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THE FUTURE OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE¹

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Six years ago I published a little book in which I undertook to show that one of our most popular shibboleths, the Monroe Doctrine, had become obsolete. It now becomes my duty to admit that the book was founded upon premises which have turned out to be false.

In the first place, I assumed that when we said Monroe Doctrine we referred to that presidential message prepared in 1823 by President Monroe under the influence of his able Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams. A great part of that message has become obsolete. The sentence "With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power, we have not interfered and shall not interfere," became obsolete in 1898 and has had no force since then. The sentences immediately preceding and following it, however, in which Monroe says that we should consider any attempt on the part of the European powers "to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety," and that "we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing . . . or controlling, in any other manner," the destiny of the independent American governments "by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States," are still very much alive and in the future must be extended so as to cover both European and Asiatic powers.

When the American people say they believe in the Monroe Doctrine and that it has a future, they do not mean to subscribe to the balanced policy laid down by President Monroe, but rather to the spirit which prompted John

¹ A paper presented before the American Historical Association at its Annual Meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, December 30, 1919.

Quincy Adams to reject the proposals of Canning and to enunciate the doctrine that the United States proposes to look out for the western hemisphere and does not need or care for European interference in so doing. Further than this it hardly needs to be said that the words of the Monroe Doctrine have been twisted and turned to mean many different things or that public writers have never been willing to agree as to details

In the second place, my thesis was based on the supposition that European nations had long since lost their tendency towards despotism and were quite as democratic as many American republics. And that therefore it seemed ridiculous for us to pretend that the Monroe Doctrine was a necessary element in our foreign policy.

It is hard to realize today what things we regarded as axioms six years ago. Although in my little book I did say "it is conceivable that there may come a day when threatened foreign invasion or racial migration will make it appear advisable for us to reassert the principles of the original doctrine of America for the Americans," I had not the slightest inkling of an idea that one of the great world powers would begin in 1914 to give an exhibition of military despotism such as had not been seen since the days of the Huns and the Vandals. It hardly need be said that any one who would have ventured to predict that a nation to which we looked for advanced ideas in education, science, and efficiency, which our students of municipal affairs visited in order to study improved social conditions, whose masterly handling of the difficult problems of foreign trade and international exchange won the admiration of our leading business men, and whose ability to promote scientific research for its own sake won the approval of our foremost educators—that such a nation would be capable of turning back the clock one thousand years, carrying on piracy on a gigantic scale, rejoicing in the murder of women and children, approving the action of naval officers in sinking life boats filled with non-combatants, and breaking at pleasure scores of rules which had been formulated and adopted by the civilized nations of the world—anyone who

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would have ventured to predict such an event would have been considered to be mentally unbalanced or guilty of the wildest jingoism. Yet these are things which we have actually seen come to pass during the past six years.

In the third place, it was assumed that the stronger powers of South America would naturally be willing to join us in defending the Americas from any possible aggression on the part of the powers of the Old World. Although one of these powers—Brazil—always our best friend among the southern republics, did so join us during the World War, the most important temperate zone powers—Argentina and Chile—declined to sacrifice any chances of gain by placing themselves with the Allies, and refused to fight against the enemy of civilization. Furthermore, it is well known that Mexico stood ready to aid our enemy and the enemy of republican institutions as far as she possibly could. The case of Mexico was, perhaps, not surprising in view of her contempt for our citizens and their property.

The attitude of Argentina and Chile, however, was most surprising and unexpected. That Cuba should have been willing to join us immediately shows that our policy of intervention in Cuba whenever interior conditions have made it necessary has made us friends, instead of enemies as so many feared would be the case. On the other hand our unwillingness to intervene effectively in Mexico has made us enemies instead of friends. Furthermore, German influence in Argentina and Chile was sufficiently strong to prevent those republics from joining the cause of France in her hour of trial.

Viscount Bryce said in summing up the question of South American affinities, the South Americans "have an intellectual affinity for France, for the brightness of her ideas, the gaiety of her spirit, the quality of her sentiment. . . . In South America French influence reigns supreme." Yet the great temperate zone republics of South America refused to join us in helping France in her extremity.

In the fourth place, I believed that the great war of the future was to be fought with commercial rather than mili-

tary weapons. Repeated visits to South America convinced me that Germany was getting tremendous advantage commercially. Her merchant marine was successfully competing with that of England and was keeping ours from raising its head. The close combination between her bankers, manufacturers, and diplomats was proving a tremendous obstacle to our success. Many of the leading South Americans ridiculed the Monroe Doctrine and hated us for supporting it. I felt that it would be greatly to our advantage in the coming commercial struggle to abandon the doctrine and establish a Pan American concert of the powers as had been suggested by Prof. Theodore S. Woolsey in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1908.

The World War and the events of the last few years have shown that I was mistaken.

The Monroe Doctrine, which was becoming obsolete in 1913, is now no longer obsolete but is more firmly held than ever before and has a very definite future sphere of usefulness.

Germany has shown us that human nature has not changed in the possibilities to which it may go in acting on the unregenerate principle that *might makes right*. Germany has shown us that any foreign policy we may adopt which neglects the possibility of a world power seeking imperial conquest by force of arms is blind and feeble. Our foreign policy for the next generation must be based on lessons learned from what we have seen during the past five years. Germany has taught us many bitter lessons which we as lovers of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness would rather not have learned. If we show ourselves unwilling to face these lessons in all their ugly nakedness, if we prefer to obscure them with the smoke of sacrifices to some Utopian goddess of Peace-without-Preparedness, our children must suffer the consequences.

No one knows what will come out of present conditions in Russia. We hope for the best but we must prepare for the worst. If such selfish tyrants as Lenine and Troztsky succeed in becoming the new czars of that great empire and utilizing its tremendous resources to crush the rule of government "of the people, by the people, and for the

people," wherever they can do so, we must be prepared to demonstrate the efficacy of the Monroe Doctrine to keep any such tyranny from operating successfully in the western hemisphere, no matter what ingenious phrases it may use to deceive lovers of liberty and independence.

There appears to be in Japan a powerful, highly intelligent administration resembling in many ways the Prussian military caste. This group appears at present to be guiding the destinies of the Japanese Empire. Many of the best friends of Japan, who believe in her people and in their aspirations, admit that the weighty arguments of the military caste by which they endeavor to convince the Japanese people that all of Japan's gains during the past century have come from military successes are highly significant.

Such arguments, like those used by pan-German writers during the present generation, will lead to future wars unless the Japanese people decree otherwise. We have never done much to make Japan love us or desire our friendship. We have frankly told her that her citizens were not welcome in this country. It seems probable that our policy of Japanese exclusion will continue for many years to come. The only way we can keep peace with Japan is by maintaining her respect rather than her regard. It would be greatly to her favor to secure a naval base on the Mexican coast. Many people in Mexico would regard such action with joy. It is obvious that the Monroe Doctrine must be maintained to give advanced notice that any such action on the part of Japan would be regarded as "the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

The nature of the various republics that border on the Caribbean Sea, their proximity to us and to the Panama Canal, and the strategic importance of their ports, so far as our national defense is concerned, make our interests in the Caribbean Sea paramount to all others. The acquisition by Germany, Russia or Japan, of a naval base in the Caribbean is unthinkable. A close alliance between any of the Caribbean republics and one of the great powers of the eastern hemisphere could not be tolerated. The need of

pursuing a carefully prepared policy of self-preservation has been borne in on us by the acts of Germany. As a people we do not wish to pursue an aggressive policy. At the same time, the fact that only a few months ago one of the greatest nations in the world was pursuing selfish aggrandizement in a thoroughgoing and pitiless manner, unrestrained by any handicaps of human sympathy, makes us realize the importance of looking fearlessly at the Caribbean problem. The condition of the Caribbean republics is such as to cause us grave concern for their welfare and for ours.

If there were more than one world power in the western hemisphere or if there were likely to be more than one during the present generation we should be obliged to look at this problem from a different angle. In the eastern hemisphere there are half a dozen world powers. Many of them are constantly rubbing elbows. While it is true that the world is smaller than it was before the days of steamships and airships nothing that man has done has served to make it as easy to cross the stormy Atlantic as it is to rush an army across a continental frontier. While it is true that the advance of the science of mechanical engineering has shortened the distance across the Pacific Ocean it has also shortened the distance between Peking and Petrograd. Army motor cars, tanks, and airplanes can be operated successfully over continental boundaries but not across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Everything that makes the world smaller intensifies the problems of the eastern hemisphere and of the western hemisphere, besides making each more cognizant of the problems of the other. Some writers seem to forget this and to feel that modern invention has overcome the handicap of oceans and the isolation made by stormy seas.

Since we are the only world power in the western hemisphere our duty to ourselves, our desire to preserve our own institutions and our own independence as well as our duty to protect the other powers in this hemisphere against possible aggression on the part of European or Asiatic powers, and to prevent such powers from securing bases

from which we or any other American republics might be successfully attacked, becomes evident. If Argentina, Brazil, and Chile were world powers the problem would be different. But they are not yet world powers nor are they likely to become such until they have followed a rough and rugged road and given proof of their faithful adherence to the cause of liberty as well as of their ability to take their place in world movements. Until such time we must not be accused of selfishness if we deem it our duty to maintain the Monroe Doctrine alone against all comers.

It will be agreed that the Panama Canal is one of the most important units in our scheme of national defense. We built it because we saw how long it took the battleship *Oregon* to come from the Pacific to our Atlantic coast and we desired to be able to use our navy to protect whichever coast was most seriously threatened. As has been frequently pointed out by the highest naval authorities, to divide our fleet would be disastrous. To divide it and have it kept apart through hostile control of the Panama Canal would be doubly disastrous. Since the Panama Canal is surrounded by the Caribbean republics it is obvious that instincts of self-preservation will lead us to keep the Monroe Doctrine alive so far as any countries are concerned whose boundaries are near enough to the Panama Canal to permit of their being used successfully as hostile naval bases for operations against the Canal.

These are some of the reasons why the people of the United States have decided to stick to the Monroe Doctrine and not to regard it as being obsolete. It now remains to be considered what form should be taken by the Monroe Doctrine in the future. This is a subject on which every one is bound to have his own opinions and on which as in the past there will be wide diversity of view.

Some of our people wish to see United States troops employed in any part of the world to prevent injustice and oppression. Some enthusiasts would even be willing to see United States troops employed to prevent aggression against any small Balkan State. Whether these Americans would be equally willing to see British troops employed in

Nicaragua to prevent active interference on the part of the United States; whether they would be willing to see French troops used in Haiti to aid the French speaking citizens of that black republic in expelling American marines; is another question. Certainly, the great majority of our people believe that we do not want to see any European or Asiatic troops operating in any part of America. Most of us believe that it would be better not to attempt to enter into acrimonious disputes around the Mediterranean Sea or use our troops for any such purpose. We can do our duty to the world by treating those nations that deserve it with generous consideration both as regards credit and raw material. We can always be counted upon to do what we did in 1917 and come to the armed assistance of France or Italy if Germany or Russia threaten to crush their civilization. But it is hardly feasible for us to consider entering into the rights and wrongs of disputes between the smaller European powers.

On the other hand, it is obvious that we must maintain a most active form of the Monroe Doctrine so far as the Caribbean republics are concerned. In this regard I have come to agree entirely with President Roosevelt's ideas on the Monroe Doctrine. "Our attitude in Cuba is sufficient guaranty of our own good faith. We have not the slightest desire to secure any territory at the expense of any of our neighbors." "All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous." "If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would follow the program in stable and just civilization which Cuba has shown . . . all questions of interference by this nation with their affairs would be at an end." "The adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrong-doing or impotence to the exercise of an international police power." In these sentences Theodore Roosevelt outlined what I believe to be necessary in the Monroe Doctrine of the immediate future.

As a matter of fact, this has been our policy even under an administration that has made much of the phrase "racial

self-determination." Nicaragua, Haiti, and Santo Domingo—flagrant cases of chronic wrong-doing and of inability to "act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters," (Roosevelt's Message to the 58th Congress, 3d Session), unable to guarantee peace to their own citizens are kept in order by armed men wearing the uniform of the United States.

The history of some of the Caribbean republics shows that "self determination" is not necessarily a guaranty of liberty and that the right to rule sometimes leads to the practice of misrule. It seems to be our duty to say both for our own sake and for the sake of the other members of the family of nations that whenever a Caribbean republic makes it impossible for its citizens to enjoy the blessings of peace and to take their part in the work of the world, it must lose temporarily that delightful privilege of self-determination until such time as it will cease to abuse it and learn how to use it. The privilege of independence creates the responsibility of recognizing certain obligations to the family of nations. If you want to be free to take your part as an independent unit of that family we shall be glad to help you acquire and maintain this freedom, but if you want to be free to hold a continuous revolution, to protect the operations of murderous bandits, to kidnap and kill foreign engineers who happen to be American citizens, if you want to be free to steal from all those who are weak and defenseless, you must lose that form of freedom.

In other words, we owe it to the progress of the world and to the world's need for its natural resources to see to it that the republics of Tropical America behave like citizens of the world rather than like pirates or members of savage head-hunting tribes.

It has been said that the Monroe Doctrine is no stronger than our army and navy make it. That is partly true. An active Monroe Doctrine such as it should be our policy to maintain in the future as regards the Caribbean Sea must be backed up by a sufficiently strong army and navy to make it immediately effective in case of necessity. This is the surest way of maintaining peace and prosperity in the Caribbean Sea.

As regards the Temperate Zone republics of South America, we may well maintain a latent Monroe Doctrine—a Monroe Doctrine whose strength will not depend on our actual army and navy, but on our potential military strength when called upon to exercise it.

As soon as Germany saw what our potential army was going to be on the western front she realized that she could not possibly win and must accept the best possible terms that she could secure.

If we maintain a latent Monroe Doctrine so far as concerns the republics of the South Temperate Zone in the western hemisphere we need not have a sufficient military force for immediate action, but we should be ready to say that we would consider any attempt on the part of any Asiatic or European power to form close alliances with that or any other portion of this hemisphere "as dangerous to our peace and safety." Our attitude towards these republics, particularly towards the governments of Argentina and Chile, should be one of dignified friendship. There is no necessity for us to adopt any air of patronage toward them, nor should we expect them to be grateful to us for maintaining a doctrine which is more to our advantage than to theirs, even though it would be of tremendous importance to them to realize that we should be ready to come to their assistance in case of possible aggression on the part of European or Asiatic powers.

Finally, the immediate future of the Monroe Doctrine means intervention in Mexico.

Those who advocate intervention in Mexico are nearly always accused or suspected of being financially interested in that republic. For this reason I should like to state that I have no investments nor any business connections in that unfortunate country and never have had.

We have followed a policy of partial intervention and partial watchful waiting which has been largely responsible for present conditions in Mexico. We have meddled to overthrow a president chosen at a national election. We have failed to take steps to prevent the murdering of several hundred American citizens. By our attitude we have

encouraged the bad Mexicans to do their worst and have discouraged the good Mexicans from attempting their best. Our adherence to the Monroe Doctrine prevents other nations from taking steps to help Mexico to get on her feet. It seems to me that it is our duty to announce that we will accept the burden of doing for Mexico what we did for Cuba. We do not want any Mexican territory. We do not want special concessions nor do we desire to secure special advantages for American citizens. On the other hand, we do not propose to tolerate the present condition of affairs any longer. We should plan to introduce a sufficiently large force to preclude the likelihood of much blood shed.

When we practiced armed intervention in Cuba hardly a country in the world believed that we would get out when the job was finished. Our record in Cuba is one of the things to which we can point with utmost pride. We can Cubanize Mexico. It would probably take longer and would certainly take more men. We should go in on the distinct understanding and open announcement that we did not propose to stay any more than we stayed in Cuba, but that we did propose to help Mexico get on her feet and establish a strong, independent government which could guarantee her own people peace and happiness and guarantee to the citizens of other countries the exercise of their normal rights to life and property.

We are at the present time in a strategic position so far as trained officers and men are concerned, as well as regards the possession of munitions, so that it would be particularly difficult for Mexican jingoes to minimize the practicability of American intervention once we had determined upon it or to expect that it would fizzle out as did our visit to Vera Cruz and Pershing's attempt to capture Villa. Of course, after such an exhibition as we did give Mexico, many Mexicans would at first be inclined to disbelieve our ability to achieve successful military occupation. The seizure of her seaports by our navy and the occupation of her railroads and principal cities by our army would, however, soon convince the most radical gringo haters of our ability to Cubanize Mexico as well as our willingness to do so.

Notwithstanding the dismal forebodings of our calamity howlers and the accusations leveled at all those who were willing to have America assume the burdens of war, we have a record that we may be proud of not only in Cuba but also in France. There has been no demand in this country that Germany should pay us a great indemnity or should reimburse us for our heavy taxes and the dislocation of our normal activities. There has been no thought of securing a share of Germany's colonies. Our actions as well as our words have not shown any desire to profit from our entry into the European war except as we with the rest of the world are benefited by the downfall of the Prussian military caste. Consequently we need not fear to announce that in the future one of our duties to the world for the benefit of all concerned will be the maintenance of a strong Monroe Doctrine—latent in Temperate America, active in Tropical America, and immediately effective in Mexico.





