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The Relationship of China to the War

BY MR. JEREMIAH W. JENKS.*

AT a regular luncheon of the Club held on the 16th April, Mr. Jenks said:

Mr. President, Brothers in Arms,—It is with a feeling of very sincere, although somewhat solemn, gratitude that I find that I am able to address you as "brothers in arms." You all know that for months now it has been the feeling of a very large proportion of the citizens of the United States that our country ought to step forward in the cause of democracy and freedom the world over and take its part in the war to the utmost. It had not seemed to the Government until lately that the fitting moment had come. The time has come. I think we may judge from that last Saturday's unanimous vote in the House of Representatives as regards war credit, that the United States expects to go into this war with the fullest preparation possible, with plans as if it were to be a long war, and that there will be no stinting of money or men in doing its duty.

I was in Washington a good part of last week, and I have spoken with many people since the declaration of war; the feeling seems to be unanimous that the United States is not to stop with money, but will put men, and fighting men, into the war as rapidly as they can be prepared.

I am to speak to-day with reference to China, and of China with reference to the war. I do that gladly because should it prove to be a long war, and it is not for us to assume anything else until it is over—China may prove to be a most important factor in the war.

Men that are used to Europe and the United States, who have not lately been in China, fail to recognize the changes, the wonderful progress made by China during the last dozen years. China is no longer an old, stagnant, backward country; China is one of the youngest and most progressive countries in the world. I wish to bring that fact very briefly before you, and then to answer these questions: Why should China

*Professor J. W. Jenks is one of the leading Political economists of America and has represented the United States upon many important international commissions, notably the ones in reference to the reform of currency in China.

come into the war (as I think she will very soon)? What can she do after she does come in? and What does it mean to us?

I have said that China is a young and progressive country. Let us remember that she has been sending to us her best young men, to Continental Europe, to England, to the United States, for the last ten or fifteen years. These young men are going back now, and they are exerting a very important influence on the government and business life, not merely in Peking but in government and commercial centres throughout the country. And that, more than anything else, has brought about the change. When China decided that it was time for the Manchus to be ejected, and when she further decided on a republican form of government, she got in step with the leading countries of Europe and the United States. China wants a republic, and will have it.

In the United States we have been disposed to boast of the remarkable things we have been doing in the Philippines in the last dozen years. We have been doing no greater work in the Philippines the last dozen years, than has been done in China by the Chinese. I trust you will let me speak very frankly about this.

In June, 1904, as a member of a Commission, I was sent by our Government to look into the monetary system of China, and to make suggestions regarding financial conditions. That gave me important and close personal contact with practically all the leading officials both in the Provinces and in Peking. I likewise met the leading business men in Peking, Shanghai and the leading interior cities. Again, I traveled into the interior, to judge of the ability of the people to take up a new type of money, and to see what could be done to introduce a new system. I had been some time previously in the Philippines studying financial matters there, so that when I went to China I was able to compare conditions in the two countries. During the past summer I visited both countries again, although the larger part of that time I was in Peking. I stayed at Peking because I found it wonderfully alive. It was in the midst of the revolutionary changes. If I were absent one day, I might lose some great historic movement; so I stayed there at the centre of activity. In that way I was able to make a comparison between conditions in 1904 and as they existed in 1916. When I say that I saw as great changes and improvements in the city of Peking as in the city of Manila during the twelve-year interval, that has some significance.

At my earlier visit there were no horses or carriages or automobiles in Peking; it was no place for them, in the single

dirt streets. The people had to travel in the old two-wheeled carts, making ruts in the middle of the roads. I remember Mr. Coolidge, one of the leading architects of the United States, who has planned some of our greatest public buildings, speaking this summer, saying that no other city in the civilized world is on the whole so magnificently planned as Peking. The streets are magnificently wide though lined with the low Chinese houses, but the conception of the layout of the city, planned some hundreds of years ago, was right. I do not know any other piece of landscape gardening with so magnificent a conception as that of the Ming tombs; the whole great valley, miles in depth, is taken for the arrangement of these tombs, each having a mountain for its background, a picturesque scene that shows that the Chinese are thinkers and artists, and have been for hundreds of years. Now this city of Peking has all these wide avenues finished, graded and thoroughly macadamized or paved just as you find here, and much better than some in New York. And now these streets are thronged with horses and carriages, rickshaws and automobiles, every kind of vehicle, all done in twelve years.

I visited the Agricultural Experiment Station near Peking, an immense undertaking in old palace grounds though lately begun. I found there two of our former graduates of Cornell University, where I used to be, as you may know. I found the work just as well managed as that at Cornell, just as well planned, in some particulars going even farther; it is young of course, some of the fruit trees are still not bearing, but as regards management and plan the work being done is just as good in quality, so far as I could judge, as any here.

I have been teaching thirty years and of course am interested in education. I visited the Government University, and happened there during examination week, so I got the President to collect for me sets of examination questions asked in those classes; so far as I could see, they were of the same type as those asked at Cornell, New York or other American universities in economics and history, physics and chemistry, showing that the same kind of work is done in the Chinese University as in our universities. There were none of these things in Peking twelve years before.

I might go on to speak of external things, but your time is very properly limited, so I will just say that these changes, marvelous as they are, are not one whit greater than those in other matters.

In 1904 China had not one official capable of discussing monetary problems along scientific lines; to-day her Minister

of Finance is fit to be placed side by side with your Minister of Finance, or the Minister of Finance of the United States or of England or France or any country in the world. That is not merely my opinion; I could give you the opinion of leading financiers of Europe. In 1911, you recall a syndicate of bankers of the United States, France, Germany and Great Britain was preparing to make a loan to reform China's monetary system; those financiers thought it well to have the Chinese plan passed upon by financial experts not interested in the loan, to give an independent expert judgment. That group of men met in London, and stayed there some two weeks. Sir David Barbour who, more than anyone else, was active in the reform of the currency in India, was the British representative; M. De Foville, a Member of the Academy, one of their leading economists, represented France; and other countries sent on their best men. One day after the conference when I was talking with Sir David and M. De Foville, they said, "We had been wondering what kind of man China would send to this conference; now that we have seen Dr. Chen Chin-tao we know that China has sent a man who is the peer of anyone in the conference." That was the opinion of two of the leading financiers of Europe. I agreed and added that in detailed knowledge of the history of and practice of monetary systems he was "not only in the first rank, but easily the best of us; they both agreed. That man to-day, as Minister of Finance, is handling his work under tremendous difficulties. In the United States I should be satisfied if we could count upon our Secretary of the Treasury always doing so well.

The majority of China's Cabinet to-day are foreign-trained men, so were the majority of the last cabinet of the late President, Yuan Shi Kai, who wished to be Emperor. No doubt you have read Mr. Blythe's article in the last *Saturday Evening Post*, in which he speaks of him as a blood-thirsty tyrant and ambitious. I visited him for an hour a month before he died and discussed very frankly questions regarding his policy and possible resignation. I have no objection to Mr. Blythe's suggestion that he was an ambitious man, but with regard to his bloodthirstiness I should put it this way—Yuan Shi Kai was one of the old type trained under the Manchu rule; life was held cheap in China. He did not like to have anyone stand in his way; if a man stood in his way, he might have him taken out into the back yard and have his head chopped off; or in these later days he could be shot; that was all. Yuan did not like to be balked in his

plans; he did not like to kill; but he was a man of the older type. The new President is of the modern type. He had occupied the position of Vice-President two years; then Yuan died and the Vice-President succeeded him. I had the good fortune to become well acquainted with him before he became President. As soon as he succeeded to the Presidency he was urged to order that there should be no executions for political reasons. He said he could not promise that, "but," he said, "I will do this, I will see that no man is executed without a fair trial for treason." The result is that not one man has been executed for political reasons since the new President came in, and I think no man will be.

There were eight men who had been so active in promoting the monarchy and were thought to be so treasonable that an order was issued for their arrest. It was known to everybody in Peking that if there were a few hours' delay in making their arrest it might have a good effect; hints were given them, every man of them left the city, and not one was arrested. That was done on purpose; their lives were not taken because of the presence in China of a man who is not bloodthirsty, but expects to rule in the modern way.

I might go on for hours telling you of the progress made by China. We all think of the progress of Japan as marvelous; it has been marvelous, and Japan is entitled to the greatest credit, but I think it could be proved over and over again that never in her most progressive twelve years has Japan shown more signs of progress than has China in the last twelve years. These facts we want to keep in mind when thinking of China as an ally. She has the most people, and probably the greatest natural resources of any country in the world. She is a nation of republican ideals, so far as most—the large majority—of the leaders are concerned. I was surprised to find that the servants around my house, the coolies, also wanted a republic. The Chinese are not unthinking men. We judge the Chinese mostly by the laundrymen and the day laborers, the lowest coolie class. Yet even these are intelligent.

Some years ago I was studying the situation on the Pacific coast as a member of the United States Immigration Commission, and came to the conclusion that the Chinese were far and away the most desirable laborers, absolutely faithful, and honest to an extent that others are not. So, when we find an honest nation, with republican ideals, that would be an ally worth having.

Why does China want to get into the war? The members

of the Cabinet to-day think it wise to go into the war, but there is a good deal of division among them as to the method by which and the conditions under which she should go in. It does not take a very long memory for us to recall that China for the last fifteen or twenty years, particularly since 1898, has suffered losses of territory, and this one question, more than any other, is to-day in the minds of the Chinese, and of the Chinese Government. In 1898, for an offense that in your country, in my country, in Great Britain, would have been settled by an apology and the payment of two or three thousand dollars—China saw the German fleet seize her most important northern port. The result of the murder by a mob of two missionaries was that under threat of war, for which China was not prepared, China lost this valuable port of Kiao-Chau. In addition under compulsion China gave Germany prior rights for opening mines, building railways throughout this most densely populated Province of China, one of the richest and most fertile, with a population of some thirty millions of people; China was also compelled to say that in case China herself should need capital for development of that province, Germany and German citizens should have the first right, provided the terms were as good as those offered by anyone else.

At the beginning of the war, when Japan demanded the surrender of Kiao-Chau or Tsing Tau, she declared that if it were surrendered at once she would in due time return the Province of China. Germany did not see fit to surrender it. No one expected she would. In consequence Japan fought—with the aid of England—and captured it. Now Japan claims that she has over China and over that territory the same rights that China was compelled by force of arms or threats of arms to surrender to Germany.

China feels this way about it: If I, going along a street in Toronto, should be assaulted by a highwayman in the street, and under threats of a revolver pushed into my face should surrender my purse, and then the robber three or four blocks farther along is held up by another robber, and my purse is taken from him, I would not recognize that that would give the second robber a legal or moral title to my property. China feels, therefore, that Japan has no legal or moral title to its concession made to Germany.

When Japan protested against the concession made by China to an American corporation to improve the Grand Canal, an improvement very much needed, the Chinese Government responded: "The war is not yet over, and we don't

know what the result will be; it is quite possible"—I do not think China thinks it is probable—"that Germany may win, and at the Peace Conference you may have to surrender that territory to Germany; at any rate, the status of that territory is to be settled at the Peace Conference, not by you now."

Now I think we see why China wants to get into this war: she wants to sit in that Peace Conference as a member, to settle her claim to that territory and to settle many other important questions. This matter is one of more danger to China than most of Great Britain's dangers, and China ought to get into the war.

And why should not we see that she does get into the war? I think there is no doubt that you and Great Britain and the United States and France, and probably the Republic of Russia, will be glad to have China in that Conference.

Now in a word or two, if China comes into the war, what can she do? It does not take very long to tell. If Great Britain and the United States and the others wish to finance China, wish to supply her with munitions, wish to supply her with transportation, China can do these things: in the first place, she can furnish food for all the Allies—with four hundred millions, no other country in the world has so many agriculturists, the best market gardeners in the world—; then, she could supply men, if they can be transported, to release all the men used by the European nations, to dig trenches, do the work outside, to make munitions. So you can let all your able-bodied men go into the trenches, if you don't want to trust the Chinese there; still further, China has four modern well-equipped arsenals, unlimited supplies of ore, and is making very good modern guns—not of the latest pattern, because Japan, Russia and other nations have seen to it she did not have the latest pattern—but if you send over a few models of the latest design, and a few men to give instruction, she could easily turn out small guns of the best modern type; we know in the United States that you can develop manufactures fairly rapidly if you have the money and men.

Again, suppose you wanted some soldiers. China has at present half a million men, trained by Japanese, English, German and American officers. I don't suppose they are the equal of those magnificent Canadian troops, but, as I have said, China could put half a million men into Europe, trained, quicker than the United States could. Do you realize that these men have had experience in fighting in their revolution. A military attaché told me, "I was not in time to see them fighting, but I saw the troops; I saw a thousand wounded

soldiers in their hospitals; I saw their drill and I can say without hesitation that I am sure Chinese can fight under native leaders. They can furnish soldiers if you need them."

One of our statisticians has figured that on the same basis that Great Britain has furnished soldiers the United States could put in twelve million men; China could put in forty-five or fifty million! We should realize what the possibilities are if it should be a long war.

Whatever the rest of the Allies are prepared to pay for, China will be glad to do. It is a matter of paying for it, and of asking. China feels her future is at stake. China is willing.

Then again, look ahead; Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and France, the United States, Russia, China—all great democracies; the future of the world as regards peace and popular self-government and high ideals is safe, if all these great countries get together, think together, plan together, for the future. And it is not wise to leave out or check or help anybody else to hamper a nation with that power and those ideals, of four hundred million people. Let us help China into the war, help her and use her in the war, and stand by her at the end of the war.