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COLONIALISM AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ASIA

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I. The Defeat of Colonialism in Asia,

The awakening of the peoples of Asia is clear to all the observers. The World War I brought to us the ideas of science, progress, civilization, democracy and socialism. The World War II further brought to us the prospect of freedom, independence, equality and sovereignty. Thus, most of the countries in Asia are today independent. In fact, until recently, most of the Asiatic peoples have not been consulted even about the problems of their vital concern and as late as at the beginning of the World War II, there were only three sovereign states in Asia, i.e., China, Thailand and Japan. But, the end of British rule over India has given rise to three new states, i.e. India, Pakistan and Ceylon, while Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia have also begun to enjoy full independence as sovereign republics. The latest entries to the charmed circle are Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, which have finally gained their freedom from the Western yoke as a byproduct of a bitter war. Although Malaya remains a colony, it too is slowly moving in the same direction of greater internal autonomy and eventual independence. We see therefore that colonialism in Asia has come to end. In fact, it was the rise of militant nationalism that caused the eventual retreat of colonialism. Another important milestone was the abrogation of the unequal treaties as well as the end of foreign concessions in China.

The defeat of colonialism in Asia is just another phase in the overall decline of colonialism throughout the World. Modern imperialism was first given birth in the 16th century, when, as a result of the invention of the navigational compass, Europeans succeeded in expanding the sphere of their maritime operations. The discovery of new land one after the other was followed by the successive establishment of colonies there. It was in 1492 that Christopher Columbus discovered America. Immediately thereafter, the American Continents were colonized by all the then great maritime powers of Europe—Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland. In 1497, Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, found a sea route to the Indian Ocean around the Cape of Good Hope and marked the opening of Asia to Europeans, who henceforth have come into contact with Asiatic peoples. It was indeed from this time on that colonialism in Asia started.

But in the American Continents, colonialism underwent a major setback.
American colonies declared independence in 1776 and went on to realize it through a war. Ever since the Latin American states won their independence from Spain and Portugal in the 19th century, the only remnant of colonialism in South America is found in Guiana.

Everywhere we find a new spirit against colonialism throbbing. The League of Nations had set up a mandate system for the administration of non-self-governing territories, which was in principle a step away from colonialism. In the Charter of the United Nations, a chapter on non-self-governing territories was added besides the stipulations on the trusteeship system, which was intended for the promotion of the political, economic, social and educational advancement of natives. The majority of people in the world has become definitely against imperialism from the stand-point of humanism. The British Empire, for example, has changed into the British Commonwealth, while France has been obliged, at least in gesture, to reorganize her colonial empire into a union with less centralization. Thus we see a vast retreat, if not a complete defeat, of colonialism throughout the World.

Yet there are still strong remnants of colonialism remaining in Asia, from which there are originating the feeling of resentment against it. We are all in agreement that we should be against colonialism and the domination of one country over another. But there are diverse nuances in the meaning of the word "colonial menace". For instance, the definition for colonialism as "every possible influence of one country over another", is too broad for its proper use. There is no doubt that Western influences are still remaining in Asia. The British influence has not yet disappeared completely from India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, while the French influence in the newly born Indo-Chinese countries, American interests in the Philippines and those of Netherland in Indonesia are still strong. Except where independence has been definitely obtained through the wars for independence, the privileges which had been enjoyed by foreigners in legal affairs are generally left intact. In Japan, people suffered for years from the American military occupation, which is still in continuation in the form of American military bases.

It would not be fair, if we did not point out the undesirability of the Soviet influence upon Communist China, and the similar relation between the United States and Formosa. However, it should be remarked, the overall policy against any foreign "influence" would be quixotic. It would lead only to a new form of isolationism, in which any international intercourse is rejected for fear of "influence" or "domination" by foreign powers. In fact, such a policy would eventually make us orphans in the World.

With your kind permission, I should like here to propose my own definition of colonialism. Colonialism, it seems to me, is a system which places one nation under the rule of the legislative authority of another.
Once this definition is accepted, there are obviously many kinds of relations between countries which do not in any sense come to the category of colonialism, so far as they are based on international law and justice and on equality between the parties concerned. The extremely nationalistic sentiment, which is fearful of any contact with foreign elements in view of their possible “domination”, is, it seems to me, a sign of the lack of self-confidence in maintaining independence and stands in contradiction to the general world tendency toward international co-operation.

Let us examine, by way of example, the case of Japan. It is often argued that the presence of American bases means the continuation of the occupation or of colonialism. It is however to be pointed out that the United States maintains her military bases in Japan in accord with the mutual security provisions of the Japan-United States Security Treaty of 1951. Furthermore, no Japanese is subject to the jurisdiction of American courts martial. Quite the contrary, crimes committed by American military personnel not in official duty are taken care of by the Japanese criminal codes. Thus in principle, Japanese law are applied to all persons irrespective of nationality in the territory of Japan. By contrast with the occupation period, the Japanese Government is no longer subject to the authority of the American military command, although American forces are still remaining in Japan by the afore-mentioned agreement. The American military authorities have no right for procurement and they must negotiate on an equal legal basis with the Japanese Government through the normal diplomatic channels existing between these two countries. Further, the investment of foreign capitals, which are both desired and feared, is only allowed through the strict provisions of Japanese law.

As a result of the long and bitter experience of colonialism, the nationalism takes a rather extreme form in Asia. In fact, nationalism is a necessary consequence of colonialism. Therefore, the severer the colonialism, the more deeply rooted the nationalism. The primitive and almost instinctive animosity against the foreign overlords is a natural reaction to the military and economic domination, which has expelled the native people to a status of only secondary importance in their own countries. In fact, the independence was brought about only as a consequence of this anti-colonial sentiment, which was properly organized and strengthened by the awakening of national consciousness. However, I am at the same time a little afraid of the possibility that nationalism in its extreme form may prove to be an obstacle to international peace and co-operation. There is an old Japanese saying: “Bozu nikukerya kesa mademo”, which means that the hatred for monks is readily turned to that for their clothes.

A century ago, when Japan opened her door to the outside world, she also underwent various humiliating experiences. For instance, unequal treaties deprived her of custom autonomy and established a consular jurisdic-
tion as well as concession system. Japan suffered from these impositions until 1899, when the treaties were finally revised. Having had a similar experience, the Japanese people are therefore in a position to feel a deep and sincere sympathy to the peoples of Asia about their present situation. But the method by which the unequal treatment is abolished must be chosen very carefully. Japan, for example, managed to realize it by her rapid modernization, such as the adoption of Western science and culture, the reformation of judicial systems along Western lines, the drafting of modern laws, the establishment of a modern prison system, etc. In this way, she succeeded to obtain respect for her achievements and strength. This was however a course which could be followed only with much patience. The ideal at which a nation is aiming is of course important in themselves, but the means by which it is realized is even more important. I feel that we Asian nations must achieve our full independence by the steps which will not in the long run be destructive to our ideal. In other words, less hasty steps have sometimes the effect of minimizing the conflicts thus bringing less embittered and more reliable results.

Now, the final disappearance of colonialism is inevitable. Asia, which until recently used to be on the periphery of the World has now become one of the centers of world affairs, while in the past she was no more than a place where Western powers competed among themselves for the exploitation of Asia. In fact, the outside world cannot disregard the opinions of the Asian peoples any more.

A large tree is provided with deep roots. With her abundant resources, large population and growing number of enlightened intellectuals, I am convinced that the Asian tree will certainly grow and soon send forth beautiful blossoms. If the peoples of Asia can unite their strength, there will be no danger of falling again into the clutches of imperialism.

II. The Formation of Modern States in Asia

The birth of independent Asian countries was a blow to colonialism. Before its final disappearance, these newly born countries have however the task to develop themselves economically and politically to sturdy, viable and modern states. Some people might argue that the “backward” nations should attain the same level of industrialization as that where developed countries of the West are. It seems to me however that another way should be sought for. In the first place, the modernization of the Western countries is the natural outcome of its traditional culture. The Western peoples have
a long living tradition of freedom and democracy. Democratic values are finely woven into the fabric of their social and spiritual life. The industrial revolution is also one of the products of their traditional culture.

This is however not the case with Asia. The political, economic and cultural problems, with which Asian countries are confronting are extremely complicated. There are many social and cultural obstacles to modernization, such as casteism, hierarchical concepts, communalism, racialism and religion. Further, most Asian nations are still at the level of one-crop economy. In fact, it is quite difficult, though not impossible, for them to develop a well-balanced, diversified industrial system. Because of their low educational standards and consequent high illiteracy rate, they have great difficulties in obtaining trained labor forces for improving their technological backgrounds.

We must also remember that the whole responsibility of leading this program of modernization and industrialization rests upon a very small number of educated persons.

It is further pointed out that the biggest single obstacle to advancement is the desperate shortage of capital. In order to free themselves from the vicious circle of poverty and backwardness, the accumulation of capital by means of internal saving and the introduction of foreign investment are urgently necessary. I shall first deal with the domestic accumulation of capital.

The habit of saving is very underdeveloped in Asia, as a result of poverty, suspicion and the absence of clear incentives. We cannot expect much at least for the time being from voluntary private savings.

If voluntary saving is unlikely to be a solution, compulsory savings should be taken into consideration. For its effective realization, a strong governmental control should be called for in order to reduce people's consumption and enforce them a stringent and austerity life, while unemployed labors should be mobilized for all kinds of construction works. This is the method of capital accumulation adopted by the totalitarian states, such as Soviet Russia and Communist China. It usually takes the form of Draconian taxation, compulsory loans, forced labor, requisitions, confiscation and so on. These are however all gloomy and violent measures which override the free will of the people. Although Asiatic peoples have become gentle and submissive as a result of their long past under despotic regimes, it would be a slander if the totalitarianism is the only solution for the industrial developments. We must look for a solution, which is more decent and justifiable, for the end, even attainable, does not justify the means.

Some sorts of governmental control and planning may be desirable and necessary. This does not however necessarily mean that the peoples of Asia should adopt the measures, which might destroy their national tradition and liberty. There is a danger that impatience with the development would make them receptive to the false blandishments of totalitarianism.
Let us now briefly consider the capital formation through the introduction of foreign capital. If domestic capital cannot be increased, the only solution may lie in the introduction of foreign capitals or in some combined investment of foreign and domestic capitals. Economic and technical aid programs after this ideal have already been embodied in the Colombo Plan and the Point Four Program. In fact, the so-called “Marshall Plan for Asia” would be of much help in rapidly modernizing her. In case the investment of this type is not developed on an adequate scale, the above-mentioned totalitarian method might be one of the possible way of solutions for their problems. Once this eventuality happens to be the case, the Western powers should not be allowed to remain a mere spectator to the communization of Asia in view of their responsibility as senior friends. It should further be remarked that no beneficial results is expected unless both the capital-investing and capital-receiving countries are careful enough. The capital-investing countries should give their aid through international bodies, such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in order to minimize any political commitments. It is provided for in the charter of the International Trade Organization that foreign investments should not be used as a basis for interference to the domestic affairs of the beneficiary (Article 14). On the other hand the beneficiary is requested to use the funds most rationally without making unreasonable demands.

If ultra-nationalism should be the only policy for the newly born Asian countries to maintain independence, such a policy would only be carried out at the risk of loosing the possibility of a smoother advancement towards modernization and industrialization. Any failure on the midway of this policy is liable to induce the onslaught of Communist both abroad and at home. While colonialism is fading away, Communism is threatening with ever increasing intensity. Let us not resort to any remedy which, as a proverb puts it, is worse than the disease.

Asia has developed her own traditional values, which lays a particular emphasis upon philanthropy and universal brotherhood sharply against the totalitarian way. Buddhism, Hiduism and Mohammedanism all join in teaching us brotherly love and respect for the inner person. They are all against authoritarianism. Asia must choose her own way of modernization. It is true that success of economic reconstruction in Communist China are attractive to many. There are however very few, to my regret, who take the trouble of paying attention to the sacrifice for this economic build-up, the struggles for power, the liquidations, the oppression, the police control and the thought control. Let someone make the economic calculation of whether the economic reconstruction of Red China—supposing its propaganda is all true—is worth the cost paid for the destruction of freedom. From the standpoint of cultural freedom, she is already a lost paradise. Do we not have the wisdom and foresight to reach our goals of freedom and
strength without falling into the totalitarian trap? If the peoples of Asia are too preoccupied with anti-colonialism in its negative form or ultra-nationalism, they are, before they realize it, giving way to totalitarianism, thereby losing once and for all the possibility of attaining their ideal of a free, humane, democratic welfare state.

We do not accept Communism as a solution. Our rejection of colonialism and advocacy of equality against exploitation does not necessarily imply the acceptance of any totalitarian economic ideals. Unfortunately, since modern economics is so complicated and abstract, many people being impatient of complexities and contingencies, are attracted by the simplicity of Marxism. But our problems are in reality too complicated to be solved by mere slogans. "The more haste, the less speed!" Now it is the time for us to decide definitely what our future course should be.

III. Closer Cooperation for World Peace

Asia is one. Of course there are differences in religion, race and language. But, the requirement for unification is stronger, because of our geographical relationship and our cultural similarities.

Although any single one of these newly born countries is not strong enough because of the unbalance in economy and resources, once they are united, they will form a powerful bloc, which will then be completely free from colonialism and Communism.

Regional arrangements are explicitly provided for in the Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Under these provisions, the American nations have formed the Pan-American Union, European nations the Brussels Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Arabic nations the Arab League, and Communist states their own great regional power bloc. Should then Asia alone be left unorganized? In these days of bitter antagonism between East and West, disunited Asia might well fall victims of some of these antagonistic powers.

If the unification is successful, the Asiatic nations should not turn to ultra-nationalism. Quite the contrary, international cooperation should be the very principle for them to follow. In other words, we should develop internationalism, only on which peace and order in Asia would be obtained promoting the modernization of Asia and filling up the political vacuum. We must find the way towards the world peace by the firm establishment of our own regional peace.

No exploitation should be made of Asian countries. Nor they must
be placed in isolation. No nation should have a place in the world unless it is in a position to contribute to the peace and welfare of it. We want the unity of Asia. We welcome any financial aid for modernization and development, if it is granted through the channels of international organizations. We want to see the Asiatic countries devoting themselves to the peace and security of the World.