

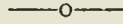
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JAPAN'S CASE

IN THE SINO-JAPANESE DISPUTE



AS PRESENTED BEFORE THE
ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE
OF NATIONS, AT THE FINAL
MEETING ON THE SUBJECT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY
YOSUKE MATSUOKA



JAPANESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF NEW YORK, INC.

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Address delivered by Yosuke Matsuoka, Chief Japanese
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FEBRUARY 24, 1933.

I.

Mr. President and Gentlemen:—I do not feel called upon to reply to the discourse of my distinguished Chinese colleague, for most of the points brought up by him, were made very clear in the Observations of my Government and subsequent speeches of mine; some of them you will find replied to as I proceed with my speech.

The Japanese Delegation have notified the Assembly that they disagree with the Draft Report prepared by the Committee of Nineteen and cannot accept it. It is hardly necessary for me to say that the Japanese Government have given careful and serious consideration to this document and that it is with sad disappointment that they have come to this conclusion.

One outstanding feature that is noticeable throughout the Draft Report is the failure on the part of the Committee of Nineteen to realise the actual situation in the Far East, the difficulties of Japan's position in the midst of an unparalleled and appalling circumstance, and the ultimate aim that is impelling Japan in her action.

For over twenty years China has been going through a revolution which has brought disaster to her people. Tens of millions of people have lost their lives as a result of internecine warfare, tyranny, banditry, famine and flood; hundreds of millions of them have been plunged into misery and despair. With armies of communists ranging over a wider territory than the Nanking Government controls, a condition of chaos reigns throughout the country. Such distresses and miseries as exist among the Chinese people are beyond the imagination of the

average man or woman living in Western countries. And the end of this catastrophe is not in sight. No one can foresee how long it will continue.

The fundamental cause of the trouble in the Far East is the lawless condition in China, the impossible reign of self-will in that country, without recognition on her part of her obligations to her neighbours. China has long been derelict in her international duties as a sovereign State and Japan as her nearest neighbour has been the greatest sufferer on that score.

Since the beginning of the revolution, which has shattered China into parts, all of what were called under the Manchu Dynasty the dependencies of the Empire have been lost to the Republic. Over none of these former dependencies has China any longer any control. Tibet is independent; Chinese Turkestan is completely cut off from contact with China proper; Outer Mongolia became many years ago a part of the Soviet Union. Only Manchuria has remained, down to last year, a part of China—a part by a measure of contact and association, under the nominal sovereignty of that country. To say that Manchuria was under full sovereignty of China would be a distortion of the actual and historic facts. Now this territory has gone, it has become an independent State.

China is a vast country; but it is not a nation or country in the sense that Western peoples use the term. It is a country, larger than Europe, a region with as many governments in it as there are governments in Europe, a region with almost as many different groups of people, speaking almost as many mutually unintelligible dialects. That is one reason why China, in spite of her size, in spite of the enormous number of men in the various armies of the many dictators, is unable to defend itself today, unable to rid itself, as it desires, of the foreign military forces stationed in and about its Treaty Ports, and the foreign naval vessels that ply the Yangtze River. These forces as I have said before, are not only Japanese. They are British, Ameri-

can, French, Italian and others. They guard the lives of the diplomats accredited to the Central Government, the so-called Central Government. Less than five years ago a portion of these forces, British and American, had to go into action at Nanking, the capital of the country, to save the lives of their official representatives assaulted by Government troops. For the moment, however,—this present moment—the hostility to other foreigners is abated, as you all must have noticed. It is being officially restrained with a definite object in view. We are not now hearing of China's determination to undo the "unequal treaties." Why not? Why has this agitation, vigorously and officially conducted prior to September, 1931, come abruptly to an end? Have you thought about that point? The answer is obvious. I need not make it.

China is a backward country, a country in an appalling condition of disintegration and distress. China is a problem, as the Lytton Commission has reported, to the peace of the world.

Beside China and beside another vast country,—I speak of Soviet Russia,—is Japan, a comparatively small country, very different from either of its colossal neighbours. The conditions of these neighbours in the past twenty years have given us Japanese deep and anxious concern. Our anxiety is not ended. We look into the gloom of the future and can see no certain gleam of light before us.

Inexorably situated beside China in chaos, Japan has had to bear and forbear, and for many years tried patiently to have her many grievances with the Chinese settled in an amicable manner. She followed that policy of conciliation even in the face of violent criticism from a portion of her own people. It has been Japan's hope and determination that Manchuria should become a land of law and order, of peace and abundance, a land that would be of benefit not only to Eastern Asia but to the world at large. To achieve that end Japan was long

prepared to co-operate with China, and she sought this co-operation, sought it for years. The Chinese, however, would not accept our proffered friendship and assistance. Instead, they offered constant obstructions and created continuous difficulties. In recent years—and especially since the deliberate development of antiforeign sentiment by the Kuomintang and by the Nationalist Government—this opposition was intensified. The more we displayed patience, the more intense became the opposition until at last it reached a point that was intolerable. Instead of meeting us halfway, China took this attitude of ours as a sign of weakness. The Chinese began to claim that the Japanese should be driven out of Manchuria, that Japan should no longer share in the development of that land, condemning Japan as an aggressor pure and simple, as though there was no reason whatever for her to be in Manchuria, ignoring the whole historic background. This is not the first time that China has accused us of aggression. The impossible attitude and the violent movement based on such psychology on the part of the Chinese lay really at the bottom of the trouble, that finally resulted in what happened. Japan's policy of patience and conciliation failed. It failed because of China's, or rather Chang Hsueh-Liang's, inability to appreciate Japan's intentions and friendliness.

It should not be necessary for me to dwell upon the importance that Japan attaches to Manchuria. The Assembly of the League should know by this time the economic and political necessities of Japan in that territory. But at this critical moment I want to remind you again that Japan fought two wars in Manchuria, in one of which she staked her existence as a nation on the outcome. She wants to fight no other.

It is true that international peace can be secured only upon the basis of mutual concessions. There are, however, with every nation, certain questions so vital to its existence that no concession or compromise is possible.

The Manchurian problem is one of them. It constitutes such a problem to the nation of Japan. It is regarded by our people as a question of life and death.

The Powers of the world have long been dealing in fictions regarding China. Long ago we should have noticed that the first Article of the Covenant requires that a State, Dominion or Colony, to be a member of the League shall be "fully self-governing." China is no such state. Beyond China Proper the sovereignty of China has long been gone, while within China Proper there has been no constituted government supreme and able to govern. The Nanking Government administers today the affairs of less than four out of the Eighteen Provinces.

The world cannot deal in such fictions as these and call upon the League to uphold the letter of treaties.

It is the firm conviction of the Japanese Government that Japan has been and will always be the mainstay of peace, order and progress in the Far East. If she has taken a definite stand regarding Manchuria in recent months, it is because she has been actuated by the implicit faith that that was the only course left to her after years of unrewarded forbearance and waiting. If she insists upon the maintenance of the independence of Manchoukuo, she is guided by the confident belief that in the present circumstances that independence offers the only guarantee of peace and order in the Far East.

Even after the present Sino-Japanese dispute began, Japan continued in her policy of conciliation. If China had been capable in those days of realising the actualities of the situation and had agreed to negotiations with Japan in a sincere desire to arrive at an agreement, one could have been accomplished without great difficulty. But China did not take that course. And what did she do? Instead, she appealed to the League of Nations. She sought to bind Japan's hands through the intervention of the Powers composing the League. And the League, not fully understanding the real issues involved

or the actual conditions existing in the Far East, and perhaps not suspecting the real motive for the Chinese move, gave her encouragement. Here lies the trouble.

It cannot be doubted that the League of Nations, in dealing with the Sino-Japanese dispute, endeavoured sincerely and conscientiously to bring about a satisfactory settlement at an early date. But, in point of fact, its actions have continually resulted in giving China a false hope and in encouraging her to take an attitude of defiance against Japan. In making her appeal to the League China was not, as you have been told, acting from her love of peace and her loyalty to principles. A country with more armed men than any other is not a nation of pacifists. A country which has habitually broken international pledges is not a nation that respects principles.

In proposing to the League to send a Commission of Enquiry to China, Japan was actuated by the belief that it was urgent and essential that the League should fully understand the realities of conditions existing there. But the result was disappointing to Japan. The Report of the Commission proved to be, in some respects, superficial in character. It displayed, in parts, a lack of penetration. It often failed to probe the problem to its depths. One of the reasons for this was undoubtedly the brief time in which the Commission had to make its investigations.

In this connection let me say a word regarding the population of Manchoukuo. A false impression has been given to the world by the Lytton Report on this subject. There were no authentic statistics upon which the Commission could base its view. No reliable Chinese census has ever been taken, even in China proper, and any figures placed before the Commission by Chinese authorities could not be regarded as dependable. For many years the racial term "Chinese" has been applied, particularly by foreigners, including Japanese, to most of the people of the Chinese Empire. But this laxity

in expression should not be taken to mean that Manchus and Mongols, or even the people of China proper, are all of a single racial stock. The majority of the people of Manchoukuo are distinctly different from those of China. Even the people of North China, from the Provinces of Shantung and Hopei, who have migrated to Manchuria to the extent of several millions in recent years, are strikingly different from those of other Chinese Provinces, different from those of the Yangtze Valley, more different from those of South China, radically different from those of Western China—different in physical appearance, different in many of their customs and in some cases even in their language. But even these immigrants who have gone from China to Manchuria in recent years do not form the bulk of the population. They form probably but a tenth, or at most but a fifth, of it. The great body of the population can properly be described as Manchurian. It is formed by the descendants of the old Manchu stock, by old Chinese stock which affiliated itself with the Manchus in former years, and by Mongols. The great majority of these people have never lived in China and have no such attachment to that country as the Lytton Report describes. Here the Report was clearly in error.

Regarding the Report of the Committee of Nineteen, I am constrained to make a critical remark. I do not want to accuse that Committee of prejudice, but I cannot refrain from making the observation that, while China is exonerated, nothing whatever is said of the work of my country and people in their long and difficult efforts to preserve peace, to promote law and order, to benefit the people of Manchuria.

The good work of my country in Manchuria is on record. It is not on record however, in the draft Report, but you can see it in Manchuria. The physical developments that we have made there are visible monuments of our efforts and our ability. The well-ordered cities of the Leased Territory, the thriving condition of the

Railway Zone, the improvement of Chinese cities influenced by our initiative, the vast mining and industrial enterprises, the schools, the hospitals, the technical bureaux,—these things, the likes of which exist nowhere under Chinese administration, are testimony to our service to the people of the land. In short, we have been and are a great civilizing and stabilizing force in that wild country. If the Committee of Nineteen knew and understood what we have done to benefit the people of Manchuria they might have gone out of their way to say just a word in favour of this great work of ours. If they did not know and understand why the people of China Proper migrate to Manchuria, it might have been well for them to enquire. Yet they have felt that their knowledge was sufficient to qualify them in proposing to the Assembly that it adopt the momentous proposal contained in this Draft Report. Do you really think it is right? Do you think it is common-sense?

On the first page of the Report are these lines. I quote them:

“The issues involved in this conflict are not as simple as they are often represented to be. They are, on the contrary, exceedingly complicated. And *only an intimate knowledge of all the facts, as well as of their historical background*, should entitle anyone to express a definite opinion upon them.”

This passage was, as you know, taken from the Lytton Report, and the Commission was right in having this passage in its Report. Beginning with this statement, the Committee of Nineteen proceeded to pass judgment in this dispute, judgment against a nation which is the bulwark of whatever law, order, and peace there exist in the Far East, and in favour of one whose backward condition has been the cause of wars in the Far East for nearly a century. I suppose I may take it that the members of this Assembly who are now about to vote on the draft Report have all read histories of China written by impartial authors. But I am not too

sure of that, for there seems to have been a lack of careful reading even of the Lytton Report.

Let us now turn to the recommendations made by the Commission of Enquiry. Their full significance seems to have been overlooked in the Draft Report before us. I refer in particular to the tenth and final Principle contained in Chapter IX. That Principle reads as follows:

“Since the present political instability in China is an obstacle to friendship with Japan and an anxiety to the rest of the world (as the maintenance of peace in the Far East is a matter of international concern), and since the conditions enumerated above cannot be fulfilled without a strong Central Government in China, the final requisite for a satisfactory solution is temporary international co-operation in the internal reconstruction of China, as suggested by the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen.”

I would ask the League to consider carefully this definite warning. I would ask that it be not misled by the thought or the hope that China can be changed by the mere sending of technical commissions to aid the harrassed government with advice regarding sanitation, education, railway, financial and other administration. More than that is needed, much more—so much that no great Power or group of them would be willing to undertake the task. Some form of international control may be helpful, but who is going to undertake it? Of this I am speaking earnestly, and I am speaking with knowledge of China—the real China, the China that exists in fact and not in theory or imagination, the China that has made many wars already, and now seeks to make another, the China that does not fight her own battles, but calls on distant friends to fight her near-by neighbour.

In the above connection, permit me to put one categorical question to my Chinese colleagues. Although my colleague Dr. Yen expressed—on behalf of the Govern-

ment that exists at Nanking, but which does not rule the whole of China—his willingness to accept the recommendations without any reservation, I would put this categorical question to him and his colleagues to answer: Are the Chinese Government really prepared to accept these recommendations which envisage in the final analysis the imposition on China of an international control in one form or another? You cannot get away from that, however you may try to cover it up with words. Will you make the position of your Government clear on this point before the Assembly votes on this present Draft Report?

I have no doubt that the attitude of the League in the present dispute has always been conceived with a genuine desire to uphold the sanctity of treaties and the principles of peace and serve the cause of peace, but its efforts have had the result of adding confusion to the situation. The Jehol affair, which is giving all of us concern at this moment, is a case in point. It is a demonstration on China's part, made for the purpose of affecting the League's decisions. There would have been no onrush of Chang Hsueh-liang's troops beyond the Great Wall except for instigation from the Nanking Government which, in turn, has been encouraged by the attitude the League of Nations has been taking vis-a-vis Japan. The Japanese Government are not in the least anxious about the outcome of a conflict with these Chinese contingents. They are not the troops of a modern army, well trained, well disciplined, well organised, well officered. They are not troops inspired with zeal for a cause or love of country. They are mercenary troops, with loyalty only to their military chief, and, like other Chinese armies, loyal because their chief provides for them the means of living. The moment some other chief tempts these soldiers with money or means of living they will desert their present chief. But Japan is loath to see further unnecessary bloodshed, and, for that reason, has been and is endeavouring to persuade

Marshal Chang to withdraw his forces. The prospects, however, do not seem at this moment very encouraging.

I refer to the situation in Jehol to bring home to you the possible effect the adoption of the Report now before us may have upon the situation in the Far East. Please think seriously on this point. The adoption of this report would give the impression to the Chinese that they had been exonerated from all responsibility, that they could continue to defy Japan with impunity. It would serve further to embitter the feelings of the Japanese and Chinese peoples, whose interests are closely interwoven. The two peoples ought to be friends and should co-operate with each other for their common welfare.

By the adoption of the Report before you, however, the Assembly would not be helping us, either Japanese or Chinese, along the road to that goal, nor would it serve the cause of peace or the interests of the suffering masses in China. There are two Chinas: the China of war lords, politicians, and of those gentlemen who have been educated abroad and represent an imaginary China at an Assembly like this, and the China of four hundred fifty million souls suffering under the yoke of these war lords and politicians, who care nothing about their welfare. By the adoption of this Report, would you be serving the cause of these suffering masses in China?

The Report of the Committee of Nineteen not only accepts the Report of the Commission of Enquiry but goes even further: it passes judgment on the basis of premises which are incongruous and far removed from actualities.

Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria was only nominal at most, but the Draft Report before us would undertake to establish Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria in a more or less effective manner; that is to say, it undertakes to introduce into Manchuria the power and influence that China has never had before. Let us pause and think; does it stand to reason? It would, moreover,

open the way for Chinese agitators and give rise to more complications only to end, I am afraid, in another and possibly worse catastrophe.

Again, the Draft Report makes an attempt to establish a measure of international control over Manchuria, where there has been and is no such control. A moment ago I was referring to the international control of China, but now I am referring to the setting up of international control of Manchuria. What justification is there for such an attempt on the part of the League of Nations? I cannot see. Would the American people agree to such control over the Panama Canal Zone? Would the British people permit it over Egypt? In any case, how would you do it? Which of your Governments would undertake it, assuming a grave and heavy responsibility certain to entail sacrifices—sacrifices, I am sure, of great magnitude?

In this connection, let me state clearly once and for all that the Japanese people will, for reasons too patent for me to feel necessary to explain, oppose any such attempt in Manchuria. You can be sure of that. We do not mean to defy the world at all; it is only our right. This must be plain to anyone who would take pains to read the history of the Far East.

A verdict is given in the Draft Report that the Chinese boycott against Japanese goods imposed after the outbreak of the present dispute falls within the purview of retaliatory measures. My distinguished Chinese colleague referred in particular to this, and you, gentlemen, will in time know what is meant. If the adoption by Powers of any forcible measures, made necessary by the exigencies of the situation, for the protection of their rights and interests and for the protection of the rights and property of their nationals in China, is on each occasion to be met lawfully by a retaliatory boycott, a very dangerous principle will have been established, and established by the League of Nations. The

seeds of incalculable future trouble for each and every Power interested in China will have been sown.

You should think twice before you adopt a report which includes such a principle as this.

If you are interested in the problem of peace in the Far East, and I believe you are, you will find, as I had occasion to point out previously, that the real question, the greatest question before us today is the anarchy in China. But you have not proposed to do anything in that connection. The Manchurian question is only one phase or rather an upshot of it. In the eagerness to deal with the Manchurian question, you are forgetting the big question that lies at the root of all the troubles in the Far East—the anarchy in China. What are you going to do about it?

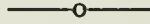
In the actual circumstances in which Japan finds herself as above described, and for the reasons above stated at some length, there is no alternative for her to take in regard to the draft report before us. The Committee of Nineteen has left her none. She had promptly and unequivocally to answer “No.”

Our desire is to help China as far as lies within our power. We are sincere. This is a duty that we must assume whether we like it or not. Paradoxical as this statement may sound to you at this moment, it is true; and our present effort to assist Manchoukuo to her feet, over which we are unfortunately having differences, will lead some day, I am confident, to the realisation of Japan's desire and duty to help China and thereby at last to succeed in firmly establishing peace throughout the region of Eastern Asia.

Gentlemen, will you give Japan a chance to realise this aim or will you not?

I beg this body to realise the facts and see a vision of the future. I earnestly beg you to deal with us on our terms and give us your confidence. Our history during the past sixty years is, I think, a guarantee of our good faith; is that history of no worth beside China's

history, the history of creating disturbances and bringing about catastrophes in the Far East? To deny us this appeal will be a mistake. I ask you not to adopt this Report,—for the sake of peace in the Far East and for the sake of peace throughout the world.



II.

Declaration of the Japanese Government following the vote of the Assembly on the Report and Recommendations submitted by the Committee of Nineteen.

Mr. President and Gentlemen:—On behalf of my Government I wish to make a declaration.

It is a source of profound regret and disappointment to the Japanese Delegation and to the Japanese Government that the Draft Report has now been adopted by this Assembly.

Japan has been a member of the League of Nations since its inception. Our delegates to the Versailles Conference of 1919 took part in the drafting of the Covenant. We have been proud to be a Member, associated with the leading nations of the world, in one of the grandest purposes in which humanity could unite. It has always been our sincere wish and pleasure to cooperate with the fellow-members of the League in attaining the great aim held in common and long cherished by humanity. I deeply deplore the situation we are now confronting, for I do not doubt that the same aim, the desire to see a lasting peace established, is animating all of us in our deliberations and our actions.

It is a matter of common knowledge that Japan's policy is fundamentally inspired by a genuine desire to guarantee peace in the Far East and to contribute to the maintenance of peace throughout the world. Japan, however, finds it impossible to accept the Report adopted by the Assembly, and in particular, she has taken pains to point out that the Recommendations contained therein could not be considered such as would secure peace in that part of the world.

The Japanese Government now find themselves compelled to conclude that Japan and the other Members of the League entertain different views on the manner to achieve peace in the Far East and the Japanese Government are obliged to feel that they have now reached the limit of their endeavours to co-operate with the League of Nations in regard to the Sino-Japanese differences.

The Japanese Government will, however, make their utmost efforts for the establishment of peace in the Far East and for the maintenance and strengthening of good and cordial relations with other Powers. I need hardly add that the Japanese Government persist in their desire to contribute to human welfare and will continue their policy of co-operating in all sincerity in the work dedicated to world peace, in so far as such co-operation is possible in the circumstances created by the unfortunate adoption of the Report.

On behalf of the Japanese delegation, before leaving the room, let me tender their sincerest appreciation of the labours ungrudgingly given to find a solution of the Sino-Japanese dispute before you, for the past seventeen months, by the President and Members of the Council, as well as by the President and Members of the General Assembly.

