

*Remarks of the Secretary of War at a dinner offered by
the Tokyo Municipality, The Tokyo Chamber of Commerce, and
other prominent citizens of Tokyo on Monday, Sept 30, 1907*

Mr. Shibusawa

Mayer and Gentlemen of the Municipality and Chamber of Commerce of Tokyo

I beg to extend to you my heartfelt thanks and acknowledgment for this magnificent evidence of your hospitality and good will. It is a little more than two years ago since a large party, of whom I was one, was the recipient of a similar courtesy and attention in this very hotel at the hands of the then Prime Minister Count Katsura. So many were we then that I ventured to compare our coming to the descent of a cloud of locusts upon this devoted land. But you stood the onslaught bravely and your treatment of us is a bright memory, never to be effaced. At that time you were engaged in a titanic struggle with another great nation, but the first traces of the dawn of peace were appearing in the East. We Americans shall always feel proud of the part that Theodore Roosevelt with the prestige of the leadership of our people was able to play in hastening the end of the war. Peace has come under circumstances honorable to both parties and Japan having proved her greatness in war as in peace has taken her stand in the first rank of the family of nations. You have concluded new treaties with your former antagonist, of amity and commerce, and the wounds of war are healed.

The growth of Japan from a hermit country to her present position in the last fifty years is the marvel of the world. In every step of that development, even at the very beginning, we Americans are proud to record the fact that Japan has always had the cordial sympathy and at times the effective aid of the United States. The Names of Commodore Perry, of Townsend Harris, of John A. Bingham, of General Grant and Theodore Roosevelt will be inseparably connected with the history of the advance of Japan to the first rank among the world powers. But now for a moment, and a moment only, a little cloud has come over the sunshine of a fast friendship of fifty years --- a slight shock has been

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felt in the structure of amity and good will that has withstood the test of half a century --- how has it come about? Well in the first place, it took a tremendous manifestation of Nature to bring it about. Only the greatest earthquake of the century could have caused even the slightest tremor between such friends. I do not intend to consider the details of the events in San Francisco. I cannot trespass on the jurisdiction of the Department of State, of My colleague Mr Root or my friend Mr O'Brien to discuss them. But this I can say --- that there is nothing in these events of injustice that cannot be honorably and fully arranged by ordinary diplomatic methods between the two governments conducted as they both are by statesmen of honor, sanity and justice, and representing as they do two peoples bound together by half a century of warm friendship.

It is said that there is one word that is never allowed to creep into the diplomatic correspondence between nations, however hostile, and that word is "war". But I am not a diplomat and am not bound by diplomatic usage --- I can talk of war --- I am not one of those who hold that war is so frightful that nothing justifies a resort to it. We have not yet reached the millenium and there are international grievances that can be redressed, and just international purposes that can be accomplished in no other way. But as one of our great generals has said "War is Hell" and nothing but a great and unavoidable cause can justify it.

War between Japan and the United States would be a crime against modern civilization. It would be as wicked as it would be insane. Neither the people of Japan nor the people of the United States desire war. The Governments of the two countries would strain every point to avoid such an awful catastrophe.

What has Japan to gain by it? What has the United States to gain by it? Japan has reached a point in her history where she is looking forward with confident hope to great commercial conquest. She is shaking off the effects of war, and is straining every nerve for victories of peace. With the marvelous industry, intelligence and courage of her people there is nothing in trade, commerce and popular contentment and enlightenment to which she may not attain. Why should she wish a war that would stop all this. She has undertaken with a legitimate interest in so close a neighbor to reform and rejuvenate an ancient kingdom that has been governed or misgoverned by fifteenth century methods. His Majesty, the Emperor, has shown his appreciation of the difficulty of the task by sending to Korea Japan's greatest statesman who has exhibited his patriotism by accepting the heavy burden when by his years and his arduous labors for his country in the past he has earned a right to rest. No matter what reports may come, no matter what criticism may be uttered, the world will have confidence that Prince Ito and the Japanese Government are pursuing a policy in Korea that will make for justice and civilization and the welfare of a backward people. We are living in an age when the intervention of a stronger nation in the affairs of a people unable to maintain a government of law and order, to assist the latter to better government becomes a national duty, and works for the progress of the world. Why should Japan wish a war that must stop or seriously delay the execution of her plans of reform in Korea?

Why should the United States wish war? War would change her in a year or more into a military nation and her great resources would be wasted in a vast equipment that would serve no good purpose but to tempt her into warlike policies. In the last decade she has

shown a material progress greater than the world has ever before seen. To-day she is struggling with the abuses which accompany such material development and is engaged in an effort by process of law to retain the good for her people and to suppress the evil. Why should she wish war in which all the evils of society flourish and on which all the vultures fatten.

She is engaged in establishing a government of law, order and prosperity in the Philippine Islands, and in fitting the people of these islands, by general education and by actual practice in partial self government, to govern themselves. It is a task full of difficulty and one which many Americans would be glad to be rid of. It has been ~~suggested~~ suggested that we might relieve ourselves of this burden by the sale of the islands to Japan or some other country. The suggestion is absurd. Japan does not wish the Philippines. She has problems of a similar nature nearer home. But more than this, the United States could not sell the Islands to another power without the grossest violation of its obligation to the Philippine people. It must maintain a government of law and order and the protection of life liberty and property itself or fit the people of the islands to do so and turn the government over to them. No other course in honor is open to it.

Under all these circumstances, then, could anything be more wicked and more infamous than the suggestion of war between nations who have enjoyed such a time honored friendship and who have nothing to fight for.

"If this be true" someone asks "why such reports and rumors of war?"

The capacity of certain members of the modern press by headlines and sensational dispatches to give rise to unfounded reports has grown with the improvement in communication between distant parts of the world.

The desire to sell their papers, the desire for political reasons to embarrass an existing government, and other even less justifiable motives have led to misstatements, misconstructions, unfounded guesses all worked into terrifying headlines that have no foundation whatever. ~~XXXX~~ In each country doubtless, there are irresponsible persons that war would aid or make prominent who try to give seriousness to such a discussion; but when one considers the real feelings of the two peoples as a whole, when one considers the situation from the standpoint of sanity and real patriotism in each country it is difficult to characterize in polite or moderate language the conduct of those who are attempting to promote misunderstanding and ill feeling between the two countries.

It gives me pleasure to assure the people of Japan that the good will of the American people toward Japan is as warm and cordial as ever it was, and the suggestion of a breach of the amicable relations between them finds no confirmation in the public opinion of the United States.

It is exceedingly gratifying for me to have, as my companion in my visit to these shores, Mr. O'Brien the new ambassador to Japan from the United States. We have been friends for years. I am sure you will find in Mr. O'Brien all that could be desired in one whose chief official duty it will be to preserve the friendship between our two countries.

I have already referred to the enthusiastic welcome which was accorded our party of American congressmen two years ago by the people of Japan. So great was the kindness of His Majesty/the Emperor and the officers of the government that we were overcome with our welcome. Coming now to this country for the fourth time I am an old story and am not entitled to any other welcome than that to be accorded an old friend who comes often. The distinction of being the Emperor's guest another time I do not deserve and I should feel it my duty to decline,

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enjoyable as the honor is, but for the fact that I know that His Imperial Majesty graciously adopts this course not as a personal matter but to signify to the American people and government the continuance of his friendship for the United States. It gives me the greatest pleasure and is a ~~great~~ great honor for me to be able to bring a reciprocal message of good will from our President and our people..



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