

# THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

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I know of no subject more fitting for discussion than that of "A Constructive American Foreign Policy," no forum more fitting than the city of Philadelphia; for in this city the world witnessed the greatest exhibition of constructive statesmanship within the tides of time. In this city the dead past buried its dead; in this city a new age was brought forth from the womb of time; in this city a new republic was established and ripened, dedicated to human freedom and human equality. This republic has shown it is as equally adapted to the government of forty-eight sovereign states as it was to the government of thirteen feeble and infant commonwealths. Every exigency has been met by the constructive genius of our statesmen and of our people. Perhaps we have been at times too much absorbed in our domestic policies to devote as much time and attention to our foreign policies or to our foreign relations as their supreme importance would justify.

There are two schools of opinion touching the time as to when the United States really became a world power. One school of opinion believes that we entered the arena of world-wide politics when our fathers declared here in Philadelphia that all men were created equal and that all men were endowed with inalienable rights. Others believe that our birth occurred with the declaration of war against Spain. There are many of us who believe that the United States has been a world power since 1776, that its influence has been international, that its example has been a guide to the lovers of liberty in every clime in every succeeding time. There are those who believe that when the liberty bell rang out to the inhabitants of this land it meant liberty to all in every quarter of the globe. There are those of us who believe that our example since the declaration was promulgated within this city's walls has been the mightiest influence amongst the sons of man, fashioning the destinies of

<sup>1</sup>Remarks as presiding officer of the session of the Academy, Saturday evening, April 4, 1914.

nations. The influence of the United States, the service of the United States, have been of a double character. We have had a negative influence, if I may say so, and a positive influence. We had to assist in ridding the world of ancient Rome. We had to assist other nations in sweeping away the dead and wrinkled skin of antiquity. We had to assist in striking away the shackles from the nations as we assisted in striking away the shackles of the individual. Our example in those countries which are governed by despotism has been an inspiration to lovers of freedom—more than an inspiration—a substantial guide and a substantial leader. When the United States took its place in the sisterhood of nations, monopoly prevailed upon the seas. It was an age of prohibition, of restriction, of search and seizure, of indefeasible allegiance. We have helped to rid the world of those shackles. Search and seizure are now little more than a reminiscence. Indefeasible allegiance has passed with the other barbaric quackeries or is fast passing. The inherent right of expatriation is coming to be a universally acknowledged right amongst the children of men. We have established or helped to establish the principle of neutrality, which has done so much to civilize the methods of modern warfare.

It cannot be denied that with the declaration of war against Spain and with the conclusion of peace there came a train of new problems, a train of new and of strange duties, perchance, and undoubtedly a train of new responsibilities. There is no one who would undertake to crush the American eagle back into its shell, but for my own part I believe that we should neutralize the inheritances which we received in consequence of the war, and that the leading powers of the earth should guarantee their neutrality and their integrity and their independence. This would reassure us against the dangers of war in another hemisphere. I still believe in the far-sighted wisdom and provision of Washington when he declared that we should have no permanent alliances, but should rely on temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies. If indeed there be a balance of power in Europe or a balance of power in Europe and Asia, we know that balance is in unstable equilibrium, and we can best serve ourselves and our destiny and our mission in a situation to cast the weight of our influence in whichever pan of the scale may promise most for the advancement of Christian civilization. I still believe that with a foresight almost superhuman Jefferson was right when

he pronounced our international policy to be that of peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations and entangling alliances with none. It cannot be doubted that with the spread of prosperity and the probability of peace we ought to encircle the world with our commerce. I am anxious, and I confess an ambition to see the United States the industrial, the commercial, and the financial leader of the world. I want to see the United States achieve that position by deserving that position. She must conquer commerce. She must conquer foreign commerce, not with the guns but with goods. Extended foreign markets give added stability to our industries, to our prosperity, to prices generally; and stability is one of the greatest desideratums in the industrial and financial worlds.

The observing of treaties is a virtue which the United States has inculcated among other nations, and this it has practiced with fidelity by its sacrificing observance of its treaty obligations. There may always be debate as to the wisdom of entering into a treaty. There can never be debate as to the virtue of observing any given treaty.

Good faith is to a nation what honor is to a man and what chastity is to a woman. It is that virtue without which all other virtues are vain. Fidelity—good faith—is essential to the success of a nation and of its rulers. It is essential to the success of a city boss, perhaps the worst of modern rulers, at least in the United States, and my words are to have no local application in this instance. The proverbial city boss may have every vice in the category of vices, he may want every virtue in the calendar of virtues, save only one. He must keep his word. And if you will make inquiries, as I have done, you will find the philosophy accounting for the success of the city boss in every city is this fact. His devout followers, and even those who follow him with an accusing conscience, offer this apology. He will do what he says he will do. And that virtue cannot be denied. It will cover a multitude of vices. I hope that the United States in the future as in the past will be a splendid example of a nation of the earth that adheres with scrupulous and unquestioning fidelity to its treaty obligations.

We have done the same in establishing the principle of neutrality, and in conducting international affairs according to the recognized and established rules of international law. We have taken the initiative in promoting the progress of arbitration. In order to

eliminate war we must eliminate the causes of war. We must minimize the differences between nations or municipalities for the pacific adjustment of these differences. Arbitration promises to compass the differences, to preserve peace, and to obviate war amongst the Christianized nations of the earth. We have been amongst the foremost in the establishment and in the practice of this principle, and I trust that we will persevere in the future in the promotion of the principle and the practice of arbitrating international disputes. This I say is the best means of obviating war, and I rejoice that the sentiment of modern civilization is growing constantly more steadfast in favor of peace and against war. It leads me to hope that the time will come when duelling between nations will be considered as odious and as harmful as duelling between individuals. I hope the time will come when it will be deemed to be no different for one hundred thousand men to murder one hundred thousand people than for one Cain to murder one Abel. The Christianized nations of the earth expend two billion dollars a year in preparation for war. Two billion dollars a year! The United States, champion of peace, expends four hundred and fifty million dollars a year on wars past, present, and to come. Enough to build four hundred and fifty thousand homes costing a thousand dollars apiece. Enough to build homes sufficient to house more than one-half of the population of this splendid metropolis. Four hundred and fifty millions a year on the bloody annals of war and only twenty-five millions a year on the arts of peace—on agriculture. Now I know and you know that the Golden Age has not come, perchance is not coming, when the dove of peace may plaint her notes in the throat of the cannon with unmolested and unthreatened security, and yet philanthropists may dream and poets may sing of the coming of the time when the plowshare will be dominant over the sword. I have a dream of my own, and I wish that each and every auditor here tonight might survive until the realization of my dream. I wish that the time might come when the Christianized nations of the earth would remit at least one billion dollars from their annual charges for war and for bloodshed—one billion dollars of burden from the bended backs of their citizens—and allow it to remain in the hands of those who earned that splendid, that colossal sum; when the civilized nations would limit their war expenditures to not more than five hundred million dollars a year and devote that for the time to the

maintenance of their present military establishments, and would levy about half a billion a year for an international peace guarantee fund and invest that half billion in the bonds of the different nations, at least one-half of it in the bonds of the different nations and the other half in the stocks and bonds of the leading industrial concerns of the various countries, and then create an international force for the adjudication of international quarrels, so that when a verdict is given in favor of an injured nation, indemnity would be paid like an international fine. How much of war would that abolish and how much of peace and its infinite blessings would it bring in its train. Now that is my dream. Not a practical proposition for the present time, but in the process of the suns a solution of that kind or of some other kind must be found to obviate war and the rumors of war and establish in its stead the universal blessing of peace.

One other point. Our foreign policy cannot be better, cannot be wiser than our foreign representatives, than our ambassadors, our ministers and our consuls, who are our national representatives in foreign lands. They ought to be men who can ably and adequately protect and promote the vast and varied interests of this splendid industrial and commercial republic. We ought to insist upon the very highest standard of fitness and of efficiency, for no matter how wise in theory our foreign policy may be, until the agents for its enforcement are raised to these standards our policy will still be subject to criticism. It will not be a success. It will be characterized by a greater or less degree of failure.