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## The Russo-Japanese War and the Transformation of US-Japan Relations: Examining the Geopolitical Ramifications

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The Western powers, which had the distinct advantage of being able to industrialize and modernize before East Asia, unleashed their fury on the region from the early 1800s. By the late nineteenth century, the imperial powers of Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia had divided most of East Asia, excluding Japan, into their respective spheres of influence.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, Japan would certainly have encountered a similar fate had it not chosen to depart from its traditional closed-door (*sakoku*) policy and instead embarked on a path of emulating and learning from the West. Of course, this new path was not without difficulties, as Japan had no recourse but to accept the burden of the so-called unequal treaties—extraterritoriality and the lack of tariff autonomy—as a late comer to the global stage. That being said, Japan was, by and large, mostly successful in facing the challenges of modernizing both nation and society. As a result, Japan was largely able to deflect the more serious consequences of Western imperialism.

This alone did not assure Japan's continued existence as a sovereign state. The struggle for primacy in East Asia was actively contested among the European powers, but Russia—because of its proximity to the region—gradually began to emerge as the most expansionist force in Northeast Asia. This Russian ambition became readily apparent by May 1891 with the

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construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which not only provided the nation with the impetus and momentum, but also the means to extend its influence eastward. From the Japanese perspective, this move was a serious threat to its national security. Russian expansion had the result of greatly altering the geostrategic importance of the Korean Peninsula, as it now was transformed into a critical buffer against further Russian expansion into the region.<sup>2</sup>

In hindsight, it can be concluded that it was this control over the crucial peninsula—the dagger poised to strike at the heart of Japan—that led to Japan’s preemptive strike on Qing China, which culminated in the 1894 Sino-Japanese War. This was undeniably a crucial first step in the series of events that would eventually result in a power shift in the region. In other words, the conflict, which ended with the decisive defeat of China, was the catalyst for geopolitical transformation.<sup>3</sup> In the aftermath of the war, Japan was able to secure a solid foothold on the Korean Peninsula, but such a drastic change in the status quo also brought about serious repercussions. This blowback came in the actions taken by Russia, Germany, and France following Japan’s victory in the 1895 Triple Intervention. The three powers coordinated to pressure Japan, through the threat of military action, to relinquish the recently acquired territories on the Liaotung Peninsula in Northeast China (South Manchuria) that had been ceded to Japan in the treaty that resulted from the Shimonoseki Peace Conference. Japan was powerless to resist such demands. Adding further embarrassment to Japan was that the relinquished possession was later leased to Russia, contrary to the original agreement. This traumatic experience—though not unique in the power politics of the day—forced Japan’s leaders to become ever more cognizant that in a dog-eat-dog world Japan could not be aloof to the national interests of the European powers. It was also clear that Japan was in no position to resist their demands; that is, until such time as Japan could become a powerful nation in its own right. There is no doubt that Japan’s predicament instilled a strong sense of urgency in the Meiji government’s goal of “wealthy nation, strong military (*fukoku kyōhei*).”

Meanwhile, Russia increased its pace of expansion and moved quickly to secure deepwater ports that remained unfrozen even during the coldest periods of winter.<sup>4</sup> Ports that were accessible all year round were essential for Russia’s quest to control the vital sea lanes, as steamships of the period had limited range. Maintaining a chain of coaling stations south of the Russian border was seen as critical to Russian national interest. Japan needed to tread cautiously in trying to counter Russian ambitions, and its

first realpolitik instinct was to accommodate Russian expansion in South Manchuria in order to avoid a direct confrontation with its powerful neighbor. It was in this spirit that the Komura-Weber memorandum was agreed on by Japan and Russia in May 1896. In the following month, this was further reinforced by the Yamagata-Lobanov agreement. The purpose of these diplomatic agreements was ostensibly to maintain an independent Korea, but their true intent was to ensure that neither side would establish a dominant position on the Korean Peninsula. In negotiating the second agreement, Japan floated the idea of drawing a line of demarcation across the 39th parallel as a way of diffusing tensions that were gradually building up. Unfortunately, Russia had no interest in this compromise, as it firmly believed that its dominant position did not necessitate any such concession to a second-rate power.

Of course, international relations seldom remain static. A mere two years passed before the Russians were forced to reconsider their position. Now much more enmeshed in the affairs of Manchuria, Russia revised its posture toward Japan, and for the first time entertained the idea of accepting a compromise on the Korea issue. This new stance was made apparent in the 1898 Nishi-Rosen agreement that acknowledged Japan's superior commercial status on the Korean Peninsula. This sudden policy reversal by Russia stirred Japan's leaders into seeking a new agreement that would carve out separate spheres of influences. Japan hoped that in exchange for allowing Russia a dominant position in Manchuria, it would be allowed a similar position in Korea. But things did not proceed as the Japanese had hoped, since Russia, as the greater power, did not see the need to concede more to the Japanese.

St. Petersburg's stubborn stance toward Tokyo, along with its convenient ignoring of its previous promise to Japan of withdrawing its remaining troops from Northeast China after the Boxer Rebellion, put Japan's leaders in a quandary. What policy should Japan implement toward a recalcitrant Russia? Two distinct lines of Japanese foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia emerged.<sup>5</sup> The first line, supported by the Itō-Yamagata *genrō* (elder statesmen) camp, held steadfastly that any actions that might lead to war with such a large and formidable nation would be self-defeating. Thus, it was purely rational for Japan to pursue a policy of avoiding conflict by appeasing Russia. In contrast, the younger Japanese statesmen, led by the Katsura-Komura camp, firmly believed that the most prudent way of dealing with Russia and thwarting its ambitions in the Korea Peninsula—a *sine qua non* for maintaining Japan's national security—was to remain steadfast in

its position, even at the risk of war. The hard-line policy advocated by this group became much more viable with the signing of the 1902 Anglo-Japanese treaty.<sup>6</sup> This was the first time that Japan had entered into a formal alliance with a formidable European power. It was this major change in the regional power paradigm that finally allowed Japan's decision makers to consider a military option in dealing with a recalcitrant Russia.

After attempting a final and diplomatic solution to the problem through the Komura-Rosen negotiations of February 1904, the decision was made to pursue the Katsura-Komura line. After convincing the *genrōs* of the wisdom of this policy change during the Ogikubo meeting, the final hurdle to waging war against Russia was effectively removed. With war now looming on the horizon the crucial issue was which nation would eventually come to dominate the Korean Peninsula: the outcome would undeniably shape Japan's destiny.

With this as the historical backdrop, this essay will first trace the diplomatic process that led to the Portsmouth Peace Conference of August 1905. It will then examine the various motives and objectives of the Japanese government. And in conclusion it will examine the transformation that took place in US-Japan relations in the context of the realignment of international relations in East Asia in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War.

#### FROM WAR TO PEACE: IN PURSUIT OF A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION

At the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese military scored several stunning victories on the battlefield, although this came at a tremendous sacrifice in lives.<sup>7</sup> The Battle of Mukden was a powerful blow to Russia, but Tsar Nicholas II still had a potent card up his sleeve; the formidable Baltic Fleet. If this mighty fleet could annihilate the Imperial Japanese Navy, the tide could be turned decisively against Japan, as it would be essentially prevented from resupplying its land forces fighting in Manchuria.

Despite a string of key victories, and while hidden from the public, Japan was near exhaustion in terms of both material and financial resources. The nation's ability to sustain the conflict was seriously crippled.<sup>8</sup> Munitions plants across Japan were on overtime production, yet the enormous demand could not be filled. Faced with this harsh reality, Japan's leaders realized that concluding the war was a matter of utmost importance. But to end the war on terms that were favorable to Japan, a crushing blow was needed to dash the hopes of the tsar in achieving victory. This opportunity presented

itself in a showdown between the two navies on May 27, 1905, in the Tsushima Straits. Since a Japanese victory at sea was a prerequisite for peace, the fate of the nation now rested entirely with Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō.

Japan's quest to end the war gained much needed traction on July 29. When the last shots had been fired, the Japanese fleet had completely crushed the Baltic Fleet, and sinking with the fleet was the tsar's hope for a reversal of fortune in the war.<sup>9</sup> The tsar now, however grudgingly, had no choice but to acknowledge defeat and consider a diplomatic resolution to the war. The military phase of the war was fast approaching its terminus, and the next round would be contested among diplomats sitting at the negotiating table. Yet only by achieving additional victory in the diplomatic phase would Japan be able to secure the fruits of the war.

Japan's peace overture actually began much earlier than the Portsmouth conference. Early attempts can be traced back to July 1904 when Tokyo contemplated a meeting between the Japanese ambassador to Britain, Hayashi Tadasu, and the Russian finance minister, Sergei I. Witte, in a neutral county such as Belgium, with Germany acting as intermediary.<sup>10</sup> The plan fell through when it became evident that St. Petersburg had no interest in peace. From the tsar's perspective, the military situation did not pose a serious enough threat to necessitate a diplomatic compromise with an inferior power such as Japan. Although some of his advisers had concerns about the financial toll of the war and the swelling social unrest in Russia, the tsar did not share these concerns and instead interpreted Tokyo's eagerness to negotiate as a sign of weakness.

As the tsar's confidence in his military was what supported his position, it was only natural that after each Japanese victory on the battlefield, seeking peace would become that much more attractive. In the end, it was the fall of Port Arthur to the Japanese in August 1904 that provided the impetus for Russia in considering peace, which was also supported by the US president, Theodore Roosevelt. Once more, Tokyo tried to prod St. Petersburg to sit at the negotiating table. Despite this effort, however, the Russians were still not ready to seek peace. No doubt, maintaining prestige was an important concern for imperial Russia as it could not bear the idea of being humiliated by this nonwhite and still developing nation.

There was another reason why the early peace initiatives failed. The German kaiser, Wilhelm II, was urging Tsar Nicholas II to persist in his struggle against the "yellow peril."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, despite this pressure, the Russians were forced to reassess their posture in the aftermath of Japan's

huge victory at Mukden in March 1905. The bleak outlook for their situation on the battlefield, combined with further swelling of domestic unrest, finally made peace a palatable alternative for Russia.

The mood in Tokyo was also rapidly changing. Prime Minister Katsura Tarō and Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō, who were both initially opposed to an early peace, now believed that the time was ripe for ending the war. Although Japan had been successful in obtaining additional loans from its allies that were necessary for continuing the war, they clearly were not adequate to allow for a prolonged conflict. With financial and military resources rapidly dwindling, Japan's war-fighting capabilities were stretched to the breaking point. Moreover, considering that Russia's imperialistic ambitions toward South Manchuria and Korea had been successfully thwarted, seeking peace at this juncture was a pragmatic and prudent move on Japan's part.

#### THE UNITED STATES ENTERS THE FRAY

By late April 1905 the decision was made by Japan's leaders that Japan would seek the good offices of President Roosevelt in brokering a peace deal with the Russians. Although Roosevelt ostensibly maintained a position of not taking a side in the conflict, it was readily apparent that he was in fact a friend of Japan. Once the formal Japanese request for American assistance was made, the president strove earnestly to bring the Russians to the peace table. At one point, an international conference that included other European powers was also considered, but this was quickly withdrawn, as it was realized that mutual distrust would surely doom such a conference from the onset. Japan also objected to this plan out of concern that the European powers, excluding Britain, would create a united front against it.

Once Japan had agreed to a bilateral peace conference, it was tasked to Roosevelt to persuade the Russians to acquiesce. There were two new weapons in his arsenal to accomplish this: the capable US ambassador, George von Lengerke Myer, in St. Petersburg, who had just been transferred from Rome, and the German kaiser, who now felt a sudden and urgent need for Russia to reach peace lest domestic unrest in that country spread to Germany. In the end, Roosevelt was successful in convincing the tsar of the wisdom of seeking peace. Thus, on June 9, the convening of a peace conference was formally announced.

Of particular interest is the following episode. The tsar was adamant that his decision to accept Roosevelt's mediation be kept under wraps until the

Japanese had publicly announced their intention of participating in the peace conference. Myer thus gave his assurances that this information would not be divulged to the Japanese. At the same time, however, Myer was keenly aware that he needed to somehow convey the tsar's decision to Tokyo so that Japan would indeed take the first step and make its intention publicly known. To this effect, Myer devised a clever a plan whereby he discreetly leaked the information to the foreign offices of both Britain and Germany. This assured that Japan would learn of Russia's decision via a third party while Myer would, in a strict sense, be able to keep his promise to the tsar.<sup>12</sup>

Getting the two sides to agree to talk was just one of many obstacles that needed to be resolved before peace could be achieved. For example, Japan and Russia haggled over such details as where the conference should be held, the former requesting Chefoo in China and the latter a European venue such as Paris, The Hague, or Geneva.<sup>13</sup> Japan held steadfast in its position that any European location was untenable. In this way, both countries were desperately attempting to somehow secure a sort of home court advantage in a foreign country. After a few weeks of quibbling, Washington, DC, finally emerged as an acceptable venue for both parties, although Roosevelt was not terribly enthusiastic about the idea of hosting the conference on American soil.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, a serious drawback with hosting the conference in Washington was that the city became notoriously hot and humid during the summer. In the days before air-conditioning, convening a conference under these harsh conditions was untenable. Therefore, a more suitable alternative was considered from among the many towns on the Eastern seaboard. In the end, it was determined that Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which was nice and cool in the summer but not overly crowded with tourists, would be an ideal location.<sup>15</sup> The existence of a naval base nearby made it a secure location while allowing for convenient access by water. Both Japan and Russia agreed to the site, and thus it was now finally possible to address the finer details of the upcoming peace conference.

Once the venue of the conference was determined, the Japanese government needed to decide who would lead the delegation in what was surely to become an arduous mission. Prime Minister Katsura's first choice was former prime minister, Itō Hirobumi, since he had consistently advocated a pro-Russian policy.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Itō had many high-level contacts in St. Petersburg, which made him an ideal candidate. Ito politely declined, however, claiming that because he had been a vocal opponent of the war from the beginning it made more sense for the onerous task to fall

on an individual who had actually advocated for war.

Encountering stiff resistance, Katsura realized that it would be futile to attempt to convince Ito to accept the task. At the same time, Katsura thought that it was imperative for himself to remain in Japan so that he could send instructions to the delegation from Tokyo. Who, then, would be the next most suitable candidate? The natural choice was of course his foreign minister, who had been avid in pressing for war against Russia. Komura, then fifty years old, embraced this opportunity to become the Japanese plenipotentiary to the conference. It was also decided that Takahira Kogorō, ambassador to the United States, would act as his right-hand man.<sup>17</sup> In Komura's absence, Katsura would also assume the position of acting foreign minister, strategically placing himself where he could coordinate and assist with the diplomatic maneuverings in Portsmouth.

#### PURSUING PEACE IN PORTSMOUTH: GETTING AMERICA INTO JAPAN'S CORNER

On July 3, 1905, the names of the members of the Japanese delegation were made public. In addition to Komura and Takahira from the Japanese foreign ministry (Gaimushō), the diplomats Satō Aïmaro, Yamaza Enjiro, Adachi Mineichiro, Honda Kumatarō, Ochiai Kentarō, Hanihara Masanao, and Konishi Kōtaro were chosen to participate in the delegation. Also sent from the Gaimushō was the capable American adviser, Henry W. Denison, who earned a handsome salary that was nearly twice that of the foreign minister's. From the Imperial Navy, Commander Takeshita Isamu, and from the Imperial Army, Colonel Tachibana Shōichirō constituted the military component of the delegation.<sup>18</sup>

All the delegates were aware of the difficulty of their mission. The Russians were one thing, but what loomed heavily on their minds was the unrealistically high expectation held by the Japanese public. In order to conceal Japan's dire military situation from the Russians, the Japanese public had been intentionally misled into believing that their nation had dealt a crushing blow against the enemy. In reality, however, Japan was not only burdened by a serious shortage of munitions and other critical military supplies, but it also critically lacked the necessary manpower and financial means to remain engaged in the war. Therefore, unbeknownst to the Japanese public, peace at *almost* any price was the prevailing attitude of Japan's leaders.<sup>19</sup>

One cannot deny that the Shimonoseki conference had set an important

precedent as to what was expected in a peace negotiation for the victor: territorial concessions and an indemnity. The government was keenly aware, however, that it would be next to impossible to extract such concessions from Russia, as it had been defeated on the battlefield but not yet the war itself. Thus, these two items had lower priority among Japan's peace demands. On July 8, 1905, as the Japanese delegation was preparing to depart Yokohama onboard the steamliner *SS Minnesota*—one of the largest American passenger ships of the day—Komura observed from the deck the crowd below had gathered to see him off and who were proudly waving the national Hinomaru flag of Japan. He gloomily commented to his colleagues that on his return to Japan, this patriotic fervor might very well cost him his life.<sup>20</sup>

Despite a few early days of rough seas, the voyage from Yokohama to Tacoma, Washington, was generally a pleasant one. They arrived on July 19. Komura had been out of contact with Tokyo throughout this trans-Pacific journey, so he immediately immersed himself in the Gaimusho cables that were awaiting his arrival at the Japanese consulate in Seattle. It was at this time that Komura learned that his counterpart at the conference would be Witte.<sup>21</sup> Komura assessed this positively as he knew that Witte had been opposed to the war. Also contained in the cable was a vital piece of information that stated that Witte would be arriving in New York on August 1. This meant that Komura would be able to meet with President Roosevelt first and keep a step ahead of the Russians.<sup>22</sup> Without further delay, Komura departed for Washington, DC, on the first transcontinental train from Seattle, arriving in New York via Chicago on the morning of July 25. He was met at the station by Ambassador Takahira, who had just arrived from the Japanese legation in the capital. The headquarters of the Japanese delegation was a room in the luxurious Waldorf Astoria Hotel, and the group's first diplomatic priority was to reaffirm the "good offices" of Roosevelt. This also coincided with the final phase of the war, which was taking place just north of Hokkaido in the Sakhalin Islands.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to Komura's arrival in America, Roosevelt had casually suggested to Takahira that occupying Russian territory would undoubtedly improve Japan's position in the upcoming peace negotiations. Although the Imperial Army had independently reached the same conclusion, albeit much earlier, under the suggestion of army chief of staff Nagaoka Gaishi, the operation had been shelved because the Imperial Navy was unwilling to spare any vessels for the operation due to the impending arrival of the Baltic Fleet. Thus, victory in the Battle of Tsushima Straits had finally freed up the

necessary resources required for proceeding with the invasion of Sakhalin. With the gentle prodding of Roosevelt and the blessing of Yamagata Aritomo, what had previously been a low-priority operation now became a mission with huge diplomatic ramifications. Sakhalin was secured just in time before the convening of the conference, and with sovereign Russian territory now in Japanese possession for the first time, the fate of the islands would become an important card at the negotiation table.

DAVID AND GOLIATH:  
THE DIPLOMATIC STRUGGLE BETWEEN KOMURA AND WITTE

With both plenipotentiaries now sitting across the table from each other, the stage was set for the final phase of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>24</sup> Although Japan had achieved a stunning victory in the military phase of the war, the real fruits of this victory could only be sealed through the peace negotiation. Defeated Russia in 1905 was very different than the utterly devastated Japan of 1945; it still possessed the ability to continue the war in the event the conference failed. The leading voice representing the diehard hawks in St. Petersburg was the tsar himself. Under these circumstances, Japan's only realistic option was to seek a "soft peace" that did not require a substantial sacrifice on Russia's part.

Japan's bottom-line peace terms fell into three categories. In the first category were those terms of the highest importance over which the Japanese government would not make any concessions. These demands embodied the very national security interests that had prompted Japan to go to war with Russia in the first place. In the event that any of these demands were not met, Tokyo was determined to continue the war. Thus Komura had strict instructions not to deviate from following non-negotiable demands,<sup>25</sup> which were first, removing all Russian influence from Korea as well as Russian acquiescence to placing Korea under sole Japanese control; second, complete withdrawal of both Russian and Japanese troops from Manchuria; and third, obtaining the leasing rights to the territories of Lushun, Dairen, and several other portions of the Liaodong Peninsula in addition to the transfer of all railways and mines south of Harbin to Japan.

At the same time, the Japanese government provided Komura with some leeway in negotiating the precise terms of the second category of demands: (a) payment of an indemnity, the sum not to exceed 15 billion yen; (b) the surrender of all warships that were interred in neutral ports; (c) cessation of Sakhalin and other outlying islands; and (d) the concession of coastal fishing

rights.

The final group of Japanese demands consisted of nonessential terms which the Russians would most likely to reject outright. These demands were not critical for Japan, and they were intended to be used as bargaining chips by Komura in order to obtain key Russian concessions in the other more crucial demands; namely, limiting Russian naval presence in East Asia and demilitarizing Vladivostok by converting it into a commercial port.

Under the precondition that the first set of demands would be definitely incorporated in the final peace treaty, Komura was given the authority to discuss and negotiate the finer points of the peace settlement as he saw fit. In this way, Japanese demands were set as low as realistically possible, which clearly reflected Japan's eagerness to reach an agreement. Despite this, the negotiations did not progress smoothly, in part because Komura stubbornly bargained for territorial concessions as well as an indemnity. These were the two demands that Russia could not consider lest it be perceived as suffering a humiliating defeat by a lesser power. At the same time, Komura could not also sidestep his second-tier demands as he knew very well that the Japanese public, with its bloated expectations of the peace conference, would be content with nothing less. It was only after American pressure that Komura was forced to accept a peace without reparations and only the southern half of Sakhalin as a territorial concession.

#### ENDING A CONTROVERSY: DID ROOSEVELT BETRAY JAPAN?

Roosevelt has long been viewed as a friend of Japan since he spared no effort in advancing Japanese interests during his term in office. Before the war, he had enthusiastically supported Japan's opposition to Russian influence in Manchuria and Korea, and during the Portsmouth conference he eagerly lent his hand so that Japan could achieve a diplomatic victory. Roosevelt skillfully advised Japan to the point of even suggesting the occupation of Sakhalin as a way to improve Japan's bargaining position. But Roosevelt was no Japanophile; his policy was firmly grounded on pragmatism and the preservation of American national interests.

This traditional image of Roosevelt as sympathetic to Japan has recently come into question. This view, which is based on a misconstrued interpretation of a comment found in the Japanese foreign ministry's history of the conference, portrays Roosevelt as betraying Japan by not divulging a key piece of information at the Portsmouth conference.<sup>26</sup> The basis for the

argument hinges on a telegram Ambassador Meyer sent to the president which contained a startling revelation. Per the ambassador, the tsar had a change of heart and was now finally willing to concede the southern half of Sakhalin to Japan. With this fact, the revisionists argue that it was Roosevelt's intent to sabotage the conference so that he could bring the parties together again in New York where a treaty would be successfully concluded under his direct supervision. In other words, Roosevelt supposedly wanted to gain domestic political capital that he could use in the upcoming presidential election.<sup>27</sup>

Does this theory about Roosevelt's behavior hold any water? It is true that neither the Japanese government nor Komura were initially aware of the tsar's dramatic volte-face. Because Nicholas had hitherto been staunchly opposed to accepting a humiliating peace, even the Japanese elder statesmen and the influential army leader, Yamagata Aritomo, had become reconciled to the idea of a peace without indemnity and/or territory. This policy shift was grounded in the stark reality that Japan did not possess the capability of prolonging the fight, particularly since the Russian army had been given ample time to regroup and resupply.

The final decision to accept a peace treaty that did not insist on *both* an indemnity and territory was reached by the cabinet on the afternoon of August 28 and immediately conveyed to the emperor. The specific instructions based on this cabinet decision were sent to the delegation and encoded and transmitted at precisely 20:35,<sup>29</sup> but because of the time difference Komura received the telegram only at 13:00 on August 28. He read the telegram with a heavy heart, but he also clearly he understood the logic behind the government's decision. Following his instructions, Komura placed the last touches on the final Japanese peace proposal, which was nearly identical to Witte's final offer.

It is at this time that a series of remarkable developments altered the outcome of the peace conference. After the instructions had been sent off to Komura, the Gaimushō finally given a reprieve from the frantic pace of the past few weeks. The head of the commerce bureau, Ishii Kikujirō, felt that this would be the time to meet with the British ambassador, Sir Claude MacDonald, who had requested an appointment the night before. Because Ishii had been exhausted from a long day at the ministry he had been annoyed by how late into the night the request had been made and was not at all looking forward to meeting the Scotsman.<sup>30</sup>

Ishii was in for a huge shock when he heard MacDonald's startling revelation. According to confidential information that the ambassador had

just received from London, the tsar had grudgingly agreed to cede the southern half of Sakhalin to Japan on the grounds that it had only been part of Russia for the past thirty years. On learning this stunning information, Ishii hurried back to the Gaimushō to inform Vice Foreign Minister Chinda Sutemi. Chinda in turn rushed to Prime Minister Katsura's residence to apprise him of the sudden turn of events. After several frantic meetings with key government leaders, just after dawn on the next day, the emperor was informed of the situation, after which a new set of instructions was sent to Komura. He was now to include in his demands, the cessation of the southern half of Sakhalin.<sup>31</sup> Unaware of the reason behind this sudden position reversal, Komura was skeptical that Witte would agree to a proposal that significantly departed from his earlier proposal. But to Komura's utter astonishment, Witte accepted Japan's offer, and at this very moment peace was had been achieved. On learning of this news, Roosevelt exclaimed, "Magnificent! Nothing for years has pleased me so much."<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, there is not a single shred of evidence that supports the notion that Roosevelt intentionally withheld this crucial piece of information from the Japanese for political gain. Besides, there was absolutely no assurance that Japan and Russia would agree to a second conference at a later date. Furthermore, it was obvious that if an agreement could not be reached in Portsmouth, the fighting would surely resume. This would be a political liability for Roosevelt as it would signify that his mediation had been a failure. As mediator, he had indeed devoted himself in earnest so that the two adversaries could come to terms. These reasons all suggest that Roosevelt's omission of information was by no means deliberate.<sup>33</sup> But the greatest inherent weakness of the notion that Roosevelt acted for political reasons, however, is that the presidential election had already taken place in November 1904.

When the Portsmouth Peace Treaty was concluded in September 1905, Roosevelt had been in office for less than six months. Moreover, Roosevelt had publicly announced his intention not to run for a second term.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the idea that Roosevelt intended to sabotage the peace conference for his own personal gain is untenable. The precise reason why he did not inform Komura about the tsar's changing his position over Sakhalin has long puzzled historians. Yet if Roosevelt had not acted based on personal interests, then how can his perplexing action be explained?

In reality, there was a less cynical reasoning behind the president's motive. Ambassador Meyer had informed Roosevelt of the tsar's decision to cede the southern half of Sakhalin on August 23.<sup>35</sup> However, the president

wanted reassurance that Meyer had conveyed his plan to Nicholas in toto. Roosevelt was particularly anxious to clarify if Nicholas had been informed about the proviso that the Russians would relinquish all of Sakhalin to Japan after which a payment would be made to Japan for the return of northern portion of Sakhalin. The exact amount of the payment was to be left for a future negotiation. It was important that the tsar provide assurance that he agreed, in principle, to the idea of paying for the return of part of the island.<sup>36</sup> Because the tsar's position still remained ambiguous, Roosevelt had instructed Meyer to confirm that the tsar had acquiesced. However, before receiving a reply from his ambassador, Roosevelt took the matter into his own hands and sent a direct letter to the tsar on August 25 that described his proposal in detail. Two days later, on August 27, Russia replied that it would refuse to make any form of payment as it would essentially amount to an indemnity.<sup>37</sup> On the following day, the tsar's attitude further hardened, and he ordered his foreign minister Vladimir Lamsdorf to send instructions to Witte that Russia would reject outright the Japanese proposal and that the peace negotiations were to be broken off immediately.<sup>38</sup>

Under these circumstances, Roosevelt was not yet prepared to inform the Japanese of the content of the August 23 telegram from Meyer. The tsar was notoriously indecisive about important issues and thus frequently changed his mind about them. As far as Roosevelt was concerned, Nicholas's concession of August 23 still needed to be verified. If he were to pass along this unconfirmed piece of information over the territorial concession to the Japanese and this turned out to be false, he would be placed in a very embarrassing situation. This was a risk that he wanted to avoid. Of course there was also the possibility that the tsar would remain true to his initial promise, and in that case, it would be prudent to share this crucial piece of information with the Japanese. It is therefore reasonable to believe that Roosevelt leveraged his position and utilized an indirect channel to inform Tokyo, namely, by divulging the information to Japan's ally, the British. After all, a precedent existed for this sort of diplomatic maneuver. As we have seen earlier, the tsar had agreed to negotiate peace under the condition that Japan would make the announcement first. This "confidential" information had been quietly leaked to the British so that it could be secretly conveyed to the Japanese without any involvement of the Americans.

By using the British as intermediaries, Roosevelt was also avoiding any responsibility for the veracity of the information regarding to the verbal concessions made the tsar. That being said, the Japanese would be privy to this new development and thereby be given the opportunity to respond how

it saw fit. However, this information only became critically important due to an unforeseen development of events. Witte had decided to disregard the instructions from the foreign minister and instead accepted peace treaty along the terms submitted on August 24. This was the precise moment when peace had been attained. In light of this big picture, the issue of southern Sakhalin should not be overblown as it was merely icing on the cake for Japan. Moreover, as the concession by the tsar had come at such a late juncture in the conference, it had not impacted the negotiations in a significant way: Tokyo had already committed itself to accepting “peace without an indemnity or territory.”

PEACE AT PORTSMOUTH:  
ACCOMMODATING JAPAN AS AN EMERGING POWER  
AND ENSUING US-JAPAN RELATIONS

Securing peace at Portsmouth allowed Japan to shift its attention toward its postwar diplomacy. The decisive outcome of the Russo-Japanese War enabled Japan to vastly strengthen and expand its sphere of influence in both Northeast China and Korea. Thus, it was only logical that Japan’s new foreign policy trajectory would place more emphasis on how to maintain and manage the expansion of its empire. Emerging from this new reality were three distinct lines for the possible future course of Japanese foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

The first, supported by the Imperial Army, advocated direct military rule over the newly acquired Japanese possessions as well as greater involvement in the affairs of China. In addition, the army supported outright annexation of Manchuria. Wary of any further Japanese territorial expansion, the British steadfastly objected to this policy, informing Japan that it would be an imprudent move to take further action on the continent. The United States also made its concerns known, conveying to Tokyo its “great disappointment” if Japan were to embark on an overly imperialistic path. Fortunately, in the end, pragmatism prevailed, and the plan was withdrawn after intense pressure from Itō, who firmly believed that that the pursuit of such a policy would spell disaster for Japan.

The second policy line found its most outspoken proponent in Hayashi. This policy was grounded firmly in the ideals of internationalism that envisioned Japan as a nation working in concert with the other great powers. It embraced the concept of enlightened self-interest and emphasized cooperation over conflict. It was a very radical approach, however,

considering that, in the early part of the twentieth century, imperialism still was the fundamental policy of the major powers. Therefore, it naturally encountered stiff resistance from the *genrō*, who viewed Hayashi's idealistic diplomacy not only as amateurish but also unrealistic. Moreover, the tremendous surge of Chinese nationalism that manifested itself after the Russo-Japanese War also damaged Hayashi's credibility, as many in Japan began to view his weak-kneed stance toward China as the fuel sustaining this nationalism. Despite losing the support of the Japanese public, Hayashi, as the foreign minister in Saionji Kinmochi's first cabinet, was still successful in bringing Japan closer not only to France but also to its former adversary, Russia.

The third policy line was continent-oriented as advocated by Komura. This policy, known as "Komura diplomacy" (Komura *gaikō*), eventually became the guiding principle of Japan's foreign policy until the early 1920s, when the foreign minister during that time, Shidehara Kijūrō, embraced the principles of the Washington Treaty system and realigned Japan's diplomatic path so that it emphasized greater cooperation in East Asia with the United States and Great Britain.

After the conclusion of the Portsmouth Peace Conference, Komura's primary policy goal was to ensure that Japan would become a major player in East Asian affairs.<sup>40</sup> The essence of Komura *gaikō* was not merely about solidifying Japan's position on the Asian continent but also boosting its global status and prestige. When Komura's policy was implemented, it therefore prompted a realignment of the existing international order of the region, transforming the status quo into a new regional order that better conformed to Japan's perceived national interests and security concerns.

Japan's rise as a new power, coming mostly at the expense of Russia, was the key catalyst for a cascade of events that led to a shift in the existing spheres of influence in East Asia. This drastic change became readily apparent as the European powers took the necessary diplomatic action to accommodate Japan's entry as a new power—the Taft-Katsura memorandum of July 1905, the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance of August 1905, the Franco-Japanese Convention of June 1907, the Root-Takahira agreement of November 1908, and the Russo-Japanese Convention of July 1907 (amended and extended in 1910, 1912, and 1916). This string of new international agreements were especially significant as, unlike the events that had transpired after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), for the first time all the European powers now acknowledged Japan's status as a new power while also recognizing Japan's vested interest in South Manchuria and the

Korean Peninsula.<sup>41</sup>

In the context of US-Japan relations, it was Japan's rapid ascendance as a power that transformed the very nature of the relationship to one which evolved into a strategic partnership.<sup>42</sup> This was partially a result of the limits to American power. At the time, the United States did not possess the necessary naval strength to defend its recently acquired territories in the Pacific. Thus, the Philippines, referred back then as America's "Achilles' heel," was an acute security concern owing to enlarged German ambitions in the region.<sup>43</sup>

It was Japan's decisive victory against Russia that prompted a dynamic shift in Japan's position, as it now became the most ideal partner in Asia for the United States. This partnership was forged on the principle of preserving and respecting mutual interests in the region. In other words, as long as the Open Door principle was respected by Japan and Tokyo took no action that would encroach on other American interests in the region, Japan would have the tacit approval by Washington to establish its own sphere of influence. It was this mutual understanding which was embodied in the 1905 Taft-Katsura memorandum and the 1908 Root-Takahira agreement. Hence, in the aftermath of the Portsmouth conference, US-Japan relations, from a strategic perspective, were now on firm ground. Despite this mutuality, the idea that US-Japan relations suddenly underwent a momentous shift toward one of constant friction after the Russo-Japanese War still has a powerful grip among those trying to interpret the nature of American-Japanese relations of the time.<sup>44</sup>

The arguments used in supporting this prevailing view are the following: first, the fierce anti-American riots in Japan epitomized by the September 1905 Hibiya riots in which thousands of Japanese gathered in Tokyo to protest the recent peace agreement; second, the war plans drawn up by the two nations that viewed the other as the hypothetical enemy; third, the ensuing naval arms race; and fourth, the "war scare" instigated by the anti-Japanese movement in California as well as its racist underpinnings.<sup>45</sup> All of these factors seemingly point to a buildup of serious tensions in US-Japan relations. But under closer scrutiny, each event has a rational explanation that does not necessarily imply a deteriorating bilateral relationship. Quite on the contrary, these events merely serve to reveal that a fundamental shift had taken place in which US-Japan relations experienced a significant transformation resulting in a mature power-to-power relationship paradigm for the first time ever since the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry to Japan in 1853.

There is little doubt that public opinion was the chief instigator of domestic unrest in Japan after the Portsmouth conference. However, the Hibiya riots cannot be conveniently explained away as merely as a sudden upsurge in anti-American sentiment in Japan. To frame the incident in a more proper context, one needs to realize that the rioters' anger was also directed at the Japanese government. Furthermore, since the Japanese public had been misled for national security reasons to believe that Japan had soundly defeated Russia in a one-sided victory, it was only natural that many felt betrayed by what appeared to be Komura's capitulation to the Russians at the negotiating table. Just as Komura had feared when he embarked on his trip to Portsmouth, this powerful feeling of disappointment created a highly combustible atmosphere that erupted when the public realized that, despite their huge sacrifices, there would be no indemnity and that territorial concessions would be minimal.

Quite different in nature was the postwar naval buildup that followed in the aftermath of the conference. This can be understood in the context of the natural growth of both nations, as each now possessed a vastly wider sphere of influence that covered a lot of ocean. Moreover, Mahanian doctrine, which had a powerful influence on naval strategy of the time, dictated that securing sea-lanes was a vital component of maintaining national security. Therefore, the naval buildup in itself did not signify any hostile intentions. Even if one examines the war plans of each nation—War Plan Orange for the United States and the Imperial Defense Plan (*Teikoku kokubō hōshin*) for Japan—it is unrealistic to interpret either as a viable plan for actual war. Because the United States and Japan were the dominant naval powers in the Pacific, it made practical sense for both navies to contemplate contingencies based on the possibility, however remote, that the other side could one day become an adversary. Moreover, neither nation developed a detailed tactical operational plan but simply set forth basic guidelines in the event conflict were to occur. As is true for any institution that seeks to sustain relevance, this served as a convenient way for both navies to rationalize their huge budget requests, which they claimed was absolutely necessary in order to maintain an ideal state of military readiness.

Regarding the final issue of discriminatory practices toward Japanese immigrants in the United States, this can be interpreted as an isolated, albeit unfortunate, incident that in no way reflected the policies being pursued at the national level.<sup>46</sup> Specifically, it was the 1906 San Francisco School Board incident that culminated in the mini war crisis on the jingoistic West Coast. The yellow press, eager to sell newspapers, flamed emotions by

stirring up sensationalistic stories of an “impending war with Japan.”<sup>47</sup> The crisis escalated to the point that it was only diffused through the direct intervention of President Roosevelt, who was wholly unsympathetic to the position taken by the local politicians. Although this was an unpopular move with those who valued states’ rights, his firm commitment of not allowing domestic politics to hinder foreign relations served to further strengthen US-Japan relations. This hands-on policy toward the immigration problem reflected not only the high level of friendship and mutual trust between the two nations, but also the value that Roosevelt himself placed on fostering and maintaining a strategic partnership with Japan.

William H. Taft, who followed Roosevelt in the presidency, also did not depart from the fundamental policy established by his predecessor in regard to the immigration problem. As a result, it never resurfaced as a diplomatic issue during his tenure as president. The basic groundwork of US-Japan relations during the two Republican administrations was firmly based on mutual cooperation, not confrontation. To be sure, Taft’s “dollar diplomacy” toward Manchuria, a term which was actually only enunciated at the end of his presidency, raised some concerns in Japan. Komura was particularly troubled by the railroad magnate E. H. Harriman’s plans to neutralize and own the railways in Manchuria, as this blatantly disregarded Japan’s national interests and was an unwelcome encroachment upon its sphere of influence.

However, this too never became a serious issue that stirred strong national sentiments. Harriman soon passed away, and his ambitious plans died with him. In the end, diplomatic pragmatism prevailed. Even though Taft’s policies in regard to East Asia were of a slightly different shade than Roosevelt’s, the tune still remained the same. Bilateral ties with Japan, even if tested at times, were never in serious danger of being strained. It was Taft’s unwavering belief that as long as Japan respected the Open Door Policy in Manchuria, and harbored no designs on the Philippines or Hawaii, then American interests in the region were safe. Conversely, the president was clearly cognizant that US interests could only be maintained if Washington extended the same respect and courtesy toward Japan’s sphere of influence in Taiwan, Korea, and South Manchuria. It was in this light that both countries signed the 1911 US-Japan Treaty of Commerce and Amity that finally dispensed with most unequal provisions of the previous treaty. Japan was now a strategic partner in its own right and a power that the United States would depend upon on in preserving its interests in the region.

Unfortunately, this amicable arrangement was not to last. The unexpected victory of the Democrats in the 1912 presidential election, brought about by

a split in the Republican Party, caused this informal accord to come under increasing pressure. President Woodrow Wilson and his “New Diplomacy” espoused idealistic principles that altered the underpinnings of US-Japan relations in a way that friction and tensions increased. Wilson and his adherents in the State Department placed emphasis on undoing the realism-based East Asian policy embodied in the Root-Takahira agreement.<sup>48</sup> Thus, in retrospect, it can be understood that it was actually Wilson who brought about a fundamental shift in US-Japan relations. His new policy disregarded Japan’s interests in East Asia while also failing to address Japanese sensitivities over race and immigration. Thus, it was not a coincidence that the immigration issue in California flared up twice during Wilson’s tenure as president, in 1913 and 1920. Faced with these new norms, Japan reacted by implementing policies that would further solidify its position on the Asian continent. This, in turn, would have a boomerang effect on American public opinion, leading to an eventual deterioration of mutual perceptions.

The longer events of the Great War led to a momentarily lapse in tensions as witnessed by the 1917 Ishii-Lansing agreement, but this was merely a temporary accommodation that emerged due to the existence of a more pressing issue. Thus, Japan and the United States quickly came head to head in the aftermath of the war during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. By then, a latent undercurrent had developed in both countries, and they now increasingly viewed each other as lacking a common strategic objective. The adjustments made during the 1920s under the Republican Warren G. Harding administration—the Washington Treaty System, and more specifically the Nine-Power Treaty—momentarily realigned the two nations once again. However, their difference would become even starker during the tumultuous decade of the 1930s which in turn culminate in the rupture of relations in December 1941.

As present-day events in East Asia indicate, another regional dynamic power shift is taking place as relative US primacy in the region wanes as becomes increasingly challenged on multiple fronts by China. Surely, there are ample lessons to be garnered from the power shift that took place over a century ago in this region.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal also had maintained spheres of influence at various times, but by the nineteenth century these powers had declined significantly in influence. See William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902* (New

York: Knopf, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> For further details, see Seung-Young Kim, “Russo-Japanese Rivalry over Korean Buffer at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century and Its Implications,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 16 (2005): 619–50. The Japanese viewed Russia as the greatest national security threat from March 1890. *Ibid.*, 621.

<sup>3</sup> A classic study is Seizaburo Shinobu’s *Nishinsensō* [The Sino-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Nansōsha, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> In 1899, Port Arthur partially froze, making the search for an ice-free port an increasingly urgent matter. Seung-Young Kim, “Managing the Korea Buffer: Great Power Competition over China, from the Late Nineteenth Century until Today,” *Stockholm Journal of East Asian Studies* 15 (2005), 3. One should also note that steamships of the day could not travel long distances without frequent access to coaling stations. This made the possession of numerous ice-free ports a critical matter of national security.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed study, see Yastutoshi Teramoto, *Nichirosensōigo no nihongaikō* [Japanese foreign policy after the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Shinzansha Shuppan, 1999); and Yukio Ito, *Rikkenkokka to nichirosensō, 1898–1905* [The constitutional government and the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Bokutakusha, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, see Shigeru Kurobane, *Nicheidōmei no kenkyū* [A study of the Anglo-Japanese alliance] (Sendai: Tōhoku Kyouikutoshō, 1968); and Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894–1907* (London: Athlone Press, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> For a thorough account of the military dimension of the war, see the classic study by Toshio Tani, *Kimitsu nichirosenshi* [Classified military history of the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Harashobō, 2004). A detailed examination of the prelude to the war can be found in Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Longman, 1985). The standard work on the subject from the Japanese perspective still remains Seizaburo Shinobu and Jiichi Nakayama, *Nichirosensoshi no kenkyū* [A study of the military history of the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Kawadeshobō Shinsha, 1959).

<sup>8</sup> For a general overview of the situation, see Tetsuo Furuya, *Nichirosensō* [The Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Chuōkōronshinsha, 1966), 161–65.

<sup>9</sup> Shinobu Oe, *Baluchiku kantai* [The Baltic Fleet] (Tokyo: Chuōkōronshinsha, 1999), 169–78, provides a detailed account of the naval aspect of the war, including a wealth of information on the Baltic Fleet.

<sup>10</sup> John A. White, *The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (Princeton University Press, 1964), 198. This excellent study provides tremendous detail regarding the pre-Portland diplomacy of the two nations. Classic works on the subject are Tyler Dennet, *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1925) and Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington

Press, 1966).

<sup>11</sup> Michael Balfour, *The Kaiser and his Times* (1964; repr., Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1972), 260–61.

<sup>12</sup> Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), 253.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 251 n17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>15</sup> Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Nobuo Kanayama, *Komura Jutarō to Pōtsumasu* [Komura Jutarō and Portsmouth] (Tokyo: PHP Shuppan, 1984), 29–30.

<sup>17</sup> Takahira's capabilities are thoroughly assessed in Masayoshi Matsumura, "Mōhitori no Pōtsumasuzenkenkōaiinn" [The other Portsmouth conference participant], *Gaimushō Chōsageppō* 1 (2006): 35–64.

<sup>18</sup> For a brief biography of each of the participants, see Akira Yoshimura, *Pōtsumasu no hata* [The flag of Portsmouth] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979), 51–53.

<sup>19</sup> In fact, Takahira had earlier informed Roosevelt that "peace without indemnity or territory" was acceptable. His logic was that prolonging the war would easily exceed in cost any amount of indemnity that Japan could obtain from Russia. Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), 249.

<sup>20</sup> Shumpei Okamoto, *The Japanese Oligarchy and Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). This excellent English language study examines the Japanese side of the decision-making process leading to the war.

<sup>21</sup> Prior to this, Komura believed that the former Russian foreign minister, Mikhail N. Muraviev, would be his counterpart.

<sup>22</sup> Eugene Trani, *The Treaty of Portsmouth: An Adventure in American Diplomacy* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), 119. This excellent book examines in depth the diplomatic phase of the Russo-Japanese War from the American perspective.

<sup>23</sup> For the specifics of the operation, see Tani, *Nichirosenshi*, 302–30.

<sup>24</sup> See also Masayoshi Matsumura, "Pōtsumasukōwakaigi to Seodoa Rūzuberuto," [The Portsmouth conference and Theodore Roosevelt] *Gaimushō Chōsageppō* 2 (2005): 21–52.

<sup>25</sup> Japanese Foreign Ministry, ed., *Komura gaikōshi* [History of Komura diplomacy] (Tokyo: Harashobō, 1966), 491–92. This is the primary account of the Portsmouth conference from the Japanese side.

<sup>26</sup> *Komura gaikōshi* (585) implies that Roosevelt acted treacherously in not revealing the information to the Japanese. .

<sup>27</sup> This was the central theme of the Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai documentary, *Sonotoki rekishi ga ugoita*, episode no. 182, June 16, 2004. See also NHK Coverage Group, ed.,

*Sonotoki rekishi ga ugoita* 30 (Tokyo, 2004), 114–59.

<sup>28</sup> *Pōtsumasu no hata*, 217.

<sup>29</sup> Telegram no. 69, from Katsura to Komura, *Nihon Gaikō Monjo* [Japanese Diplomatic Papers] 5, 300–302.

<sup>30</sup> *Pōtsumasu no hata*, 217.

<sup>31</sup> *Komura gaikōshi*, 584–86. This is the infamous “top secret telegram no. 154” that drastically altered the shape of the final peace agreement.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 587.

<sup>33</sup> Ishii writes in his memoirs that the president acted cordially throughout the conference and that he personally was truly grateful. Ishii Kikujirō, *Gaikō yoroku* (Tokyo, 1930), 90.

<sup>34</sup> This was a decision that Roosevelt would later regret and perhaps the greatest mistake of his presidency. Dissatisfied with Taft’s conservative domestic policies, Roosevelt split the Republican Party and ran on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912. The unintended consequence of this action was handing over the presidency to the Democrats.

<sup>35</sup> Myer met Tsar Nicholas at Peterhof and persuaded him to accept this plan, which had been preapproved by Roosevelt. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 86. Witte was informed of this decision via Lamsdorf on August 24.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 90.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>39</sup> For further explanation, see Tosh Minohara and Yasutoshi Teramoto’s chapter in Iokibe Makoto, ed., *Nichibeikankei tūshi* [The history of US-Japan relations] (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> For a thorough examination of Japan’s foreign policy during the 1920s, see Ryūji Hattori, *Ajiakokusaikankyō no hendō to nihongaikō, 1918–1931* [The change in the international environment in Asia and Japanese diplomacy] (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 2001).

<sup>41</sup> See also Toshihiro Minohara, “Nichiro sensō to rekkyo eno taitō” [The Russo-Japanese War and the rise to a power] *Kokusaimondai* 546 (2005): 7–22.

<sup>42</sup> On US-Japan relations during this period, see Payson J. Treat, *Japan and the United States, 1853–1921: Revised and Continued to 1928* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1928); William Neumann, *America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963); and Charles E. Neu, *An Uncertain Friendship: Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, 1906–1909* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

<sup>43</sup> A. Whitney Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 35.

<sup>44</sup> This thesis is clearly evinced in Walter Lafeber’s, *The Clash: A History of US-Japan Relations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

<sup>45</sup> For example, see chap. 5 of Kazuki Iguchi, *Nichiro sensō no jidai* [The times of the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Yoshikawakobunkan, 1998); and Yoichi Hiramata, *Nichiro senso ga kaeta sekaishi* [How world history was changed by the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Fuyoshobo Shuppan, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> For further details, see Toshihiro Minohara, *Kariforniashu no hainichiundou to nichibeikankei* [The anti-Japanese movement in California and US-Japan relations] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> The incident is examined in depth in Thomas A. Bailey, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese American Crises* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1934). For a more contemporary treatment, see Minohara, *Kariforniashu no hainichiundou*, chap. 1.

<sup>48</sup> James C. Thomson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, and John Curtis Perry, *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 148–61