peace with one another.' Of those preparations the only visible memorial is the singularly interesting volume from the preface to which these words are quoted.\* That hundred years' peace, as Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler has justly said,

is of itself an eloquent testimony to the temper and self-restraint of the English-speaking peoples, and a noble tribute to the statesmen who have in succession guided their policies and conducted their international business. The long invisible line which separates the United States and the Dominion of Canada has been left unguarded despite the fact that two energetic, rapidly-expanding peoples have been pushing steadily westward on either side of it. This long invisible, unguarded line is the most convincing testimony that the world has to offer to the ability of modern self-disciplined peoples to keep the peace.

The peace thus kept forms no inconsiderable part, and not the least honorable part of the foreign policy now under review. It is not, however, the most conspicuous. Literary research would seem to establish the conclusion that American foreign policy during the last century was concentrated upon a single episode or rather upon a single doctrine. 'The Monroe Doctrine,' writes Professor McLaughlin, 'is practically the only policy which we have evolved — our one tradition.' 'The Monroe Doctrine,' writes Mr. Kennedy, 'is to the American voter what the maintenance of a big fleet . . . is to the British elector. For two full generations this (the Monroe Doctrine) continued to be the norm of conduct.' The truth of these judgments has been recently and remarkably exemplified by the debates in the American Congress and the American press on the policy of President Wilson

\* *The British Empire and the United States.* A review of their relations during the century of peace following the Treaty of Ghent. By W. A. Dunning, with a preface by Nicholas Murray Butler.

and the project of a League of Nations. With the merits of President Wilson's policy this article is not concerned. What is remarkable is that the touchstone applied to that policy by a large proportion of American critics is whether it does or does not conform to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine and to 'our one tradition' — to the 'norm of conduct' for foreign affairs at Washington.

The genesis of that famous doctrine has been the subject of considerable dispute. The theory contains in its complete form two distinct formulas, first abstention on the part of America from any intervention in European affairs, and, secondly, the exclusion of European influence from the American continent. The first formula was explicitly affirmed, as we have seen, by Washington in his Farewell Address, and by Jefferson in his first Inaugural. It was not long before the second and strictly correlative formula was added to it. As early as the year 1808 Jefferson insisted that the object of the United States should be 'to exclude all European influence from this hemisphere,' and three years before President Monroe sent his famous message to Congress, Jefferson was at pains to emphasize 'the advantages of a cordial fraternization among all the American nations, and the importance of their coalescing in an American system of policy totally independent of and unconnected with that of Europe.'

Jefferson's words date from 1820, but for some years past the tendency of American opinion in this direction had been clearly perceived by the more acute among European diplomats. Thus, in 1814, at the time when peace negotiations were in progress between Great Britain and the United States, Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, wrote to Count Nesselrode:

The conclusion of this important matter is uncertain. The dominant party in America, which desired the war, is aiming at the destruction of all European interests in the American continent. . . . Will the fact that Great Britain has a free hand stop this plan? I said all this in England, which takes short views, but was not believed.

It would be interesting to know whether Pozzo di Borgo's warning ever reached the ears of Canning. Without this information, it is idle to speculate whether the warning would have influenced Canning's policy in 1823. In that policy there were several factors: a desire to 'redress the balance of the old world,' and, in particular, to 'get even' with the Holy Alliance; a desire to prevent France from extending her intervention from the old Spain to the new; a desire to protect the commercial interests of Great Britain in the Spanish Indies, interests which were gravely menaced by the inability of Spain to reduce to obedience her colonial subjects, combined with a refusal to recognize their independence; and, finally, a willingness to hold out an encouraging hand to young states struggling to be free. On August 20, 1823, Canning conveyed to Richard Rush, the American Minister in London, a clear intimation as to the attitude of Great Britain in reference to the Spanish colonies, and at the same time suggested that she should come to an understanding on the subject with the United States. President Monroe inclined toward the acceptance of Canning's suggestion, and was strongly supported in his view both by Jefferson and by Madison. By accepting Great Britain's offer of coöperation, wrote Jefferson, the United States would 'detach her from the bonds [of the European despots], bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate a continent at one stroke.' Madison cordially concurred in Jefferson's view.

The Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, was, on the contrary, strongly opposed to coöperation with Great Britain. He suspected that Canning was less anxious to emancipate South America than to thwart the ambition of France, and he urged upon the President that it was more consonant with the traditions of American policy that, while pursuing up to a point a common end, she should seek to attain it by her own isolated and independent action.

The advice of Adams prevailed, and the famous message sent to Congress on December 2, 1823, in the name of President Monroe, embodied his views, if it did not actually reëcho his language. The significance which has ever since been attached to that message may justify quotation of the pertinent passages. They run as follows:

. . . The occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for any future colonization by any European Powers. . . . We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any other European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

Our policy in regard to Europe . . . is, not to interfere in the internal concerns

of any of its Powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every Power, submitting to injuries from none.

By this message Canning was gravely perturbed. He had got much more than he bargained for. All that he desired was the coöperation of the United States in thwarting the supposed designs of the Holy Alliance, and in particular of France, upon the Spanish colonies. What he got was a general intimation, *urbi et orbi*, that henceforward the American continent would be the exclusive preserve of the American peoples, and that no further acquisitions of American soil would be permitted to European or other states.

From December, 1823, to December, 1918, the Monroe Doctrine has been the sheet-anchor of American diplomacy. Primarily put forward in reference to the Russian claims upon the Northwest coast and to the crisis in Spanish South America, the principles enunciated by President Monroe were, from the first, perceived to possess a far wider application. Canning's chagrin was amply justified. The message no more discriminated between Great Britain and the absolutist Powers of the Continent than did the propagandist decrees issued by the French Republic in the autumn of 1792. It was, in fact, as Professor Dunning has candidly admitted, 'the pronouncement of a great democracy just arrived at aggressive self-consciousness. Its underlying spirit was in very truth antagonism, so far as concerned affairs of the Western hemisphere, to all monarchic Europe, Great Britain included.'

During the seventy years following 1823 comparatively little was heard of the Monroe Doctrine. The United States had other things to think about,

notably the problem of national unity, forced to the front by the rapidity of the westward expansion. Still, whenever opportunity offered, the world was reminded that the Doctrine, though slumbering, retained its vitality. President Grant, in particular, asserted it with vigor. Thus, in reference to the temporary occupation of San Domingo by the Spaniards (1861-1865), he declared that 'no European Power can acquire by any means — war, colonization, or annexation — even when the annexed people demand it, any portion of American territory,' and ventured to predict that 'the time is not far distant when, in the natural course of events, the European political connection with this continent will cease.'

In the last decade of the nineteenth century the Monroe Doctrine was invoked in a case of serious importance. For many years there had been disputes between Great Britain and Venezuela as to the boundaries between the latter state and British Guiana. Lord Aberdeen had tried to settle the matter in 1844, but his suggestions were declined. Thirty years later Venezuela professed its willingness to accept the Aberdeen line, but Lord Granville and his successors refused to concede it. Venezuela represented the British contention as being tantamount to an attempt at annexation, and, invoking the Monroe Doctrine, appealed to the United States. The dispute dragged on until, in July, 1895, Mr. Olney, Secretary of State under President Cleveland, insistently demanded that Great Britain should submit the whole question to arbitration, and incidentally reasserted in the most extreme form the underlying principles of the Monroe Doctrine.

That distance and three thousand miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between a European and an American state unnatural and inexpe-

dient, will hardly be denied. . . . The states of America, South as well as North, by geographical proximity, by natural sympathy, by similarity of governmental constitutions, are friends and allies, commercially and politically, of the United States. . . . To-day the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. . . . There is, then, a doctrine of American public law, well founded in principle and abundantly sanctioned by precedent, which entitles and requires the United States to treat as an injury to itself the forcible assumption by a European Power of political control over an American state.

That Mr. Olney's dispatch gave a wide extension to the principles laid down by President Monroe will hardly be denied, nor that it was needlessly provocative in tone; but Lord Salisbury declined to be provoked. He did, indeed, refuse to accept 'unrestricted' arbitration, and politely questioned the applicability of the Monroe Doctrine to the matter in hand. It was, however, manifest from his reply that he had no intention of allowing Great Britain to be drawn into a serious quarrel with the United States. Lord Salisbury's good humor tended rather to provoke than to appease the wrath of the United States, and on December 17, 1895, President Cleveland sent a special message to Congress, wherein he declared that

If a European Power, by an extension of its boundaries, takes possession of the territory of one of our neighboring Republics against its will, and in derogation of its rights, it is difficult to see why, to that extent, such European Power does not thereby attempt to extend its system of government to that portion of this continent which is thus taken. This is the precise action which President Monroe declared to be dangerous to our peace and safety.

This message, notwithstanding its decorous moderation of language, accentuated a difficult situation, and

feeling began to run very high in America. 'Fortunately for us,' writes an American critic, 'Lord Salisbury had a very good sense of humor, and declined to take the matter too seriously.'

Both Great Britain and Venezuela agreed to submit the evidence for their conflicting claims to a 'committee of investigation' appointed by the United States; and the investigation issued in a Treaty of Arbitration, concluded nominally between the immediate disputants, but in reality between Great Britain and the United States. The result of the arbitration was, on the whole, to substantiate the British claim. A still more important result ensued. In January, 1897, a General Arbitration Treaty between the two great English-speaking nations was signed by Sir Julian Pauncefote and Secretary Olney. The Senate, however, refused its assent, and the treaty was not actually concluded until the autumn of 1914.

In the interval a very significant change had taken place in the attitude of the United States toward world politics. The Venezuelan affair proved to be the starting point for a new departure in American diplomacy. From the position then asserted by Mr. Olney, his countrymen could not well recede. That position involved, moreover, important corollaries. If the United States is 'practically sovereign' on the American continent, if 'its fiat is law,' it could not avoid responsibility for the doings of its neighbors. Several of those neighbors have shown themselves both weak and turbulent, and in 1904 President Roosevelt frankly admitted that 'the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of wrongdoing or impotence to the exercise of an international police power.'

As a fact, the policy of isolation had already been abandoned. The war with Spain in 1898 was followed by the definite assumption of responsibilities in the Caribbean and in the Pacific. The annexation of the Hawaiian Islands (1898), the partition of Samoa (1899), and still more the conquest of the Philippines, unmistakably proclaimed the advent of a new world power. The *Zeit-Geist* had proved itself too strong even for the Americans. As President McKinley wrote in 1898:

The march of events rules and over-rules human action . . . the war has brought us new duties and responsibilities which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation, on whose growth and career from the beginning the Ruler of Nations has plainly written the high command and pledge of civilization.

The United States afforded a further indication of its new position in world politics by taking part, in 1900, with the leading European Powers in the relief of Peking and the punishment of the Boxers.

But all these manifestations of the new spirit, with others too numerous to recall, pale into insignificance as compared with the great resolution taken in 1917. Few will question the accuracy of Lord Bryce's words ut-

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tered in 1917: 'With the entrance of the United States into this war a new chapter opened in world history. It was an occasion of solemn significance for all the ages to come.' To this judgment one observation may, however, be added. The new chapter is one toward the opening of which events have been tending with some rapidity since 1898, if not since 1895. The resolution to which President Wilson brought his country in 1917, though far transcending in significance any previous resolution in regard to external affairs, was in harmony with the whole trend of American policy for the last twenty years. Still more important: it was in harmony with the development of *Welt-politik*. During the last generation the world has become one in a sense of which no one dreamed forty years ago. 'The expansion of Europe' is the formula in which a brilliant historian has recently crystallized the political developments of the last half-century. The formula expresses the truth, but not quite the whole truth. If Europe has expanded, the world has shrunk; and, in the process of contraction, the American, Australian, and African continents have been inevitably drawn into the maelstrom of European politics.

# A GERMAN VIEW OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY PROFESSOR WALTHER SHÜKING

THE Covenant of the League of Nations, made public by President Wilson on the 14th of February, 1919, is evidence of a momentous period of transition in world relations and, like a head of Janus, it looks in two directions. A pessimist might regard it as an instrument for perpetuating the existing superiority of certain governments to our disadvantage, and as intended to oppress us permanently. An optimist will hope that the statute will gradually be amended and modified, so as eventually to guarantee the vital interests of every nation, and to assure a status of just peace. This double character of a covenant that, unfortunately, is not born of the pure spirit of pacifism, has the defect of being more political than juristic in its nature. Its provisions are to some extent elastic and susceptible of varied interpretation. In regard to precision and definiteness of draft and consistency of form and arrangement, the Paris project is incomparably inferior to the draft proposed by the German Society of International Law. It is also decidedly inferior to the draft proposed by a Swiss federal commission of experts, which has also considered this topic.

The Paris Covenant creates three governing organs — a body of delegates, an executive council, and an international secretariat. The body of delegates, to which each government is permitted to send three representatives, follows the suggestion of The Hague Peace Conference in meeting only at intervals. Unfortunately —

for this is a very serious defect — the Executive Council likewise is not a continuously functioning institution, but ordinarily will meet only once a year. This Executive Council will likewise perform the function of an international mediation office, in case of controversies of a non-political character. This adds to the importance of the manner in which it is constructed. Although the evolution of international law has been consistently in the direction of a non-partisan authority to settle controversies between governments, and the reform most urgently advocated in this procedure has been the elimination of political influence, which, arising as it does from the governments themselves, gives such procedure the character of partisan intervention, the Paris Covenant commits this mediation to an executive council constituted entirely along old diplomatic lines, composed of the representatives of the Great Powers and of four other states elected by the body of delegates. Were we to assume that the present political alliances were likely to be permanent, the German Empire, upon entering such a League of Nations, would incur the peril of unjust and arbitrary treatment by this Executive Council. To be sure, commissions may be appointed to investigate special cases; but if the Executive Council is to decide by a majority vote when the latter course is to be taken, this does not constitute any ground of fair treatment.

Quite remarkably the question as