New Kid on the Block: the Effects of the Rise of Japan on Theodore Roosevelt's Hierarchy of Nations

MA Thesis
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Preface

When researching Theodore Roosevelt's presidency (1901-1909) and the literature concerning it, one will find that it is marked by dualities, or, depending on the preferred term, inconsistencies and contradictions. The 26th President of the United States has been characterised as both a ruthless, bellicose imperialist[1] and a champion of moral principles in international politics.[2] He was a staunch supporter of white supremacy and an advocate of the spread of Western civilisation throughout the world,[3] while also promoting America as a safe haven for all, regardless of race, gender or ethnicity.[4] His relationship with Japan can also be seen as part of this dualism: during his presidential tenure he both brokered a peace settlement between Russia and Japan in favour of the latter but was also forced into a yearlong Japanese-American diplomatic conflict revolving around the immigration of Japanese labourers. In his personal correspondence Roosevelt expressed his admiration for the Japanese people on multiple occasions, which raises questions about his exact thoughts on Japan.

One of the key elements of Roosevelt's foreign policy was a strong presence in the Pacific region (China, Korea and Japan), especially one that could guarantee a thriving commerce between the U.S. and China. An 'Open Door' to China, meaning equal economic access for all nations to the Chinese market was vital to the American economy, but also uncertain due to the various interests of the contending European (imperial) powers and a rising Japan. Roosevelt therefore sought to preserve the balance of power in the region wherever he could.[5] He thought that a certain from of cooperation with Japan would be fruitful to help the U.S. pursue its interests in the Orient. Diplomatic manoeuvring was a tricky undertaking in the Far East at that time, especially considering the complex set of alliances between the different powers active there. France had been aligned with Russia since 1894 while Britain and Japan

1 David H. Burton, 'Theodore Roosevelt: Confident Imperialist', *The Review of Politics* 23:3 (July 1961), 356.
2 Greg Russell, 'Theodore Roosevelt, Geopolitics, and Cosmopolitan Ideals', *Review of International Studies* 23:3 (July 2006), 434.
3 Theodore Roosevelt, 'Chapter II: Expansion and Peace', in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (Charles Scribner's Sons 1903), 29.
4 Gary Gerstle, 'Theodore Roosevelt and the Divided Character of American Nationalism', *The Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999), 1281.
5 Greg Russell, 'Theodore Roosevelt's Diplomacy and the Quest for Great Power Equilibrium in Asia, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38:3 (September 2008), 438.

established a treaty in 1902. Germany had no friendly nations in the area, but was quickly building up its naval strength around the turn of the century and therefore becoming a force to be reckoned with in global power politics. It was this volatile environment Roosevelt had to navigate to best pursue America's national interests.

The 'hierarchy' of nations that Roosevelt made before and during his presidency will serve as the foundation of the argument, since it can be seen as the main driving force behind the decisions Roosevelt made on the Far Eastern political theatre. This hierarchy can be defined as a set of political and cultural characteristics that Roosevelt applied to different countries, on the basis of which he spoke out in favour of or against a certain state. It was by no means a static ranking, but instead a dynamic element of Roosevelt's foreign policy thinking in which certain remarkable changes occurred during his presidency. It is therefore a useful tool to see how the Japanese, although from a different race and culture, still managed to obtain Roosevelt's favour. Subsequently, by researching the key decisions Roosevelt made while handling foreign affairs it can be revealed what influence the addition of Japan to his hierarchy had on his policy and in what way it reflected on the European nations, or maybe even his thoughts on the U.S. itself. Eventually, the goal of this research is to determine which place the Japanese took in this hierarchy, and if the rise of Japan contributed to certain changes in it. The research question is therefore formulated as follows: How can Japan's place in Theodore Roosevelt's hierarchy be defined, and to what extent did it affect the position of other countries in it?

The common consensus is that the top of Roosevelt's hierarchy is represented by the civilised nations of Western Europe and the U.S. Britain had a special place in this group, as Roosevelt saw the 'English-speaking race' as distinct from other races both politically and morally, and believed that the U.S. and England had a shared duty of spreading civilisation around the world.[6] Germany was a difficult case, as Roosevelt greatly admired them for their industrial and military capabilities but despised their autocratic methods of governance. In addition, he was very suspicious of the designs of Kaiser Wilhelm II.[7] This distinction between civilised races and the political system they used is an important element of Roosevelt's hierarchical thinking – according to him, Germany was undoubtedly civilised, but they used the wrong kind

6 William S. Tilchin, *Theodore Roosevelt and the British Empire, 1901-1907* (Providence 1992), 355-356; Russell, 'Great Power Equilibrium', 437.
7 Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore 1956), 394-395.

of statecraft. Roosevelt initially did not think much of the French but Franco-American ties grew closer when Jean Jules Jusserand was appointed ambassador to the U.S. Roosevelt connected very well with Jusserand on a personal level, which eventually contributed to his siding with France during the Algericas Conference of 1905 that resolved the Moroccan Crisis. Below Germany, France and Britain stood Russia, on which Roosevelt's contempt for autocratic regimes was also reflected. He reserved some admiration for their military capabilities but also characterised them as "huge, powerful barbarians," with the Slavs being of a distinct, inferior race.[8] At the bottom of Roosevelt's hierarchy were the "uncivilised peoples" such as the native inhabitants of Africa, China and South America, who had not yet adopted Western culture, technology and values – which eventually had to be brought to them by the civilised powers.

There are numerous works on Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy, ranging from general works such as Howard K. Beale's *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* to literature that deals exclusively with Roosevelt's relationship with Japan. These all provide different characterisations of the President's outlook on the Japanese people and culture. Beale contends that although Roosevelt believed the Japanese to be from a distinct race and culture, not belonging to the superior white race, he still expressed admiration for their assimilation of "the characteristics that have given power and leadership to the West."[9] Raymond A. Esthus has written a comprehensive work on American-Japanese relations during Roosevelt's presidency, describing the difficulties that arose after the Russo-Japanese War, and the eventual rapprochement between the two powers owing to skilled leadership from both sides. Another factor was the mutual admiration the American and Japanese leaders had for each other.[10] In *An Uncertain Friendship: Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, Charles E. Neu argues that Roosevelt purposefully limited American (political) presence in the Far East because he was fearful of conflict with a rising Japan.[11] Although he was in awe of the rapid military developments in Japan, Roosevelt was worried that after their victory over Russia the Japanese might get "a

8 Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge 1980), 135.
9 Beale, *Rise of America to World Power*, 266.
10 Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle 1966), 298.
11 Charles E. Neu, *An Uncertain Friendship: Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Oxford 1967), 310.

big head" and become more hostile to other nations active in the region.[12] Thomas G. Dyer argues in his book about Roosevelt's racial thinking that the President thought that the Japanese would eventually earn their place among the civilised powers, but that they would develop along a different path than the Western powers. Furthermore, Dyer notes that Roosevelt was convinced that Americans and Japanese should not mix racially.[13] According to Jeffrey A. Engel, Roosevelt put Japan and Russia on the same level – they were sufficiently civilised to maintain their own affairs, but could not be regarded as equal to the Western nations.[14]

The historiography on Roosevelt's attitude towards Japan all agree that Roosevelt held a positive view of Japan, albeit with some nuances; Dyer highlights Roosevelt's racial convictions more than Neu or Esthus, for instance. All these studies can be useful to determine Japan's place in Roosevelt's hierarchy, but they do not provide an outlook on how this emergence of Japan in Roosevelt's worldview reflected on his outlook on European states and the U.S. itself. This research will therefore aim to fill this void in the historiographical debate, as it will provide new perspective to the position of Japan in Roosevelt's foreign policy thinking. In addition, the politico-cultural hierarchy that represents the main structure of the research gives the thesis a more systematic view than other studies in the field.

This thesis will deal with several theoretical tools of historiography, most notably political culture and national identities. Power politics in the first years of the 20th century were characterised by the existence of several power blocs who combated each other diplomatically and militarily for spheres of influence around the globe. Because of the intertwining of the different nations' interests, the dominant powers were constantly suspicious of unfriendly designs by rival states. Carefully assessing the different political characteristics of each nation playing a role in this research and comparing them with Roosevelt's beliefs provide extra context to the events described.

The thesis will be divided in three separate case studies, each dealing with an important event in the Far East in which Roosevelt was involved. The first chapter will revolve around the Boxer Rebellion, which started 1899 and ended in 1901. At

12 Neu, *An Uncertain Friendship*, 17-18.
13 Dyer, *Idea of Race,* 137-138.
14 Jeffrey A. Engel, 'The Democratic Language of American Imperialism: Race, Order, and Theodore Roosevelt's Personifications of Foreign Policy Evil', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 19:4 (2008), 678.

this time Roosevelt had not yet ascended to the presidency; from 1899-1900 he served as Governor of New York and in March 1901 he was appointed to the position of Vice President under the leadership of William McKinley. He fulfilled this role until the assassination of said President in September of that year, making Roosevelt the 26th President of the United States. By then, the Rebellion had just about ended, but Roosevelt still expressed his opinion on the matter on several occasions in his correspondence. The significance of the Boxer Rebellion is that was an event in which all leading European nations and Japan were involved. Although in this particular case the European nations, America and Japan were united against one common enemy, the Boxer Rebellion can still serve as an interesting case study of how Roosevelt thought about the different European countries compared to Japan in an Asian context. Certain remarks about differences of political and military conduct between the powers involved can shed some light on how Roosevelt's hierarchy can be characterised before his rise to U.S. leadership. It is therefore a good starting point for this thesis.

The second event that will be described is the Russo-Japanese War, and more specifically Roosevelt's mediation during the peace talks, which ended with the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905). The conflict started because of rival ambitions in Manchuria and Korea, regions both Russian and Japan wished to be in their respective spheres of influence. Roosevelt saw the fighting as a danger to the balance of power in the Far East and the Open Door to China, as dominance by either of the contending powers would give them certain economic privileges. Other European nations were also indirectly concerned with the peace negotiations, as the conflict brought several alliances into effect, such as the Anglo-Japanese alignment and the Franco-Russian entente. The Western European states were therefore closely involved in the peace process as well, alongside the Russians and the Japanese. The complex set of alliances greatly strained tensions between the countries involved – the German Kaiser regarded the war as an opportunity to break up the Franco-Russian alliance, as the latter now faced British ally Japan. The Anglo-French Entente Cordiale of April 1904 would have to make sure that France would drop Russia as an ally in favour of the British.[15] The main focus of this chapter will then be on how Roosevelt thought of Japanese behaviour during the peace talks, and if this reflected on his opinion about the European powers that were also involved in it.

15 Eugene P. Trani, *The Treaty of Portsmouth* (Lexington 1969), 24-26.

The final chapter concerns the growing tensions between Japan and the U.S. between 1906 and 1908, revolving around the immigration of Japanese labourers. After emerging victorious out of the 1904-05 War, the Japanese were becoming a new force to be reckoned with in the Pacific. This outcome meant that the Japanese hold on South Manchuria was strengthened, worrying American businessmen that the Open Door to China would again be in danger. These fears proved not to be unfounded when the Japanese military authorities temporarily obstructed commercial activity in the region. By the end of 1906 the military administration withdrew, re-establishing the Open Door and resuming trade in Manchuria. Japan still retained a large influence on the area however, and tensions would not ease for quite some time.[16] The most serious controversy between America and Japan occurred when anti-Japanese agitation reached great heights in San Francisco. In the last decade of the 19th century, immigration to the U.S. from Japan greatly increased. After the acquisition of Hawaii, the sixty thousand Japanese inhabitants of the islands could enter the continental U.S. without passports. Consequently, thousands of cheap labourers began pouring in on the American Pacific Coast through Hawaii. This prompted heavy protests in San Francisco, and several 'Exclusion Leagues' were set up to bar Japanese immigrants from public buildings.[17] The most prominent example of this and the biggest source of outrage was the segregation of public schools between American and Japanese children. The diplomatic protests from Japan were sufficiently severe to force Roosevelt to set up negotiations. Continuing attacks on properties owned by immigrants fuelled tensions during this 'war scare,' and this made Roosevelt more concerned about American national safety.[18] During this period of strained relationships with Japan, there were several opportunities for Roosevelt to approach European powers for support. For instance, Germany suggested forming a German-American-Chinese entente against the Japanese (and consequently the British and French).[19] At the end of the day, Roosevelt managed to resolve this issue without violent escalation and maintain cordial diplomatic relations with Japan. This perhaps shows that in Roosevelt's eyes Japan was worthy to negotiate with and that he did not

16 Esthus, *Roosevelt and Japan*, 126-127.
17 Ibid., 129.
18 Charles E. Neu, 'Theodore Roosevelt and American Involvement in the Far East, 1901-1909', *Pacific Historical Review* 35:4 (November 1966), 441-442.
19 Leulla T. Hall, 'The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente of 1907-8', *The Journal of Modern History* 1:2 (June 1929).

feel that European nations should be involved in the squabbles. The chapter will end with the signing of the Root-Takahira Agreement, an understanding that recognised the territorial status quo of both countries, and finally resolved the immigration issue.

The collected volumes of Roosevelt's personal correspondence will form the backbone of the primary sources that will be used for this research. They contain all the important letters Roosevelt wrote to relatives, friends, colleagues and important political actors, both in the United States and abroad.[20] These give the clearest insight on the matters discussed in this thesis, as they show his most personal thoughts on them. On the other hand, they are not sufficient to provide the historian with definitive conclusions, as Roosevelt has shown to possess an unpredictable and fickle personality, and one can always cast doubts on the sincerity of his writings towards the addressee. Thankfully, the documents of the Foreign Relations of the United States collection can provide a more practical outlook. These contain all diplomatic correspondence between American ambassadors, members of the legation and secretaries of State with foreign diplomats and statesmen. By using these sources the argument will also focus on the practical implementation of Roosevelt's attitude towards Japan. The books and essays Roosevelt wrote throughout his political career can give a general idea of his ideas about the way America should present itself to the world and the significance of the European powers in American foreign affairs.

Chapter 1: The Boxer Rebellion and the prelude to the Russo-Japanese War

20 Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 1-8* (Cambridge, MA 1954).

In an 1897 letter to his long-time British friend, Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, Roosevelt gives a comprehensive view of his thoughts on the different dominant powers active on the theatre of world politics. He starts his argument by stating that it is perfectly understandable from any nation's point of view that it wishes for its own people to expand. Germany's colonial aspirations were therefore, in Roosevelt's view, completely legitimate. On the other hand, he also states that "as an American I should advocate … keeping our Navy at a pitch that will enable us to interfere promptly if Germany ventures to touch a foot of American soil."[21] According to Roosevelt however, potential German designs against America or Britain would be a case of barking up the wrong tree:

> Germany ought not to try to expand colonially at our expense when she has Russia against her flank and year by year increasing in relative power … if the Kaiser had the "instinct for the jugular," he would recognise his real foe and strike savagely at the point where danger threatens … the English-speaking races may or may not ultimately succumb tot the Slav; but whatever may happen in any single war they will not ultimately succumb to the German.[22]

Roosevelt was in awe of Russia potential military capabilities, and thought them to be comparable to those of Germany; but he was not afraid that Britain or America would have to suffer defeat at the hands of the Russian Empire. The President thought that the Slavs were "a people with a great future" but who were still "below the Germans just as the Germans are below us." He added that the "space" between the German and the Russian was probably greater than that between the Englishman and the German.[23] From this letter it can be established that Roosevelt deemed the Russians not equal to the Western nations but could ascend in the hierarchy when making use of its full potential. The English were in his opinion alike to the Americans, on several occasions placing the two peoples under the banner of the "English-speaking races." The Germans were essentially in the middle, albeit closer to the top than the bottom.

Roosevelt again confirmed the closeness of the English-speaking peoples after the Spanish-American War, where support of the British greatly contributed to the

21 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, August 13, 1897, in: Elting E. Morrison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 1* (Cambridge 1952), hereafter: *Vol. 1*, 645.
22 Roosevelt to Spring Rice, 646.
23 Ibid., 646.

Anglo-American rapprochement at the turn of the 20th century. He hoped that this strong bond could be reinforced for the coming time, as "their interests are really fundamentally the same, and they are far more closely akin, not merely in blood, but in feeling and principle, than either is akin to any other people in the world." In regard to France, he expressed the view that "the day of the Latin races is over," due to its deteriorating military power and lack of the ability of self-government.[24] Roosevelt also hoped that "the Kaiser does not make it necessary for one or the other of us to take a fall out of Germany, for the Germans are a good people, and there is really no need to have their interests clash with ours."[25] From these letters Roosevelt wrote before the Boxer Rebellion, it can be concluded that he was very fond of the English, saw promising signs in the future of the Germans, thought the French were in a downward spiral and that the Russians still had some distance to cover if they were to keep up with the Western European nations. Where does Japan fall within this pre-Boxer Rebellion framework?

Before the outbreak of the Rebellion Roosevelt felt threatened by the strengthening of the Japanese navy in the Pacific. When he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he urged his superior John Davis Long for the American fleet to keep up with these developments as not to fall behind. His main concern was that the Japanese would possibly be able to retaliate in force against the annexation of Hawaii by the U.S.[26] He complained a few months later to Sternburg that his efforts were falling on deaf ears: "I do not believe we shall make very much advance with our navy … In the Pacific we are now inferior to Japan and we shall continue to be inferior."[27] Apart from this fear of the Japanese navy, Roosevelt made no further remarks about the Japanese people or their politico-cultural characteristics. It seems that at this stage Japan's role in world politics had yet to be recognised, at least from Roosevelt's point of view. A violent eruption in China was needed to affirm this to the future President.

On 31 December 1899, British Reverend Sidney Brooks was driving by wheelbarrow through the Shandong region of eastern China, when he was attacked by a group of armed men. Brooks was severely hurt by their swords and consequently taken away and murdered gruesomely.[28] The perpetrators of this attack were members of the so-called Fists of Righteous Harmony, or "Boxers," as they were called by

24 Roosevelt to James Bryce, November 25, 1898, *Vol. 2*, 889.
25 Roosevelt to Arthur Hamilton Lee, November 25, 1898, *Vol. 2*, 889-890.
26 Roosevelt to John Davis Long, September 30, 1897, *Vol. 1*, 695.
27 Roosevelt to Sternburg, January 17, 1898, *Vol. 1*, 764.

foreigners in China due to their intensive martial arts training. The Shandong-based group was rapidly gaining support for its fierce anti-foreign rhetoric, owing their popularity mostly to the conduct of the Western powers in the country for the last decades. For the majority of the 19th century China was being used as a plaything for the imperial powers, carving up the country into different spheres of influence. It was also a popular destination for Christian missionaries (such as Reverend Brooks) who repressed the elements of Chinese society they could not convert. Ignorant of the fact that ancient Chinese religious rituals and Confucian rituals were still deeply rooted in everyday life, the missionaries publicly ridiculed these key aspects of Chinese culture. Their anti-Christian stance made the Boxers therefore very attractive for the regular Chinese who were fed up of being treated as inferior people by the so-called "foreign devils."[29] Combined with the special privileges the foreign powers made for themselves in regard to trade while ignoring Chinese interests, anti-Western sentiments erupted starting an uprising that would eventually be smashed by the Eight-Nation Alliance of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Japan and the U.S.

When the violence directed against foreigners broke out in China, Roosevelt was quick to advocate a military intervention by the U.S. military to protect American citizens. In a letter to his friend Charles Arthur Moore in 1898, Roosevelt already made clear his opinion about the importance of stable trade relations with China, stating that even action against a European power would be necessary if they would hurt U.S. interests in the region.[30] In this case though, these interests were endangered by the Chinese themselves, and a military response was therefore justified. In the summer of 1900, the conflict reached a climax when the Boxers marched for Beijing to the Legation Quarter where the most notable foreign diplomats in China lived. While the foreigners hid in their embassies the Boxers besieged the town, managing to kill the German minister Clemens von Ketteler.[31] These events caused the powers to gather their strength and send a joint expeditionary force to Beijing to smash the uprising. Roosevelt confided to Sternburg that he thought that the Western powers had

28 Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China's War on Foreigners That Shook the World in the Summer of 1900* (New York 1999), 32.
29 Richard O'Connor, *The Boxer Rebellion* (London 1973), 12-14.
30 Roosevelt to Charles Arthur Moore, February 14, 1898, *Vol. 1*, 772.
31 John P. Langellier, *Uncle Sam's Little Wars: The Spanish-American War, Philippine Insurrection, and Boxer Rebellion* (London 1999), 8.

to blame themselves for letting the Boxer movement grow this fast; it was however no surprise to him that it happened "when half a dozen nations is interested and each is jealous or suspicious of one or more of the others." Roosevelt also offered to help Sternburg in any way should America and Germany negotiate for a cooperation to deal with the Chinese matter.[32] On the same day he wrote to Spring Rice as well, saying that he hoped "that the great powers will be able to act in concert and once for all put China in a position where she has to behave."[33]

As the Boxer Rebellion raged on, Roosevelt's respect for the Japanese grew and thought that they should obtain control of Korea as a counterbalance to Russian aspirations in the region.[34] "What extraordinary soldiers those little Japs are!" Roosevelt exclaimed after learning of messages from American troops that the Japanese forces fared even better in combat than themselves and their European counterparts.[35] Roosevelt also established from these reports that the French military proved themselves to be fairly incompetent, and that the Russians were infamous for plundering and murder of innocent civilians. In the same letter he also expressed hope that following the Anglo-German Agreement on China of October 31, 1900 the U.S., Britain and Germany would cooperate closer and more frequently.[36] The Agreement was based on the two principles of unprivileged free trade and the maintaining of the territorial integrity of China, and therefore in compliance with American interests.[37]

When the Boxer Rebellion reached its final stages, Roosevelt started expressing his thoughts about its consequences in the long term. The Russians had exploited the fighting to strengthen its position in Manchuria, and there were growing fears that after the Rebellion would be definitively smashed, the members of the Eight-Nation Alliance would start fighting among each other. As a U.S. Lieutenant put it, "the British are hungrily watching every move made by any nation; the Japs say nothing, but I imagine that they are warring in secret; the Russians have withdrawn practically all their troops … to Manchuria, in the north while we sit on the fence."[38]

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32 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, July 20, 1900, in: Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 2* (Cambridge 1952), hereafter: *Vol. 2*, 1358.
33 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, July 20, 1900, *Vol. 2*, 1358.
34 Roosevelt to Sternburg, August 28, 1900, *Vol. 2*, 1394.
35 Roosevelt to Spring Rice, November 19, 1900, *Vol. 2*, 1423.
36 Roosevelt to Sternburg, November 19, 1900, *Vol. 2*, 1428.
37 John Hay to Count Isny, October 29, 1900, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter: FRUS), 343-344.
38 Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion*, 307-308.

According to Roosevelt, the Japanese would be able to give the Russians "a stiff fight" in the region, as the latter did not have a stable supply and communication line with Siberia.[39] However, he did see Russia as a future key player in Asia who had not yet been able to muster its full military capacity.[40]

The negotiations at the end of the Boxer Rebellion resulted in the Chinese government having to pay reparations to the members of the Eight-Nation Alliance. According to the final protocol that closed the talks with the Chinese on September 7 1901, this was a sum of 450 million taels[41] of silver – roughly amounting to $10 billion dollars in today's prices. Furthermore, the Chinese were prohibited from importing arms and other military materiel as well as joining any anti-foreign society, punishable by death. The leaders of the uprising were to be executed.[42] It is clear that through these negotiations the powers were able to sanction China heavily both economically and politically. German forces undertook punitive expeditions to the countryside, as they were too late to take part in the fighting against the rebels. Roosevelt spoke out in favour of these expeditions, as they were legitimate because of the earlier wrongdoing by the Chinese. This view echoes in the words he expressed towards Sternburg about misconduct by the uncivilised nations of South America: "If any South American State misbehaves towards any European country, let the European country spank it."[43]

The contents of the final protocol were satisfactory to Roosevelt, as it aimed to prevent any chance of further Chinese aggression against foreigners while also refraining from dividing Chinese territory for the benefit of the Eight-Nation Alliance. It also coincided neatly with the earlier Anglo-German Agreement. However, the tensions that arose in Manchuria after the Rebellion showed that its signatories would not necessarily uphold these agreements. The Anglo-Japanese Defensive Agreement of January 30, 1902, is a direct result of this matter. It stemmed from the wish of both Great Britain and Japan that the Open Door to China would be maintained and that its territorial integrity would be preserved. If one of the two parties would be involved in war, the other would remain strictly neutral; in the event that either of them would be

39 Roosevelt to George Ferdinand Becker, July 8, 1901, in: Elting E. Morrison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 3* (Cambridge 1952), hereafter: *Vol. 3*, 112.
40 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, July 12, 1901, *Vol. 3*, 117.
41 Chinese weight measure.
42 'Final Protocol, (September 7, 1901) FRUS 1901, China Affairs, 312-317.
43 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, July 12, 1901, *Vol. 3*, 116.

confronted by more than one aggressor both would join forces. This agreement was therefore in compliance as well to U.S. interests as it seemed to, in the words of American ambassador to the United Kingdom Joseph H. Choate, "greatly fortify the policy of the "open door" and goes far to secure the independence and integrity of the Chinese and Korean Empires."[44] This agreement can therefore be seen as the first sign that Japanese interests in East Asia coincided with American interests in the area.

Meanwhile, tensions in Manchuria continued to grow between Japan and Russia. The Manchurian Prince Qing had started negotiations with the Russo-Chinese Bank to grant exclusive industrial privileges to the latter. The U.S. saw a creation of a Russian monopoly in Manchuria as a violation of the final protocol after the Boxer Rebellion, as well as the promise of the Russian government to the U.S. that the Open Door in China would be upheld.[45] In regard to the Anglo-Japanese alignment, Russia and France issued a statement in which they expressed their sympathy for this newly shaped bond, claiming it represented the same interests as they had in China.[46] Although this official statement seemed to be promising for a friendly cooperation in the area, one did not have to be a cynic to realise that a defensive agreement between Japan and Britain would essentially pit them right against Russia. With the Manchurian situation getting more heated, the odds that war would break out seemed to become inevitable. The role of the U.S. within these affairs was minimal up to this point, but under the leadership of Roosevelt it would put itself more and more on the centre of the stage.

The Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) would be an important part of further escalation in Manchuria. It was built by the Russians under a concession of the Chinese government, and was finished in 1902. The construction of the railway brought with it a large contingent of Russian labourers and Russian police who were tasked with protecting them. Furthermore, because of the principle of extraterritorial privileges in China – foreign firms could operate under the jurisdiction of their native country – the territory that was being used for the CER virtually existed as a state within a state. The fact that it was even used by smugglers and bandits to escape Chinese law made it harmful to Chinese integrity.[47]

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44 Joseph H. Choate to John Hay, February 12, 1902, FRUS 1902, 513-514.
45 Charlemagne Tower to Count Lamsdorff, 931.
46 Memorandum handed to the Secretary of State, March 19, 1902, FRUS 1902, 930.
47 Chin-Chun Wang, 'The Chinese Eastern Railway', *The Annals of the Amercan Academy of Political and Social Science* 122 (November 1925), 57.

After finishing the CER, the Russians had made a deal with the Chinese to withdraw their troops and workers and return supervision of the railroad to China within six months of completion of the project. The Russians seemed to honour the deal at first, but used the Boxer Rebellion as an excuse to retain a firm grip on the region.[48] Subsequently, the earlier mentioned Russo-Chinese negotiations for exclusive industrial rights started, probably under pressure from the Russians. Meanwhile, occupation of Manchuria by Russian troops continued. In July 1903, Secretary of State John Hay received a statement from the Russian Embassy that the actions of Russia were merely meant as a means for "the obtaining of guaranties for the essential interests of Russia in the province occupied by their forces … it has never entered into its views to oppose the opening to foreign commerce."[49]

Roosevelt was very annoyed with the Russian behaviour in Manchuria, calling the "mendacity" of the Russians "something appalling … it seems that we cannot fight to keep Manchuria open."[50] Reacting to the Russian refusal to open Manchurian ports for commerce, Roosevelt said: "I have a strong feeling in favour of Russia, but she is doing everything in her power to make it impossible for us to continue this feeling. She seems to be ingeniously endeavouring to force us, not to take sides with Japan and England, but to acquiesce in their taking sides with us." Furthermore, he argued that the U.S. had always respected Russia's "exceptional position" in Manchuria, but that America merely wished for unhindered commercial opportunities in the area.[51] With these words, Roosevelt apparently did not want to commit himself yet to any power in the region, but he recognised that if this situation did not cool down, he had no choice but to take sides with Britain and Japan. The Russians had struck him as very untrustworthy in their communications during this affair, because of the repeated assurances that the Open Door would be upheld. In referring to the earlier mentioned memorandum from the Russian Embassy of July 14, 1903, Roosevelt said to Hay: "Your public announcement of what they had promised makes further treachery *more* difficult for them; but after all they never find any treachery *really* difficult." The President assured Hay that he was willing to go to the "extremes" with Russia, if he was sure that France or Germany would not react as

48 Wang, 'Chinese Eastern Railway', 59.
49 Imperial Russian Embassy, 'Pro Memoria', July 14, 1903, FRUS 1903, 711.
50 Roosevelt to John Hay, May 22, 1903, *Vol. 3*, 478.
51 Roosevelt to Albert Shaw, June 22, 1903, *Vol. 3*, 498.

well.[52] Before and during the Boxer Rebellion, Roosevelt's opinion about the Russians could be characterised as ambiguous: he lauded their vast industrial and military potential but criticised their national and cultural character. While assessing the President's reaction to Russian behaviour in regard to the Manchurian disputes, it becomes evident that to him, the events confirmed his thoughts about Russian politico-cultural traits.

Around the same time, the Japanese government had started negotiations with the Russians to find a solution for the Manchurian situation. Japan had strongly advised China not to give in to Russian demands, and now wanted to confront them directly as they thought this was the most effective means to come to terms with them.[53] American Minister to Japan Lloyd Griscom was informed that Japan would give four proposals to the Russians: firstly, the integrity of China was to be maintained, secondly, Russia would withdraw its troops from Manchuria, thirdly, Japan would recognise Russian rights in the region based on currently published treaties and conventions, and finally, Russia would recognise Japanese political, commercial and industrial interests in Korea as described in the Anglo-Japanese treaty.[54]

The Russians responded to these proposals with their own demands, and the Japanese wired these to the American State Department seeking advice on the matter, and "appreciating the interest the United States Government have shown in the Manchurian question." These Russian counterproposals expressed the wish that the Chinese government would provide assurance that it would not cede any part of Manchuria to a foreign power; and the Russians would have to be allowed to construct wharves and station troops along the Sungari River to protect its commercial interests along this important trading route.[55] Japan could not in any way agree with these terms, as these measures would still constitute de facto occupation of Manchuria and secure privileges for Russia. Griscom met with the Japanese minister for foreign affairs Baron Komura Jutaro to discuss the matter, and the latter confided that "[the negotiations were] making no progress at all. The only desire of the Russian government seems to be to delay matters." Upon asking whether the situation was

52 Roosevelt to John Hay, July 29, 1903, *Vol. 3*, 532.
53 Lloyd Griscom to John Hay, July 14, 1903, FRUS 1903, 615.
54 Lloyd Griscom to John Hay, July 20, 1903, FRUS 1903, 616.
55 Japanese Legation to Alvey Adee, September 12, 1903, FRUS 1903, 617-618.

becoming critical, Griscom was told, “the Japanese people are getting into a very excited condition.”[56]

It is at this point where tensions between Russia and Japan were becoming serious. In a telegram from Komura to Hay, the Japanese minister presented the latest proposals from Russia. While Japan remained committed to the pursuit of equal commercial opportunities in China, the Russians demanded Manchuria to remain outside of the Japanese sphere of influence. Furthermore, the Russians refused to comply with the Japanese wish of having a firm presence in Korea, instead proposing that the area north of the 39th parallel would constitute a neutral, demilitarised zone. This was entirely unacceptable to the Japanese, because, as Komura put it, “Russia would remain indefinitely in the flank of Korea, which is an important outpost of Japan’s line of defence.” On top of that, the suggested demilitarisation would cover almost one-third of the Korean peninsula, which was something Japan could not agree with in the slightest. [57] The unwillingness on the part of Russia to come to terms with Japan brought the negotiations to a stalemate and made the odds of a violent confrontation between the two even greater.

The Japanese government instructed its minister in St. Petersburg to relay certain modifications of these proposals to the Russians. The Korean neutralisation was to be suppressed; Japan would recognise Manchuria as being outside of its sphere of influence, as long as the Open Door would be maintained; in return, Russia would have to recognise Korea as being outside of its sphere of influence. These propositions were not be mistaken for an ultimatum to the Russian government, and were to be presented “in a spirit of perfect conciliation.”[58] The Japanese government had to wait “longer than reasonable” for a reply and subsequently sent a note to the Russian minister for foreign affairs terminating the negotiations. War now seemed imminent, especially considering the last sentence of the Japanese document: “In adopting [this] course the Imperial Government reserve to themselves the right to take such independent action as they may deem best to consolidate and defend their menaced position as well as protect their established rights and legitimate interests.”[59]

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56 Lloyd Griscom to John Hay, September 21, 1903, FRUS 1903, 618.
57 Baron Komura Jutaro to John Hay, December 21, 1903, FRUS 1903, 619-620.
58 Lloyd Griscom to John Hay, January 8, 1904, FRUS 1904, 410-411.
59 ‘Memorandum Left with the Secretary of State’, February 6, 1904, FRUS 1904, 413.

On February 8, the Japanese declaration of war sent to the Russians, citing the danger Russian to the integrity of Korea as the primary reason of resorting to violent means to resolve this conflict. It marked the start of many months of bloodshed and would ultimately have an enduring impact on the balance of power in the Orient.

Chapter 2: The Russo-Japanese War and the Treaty of Portsmouth

Roosevelt felt powerless on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War, stating that Japan had "notified us that she would regard any attempt at mediation as unfriendly," while Russia refused any American proposal of cooling down tensions, saying it should turn

to Japan instead. An attempt to approach France for assistance to possible mediation also fell on deaf ears. The only course America could take at that moment was, according to Roosevelt, to try to preserve Chinese neutrality. He therefore instructed Hay to send notes to the European powers in pursuit of this aim.[60] The war was kicked off by a surprise attack of the Japanese navy on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, Manchuria. It ended up being tactically inconclusive but it was an important strategic victory for the Japanese, as it gave them momentum for the rest of the campaign. Roosevelt was impressed with the Japanese actions, as he was not certain that her navy would be able to "whip" Russia on the sea. In secret, he was also satisfied with the course of events, as "for several years Russia [had] behaved very badly in the Far East … [now] Japan is playing our game."[61] He wished for the American people to learn the need for "preparedness, and of shaping things so that decision and action can alike be instantaneous."[62]

The Germans shared the wish for preservation of Chinese neutrality, as the relaying of diplomatic notes to other European countries was encouraged by "Bill the Kaiser." The President was very grateful to Germany for their support, because they got a relatively lukewarm response from the British in this respect. Foreign Secretary Lansdowne apparently annoyed the Americans "with thick-headed enquiries and requests about our making more specific exactly what it was highly inexpedient to make specific at all."[63] In other words, Britain had no interest at all in making an effort to cool down tensions. A month later, Roosevelt wrote Spring Rice of his thoughts on the matter. He was surprised by the "hysterical side" of the Russian people that emerged after fighting broke out with Japan, something that changed Roosevelt's image of them. While a prosperous future for the Slavs was still possible, to Roosevelt it was vital for them to free themselves from the chains of despotism. He credited the Japanese success to their disregard for authoritarianism, and despite them being non-Aryan and non-Christian, they were in Roosevelt's view nearer to the West than Russia in this respect. In the same letter, Roosevelt also drew up a possible scenario in the event of a Japanese victory. All the other powers active in the Orient would have to face "a formidable new power … if, moreover, Japan starts in to reorganise China and makes any headway, there will result a real shifting of the centre

60 Roosevelt to Oscar Solomon Straus, February 9, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 721.
61 Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., February 10, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 724.
62 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, February 16, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 731.
63 Roosevelt to Root, 731.

of equilibrium as far as the white races are concerned." He speculated that Japan and perhaps China – under the wings of the Japanese – would in the long term develop themselves into civilised powers, albeit in a different type of civilisation than the Western ones. He did not credit this to them being of a different race, but due to the fact that "the weight of their own ancestral civilisation will press upon them." The rights of any newcomer in world politics should, however, be recognised by the English-speaking peoples in order not to offend them.[64]

During the war, the Japanese sent Baron Kentaro Kaneko to the U.S. as a special envoy to win favour among the American people for the Japanese cause. Roosevelt knew him from his years at Harvard, and wrote him about the relations between West and Japan. He said, "Japan has much to teach the nations of the Occident, just as she has something to learn from them," crediting the "fine Samurai spirit" and the way in which the Japanese had managed to transform this ancient way of life into a modern one. The entrance of Japan into the circle of the "great civilised powers" was to Roosevelt a fine prospect for the rest of the world.[65] This was the first time Roosevelt directly addressed a member of the Japanese establishment, and it is clear from his words that he wanted to reach out to them for future cooperation.

Two months later Roosevelt recalled to Spring Rice a lunch he had with Kaneko and the Japanese Minister to the United States Baron Kogoro Takahira, in which he extensively discussed the possible course of Japan after the war. He warned them that if Japan would get a "big head" after emerging victorious out of the conflict with Russia, it would inevitably collide with other powers active in the Orient. Kaneko and Takahira assured him that this would not happen, as the Japanese elite would make sure that the common people would not become "intoxicated with the victory." Roosevelt also talked with them about the rumours in the West about the "Yellow Terror" (or Yellow Peril as it is more commonly known). This was a feeling of racial backlash against the Oriental peoples that had existed since the number of Chinese immigrants in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand greatly increased at the end of the 19th century, a sentiment shared by Europeans as well. The two Japanese statesmen were greatly offended by this, as they thought they had finally claimed their rightful place among the civilised powers but now were still classified by many Westerners as "barbarians." Roosevelt heartily agreed with them and responded that a

64 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, March 19, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 760-761.
65 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, April 23, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 777-778.

civilisation as they had developed "entitled them to laugh at the accusation of being part of the Yellow Terror." In the postscript, however, Roosevelt confided to Spring Rice that he deemed the Japanese civilisation "in many ways very alien to ours," especially in regard to the treatment of women. He also expected that a Japanese victory would culminate in an eventual Japanese-American struggle. On the other hand, he predicted that a Russian win would mean a shutdown of the Open Door to northern China. Weighing these two scenarios against each other tipped the scales in Japan's favour, as "on the score of mere national self-interest, we would not be justified in the balancing the certainty of immediate damage against the possibility of future damage." Following up on this, Roosevelt also makes some interesting remarks on race. He began by saying that "we have all outgrown the belief that language and race have anything to do with one another," and that he was "not much affected by the statement that the Japanese are of an utterly different race from ourselves and that the Russians are of the same race." The fact that the latter was still unable to implement "a measure of civil liberty and self-government" made them still not worthy of a place within the circle of civilised nations, unlike the Japanese. Roosevelt did, however, not anticipate that the Japan would eventually become morally superior to the Western European countries and the U.S.[66]

Roosevelt's criticism of the term "Yellow Peril" returned in a letter to Hay a month later. He argued that when people talk of the possible "Mongol invasion of Europe" they should refer to the Russians and not the Japanese, as "the Japs have played our game because they have played the game of civilised mankind." He did not elaborate on what this "game of civilised mankind" exactly meant. As Roosevelt was a staunch disciple of the teachings of Alfred Thayer Mahan, he possibly referred to the actions of the Japanese navy. Although the Japanese surprise attack was not a heavy blow to the Russian navy in material terms, it did provide them with a decisive momentum. One of the most important factors to winning this particular conflict were smooth supply lines of troops and materiel, and command of the sea would be vital to achieve this. When Admiral Togo Heichahiro attacked the Russian fleet, it scared the latter into retaliating and therefore gave room for an invasion of Korea. The only other supply line the Russians could use was the long and not yet finished Trans-Siberian railroad, which forced the Czar to create a strong enough local force to confront the Japanese. This would take an estimated period of six months, while the Japanese were

66 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, June 13, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 829-832.

able to ship men and supplies to Korea and Manchuria in just three days. In the following months, the Japanese continued to reign supreme over the seas.[67] The momentum the Japanese gained by controlling the sea and using it to prevent their enemies from reacting decisively against them fits right into the strategic views of Mahan, and therefore Roosevelt's as well.[68]

The President's confidence in the Japanese was not shared by his friend Spring Rice, who thought that the Russians would eventually emerge victorious out of this conflict. According to the Englishman, the Russian army was a combination of "the fanaticism and the endurance of the East with something of the organisation of the West." He expected that Japan would be badly broken, and that by winning Manchuria Russia would greatly increase her industrial potential. Russian-Chinese collaboration would to Spring Rice constitute the real "Yellow Peril."[69] In reaction to this letter, Roosevelt stated that although "Port Arthur proved a harder nut than the Japanese anticipated … I see no indication that Russia will win."[70] The siege of Port Arthur lasted around 5 months, resulted in the destruction of the Russian Pacific fleet and foreshadowed the eventual Japanese victory. The debate by Spring Rice and Roosevelt on this matter showed that apparently some Europeans still underestimated the Japanese fighting capabilities – or overestimated Russia's.

When Roosevelt expressed the wish to appoint George von Lengerke Meyer as the new U.S. Ambassador to Russia several months later, he provided some new thoughts on the Russo-Japanese War. He was concerned that although the Japanese rulers would probably recognise Russia as their most dangerous adversary, the common Japanese people would regard "all white men as being people who, as a whole, they dislike, and whose past arrogance they resent; and doubtless they believe their own yellow civilisation to be better." Roosevelt believed that at this point America should take an independent course and look "as clearly as may be" into the future to see what would best serve national interests. Russia had proved to be very

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67 John W. Steinberg, "Chapter Six: The Operational Overview," in: John W. Steinberg et al., ed., *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero* (Leiden 2005), 107.
68 Philip A. Crowl, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian", in: Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton 1986), 456-457.
69 Cecil Spring Rice to John Hay, August 31, 1904, in: Stephen Gwynn, ed., *The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring Rice: A Record* (Boston, 1929), 426.
70 Roosevelt to John Hay, September 19, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 946.

untrustworthy in the recent years, but as an "oriental nation … the individual standard of truthfulness in Japan is low. No one can tell her future attitude." The President also did not expect that France and Germany would be willing to conciliate with Russia, and did not care in the slightest about America's interests. The British would probably act friendly towards America and its Japanese ally, but Roosevelt did not trust "either the farsightedness or the tenacity of purpose of her statesmen; or indeed of her people."[71]

Roosevelt said to Meyer that he was to speak in St. Petersburg with a certain Englishman, namely Spring Rice. The President was becoming more and more irritated that the British government continued to deny 'Springy' a post in Washington, and Roosevelt told his British friend that there was "no one in [the British] embassy here to whom I can speak with even reasonable fullness … I think it would be very important for your Government that you should come over."[72] Roosevelt had a lukewarm relationship with Mortimer Durand, the British ambassador to the United States at that time. Durand was never able to win the affection of the President like Germany's Sternburg and France's Jean Jules Jusserand.[73] The absence of one of Roosevelt's peers in Washington was a disadvantage to the British, which is reflected in the distrust the President began to show to them. "I would hesitate in counting upon the support of your Government and your people [in regard to the Russo-Japanese War]," he confided to Spring Rice, "I am not quite sure of their tenacity of purpose, of their fixity of conviction of their willingness to take necessary risks, and at need to endure heavy losses for a given length." He thought that in both the U.S. and Britain it was vital that the "peace-at-any-price people" would not get the upper hand, as they lacked the courage to act at critical moments.

Roosevelt was worried that although the Japanese government had held a friendly attitude towards America for past years, the common people essentially considered Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Russians and Americans to be "white devils" who were of a completely different kind of civilisation. To support this claim, Roosevelt mentioned a report he received from two American military attachés traveling with the Japanese army during their Manchurian campaign. These two men,

71 Roosevelt to George von Lengerke Meyer, December 26, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 1079-80.
72 Roosevelt to Spring Rice, December 27, 1904, *Vol. 4*, 1084-85.
73 Nelson Manfred Blake, 'Ambassadors at the Court of Theodore Roosevelt', *The Missippi Historical Review* 42:2 (September 1955), 191-192.

Captain March and Lieutenant Fortescue, explained that while the Japanese have a "most admirable army," at the end of their tenure with them the Japanese soldiers became increasingly aggressive towards the white foreign attachés staying with them, sometimes even threatening them with violence. To Roosevelt, this showed that the Japanese military reserved a "common hatred" for Westerners. On the other hand, he did recognise the source of this contempt, as Europeans and Americans alike had only started to treat the Japanese with a modicum of respect for a short time. Roosevelt admitted to Spring Rice that "[American and British] traveling countrymen, not to speak of the inhabitants of Continental Europe, are not always ingratiating in their manners towards the races which they regard as their inferiors."[74]

Roosevelt got a satisfactory reply from Meyer to his earlier letter, and talked with him about the reports he got from the military attachés who were traveling with the Russian army. The information that he received confirmed his beliefs that the Russians were both treacherous and untrustworthy, as these traits were, according to these messages, also present among the Russian military brass. Roosevelt also repeated his contempt for the Russian government, which to him represented "all that is worst, most insincere and unscrupulous, and most reactionary … undoubtedly our people who live in Japan are better treated by the Japanese and are better treated by them than is the case with those who live in Russia." He was still afraid that Japan after winning the war might turn against Germany or the U.S., but if the navy would keep being strengthened further Roosevelt expected no trouble from either Japan or Germany. Furthermore, he argued that "England's interest is exactly ours as regards this Oriental complication," and he also kept the door open for cooperation with the Kaiser.[75]

In a letter to his British friend George Otto Trevelyan Roosevelt takes the first steps towards a concrete plan for mediating peace between Russian and Japan. He had approached the Russian government in order to convince them start negotiating peace terms with Japan, as he thought that continuance of fighting would only drain their resources even more, whilst the prospect of achieving victory had started to fade. The Russians flatly refused, however, and showed a "fairly Chinese temper."[76] On March 30, 1905, Roosevelt reported to John Hay that Takahira and the Russian Ambassador

74 Roosevelt to Spring Rice, December 27, 1904, 1086-88.
75 Roosevelt to George von Lengerke Meyer, February 6, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1115-16.
76 Roosevelt to George Otto Trevelyan, March 9, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1134.

Arthur Cassini had approached him to mediate in the peace negotiations. The talks were still bogged down, however, because neither of them was willing to make the first advances. Japan refused to deal with the Russians unless the Czar gave his word, rightfully so according to Roosevelt. Cassini confided to the President that his government was still bent on war, but that he personally saw peace as the better option. Roosevelt also said that the Kaiser was having "another fit": Wilhelm was fearful that France was planning to organise a congress of powers and deny Germany a place in it, hoping to isolate them. The President thought this was nonsense, but he did agree that it would be unwise to create a special congress for this matter. He hoped that the Russians and Japanese would initially be able to settle this amongst themselves, and that mediation would only be needed if absolutely necessary.[77]

A couple of days after this, several foreign envoys went to see Roosevelt to talk with him about the peace negotiations. From his conversations with Takahira, the President noticed that the prospect of victory had made them take "a distinctly higher tone." The Japanese ambassador told him that his country would settle for no less than a financial compensation from the Russians, as the significant advances the Japanese military had made at this point had put Russia in a disadvantageous position for the negotiations.[78] A few weeks later, Roosevelt received the first proposals from the Japanese for their peace terms. He heartily agreed with their wish of restoring Manchuria to China with preservation of the Open Door, but did not yet feel like taking a stance on the indemnity question.[79] Secretary of War William Howard Taft confided that the Japanese were still anxious to begin negotiations, indicated by the fact that they left the initiative mostly with Roosevelt.[80]

Almost a month later Roosevelt complained to Trevelyan that he had not yet been able to bring Russia and Japan together. The Russians were not to be trusted due to their "abhorrent" system of government and the Japanese were at this point feeling "rather puffed up over their strength." Moreover, he still had problems with the prejudice against and contempt for the white race amongst the Japanese.[81] At this point, the course for America to take was to "act in a spirit of justice and good will

77 Roosevelt to John Hay, March 30, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1150.
78 Roosevelt to John Hay, April 2, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1156-57.
79 Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, April 20, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1165.
80 Tyler Dennett, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War* (New York 1925), 180.
81 Roosevelt to George Otto Trevelyan, May 13, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1174.

towards others … and, if possible, help toward a general attitude of peacefulness and righteousness in the world at large." He reserved this attitude especially for England, but also for France, Germany and Japan; at the same time finding it difficult to behave in this way towards Russia as well.[82] The indemnity proposals of Japan had become a problem, as the Russians refused to comply with this, extending the conflict even further. Roosevelt had argued earlier that Japan should have dropped the financial compensation part of their peace terms, because a few months of fighting would cost them as much as they would gain with the indemnity.[83]

The Japanese and the Russian navy had several clashes in this period, and Roosevelt congratulated Kaneko with the Japanese victory in the Battle of Tsushima on May 27, saying, "Neither Trafalgar nor the defeat of the Spanish Armada was as complete – [or] as overwhelming."[84] It was to be expected that after being defeated on numerous occasions at sea, the Russians would lose this fight as well, but the extent of the beating Admiral Rozhestvensky's fleet suffered baffled the President. Roosevelt was visited by Takahira and Cassini shortly after the battle, and implored the Russian envoy to cease fighting and enter peace negotiations. The Kaiser sent the same message to Czar Nicholas; also adding that the U.S. was the "only nation regarded by the Japanese with the highest respect," and that "the President of the United States is the right person to appeal to with the hope that he may be able to bring the Japanese to reasonable proposals." In other words, Germany advised the Russians to use Roosevelt as a tool to keep the Japanese in check during the negotiations. The President did not wish to "squeeze out of Japan favourable terms to Russia, and suggested to the Russians that they consent to a meeting with Japan, after which he would ask the latter to comply with this. Consequently, the two powers would work out the peace terms between each other without outside interference. Roosevelt hoped that the Russians would not behave during these negotiations as he had gotten to know them, "as they are hopeless creatures with whom to deal." He continued to look at the Japanese with uncertainty, not being able to get a clear view of what their motives and plans for the future were.[85]

On June 8, 1905, Roosevelt ordered the Department of State to wire two messages simultaneously to the Japanese and Russian governments to set up peace

82 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, May 13, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1178.
83 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 15, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1180.
84 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, May 31, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1198.
85 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, June 5, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1203-05.

negotiations. A day afterwards, he received a positive reply from the Japanese and three days later likewise from Russia. The President did not know what to expect from the upcoming tête-à-tête between the two quarrelling nations. Japan would probably ask for more he deemed would be fair, and likewise Russia would want to concede less than she ought to. But it was an endeavour worth trying, he argued, because "there is the chance that they will prove sensible and make a peace, which will really be for the interest for each as things are now."[86]

In an extensive letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, Roosevelt recounted how this whole process of bringing the two together; it was by no means an easy task. When he asked the Japanese to take the first steps towards peace negotiations after the decisive battle in the Tsushima Straits, they essentially put the initiative with him to invite the powers for peace talks. This struck the President as a sign of "naiveté" on part of the Japanese. He mocked the initial reluctance of the Russians, who were claiming that they were fighting the "battles of the white race," which made Roosevelt ask them why, if that were true, Russia had treated the other members of the white race even worse than Japan. When comparing the reactions the President received from both nations, he deemed the Russian one significantly less satisfactory than the one he got from the Japanese. The latter stated: "The Imperial Government will … appoint plenipotentiaries of Japan to meet plenipotentiaries of Russia … for the purpose of negotiating and concluding terms of peace directly and exclusively between the two belligerent powers." From Cassini, on the other hand, he received the mere reply that "the Imperial Government has no objection in principle to this endeavour if the Japanese Government expresses a like desire." Roosevelt saw in these words "a certain slyness and an endeavour to avoid anything like a definite committal." Following up to the mutual agreement of Japan and Russia to start the peace talks, a discussion arose about where they should take place. Roosevelt suggested The Hague, but Japan did not want to travel to Europe. It took the President several days of haggling between the two countries before he could come to an agreement with them that the negotiations should take place at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. He warned them that trifling over details would only be of disadvantage to both. If the war were to continue, Russia would lose her sphere of influence in East Asia, and Japan would only waste more resources to in the end obtain East Siberia, which would not be of much value to them. He characterised Japan as being "entirely

86 Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, June 12, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1210.

selfish, though with a veneer of courtesy, and with infinitely more knowledge of what it wants and capacity to get it [than Russia]."[87]

The military victory Japan achieved at the expense of Russia both impressed and worried Roosevelt. He predicted that Japan would become an industrial powerhouse comparable to Germany in size, and that this growth could possibly "soften the wonderful military spirit she has inherited from the days of the Samurai supremacy." On the other hand, he admitted that these were long-term effects, and that at present America should continue to strengthen its navy to keep up with the military potential of the Japanese.[88] He did exclaim to Spring Rice "what a wonderful people the Japanese are!" and added that Germany, England and America would have to fear the Japanese more than any other nation as a rival in the Pacific trade. He was wary that if the European nations and the U.S. would not treat Japan with respect, it would have disastrous consequences for all of them. He did not believe, though, that it would come to military confrontation between Japan and the U.S.: the peace he was trying to mediate would, in his view, have a lasting effect on the balance of power in the Far East.[89]

In a letter to David Bowman Schneder, a Reformed Church missionary to Japan, Roosevelt once more expressed his admiration for the Japanese. He especially rejected the racial differences emphasised by some Westerners, providing the example of the Greek and Roman Empires, in which the blue-eyed and light-skinned peoples (of which Roosevelt himself descended) were regarded as barbarians. At that time, no one in the world would think that these northerners would eventually become part of the civilised world, and that the same misconception was now occurring with the rise of the Japanese.[90] To Meyer he recounts the wisdom Japan showed during the Triple Intervention in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895. A combined force of Russia, France and Germany threatened to intervene at that time against the Japanese, if it would not return the Liaodong Peninsula in south-eastern Manchuria to China. Japan acceded to this, as she was conscious of the fact that it would not be able to withstand a joint attack of the three powers. He suggested Russia would likewise admit defeat and make peace with Japan.[91]

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87 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, June 16, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1221-28.
88 Ibid., 1230-31.
89 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, June 16, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1233-34.
90 Roosevelt to David Bowman Schneder, June 19, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1240-41.
91 Roosevelt to George von Lengerke Meyer, June 19, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1241-42.

Roosevelt got important support throughout the peace process from the Kaiser, who on multiple occasions pressured Russia into making peace. He was very grateful for this and saw Wilhelm as crucial for stimulating the Czar to cooperate in the peace talks.[92] The President also had the feeling that the English wanted the war to go on as long as possible, so that the Japanese would be able to cut deep into Russian territory. The acquired territory would then be given back in exchange for an indemnity, which would be very humiliating for the Russians. He criticised this "short-sightedness" on part of the British, as a Siberian campaign would wear the Japanese army out. If the current situation could be maintained, the Anglo-Japanese alliance would still serve as a buffer against any Russian design towards the English possessions in Persia and India. Roosevelt remarked that an armistice would be out of the question as far as the Japanese were concerned, and he understood this position – it would only be possible if Russia would be sincere in its further conduct, and Roosevelt probably considered that not likely to happen. The President also assumed that the English were encouraging Japan to make their terms unrealistic to the extent that peace would not be possible. On the other side, Germany and France were probably trying to get Russia to be more moderate towards Japan and work out a reasonable treaty for both of them. The internal instability of Russia due to the 1905 Revolution could also deeply influence the peace talks, as there was no telling what course the revolutionary movements would take in the event they would gain the upper hand.[93] At Russia's request, Roosevelt proposed the signing of an armistice to Japan, but (as he expected) they refused. He could understand that they were afraid that any act of generosity or yielding towards the Russians could eventually be used against them. The Japanese would probably want to maintain a firm stance during the talks to prevent this from happening.[94]

In a letter to Spring Rice, Roosevelt criticised the British role up till now in the peace negotiations. While Germany and France were endeavouring to exert their influence on Russia to try and broker a peaceful resolution to the conflict, "Springy" argued, "claims of honour must be recognised as the first interest of nations and that honour commands England to abstain from action which may eventually entail severe sacrifices on England's part." In other words, Britain did not want to interfere in the

92 Roosevelt to Charlemagne Tower, June 24, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1253.
93 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, July 7, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1265-66.
94 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, July 11, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1272.

peace talks as it could probably mean unwanted confrontations with other nations. Roosevelt again drew a parallel with the Triple Intervention of 1894, and declared that if another such "combination against Japan" would again occur, America would "promptly side with Japan and proceed to whatever length was necessary on her behalf." Roosevelt could not understand why Britain thought it "improper" to urge Japan to make peace, while France did the same with its Russian ally. Even Germany took part in it, but the Kaiser's motives were not entirely clear to Roosevelt; maybe he feared that the internal dissolution of Russia would cause German revolutionary groups to stir as well.[95]

A few days later, Roosevelt received a letter from the American Ambassador to Germany Charlemagne Tower containing some interesting developments. Apparently French foreign minister Théophile Delcassé had conceived a plan in which the mediation between Russia and Japan would be carried out by France and England. The idea would be that both Japan and Russia would obtain a portion of Chinese territory, as well as two mediators as a reward for their efforts. This meant a clear violation of the Open Door and partial exclusion of both Germany and America to the Chinese market, so the Kaiser and the President had a common interest in curtailing these designs.[96] None of this was eventually brought into practice, but it is clear from this that Wilhelm was making an utmost effort to form a tight-knit cooperation with Roosevelt on this matter.

Roosevelt established two scenarios for the Japanese to take. They could drive off the Russians entirely from the Pacific coast westward in the direction of Lake Baikal, or consolidate their position in Manchuria and Korea, and take the Russian island Sakhalin, north of the Japanese mainland. The President was satisfied to see that up till now the Japan was following the latter course, based on what the Japanese diplomats had told him when asking him to bring about peace negotiations. He therefore hoped that Britain would exert their influence on Japan and convince them to make reasonable as regards to a possible indemnity. On the other hand, Roosevelt was not very sure that at this point the Japanese were willing to listen to anyone.[97] Meanwhile, Witte had stated that Russia would not pay an indemnity but was considering reimbursing Japan partly for her military expenses. Baron Kaneko wrote

95 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, July 24, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1283-86.
96 Roosevelt to Charlemagne Tower, July 27, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1288.
97 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, July 29, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1292-93.

Roosevelt that the Japanese people were increasingly pressuring the government for sharp demands, including a even larger indemnity than the Cabinet was contemplating at that moment and cession of Vladivostok and its surroundings to Japan.[98]

The peace talks were kicked off on August 6, and about two weeks later Roosevelt's first correspondence about the course of the peace talks appears. Japan had initially demanded a dramatic decrease of Russian naval power in the Pacific, but had let this go. The President was satisfied to see that the Japanese were willing to concede the northern half of Sakhalin to the Russians in return for considerable financial compensation. The deplorable condition of the Russian fleet guaranteed the Japanese that they would not be able to reconquer the southern half of the island, while it provided a stronghold against any Japanese designs against Vladivostok and Eastern Siberia. The Russian prisoners of war were also to be returned. Roosevelt urged Meyer to convince the Russians to sign a treaty on these terms, as they made for a "just and honourable" peace.[99]

The President also notified Baron Kaneko that pro-Japanese factions within the U.S. were stirring about the possible continuation of the war to pressure Russia for a larger indemnity. Roosevelt quoted a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations as saying, "If [Japan] renews the fighting merely to get money, she will not get the money and she will turn sympathy from her in this country and elsewhere very rapidly." Roosevelt therefore asked Kaneko to sharply decrease their initial demand of 600 million dollars.[100] If Japan were to persevere in trying to "extort" money from the Russians, Roosevelt thought it would lead to "undoubted national exhaustion and the feeling of the civilised world turning against her."[101] The Japanese now "owed a duty to the world … the civilised world looks to her to make peace; the nations believe in her; let her show her leadership in matters ethical no less than in matters military."[102] The President again criticised the reluctance of the English during the peace talks, as they could be instrumental in trying to convince Japan that a prolonged fight would in the end prove to be futile. To him, Germany and France had done a much better job in that respect.[103]

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98 Dennett, *Russo-Japanese War*, 298.
99 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, August 21, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1306-07.
100 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, August 22, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1309-10.
101 Roosevelt to Henry Mortimer Durand, August 23, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1310-11.
102 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, August 23, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1313.
103 Roosevelt to Henry White, August 23, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1313.

On August 25, Count Lamsdorff announced that Russia would neither pay an indemnity nor give up territory to the Japanese. The stubbornness on part of the Russians did not carry much weight considering that it had already lost Sakhalin, and it would also mean letting go the opportunity for honourable peace. “It will be a dreadful thing for Russia and for all the civilised world if [this opportunity] is thrown away.”[104] Next to these more ‘official’ remarks, Roosevelt also expressed his opinion plainly to his son Kermit: “I am having my hair turned grey by dealing with the Russian and Japanese peace negotiators. The Japanese ask too much, but the Russians are ten times worse than the Japs because they are so stupid and won’t tell the truth.”[105]

Roosevelt explained in a letter to the Kaiser on what terms peace should be made in his view. Russia would not have to pay any indemnity whatsoever, and Japan would return the northern half of Sakhalin to its previous owner. For the latter, Russia would have to pay a sum yet to be determined by a “mixed commission,” comprising of an even number of both Russian and Japanese representatives and an odd member outside of the contending parties. Japan agreed to this plan reluctantly under “strong pressure” from Roosevelt. Because the President had the feeling that he did not sufficient influence with the Czar, he asked Wilhelm instead to present these terms to him. If the Kaiser would be successful in convincing Nicholas to agree with these terms, Roosevelt would be happy to fully credit Wilhelm with bringing the peace talks to a satisfying end.[106]

In the end, the Japanese agreed to let the indemnity payment go in exchange for half of Sakhalin, concluding the peace talks on these terms. Roosevelt was “overjoyed” when hearing of this, and wanted to “congratulate Japan on its wisdom and magnanimity … after the treaty has been definitely signed I shall see Baron Komura and make public such statements that the civilised world is under to Japan for its magnanimity in its hour of triumph.”[107] He had other words reserved for the Russians: “No human beings, black, yellow or white, could be quite as untruthful, as insincere, as arrogant … as the Russians under their present system. I was pro-Japanese before, but after my experience with the peace commissioners I am far

104 Roosevelt to George von Lengerke Meyer, August 25, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1314.
105 Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, August 25, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1317.
106 Roosevelt to William II, August 27, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1317.
107 Roosevelt to Herbert Henry Davis Peirce, August 29, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1326.

stronger pro-Japanese than ever."[108] In another letter, he stated that "[the Japanese have] come out of this with great credit. I have never been able to make myself afraid of the "yellow peril," just as I have never been able to join with the people who were scared to death over the Russian peril … I earnestly hope and believe that this peace marks the beginning of a steady upward movement for both nations."[109]

While Roosevelt was content with the outcome of the peace talks, part of the Japanese population thought otherwise. The President received cables from Griscom that heavy rioting had broken out in Tokyo coupled with a "tendency to attack all foreigners." Apparently some Japanese statesmen had promised to obtain from Russia a large indemnity, which in the end, they did not get. Roosevelt resented these thoughts, as he thought that Japan had enough to be proud of considering the territorial gains they had made during their campaign against Russia. "The [Japanese] people, at least in Tokyo, are making much such an exhibition of themselves as the Russians have been making in their own homes."[110] The gratitude he received from the Japanese government for brokering the peace treaty would not last permanently, he thought, and the U.S. therefore "must rely in the last resort upon their own preparedness and resolution, and not upon the good will of any outside nation." Maintaining military strength, especially in the naval department, would be the best way to preserve peace between the U.S. and Japan, or any other foreign power. "As for Tokyo, I have no right to expect that in the long run, its policy will be on a higher level, than the policy of St. Petersburg, of Paris or of London."[111] Still, overall Roosevelt was very impressed with the conduct of the Japanese during the peace talks. He had learned not to "read one word more than was actually down in black and white," which he was inclined to do because of the "secretive" attitude they sometimes expressed. There truthfulness was refreshing compared to the deceitfulness and dishonesty of the Russians. The President thought that the Japanese had something within themselves that would be beneficial to "civilisation in general. If she is treated fairly and not yet cringed to, I believe she will play her part honourably and well into the world's work of the Twentieth Century."[112] A few months later,

108 Roosevelt to William Woodville Rockhill, August 29, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1326.
109 Roosevelt to John Callan O'Laughlin, August 31, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1328.
110 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, September 6, 1905, in: Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 5*, (Cambridge 1952), hereafter: *Vol. 5*, 15.
111 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, September 11, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 18-19.
112 Roosevelt to George Otto Trevelyan, September 12, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 23-24.

tensions in Japan had cooled down, and Roosevelt was relieved that "the Japanese people [were] taking a more rational view of matters." Apparently, Spring Rice thought that Roosevelt would also be able to interfere similarly in Europe if tensions would rise there. However, Roosevelt did not want to be come "an international "Meddlesome Mattie … I have great faith in my countrymen, but I believe that all of us must normally do our duty at home before striving to do too much abroad."[113]

The Russo-Japanese had caused a shift in Roosevelt's hierarchy, as Japan's conduct in both her military campaign and the peace talks greatly impressed the President, while the Russians had showed themselves to be untrustworthy and incompetent. The distance between Japan and Russia in the hierarchy therefore increased, and the former probably even grew close to the top. On several occasions, Roosevelt characterised Japan as a worthy civilised nation, and disregarded the racially fuelled rhetoric against the Japanese by some Europeans. He did, however, criticise the common Japanese for their anti-Western attitude and rioting after the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth. This distinction between Roosevelt's outlook towards the Japanese elite and her lower classes is a pattern that continues in the events of the next chapter. In regard to the European nations that were involved on the side-lines of the war, the hierarchy did not change dramatically. Roosevelt received important help from Germany and France to influence the Czar, while he was irritated by the refusal of the British to exert their influence over their ally. This did not clearly result in a lasting change to the hierarchy; Roosevelt had no reason to let this harm the close Anglo-American relationship, and expressed to his British correspondents the mutual interests of the U.S. and Britain in the Pacific.

113 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, November 1, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 62.

Chapter 3: The Immigration Crisis

Already when Roosevelt was trying to persuade Japan and Russia to come to terms with each other, a storm was brewing in California. In San Francisco, widespread anti-Japanese agitation was erupting due to the large amounts of immigrants pouring in on the American West Coast. These developments angered Roosevelt, as his policy was to pursue a friendly and cordial relationship with Japan. He was "mortified" that such actions were taken by Americans against a "highly civilised people" such as the Japanese.[114] What annoyed him even further was the fact that the goal of these manifestations was to pressure the government into establishing a similar act to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, aimed at Japanese immigrants. With the Russo-Japanese War going on, Roosevelt thought it very unwise to antagonise Japan, especially when there was much internal resistance against the President's plans to

114 Roosevelt to George Kennan, May 6, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1169.

expand the strength of the American navy.[115] Although Roosevelt still criticised the anti-foreign stance of some of the Japanese, "they can not behave worse than the State of California … is now behaving." He was appalled by the fact that the Japanese labourers were being excluded on the grounds that they were "an immoral, degraded and worthless race," subsequently "provoking this formidable new power – a power sensitive, jealous and warlike."[116] He therefore asked Griscom to inform the Japanese government that the U.S. leadership distanced itself completely from the events in California. "While I am President the Japanese will be treated just exactly like the English, Germans, French or other civilised peoples … each man, good or bad, will be treated on its merits."[117]

The reinforcing of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was greatly appreciated by Roosevelt. Both countries had agreed to recognise British interests in Tibet and India and the Japanese sphere of influence in Korea. Although Roosevelt had been critical throughout the Russo-Japanese War of the English reluctance to pressure Japan into moderate peace terms, he was still content with the cooperation between the two nations.[118] Prime Minister Balfour even contemplated to ask America to join Britain and Japan in a triple alliance, but this suggestion was never officially made to Roosevelt. The President had always expressed, as part of a long tradition in American foreign policy, that the U.S. would never enter a formal alliance with any state.[119] The Taft-Katsura Agreement was a discussion between Secretary of War William Howard Taft and the Japanese Prime Minister Katsura Taro in July 1905, in which it was agreed upon, but not formally established, that Japan harboured no aggressive design whatsoever against the Philippines, while the U.S. recognised the possible establishment of a Japanese suzerainty over Korea. The contents of this agreement can therefore be seen in the same light as the one between Britain and Japan, on which Roosevelt commented that America had "the same interests with Japan and Great Britain in preserving the peace of the Orient."[120] For the Koreans, however, these developments were dangerous for their political independence. The Korean emperor therefore urged Roosevelt to intervene against Japanese dominance

115 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 15, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1180-81.
116 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, June 5, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1205.
117 Roosevelt to Lloyd Carpenter Griscom, July 15, 1905, *Vol. 4*, 1174-75.
118 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, September 16, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 29.
119 Esthus, *Roosevelt and Japan*, 60-61.
120 Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, October 7, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 49.

in the region. The letter containing this request arrived too late for Roosevelt to act upon it, as the protocol officially establishing the Japanese protectorate in Korea had by then already been signed by the Korean monarch.[121]

Official relations between the U.S. and Japan remained stable and calm. The President hoped that one day China would become "civilised like Japan," and the various military despotisms such as the Turkish Empire would be "abolished," making it possible for armies to be disarmed to the extent that their only function would be to conduct (inter)national police work. Another condition for this would be that the whole of "uncivilised Asia and Africa would be held by England, France, Russia, or Germany.[122] It is worth remarking that although the President had become extremely distasteful of Russia during the war with Japan, he still deemed them worthy of a place within the civilised powers whose duty it was to elevate the uncivilised.

Starting on October 11, 1906, however, the tensions in California would eventually harm diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Japan as well. On that day, the San Francisco School Board passed a resolution establishing segregation between Oriental (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) and non-Oriental children. The former would be placed in the so-called Oriental Public School. Nine days later, news of the resolution reached Japan, causing a relentless fury among press and public. Roosevelt therefore hastened to tell Kaneko, now member of the Emperor's advisory council, that the movement in question was purely local and had nothing to do with any form of policy from Washington: "The action of these people in San Francisco no more represents American sentiment as a whole than the action of the Japanese seal pirates[123] last summer represented Japanese sentiment." The affairs in California were giving Roosevelt "the gravest concern," and he assured Kaneko that he was already taking official steps through the Department of Justice to try to obstruct the new law.[124] He also wrote Senator Eugene Hale, whom he regarded the most influential man in the Senate, for advice on how to deal with the matter. Roosevelt was immediately afraid that these troubles would bring about war with Japan, "for the Japanese are proud, sensitive, warlike, are flushed with the glory of their recent

121 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, November 25, 1905, *Vol. 5*, 96.
122 Roosevelt to Henry White, August 14, 1906, *Vol. 5*, 359.
123 On July 16 and 17, 1906, Japanese seal poachers carried out raids on American seal rookeries. The local authorities killed five these poachers. The affair caused anger on both sides of the ocean. Esthus, *Roosevelt and Japan*, 133.
124 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, October 26, 1906, *Vol. 5*, 473.

triumph, and are in my opinion bent on establishing themselves as the leading power in the Pacific." He feared that now that Japan had beaten its former national rival Russia, the U.S. would become the new archenemy of the Japanese. It was therefore critical that current American policy towards Japan remained the same, that is: "a policy of behaving with absolute good faith, courtesy and justice to her on one hand, and on the other, of keeping our navy in such shape as to make it a risky thing for Japan to go into war with us." This combination of diplomatic friendliness and military deterrence would be critical in preventing a violent conflict between the two nations.

Roosevelt hoped to maybe receive from the British a clear forecast of Japan's intentions for the coming months, but he was not surprised that they were unable to obtain them due to the, in his view, unpredictable nature of the Japanese. This made the troubles around the developments in California to him even more problematic. The President called this "labour question" part of the "race question"; although Japanese "gentlemen," defined as "people of cultivation and self-restraint," could get along fine with American, European or Australian "gentlemen," Japanese labourers were incompatible with white workingmen. Roosevelt thought that the latter were right in resisting the influx of large contingents of Japanese labourers into their respective countries, as they were essentially economic competitors. "The Japs would object as least as much to any great number of foreigners coming into their territory and exercising industrial pressure as competitors with their people." To prevent war from breaking out, Roosevelt planned to establish an agreement with Japan to put a halt to all emigration to each other's countries.[125] He wanted to "do this in a way which will leave Japan our friend instead of an enemy eager and perhaps able to do us frightful damage whenever the opportunity arises.[126]

On December 18, Roosevelt gave a special message to Congress about the Japanese segregation affair. In the event that if Japanese people or their property were under threat of mobs Roosevelt would execute "the entire power of the federal government within the limits of the Constitution … to enforce the observance of our treaty … [which] guaranteed to Japanese residents … full and perfect protection for their persons and property." He hoped that the he could get an agreement with Japan about restricting immigration of Japanese workmen to America and vice versa, while

125 Roosevelt to Edward Grey, December 18, 1906, *Vol. 5*, 528-29.
126 Roosevelt to Benjamin Ide Wheeler, December 20, 1906, *Vol. 5*, 530.

still keeping the borders open for "professional men," such as businessmen, travellers and students. The President was offended by the comments of Democratic Party member William Jennings Bryan, who criticised Roosevelt for strengthening the armed forces instead of using "the nation's sense of justice as a guarantee of peace." At the same time Bryan seemed to defend the actions of the Californian anti-Japanese agitators, saying that although he agreed with Roosevelt on defending the basic rights of foreigners, these laws must not interfere with the power of local government to protect themselves and the people in local matters. The latter statement was interpreted as a defence of the San Francisco school order by local media. To Roosevelt, this showed "a reckless willingness to embark on a course of policy which may at any moment lead to war," while Bryan simultaneously opposed the "steps necessary" to protect America from aggressive forces.[127]

Roosevelt's wish to set up an agreement between the two countries to resolve this matter was very clear. On February 16, 1907, he urged Root speed up the process of coming to terms with Japan,[128] but his counterparts on the other side of the ocean did not share these intentions, however. There was great uneasiness within the Japanese government about further steps, and therefore reluctance to come to an agreement with the U.S. Newly passed legislature in California containing anti-Japanese measures contributed even more to the impasse between the two powers. Still, at the end of February 1907 the foundations for the Gentlemen's Agreement were laid by a statement from Japanese Minister Hayashi to the American Ambassador to Japan Luke Edward Wright, proclaiming that the Japanese government would continue to withhold any passport to the U.S. for skilled or unskilled labourers.[129]

In a letter to Takahira, Roosevelt explained directly how he thought about the San Francisco affair. He called these international squabbles "inevitable" between two nations such as America and Japan, and was glad to see that the "educated men" of these countries could now visit each other's countries and be guaranteed of a hearty welcome. On the other hand, Roosevelt did admit that the current situation did not allow for the lower classes that were "more suspicious and less broad-minded" to mingle with each other, as this would inevitably lead to friction. Maybe in the future

127 Roosevelt to John St. Loe Strachey, December 21, 1906, *Vol. 5*, 532-533.
128 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, February 15, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 589.
129 Thomas A. Bailey, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises* (Palo Alto 1934), 165-66.

this would be possible, but at that time Roosevelt thought it was in the best interest of both America and Japan that the influx of labourers should be put to a halt.[130] Roosevelt, meanwhile, was still very impressed with the fighting capabilities of the Japanese and their extraordinary character. He had read *A Staff Officer's Scrap-Book during the Russo-Japanese War* by prominent British officer Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, which gave a few examples of this. The President was particularly impressed with a play performed by Japanese soldiers, in which the main character kills his wife and child, fearing that too much affection for them would hurt his performance on the battlefield. This feat was received enthusiastically by the spectators. Although he called it "a gruesome play," Roosevelt deemed it illustrative for what makes the Japanese "such formidable fighters."[131]

In May 1907, tensions in California reached new heights when a mob in Francisco had started attacking Japanese people and their property. Roosevelt told Kaneko "nothing during [his] Presidency had given [him] more concern than these troubles." He was glad to see that Japan had caught up with the other civilised nations in the advancement of their society and behaviour in international relations, stating that during the last three centuries "[Japan] has gone ahead much faster than any other nation." He compared the problems in California to those that arose in England after the Huguenots emigrated from France, when English workingmen violently resisted the entrance of foreigners to the labour market. A similar situation between France and England would now be unlikely, but between Japan and America, these steps had yet to be made.[132]

A month later, the situation in California remained problematic, and Roosevelt was angry that the actions of the San Francisco mob had given room for jingoism to rise in Japan as well. He did, however, admit that the Japanese held "just grievances" over the incident.[133] The tensions had grown into a "war scare," primarily aroused by the hysterical media who greatly inflated the rhetoric on both sides. A report by Major Samuel Reber revealed that there was no evidence of hostility directed towards Americans directly, and that the Japanese government was by no means planning to seek a military confrontation with the U.S. A war against America would only hurt the

130 Roosevelt to Kogoro Takahira, April 28, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 656-657.
131 Roosevelt to Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, May 8, 1907, *Vol.* 5, 663.
132 Roosevelt to Kentaro Kaneko, May 23, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 671-672.
133 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, July 1, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 699.

commercial ambitions of Japan instead of helping them, so it would be a very unwise move for them to resort to this.[134]

Naval authorities had been planning to send the American fleet on a practice cruise across the globe for almost two years, and in 1907, the departure was imminent. Roosevelt thought it was good for the navy to gain some practical experience with organising a fleet before the possible outbreak of a war.[135] The fleet's journey would also have a "pacific effect," he thought, in regard to the tensions with Japan, and fit into the strategy of deterring Japan. He was very irritated with the American "yellow press" who were writing articles every day "insulting the Japanese," the fallout of which Roosevelt had to deal with.

On July 12, Roosevelt had received the Japanese Ambassador Aoki and Admiral Yamamoto for lunch. The Admiral insisted that the Japanese immigrants would have to be admitted while European immigrants were still entering the U.S. as well. Roosevelt said that under the Gentlemen's Agreement that was made with Japan some time before America had the right exclude Japanese labourers from entering the country. Japan had applied the same rules vice versa. The President thought that Yamamoto had to "face facts": if American workingmen came in large groups to Japan and represent economic competition to the native people there, tensions would inevitably rise as well. Other developments were worrying as well. The restrictions of the Gentlemen's Agreement were apparently not sufficient to put the Japanese migration flow to a halt: Roosevelt had received reports that during May and June 1907 more Japanese had entered the U.S. than in the same months a year before. He suspected that a lot of Japanese who had travelled to America under the guise of being "petty traders" were actually labourers. This showed that the Agreement was not functioning properly, and Roosevelt therefore expected "a very dangerous agitation in Congress next year for [exclusion of Japanese immigrants] according to the Chinese model," in the event that the number of immigrants would not drop.[136]

The President confided to Sternburg that he thought the whole matter to be "very puzzling," and that due to the racial differences it was "very hard for any of us of European descent to understand [the Japanese] or be understood by them." Also puzzling to Roosevelt was the desire of many of the Japanese "coolies" who returned

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134 Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, July 4, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 705.
135 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, July 10, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 709.
136 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, July 13, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 717-18.

to Hawaii after spending some time in Japan to become American citizens. They apparently felt restricted in Japan because there was "too much government." Roosevelt told Sternburg that "[America's] more unscrupulous, foolish newspapers and certain jingoes and labour leaders, and a corresponding people in Japan" were seeking war between the two countries, but he saw no reason why a violent conflict would break out. He was still out to treat the Japanese with "every courtesy and consideration," and aimed to make sure that the safety of the immigrants living in San Francisco would be guaranteed. If war would eventually ensue, Roosevelt did not believe that victory was a certainty; Japan was a "formidable military power," while was not sure if America was well prepared for war. He blamed this on the negative effects of the "luxurious, pleasure-loving, industrial, modern civilisation," which in Roosevelt's view hurt idealism among the American people. If this trend were to continue, material well-being and pleasure would be the most important factors in the average American's life, he thought. Roosevelt remained certain, though, that the American people were able to meet the challenge of war when it would happen.[137] The contrast Roosevelt draws between the military prowess of Japan and the peace-loving, lavish Americans is an interesting one, as it shows that the emergence of Japan made him realise that the national spirit of the U.S. was not yet how he wished it would be.

The war scare became serious when the President received a report by Sternburg containing information on a secret Japanese force stationed in Mexico, while an American army officer had overheard a Japanese diplomat talking about taking Hawaii, the Philippines, Alaska and the Pacific Coast. The latter story was later dismissed due to lack of credibility, but it did contribute to the feeling that war with Japan became more and more likely. It also did not bode well for Roosevelt that France, England and Germany all estimated that America would be beaten by Japan in a direct confrontation, by a "5 to 4" ratio. The President thought it was now high time to start the battleship cruise.[138] He did think that these foreign observers were in error thinking that Japan was preparing for an attack on the U.S., but considering the instability of the situation the possibility of a violent outbreak would always have to be taken into account. Roosevelt thought that Japan's primary objective would then be to take Hawaii and the Philippines, and possibly Alaska.[139] The plans of the voyage

137 Roosevelt to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, July 16, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 720-21.
138 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, July 23, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 724-25.
139 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, July 26, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 729-30.

received severe criticism in Congress, especially from Eastern politicians who were fearful that the departure of the ships would leave the Atlantic coast exposed. Further remarks were made on the ample price tag of the trip, of which Roosevelt's chief opponent Eugene Hale said Congress would not appropriate funds for. The President retorted: "[I have] enough money to take the fleet around to the Pacific anyhow, [it will] certainly go, and [if] Congress does not choose to appropriate enough money to get the fleet back, why, it would stay in the Pacific."[140] One of the goals of the battleship cruise was to show that the best course to take as regards naval tactics was to keep the fleet in one unit. The Russians had not done so during the Russo-Japanese War, "[waiting] until the Japanese had destroyed their Pacific battleship fleet, and then to see them destroy the Atlantic battle fleet when it got there … I want our fleet to be a unit … When our fleet goes to the Pacific I want every battleship and armoured cruiser that can be sent to go. So far from its being a war measure to send our fleet there, I regard it really as a peace measure."[141]

Meanwhile, Roosevelt kept being frustrated by the atmosphere among the American people. He wished that they were "prepared permanently, in a duty-loving spirit, and looking forward to a couple of generations of manifestation of this spirit … It is exceedingly difficult to get this people to take a proper view of any emergency that arises." He mentioned the unwillingness to decisively take the Philippines from the native people there, and the apathy in regard to issues in the West Indies. The latter covered matters such as the Santo Domingo Affair, a punitive expedition against the Dominican Republic after Dominican militia killed an American seaman. He saw the same apathy concerning the situation with Japan and the importance of sending the battleship cruise there – the American people simply were, in Roosevelt's view, not interested enough in a prominent position of the U.S. in world politics.[142]

Roosevelt commended an editorial by British journalist John St. Loe Strachey, who drew a comparison between the reaction of Californians to Japanese immigration and the backlash in Australia and British Columbia against it. Strachey argued, "At bottom, [this] attitude was the proper attitude, in spite of the folly and wickedness which marred it." While dictating his letter to Strachey, Roosevelt got news from Canada that anti-Japanese riots had broken out in Vancouver, of a severity far greater

140 Autobiography, 540.
141 Roosevelt to Truman Handy Newberry, August 6, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 743.
142 Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, August 21, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 761.

than those in San Francisco. “It gives the chance for narrow-minded people of both countries to indulge in pharisaical self-glorification … All such disorders must be punished rigorously; but it is idle to blind ourselves to the fact that the English-speaking commonwealths … will not submit to the unchecked immigration of Asiatics, that they ought not to be asked to submit to it, and that if asked they will refuse.”[143] In other words, the California natives were wrong to exert violence against the Japanese immigrants, but were right in resisting them. Roosevelt recognised two positive consequences from the events in Vancouver. First, it would make the British realise that they react roughly the same way to Japanese immigrations as the Americans (the violence in San Francisco had aroused criticism from England). Secondly, the Japanese were now pressured from two sides, one of them being their most important ally. This would help ease future negotiations with Japan.[144] The racial connotation of the whole affair is ambiguous. For today’s standards, Roosevelt would probably be condemned as a racist as he advocates racial segregation of (lower-class) Americans and Japanese. During his day and age, however, these remarks were certainly not out of the order. Compared to the rhetoric of the ‘Yellow Peril’ agitators, Roosevelt’s words might even be considered quite moderate. As can be seen in earlier remarks, he stated that it was possible for Japanese people of higher classes to interact with Americans and Europeans without any trouble. The President held the attitude that it was too soon for the lower classes of both races to mingle with each other, because it would inevitably lead to tensions. As he said on numerous occasions, it would be for the benefit of both countries if the immigration would be put to a standstill. A distinction therefore has to be drawn between Roosevelt’s racial views considering the lower and upper classes, which represents the same pattern as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Disquieting reports continued to come from Europe, this time from a German official who had said that Japanese-American relations were becoming “increasingly critical,” something which was not recognised by the U.S. The Kaiser, along with other Western observers, was also becoming more and more worried about Japanese designs in China and Korea. Roosevelt agreed with him and continued to speak out in favour of the maintaining China’s territorial integrity and the Open Door.[145] In

143 Roosevelt to John St. Loe Strachey, September 8, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 788.
144 Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, September 11, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 790.
145 Roosevelt to Charlemagne Tower, November 19, 1907, *Vol. 5*, 853.

correspondence with Spring Rice, who asserted that the U.S. was embroiled in a race conflict with Japan, Roosevelt replied that he hoped that was not the case. He also did not believe that in the long term an "ethnic conquest by the yellow race" would take place on the West Coast of Canada and the U.S., nor that a war would break out in which the Philippines and Hawaii would be taken by Japan. The President also highlighted the flipside of the European cultural expansion that had taken place for the last four centuries. Although the "European races" were able to spread their influence all across the globe, it also meant that the industrial civilisation they had built up had caused an "enervating and demoralising" spirit among the European people. According to Roosevelt, history showed that "humanitarian" countries eventually succumbed to "less altruistic civilisations," and that this could happen to Britain and America as well: "unless freedom shows itself compatible with military strength and national efficiency, it will ultimately have to go to the wall."[146] His criticism of the lavishness in America therefore extended to Europe as well. Roosevelt later complained to Spring Rice about the bad traits of the English-speaking peoples, and, to a certain extent, France as well: "The love of pleasure, the love of ease, and the growth of extravagance and luxury among the upper classes … all of these are very dangerous and very marked among the English-speaking peoples, as well in France. It is idle to say that such growth does not contain the possibility of national disaster, for it does." He thought that these countries could look for an example to Germany "and those formidable creatures, the Japanese."[147]

During a visit from the Canadian Commissioner of Labour and Immigration Mackenzie King, Roosevelt received some disturbing news. Some way or another, he had gotten hold of a number of documents revealing that the Japanese government had deliberately issued triple the amount of passports to Japanese émigrés than they had promised. Furthermore, King recounted a traditional Japanese dinner he was invited to by the former Japanese Consul to Canada, in which the latter gave a speech expressing the wish that Japan "pocket" the Island of Vancouver and in the long term conquer all of America west of the Rocky Mountains. Roosevelt was puzzled whether this was mere "insolence" on part of the Japanese Consul or if this was an Oriental trait. The Canadian went on to state that the exclusion of Japanese immigrants might

146 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, December 21, 1907, in: Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt Vol. 6* (Cambridge 1952), hereafter: *Vol. 6*, 869-71.
147 Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice, July 21, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 1138-39.

become the “cardinal political tenet” on the Pacific Coast of America and Canada, and that if their demands were not met by the central government they might secede and establish their own republic. Roosevelt laughingly assured King that the odds of this happening were not very high. The most prudent thing to do right now was that both Britain and America, in a joint effort, “explain to Japan our hearty friendship … in one case of an ally and in the other of an old friend,” while pointing out that it was to no benefit for Japan to send its own labourers to countries where they were not welcome. On the other hand, Roosevelt knew that the insincerity of the Japanese in this matter allowed him to invoke a complete restriction of Japanese immigration according to the Gentleman’s Agreement. He thought that now the mutual stance of Britain and the U.S. in future negotiations with Japan were “in good shape,” and continued to stress the importance of approaching the Japanese with the utmost respect.[148] Information Roosevelt received from the German Military Attaché in Peking stated that Japan was by no means preparing for war with America, but instead was gearing up for trouble in China.[149]

Roosevelt was having a lot of trouble with the expanding of the American naval force, and was worried that it might be eclipsed by the Japanese. According to him, numerous battleships and armoured cruisers were superior to the ones in the U.S. Navy. A discussion on this topic arose between Roosevelt and the man responsible for the Navy’s building program, Chief Constructor Washington Capps. The latter maintained that the ships that were being built were just as effective as its Japanese counterparts. The differences between Japan and America as regards naval strength became an important argument for Roosevelt and his fellow proponents of expansion of the Navy.[150] On April 15, a rough debate ensued in the House of Representatives around Roosevelt’s proposal of increasing the fleet’s size by four battleships. The proponents argued that the expansion of the navy was vital to preserve important policies such as the Open Door in China and the Monroe Doctrine. To keep up with other naval powers such as Britain, Germany and Japan, the new ships had to be of the “Dreadnought” type, which carried more firepower. Richmond Pearson Hobson, one of the most fervent Representatives in favour Roosevelt’s plan, regarded Japan as the biggest danger to American commercial interests in the Pacific as well as a threat

148 Roosevelt to Arthur Hamilton Lee, February 2, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 919-21.
149 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, February 17, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 946.
150 Roosevelt to Victor Howard Metcalf, March 14, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 970.

to white supremacy in East Asia. Those against naval expansion stated that a big navy was expensive and unnecessary, as the geographical position of the U.S. (between two oceans) made odds of a foreign attack on home soil very small. Strengthening American sea power would, in their view, imply preparation for an overseas attack – which would then make other powers distrustful of the U.S. In the end the bill of the Naval Committee was passed in the House and Senate, meaning an increase of the navy by two battleships.[151] Roosevelt bitterly complained about this "folly" that took place in the House, as he received more reports from German, Austrian and French diplomats in Tokyo that some of the Japanese military brass were indeed planning to land a "strong army" on the American Pacific Coast in the event of war. A strong navy was therefore vital to deter the Japanese from doing this.[152] He called his opponents "narrow-minded, selfish" and "profoundly unpatriotic."[153]

When the Pacific Fleet cruise closed in on Japan, Roosevelt urged Admiral Charles S. Sperry to make sure that none of the ship's crew did "anything out of the way" when in Japan. In the first place, the ship had to be protected from any attack by Japanese "fanatics," but the same consideration had to be applied to the attitude of the Americans. Roosevelt expected that the Japanese government would express "the highest consideration and courtesy" to the visiting Americans.[154] Some time later, Roosevelt received an official invitation from the Japanese government to direct the fleet to Tokyo, which made the President conclude that the battleship cruise had "a most beneficial effect" to Japanese-American relations.[155] From November 1907 to February 1908, immigration numbers from Japan to the U.S. dropped from 1,170 to 468, showing that the Gentlemen's Agreement was finally doing its job.

In August 1908, the Kaiser gave a remarkable interview to journalist William B. Hale of the *New York Times*, using language that in Roosevelt's view would "invite an international explosion." Among the claims of the Kaiser was an arrangement with America and China to keep Japan in check and therefore maintain the balance of power in Asia. Furthermore, he called Britain a traitor to the white race because of her alliance with Japan, aimed to arm the Mohammedans hoping that they would form a barrier against the "yellow peril" and that "everybody now recognised that Russia had

151 Roosevelt to Richmond Pearson Hobson, April 16, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 1008-09.
152 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, April 17, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 1010.
153 Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, April 19, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 1012.
154 Roosevelt to Charles Stillman Sperry, March 21, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 979.
155 Roosevelt to Arthur Hamilton Lee, April 8, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 996.

been fighting for the entire white race, but that she had fought very badly and that if German battalions had had to do the fighting, the Japanese would have been worsted." Wilhelm also thought that the current developments in Japanese-American relations meant that a war would break out between the two in about two years. The President called the Kaiser's speculations "wild" and hoped the German Foreign Office would obstruct the unpublished interview, as the consequences could be very problematic.[156] The blatantly racist views of Wilhelm were clearly not shared by Roosevelt.

Maybe the most remarkable element of Roosevelt's correspondence is the fact that he never mentions the Root-Takahira Agreement of November 1908. This was a series of exchanges between the Secretary of State and the Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. that de facto ended the tensions between America and Japan. In the agreement, a common policy for the U.S. and Japan was formulated, as the exchanges had apparently shown that both countries shared "a common aim, policy and intention [in the Pacific]." The agreement was made up of four main points. Firstly, America and Japan agreed upon the "free and peaceful development" of their overseas trade. Secondly, both countries would strive uphold the territorial integrity of and the Open Door policy in China. Thirdly, the territorial status quo as of November 1908 would be recognised. Finally, if the agreements as made above were threatened in any way, both states would come with a joint understanding on what action to take.[157] Coupled with the diminishing number of Japanese immigrants this agreement essentially settled the yearlong tensions between America and Japan. It is therefore very remarkable that Roosevelt never mentions this critical diplomatic understanding. It is possible that he thought it important to keep the Japanese crisis "alive" in order to facilitate his plans for the navy. With the signing of the Root-Takahira Agreement, the diplomatic tensions between America and Japan diminished and relations returned seemingly to their former status as the end of Roosevelt's second term as President came in sight.

Roosevelt's autobiography that was released in 1913 provides a conclusion to his thoughts on Japan after his presidential tenure ended. He credited the strong military attitude of the Japanese as key to their exemplary rise at the turn of the twentieth century. This becomes especially evident when comparing her with her Chinese neighbour. Because of their lack of military strength – it did not possess

156 Roosevelt to Elihu Root, August 8, 1908, *Vol. 6*, 1164.
157 Takahira to Elihu Root, November 30, 1908, FRUS 1908, 511.

either a powerful army or navy – China became a “helpless prey of outsiders.” Japan, on the other hand, stood on a “footing of equality” with European and American nations because it had a powerful and efficient military.[158] Looking back on the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations, he still thought the Japanese government had acted wisely throughout, apart from their insisting on a money indemnity. They had misled their own people promising them this extensive financial sum, and the violent outbreaks by angry mobs in various Japanese were, in Roosevelt’s view, to blame on the government. He also recalled the help he received from the Kaiser, in contrast to the British apathy.[159] As regards the battleship cruise, Roosevelt was very content that it helped ease tensions with Japan, and that he had proven the sceptics wrong who thought that Japan would perceive this travelling fleet as a threat. “I did not believe Japan would so regard it because Japan knew my sincere friendship and admiration for her.” In the end, the reception of the fleet in Japan was to Roosevelt the most noteworthy event of the whole trip; “in courtesy and good breeding, the Japanese can certainly teach much to the nations of the Western world.” He reported that not only he, but also the whole crew present in Japan was very impressed with the attitude of the Japanese people: “every man of them came back a friend and admirer of the Japanese.”[160]

158 Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York 1913), 550.
159 Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 556-557.
160 Ibid., 569.

Conclusion

When summarising Japanese-American relations around Theodore Roosevelt's presidential tenure in a few words, perhaps the most accurate would be: "Sometimes troubled by racial and cultural differences, but always strong enough to not let that hurt their mutual respect for each other." In the years between the Boxer Rebellion and the immigration crisis, Roosevelt's attitude towards Japan grew from indifference to respectful after the events in China, and in the course of the Russo-Japanese War, the President deemed Japan to have claimed their rightfully earned place among the civilised powers. The diplomatic tensions that ensued during the immigration crisis did put some strains on Japanese-American ties, but Roosevelt remained faithful to his approach of cordial diplomacy and military deterrence throughout the whole ordeal.

An important distinction that arose from this research is the way Roosevelt looked to the common Japanese people and to her statesmen and members of the elite. He was distrustful of the former group, among whom anti-foreign, and more specifically, anti-white sentiments were virulent. Roosevelt found proof of this in the treatment of certain European and American military attachés, who accompanied the Japanese army in their campaign against the Russians. On the other hand, he did admit that these feelings were not completely unjustified, as Westerners did not always treat members of other races with a lot of respect. Japan's political system and its statesmen could, however, count on a lot more praise from the President. This became especially evident during the Russo-Japanese War, where the sincere and courteous Japanese government were constantly contrasted against the deceitful and autocratic Russians. It is at this point when Japan clearly surpassed the Russians in

Roosevelt's hierarchy. During the same campaign, the President expressed clear admiration for the strategy and tactics of the Japanese military.

The racial element of Roosevelt's rhetoric towards the Japanese is a tricky and ambiguous one. On one hand, he expressed on multiple occasions his disregard of the 'Yellow Peril' agitation in Europe and America, and saw no danger in the entrance of Japan among the circle of civilised nations. However, when the immigration crisis erupted, he did say that it was better for Japanese and American workingmen not to mingle with each other, as the economic competition the immigrants represented would inevitably lead to racially fuelled violence. Looking through a 21st century lens, this would be considered as a racist and prejudiced approach to the problem, but considering the at that time accepted racial rhetoric, Roosevelt's stance might even be regarded as quite moderate for his time. This is exemplified by an interview with the German Kaiser in 1908, in which Wilhelm commented that Britain was a "betrayer of the white race" because it had an alliance with Japan, and that in the Russo-Japanese War the Czarist served as the defenders of the Caucasian race. Roosevelt's opinion in his correspondence on this matter reflected a certain contempt for the Kaiser's rhetoric. In short, as regards the Japanese lower classes and their immigration to the United States, Roosevelt resorted sometimes to racist sentiments towards the Japanese (but not to the extent that it was out of the ordinary for his time), but in general he held nothing but admiration for the Japanese when their governing classes were concerned.

Ultimately, it can be concluded that Japan stood quite high in Roosevelt's hierarchy, especially when one would only consider the way he looked at a country's style of government. An exact ranking is difficult to make, but it will be safe to say that Japan stood on equal footing in Roosevelt's view with France and Germany, and (especially after the Russo-Japanese War) above Russia. The only state that stood on top untouched was Britain. Japan's adaptation of Western-style liberal government, their impressive military strength and courteous diplomacy was greatly appreciated by Roosevelt, which is made explicit by the way he writes about her in his letters.

Now that Japan's place within Roosevelt's hierarchy has been properly determined, it is now time to look back on the changes her rise might (or might not) have brought to it. The Boxer Rebellion was probably the moment that Japan obtained a fixed place within the top tier of the hierarchy. The President made frequent comments about the military performances of the different nations involved, and

Japan came out very positively. Following up to the Rebellion, tensions between Japan and Russia started to erupt around the Manchurian situation, and Roosevelt's sympathies clearly leaned towards Japan after learning that the Russian advances threatened the Open Door to China – and that Japan was representing itself as a defender of this policy. In the war that ensued after these tensions, Roosevelt commended the Japanese military, which were "playing the game of civilised mankind." Furthermore, in his efforts to mediate peace between the two quarrelling nations, Roosevelt found himself constantly hindered by the insincere Russians, while the Japanese were cooperating better. This caused the gap in the hierarchy between Russia and Japan to widen even further.

After the Russo-Japanese War, Roosevelt feared that the Japanese would get a "big head" and start to attain a dominant position in Asia, filling the void that Russia left behind. This caused him to look more critical towards the state of the American and British military. He concluded that while the system of liberal democracy certainly had its perks and had made the U.S. and Britain to what they were now, he was also beginning to realise that it took its toll on the common people's resilience and fighting spirit. Economic prosperity had brought a certain feeling of "lavishness" among Americans and Englishmen, and Roosevelt feared that it would cause them to lose interest in the upkeep of their armed forces. During and after the Russo-Japanese War, he recognised this fighting spirit to be very much alive in Japan, and therefore urged Congress to increase the strength of the navy. The resistance he encountered from a substantial part of the House when he proposed angered him severely, and was to him a signal of this diminishing will to prepare for a potential conflict.

In short, it can be said that the rise of Japan made a significant impact on Theodore Roosevelt's worldview. It showed him that a non-Western country could adopt Western politics and values quite successfully, and the Japanese national character and military conduct fitted right up the President's alley. The actions of the common people sometimes angered him, as became clear in the case of the riots after the Russo-Japanese War and during the immigration crisis. Relations between the Roosevelt and Japanese statesmen were stable and respectful throughout, however. The Japanese ascension also allowed him to put certain racist rhetoric into perspective, and the different talks he had with prominent figures of the Japanese establishment made him realise that the warnings of Europeans and Americans alike

were unfounded, and that it would be more prudent to incorporate Japan into the circle of civilised nations than to alienate them.

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