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Making China a Great Power: A Reconsideration of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Postwar Vision of East Asia

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Abstract

Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, states in his memoir that during the Second World War, the United States sought to build China up "as a major power entitled to equal rank with the three big Western Allies, Russia, Britain, and the United States." Francis Spellman, the Archbishop of New York, wrote in a memorandum, as a record of a conversation with Roosevelt in 1943, "It is planned to make an agreement among the Big Four. Accordingly, the world will be divided into spheres of influence: China gets the Far East; the U.S. the Pacific; Britain and Russia, Europe and Africa." This paper examines Roosevelt's postwar vision of East Asia and clarifies that neither Hull's memoir nor Spellman's memorandum reflects Roosevelt's plan accurately. It is true that Roosevelt sought to make China one of "the Big Four." However, he positioned it not as an equal but a junior partner that, he expected, would support the United States in maintaining international order of East Asia. This paper argues that Roosevelt's postwar vision was to make East Asia an American sphere of influence and expand American hegemony geographically—from the Western Hemisphere through the Pacific to East Asia.

1. Introduction

The Secretary of State in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, Cordell Hull, states in his memoir that the United States had two objectives vis-à-vis China during the Second World War:

> The first was an effective joint prosecution of the war. The second was the recognition and building up of China as a major power entitled to equal rank with the three big Western Allies, Russia, Britain, and the United States, during and after the war, both for the preparation of a postwar organization and for the establishment of stability and prosperity in the Orient.[1)]

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1) Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. 2 (NY: Macmillan, 1948), p. 1583. ↗

While the first objective is a matter of course, the second is notable. When the United States entered the Second World War in 1941, China was still not recognized as a full sovereign country worldwide, plagued by the unequal treaty system established in the wake of the Opium War. The United States was one of the countries that enjoyed special privileges in China under this system. During the Second World War, however, the Roosevelt administration sought to give China international status not only as a full sovereign country but also as a major power or a great power. Hull explains the logic behind the second objective as follows:

> It was obvious to me that Japan would disappear as a great Oriental power for a long time to come. Therefore, the only major strictly Oriental power would be China. The United States, Britain, and Russia were also Pacific powers, but the greater interests of each were elsewhere. Consequently, if there was ever to be stability in the Far East, it had to be assured with China at the center of any arrangement that was made.[2)]

This explanation is supported by Roosevelt's alleged remark to Francis Spellman, the Archbishop of New York, who was invited to the White House in September 1943. A memorandum in Spellman's files entitled "Here are a few outstanding points of the conversation" stated the following:

> [I]t is planned to make an agreement among the Big Four. Accordingly the world will be divided into spheres of influence: China gets the Far East; the U.S. the Pacific; Britain and Russia, Europe and Africa.[3)]

Historian Alonzo Hamby accepts this description and adds that in Roosevelt's mind, the United States was to get "presumably the Western Hemisphere" as well

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↘This paper was originally prepared for the 11th International Conference on East Asian Studies, which was to be held at Lanzhou University (China) in August 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This author has already published some monographs analyzing from slightly different angles Roosevelt's postwar plan of making China a great power. See Keikichi Takahashi, *China or Japan? The American Search for a Partner in East Asia, 1941 – 1954* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2019), chap.1 and Takahashi Keikichi, "F. D. Roosevelt no Sengo Asia Kōsō: Chugoku Taikokuka no Zyōken," in *Kingendai Higasi Asia no Chiiki Chitsuzyo to Nihon,* ed. Takiguchi Tsuyoshi (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 2020), chap.10.

2) Hull, *The Memoirs*, Vol.2*,* p.1587.

3) Robert Ignatius Gannon, *The Cardinal Spellman Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962)*,* p.222.

as the Pacific.[4)]

This paper examines Roosevelt's postwar vision of East Asia and argues that neither Hull's memoir nor Spellman's memorandum conveys it accurately. It is true that Roosevelt's vision put China on an equal footing in form with "the three big Western Allies, Russia, Britain, and the United States," enabling it to gain a permanent seat of the U.N. Security Council. However, he did not mean to allow China to get East Asia because he envisioned the region not as a Chinese but an American sphere of influence, at least in the short term. From this standpoint, China was positioned as a junior partner that was required to support the American de facto domination of East Asia.

Although some previous studies have already pointed out that Roosevelt regarded China as a junior partner,[5)] they have paid less attention to his ambition vis-à-vis East Asia. As is well known, the United States had already become the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere in the early 20th century. Roosevelt's postwar plan aimed to expand American hegemony geographically—from the Western Hemisphere all the way up to East Asia.

2. Good Neighbor Policy and Roosevelt's Postwar Vision

To understand Roosevelt's postwar plan, it should first be noted that American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere changed in its form during the 1930s under the so-called good neighbor policy. For decades before the 1930s, the United States carried out repeated military interventions in Latin American countries, either to build up or protect pro-American regimes there. As the Under Secretary of the Navy in the Woodrow Wilson administration, Roosevelt was one of the officials who fervently advocated military interventions in neighboring countries.[6)]

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4) Alonzo L., Hamby, *Man of Destiny: FDR and the Making of the American Century* (NY: Basic Books, 2015), p.385.

5) Iokibe Makoto, *Beikoku no Nihon Senryo Seisaku: Sengo Nihon no Sekkeizu* (Tokyo: Chuōkōronsya, 1985). Historian John Lewis Gaddis says that Roosevelt's "purpose of including Nationalist China as one of the Four Policemen had been to give Washington a surrogate vote within that group"; see John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.53. Historian Erez Manela argues that Roosevelt ranked China as "the fourth policeman"; see Erez Manela, "The Fourth Policeman: Franklin Roosevelt's Vision for China's Global Role," in *The Significance and Impact of the Cairo Declaration,* ed. Wu Sihua, Lü Fangshang and Lin Yongle (Taipei: Chengchi University Press, 2014).

6) Graham Cross, *The Diplomatic Education of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1882 – 1933* (NY: Palgrave, 2012), chap.2.

Not surprisingly, these interventions induced savage hostility among Latin Americans and even triggered large-scale anti-American resistance movements in some countries. By the time Roosevelt was sworn in as President in March 1933, it had become clear that military intervention would not enhance but hurt American national interests in the Western Hemisphere. Along with this realization, there was a pervasive feeling in the United States that it should avoid engaging in costly foreign endeavors, and instead invest effort in rehabilitating the American economy that had been decimated during the Great Depression.

In his inaugural address, therefore, Roosevelt declared that he would dedicate the United States "to the policy of the good neighbor,"[7] and then took a clear stance of opposing military intervention abroad. In August 1933, he entered into an agreement with the Haitian government to withdraw American military forces that had occupied Haiti since 1915. In December, at the seventh inter-American conference held in Montevideo, Uruguay, Hull represented the United States and signed the Convention of Rights and Duties of States, which stipulates that "[n]o state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another."[8] The following year, the Roosevelt administration finalized a treaty with the Cuban government, abolishing the so-called Platt Amendment, which had given the United States legal authority to intervene in Cuban internal affairs since the early 20th century.

Though these were remarkable achievements, ending military interventionism was not enough to be a good neighbor. The Roosevelt administration also had to abolish American economic protectionism that deprived Latin American countries of a huge and geographically natural market. American economic protectionism had a long history since the birth of the nation and hit a peak with the enactment of the so-called Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, just three years before Roosevelt became President. It was expected that the Act would help the American economy recover after the Great Depression, but it actually worsened it by causing the stagnation of world trade. Roosevelt was aware of the problem of course, but initially took a cautious attitude to the tariff issue because it was a politically sensitive one in which various domestic interests were complicatedly involved. In his inaugural address, Roosevelt said, "[o]ur international trade relations, though

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7) F. D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933, in *The Years of Crisis, 1933,* comp. Samuel I. Rosenman, Vol. 2 of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (NY: Russell and Russell, 1969), p.14.

8) Article 8 of the Convention of Rights and Duties of States.

vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy."[9)]

It was Hull who became a main promoter of free trade in the Roosevelt administration. He overrode Roosevelt's reluctance and, at the Montevideo Conference, presented a proposal titled "Economic, Commercial, and Tariff Policy." It stipulates that the governments of the American Republics would "reduce high trade barriers through the negotiation of comprehensive bilateral reciprocity treaties based upon mutual concessions."[10)]

Hull's proposal gained favorable responses from the Latin American delegates and was unanimously adopted. It also won positive reactions from the American press. As a politician who was shrewd enough to notice a shift in public opinion, Roosevelt sent a message to Congress in March 1934, requesting authority to negotiate trade agreements with other countries. This request materialized in June as the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, which an economist calls "a landmark law that bisects the history of U.S. trade law."[11)] It granted the President authority to reduce tariffs by up to 50 percent in trade agreements with foreign countries. With an unconditional most-favored nation clause, it also made it possible to apply negotiated tariff reductions to imports from all over the world.

Starting with the finalization of a reciprocal trade agreement with Cuba in August 1934, the Roosevelt administration signed a series of agreements one after another. Until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the United States finalized reciprocal trade agreements with a total of 21 countries, including 11 Latin American ones (the others were Canada, Turkey, and eight European nations).

The tariff reduction, along with the non-intervention policy, softened anti-American feelings in Latin American countries, enabling the Roosevelt administration to take the initiative to create a new peace regime with them. In January 1936, Roosevelt sent letters to the presidents of all Latin American countries and proposed a special conference "to determine how the maintenance of peace among the American republics may best be safeguarded."[12)]

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9) Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, in *The Years of Crisis, 1933*, p.14.

10) Report of the Delegates of the United States of America to the Seventh International Conference of American States, Department of State, Conference Series 19 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1934), p.196.

11) Sasaki Takao*, America no Tsusyō Seisaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p.56.

12) *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*)*: 1936* 5 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1954), p.4.

Among the American Republics, there had already existed international schemes to solve disputes peacefully through mechanisms such as arbitration and conciliation. These, however, had proved inefficient in stopping the recurrence of armed conflicts. One of the most serious conflicts was the Chaco War erupted in 1933 between Paraguay and Bolivia over the Chaco Boreal. By the time the two countries entered into a ceasefire agreement in June 1935, the territorial war had cost them more than 100,000 casualties, and devastated their economies. Thus, it was obvious that more efficient peace mechanisms were needed.

Roosevelt's proposal of a special inter-American conference also stemmed from his concern about European international situations. In Germany, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party were rising, shaking the so-called Versailles system founded in the wake of the First World War. In Italy, Mussolini gained power and strained European societies by invading Ethiopia in 1935. The League of Nations failed to cope with these international crises, as in the case of the Manchurian Incident of 1931 – 33. Roosevelt was worried that the collapse of European international order would threaten the Western Hemisphere again, as it had during the First World War.[13)]

His special inter-American conference proposal was unanimously accepted by Latin American countries, and was realized in December 1936 with Argentina as the host country. During the three weeks of its sessions at Buenos Aires, the conference adopted 11 treaties and conventions and 62 resolutions and declarations. The most significant among them is the Convention for the Maintenance, Preservation and Reestablishment of Peace. Hailed by Hull as "the strongest assurance of peace which this continent has ever had,"[14)] it established in contractual form the obligation to consult together whenever peace of the American Republics was threatened.[15)]

It, however, had a shortcoming in that it did not provide any machinery for consultation. At the Buenos Aires Conference, Hull proposed the establishment of "a permanent Inter-American Consultative Committee" comprising foreign ministers of the American Republics.[16)] However, this proposal faced strong

13) Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 103.

14) *New York Times*, December 13, 1936.

15) Report of the Delegation of the United States of America to the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace, Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 1 – 23, 1936, Department of State, Publication 1088, Conference Series 33, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1937), pp.17-18.

16) *New York Times,* December 7, 1936.

objection from the Argentine delegation. According to Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of the State for Latin American affairs, Argentina was concerned that a regional political institution would enable the United States and Brazil to "develop sufficient influence to check Argentina's traditional attempt to assert the right to speak for the other Spanish-American republics of South America."[17)]

Subsequently, however, the Argentine attitude softened to some extent; at the eighth inter-American conference at Lima, Peru, in December 1938, it was decided that "the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, when deemed desirable and at the initiative of any one of them, will meet in their several capitals by rotation and without protocolary character."[18)] It can be said that this decision effectively fulfilled the American proposal of a permanent Inter-American Consultative Committee at Buenos Aires. After the Second World War began in 1939, three foreign ministerial meetings were held in succession by 1942, creating a joint defense regime in the Western Hemisphere.

The development of regional order in the Western Hemisphere, along with the malfunction of the League of Nations, became a key factor in Roosevelt's emphasis on a regional approach in his postwar vision. In fact, Spellman's memorandum is correct in that it indicates the regional roles of great powers. According to Roosevelt, great powers needed to adopt the American good neighbor policy as a model and, in each region, take the initiative to establish a stable and open international order after the example of the Western Hemisphere. At the Tehran Conference in November – December 1943, Roosevelt recommended the good neighbor policy directly to then Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin as a "policy for strong powers paramount in their regions," such as the United States in the New World and the Soviet Union in Eastern and Northern Europe.[19)]

As Spellman's memorandum implies, Roosevelt did not regard France as a great power that should strive to create a stable and open postwar world. When he was asked about the possibility of establishing "France as a great power" by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, who visited Washington D.C. in the middle of 1942, he ambiguously replied, "that might perhaps be possible within 10 or 20 years."[20)]

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17) Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p.206.

18) Article 4 of the Inter-American Solidarity (Declaration of Lima).

19) Forrest Davis, "What Really Happened at Teheran," *Saturday Evening Post,* May 13, 1944, p. 13; and Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.110.

20) *FRUS: 1942* 3 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), p.569

Although he had close relatives in France and felt familiar with its culture, Roosevelt was deeply disappointed that France had quickly succumbed to German military pressures and allowed Japanese troops to enter its Asian colony, Indochina, a strategically important place to defend the Philippines and other Southeast Asian regions. He also had bad chemistry with Charles De Gaulle, the leader of "Free France."[21] For these reasons, he not only took a negative stance against the resurgence of France as a great power, the international status De Gaulle coveted, but also made it the main target of his anti-colonial policy.

In terms of the size of population and territory, geographical location, and war efforts, it was Brazil that Roosevelt considered appropriate to join "a great power club" with the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. Under Roosevelt's directive, the American delegation at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944 called upon British and Soviet representatives to recognize Brazil as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Roosevelt's commitment to the proposal was so strong that despite the opposition of the two countries, he did not readily withdraw it. Even after agreeing to its withdrawal, he sought to include in the Dumbarton Oaks proposal a provision to allow other countries to be added as permanent members. This attempt also failed.[22]

That said, according to Roosevelt, Brazil was a great power that would strive for the maintenance of the international order of the Western Hemisphere with the United States; it was also to take the responsibility of maintaining peace of the African continent with Britain (in this regard, Spellman's memorandum is wrong).[23]

Roosevelt well knew that Brazil could not be indifferent to the African continent because of its geographical proximity. At the same time, he also understood that Brazil's national power would not be enough to deal with African problems. Therefore, he planned to set up a military base in Dakar (Senegal) after

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21) For the relationship between Roosevelt and De Gaulle, see Claude Fohlen, "De Gaulle and Franklin D. Roosevelt," in *FDR and His Contemporaries: Foreign Perceptions of an American President,* ed. Cornelis A. van Minnen and John F. Sears (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992), chap. 3.

22) On the deliberations at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the issue of making Brazil a great power, see Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), chap. 6.

23) William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R., 1942 – 1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1958), p.166.

denying the French colonial control and station American troops there.[24)]

According to a postwar military base plan (JCS570/2) prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and approved by Roosevelt in January 1944, the United States was to establish military bases in South America, too.[25)] This implies that Roosevelt did not believe Brazil had enough capability to maintain an international order even of its own region.

After all, Brazil was not an equal but a junior partner for Roosevelt. This means that in his postwar plan, great powers were divided into two groups—first-ranking powers and second-ranking powers. As discussed later, China, along with Brazil, was a second-ranking power according to Roosevelt.

Because of his emphasis on the regional approach, Roosevelt initially took a negative stance on the establishment of a universal international organization. At the Atlantic Conference in August 1941, he did not accept British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's proposal that the United States and United Kingdom "seek a peace which will not only cast down forever the Nazi tyranny but by effective international organization will afford to all States and peoples the means of dwelling in security within their own bounds and of traversing the seas and oceans without fear of lawless assault or need of getting burdensome armaments."[26)] The following year, he recalled the Atlantic Conference in a meeting with Molotov and said that although "Mr. Churchill had expressed some idea of reestablishing a post-war international organization which was in effect a revived League of Nations," he had given him his own opinion that "such an organization would be impractical, because too many nations would be involved."[27)]

Public opinion surveys conducted after the United States' entry into the Second World War showed that in contrast with Roosevelt, the majority of American people favored the establishment of a universal international organization.[28)] Congress reacted enthusiastically to such public opinion in 1943—the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively passed, by a wide margin, a resolution endorsing the creation of a universal international organization

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24) *FRUS: 1943* 3 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1963), p.26, p.36; and JCS570/2 "U.S. Requirements for Post-War Air Bases," Folder: Sec. 2, Box: 270, Central Decimal File, 1942 – 45, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG218, National Archives, College Park, MD.

25) Ibid.

26) *FRUS: 1941* 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), p.355.

27) *FRUS: 1942* 3, p.568.

28) Mildred Strunk, *Public Opinion, 1935 – 1946* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 911.

and American participation in it.[29)]

Pressured by American public opinion and Congress, Roosevelt changed his attitude and allowed a U.S.-British-Soviet foreign ministers' conference, which was held in Moscow in October 1943, to issue a declaration about a postwar international organization by adding the signature of the Chinese ambassador to the Soviet Union. The declaration stated that "they recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security."[30)]

At the Tehran Conference held the following month, Roosevelt himself proposed to Stalin a world-wide international organization plan, which had been drafted by the State Department. The organization would have three organs. The first was a general assembly comprising all member states, and the second "an executive committee composed of the Soviet Union, the United States, United Kingdom and China, together with two additional European states, one South America, one Near East, one Far Eastern country, and one British Dominion"; according to Roosevelt, "[t]his Executive Committee would deal with all non-military questions such as agriculture, food, health, and economic questions, as well as the setting up of an International Committee." The third organ was termed "The Four Policemen." Comprising the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China, it "would have the power to deal immediately with any threat to the peace and any sudden emergency which requires this action."[31)]

As this remark shows, Roosevelt's postwar vision for great powers was to be incorporated into a plan for a universal international organization. This means that, institutionally, the four great powers would be jointly responsible for world problems. As is evident from his conversation with Stalin in Tehran, however, Roosevelt did not completely give up pursuing his regional approach. During the conversation, Stalin pointed out that "the world organization suggested by the President, and in particular the Four Policemen, might also require the sending of American troops to Europe." Roosevelt responded that "he had only envisaged the sending of American planes and ships to Europe, and that England and the Soviet Union would have to

29) Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (NY: Atheneum, 1971), chap.4 – 6.

30) Article 4 of the Joint Four-Nation Declaration, October 1943.

31) *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), p.530.

handle the land armies in the event of any future threat to the peace."[32)]

Historian Warren F. Kimball argues that "[c]rucial to any understanding of FDR's postwar vision is his consistent emphasis on the regional role of each of the policemen."[33)] Although Kimball barely examines Roosevelt's vision of making China as one of the policemen, his argument applies to it.

3. China's Regional Roles

The first regional role expected of China was to monitor postwar Japan. In March 1943, Roosevelt said to British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden that "China might become a very useful power in the Far East to help police Japan and that he wanted to strengthen China in every possible way."[34)]

The second regional role was to temporally administer the Korean Peninsula that was to be put under international trusteeship after the war. Likewise, China would become a trustee of the European colonies in Southeast Asia.

On the latter, Roosevelt often mentioned during the Second World War how severe European colonialism had been.[35)] However, he did not take a negative stance on not only the Japanese colonies but also the European colonies merely because of his sympathy toward oppressed peoples. A strong concern of his was that tensions between the European colonial powers and the oppressed observed before the Second World War would threaten the stability of the postwar world. According to a memorandum of Charles W. Taussig, Adviser on Caribbean Affairs, Roosevelt said in March 1945 that "he was concerned about the brown people in the East. He said that there are 1,100,000,000 brown people. In many Eastern countries, they are ruled by a handful of whites and they resent it. Our goal must be to help them achieve independence – 1,100,000,000 potential enemies are dangerous."[36)]

Previous studies have pointed out that Wilson's efforts to promote the idea of national self-determination during the First World War influenced Roosevelt's world views and motivated him to adopt an anti-imperialistic policy.[37)] That might

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32) *Ibid.*, p.531.

33) Warren F. Kimball, "The Sheriffs: FDR's Postwar World," in *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies,* ed. David B. Woolner, Warren F. Kimball, and David Reynolds (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.95.

34) *FRUS: 1943* 3, p.35.

35) For example, see *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, *1943,* p.485; *FRUS: 1944* 3 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1965), p.773; and Kimball, *The Juggler,* pp.144 – 145.

36) *FRUS: 1945* 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1967), p.124.

37) Kimball, *The Juggler,* p.128.

have been the case, but it should be noted that Roosevelt's anti-imperialist policy was different from Wilson's in terms of its applicability. Wilson regarded the idea of national self-determination as being primarily applicable to European peoples. Therefore, he did not resist British and French endeavors to make the mandate system of the League of Nations applicable only to colonies or territories of Germany and Turkey, the countries defeated in the First World War.

Based on his strong awareness of racial tensions in the European colonies, Roosevelt, by contrast, considered that the idea of national self-determination should be positively applied to not only European peoples but also non-European counterparts. In this regard, he differed with Churchill over the interpretation of Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter—it provides that the United States and United Kingdom "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." Churchill had argued in his testimony in the House of Commons that this stipulation should be applied to European peoples only because he and Roosevelt at the Atlantic meeting "had in mind, primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the states and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke."[38] On the contrary, Roosevelt considered that the stipulation should be applied to "all peoples" literally, saying in a statement in February 1942 that "[t]he Atlantic Charter applies not only to the parts of the world that border the Atlantic but to the whole world."[39]

It should be noted, however, that Roosevelt's idea of national self-determination included a distinction between Europe and the others in that oppressed peoples in the latter areas were planned to be put under international trusteeship. Roosevelt thought that those outside Europe must be guided by mature countries because they could pose a serious threat to white peoples, even though they were immature at the moment due to long-term foreign rules.[40]

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38) Churchill's testimony at the House of Commons on September 9, 1941, accessed on November 1, 2020, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1941/sep/09/war-situation.

39) F. D. Roosevelt, "We Must Keep on Striking Out Enemies Wherever and Whenever We Can Meet Them," Fireside Chat on Progress of the War, February 23, 1942, in *Humanity on the Defensive, 1942,* comp. Samuel I. Rosenman, Vol.11 of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (NY: Russell and Russell, 1950), p.115.

40) With this patriarchal view as a background, Roosevelt often referred to the American experience of governing the Philippines as a model of trusteeship. On this, see Gary R. Hess, *The United States' Emergence as a Southeast Asian Power, 1940 – 1950* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1987), chap.7.

As mentioned above, it was France that Roosevelt set as the main target of his anti-colonial policy. In early 1942, Roosevelt created China's theater, where Chiang Kai-shek would serve as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, and incorporated French Indochina in it. This means that Allied forces, including French troops, could not enter French Indochina without Chiang Kai-shek's permission, and they would be placed under his command on entering.[41] It was expected that this mechanism would make it difficult for the French Empire to reestablish its control in Indochina because Chiang Kai-shek, with China's history of suffering under European and Japanese imperialism as a background, had taken a negative stance on the survival of the colonial empire.

Roosevelt foresaw that the collapse of the French Empire in Indochina would shake other European rules in Asia. Their Asian colonies are "all interrelated," Roosevelt told his son during the war. "If one gets its freedom, the others will get ideas."[42] Based on this remark, it can be said that China was supposed to play an important role in expelling European colonial powers from Asia.

China was also expected to function as a power to block the expansion of the Soviet power in East Asia. In early 1943, Roosevelt said to the Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles that "[a] stable China, recognized as one of the great powers, would, he believed, be a barrier to Soviet ambitions in the Far East."[43] In March of the same year, he also said to Eden that he felt that "China, in any serious conflict of policy with Russia, would undoubtedly line up on our side."[44]

Finally, China was expected to contribute to the reconstruction and prosperity of Asia under a free trade regime promoted by the United States. In September 1944, Donald M. Nelson, the former director of the War Production Board, visited Moscow on the way to Chongqing to investigate Chinese economy, and told Molotov that China would "supply the peoples of the Near and Far East with their requirements formerly supplied by the Japanese."[45]

4. China as a Junior Partner

Roosevelt pinned many hopes on China. That said, he never rated its

41) Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45," *The American Historical Review* 80, no.5 (1975), p.1282.

42) Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 1946), p.72.

43) Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History,* p.186.

44) *FRUS: 1943* 3, p.39; and CAB/65/38/2, April 13, 1943, Cabinet Papers, National Archives, Kew, London.

45) *FRUS: 1944* 6 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1967), p.254.

economic and political situations highly, confessing to Stalin at the Tehran Conference that he realized "the weakness of China at present."[46] It was a well-known fact that China lagged far behind Western countries and Japan in terms of modernization. China also had a problem of internal strife between the Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Party. In a meeting with Molotov in May 1942, Roosevelt revealed his idea of making the realization of "a unified central government" a condition China should meet before becoming one of the four policemen.[47]

However, Roosevelt did not wait for China to fulfill this condition for several reasons. First, there were no other Asian nations that could play the regional roles that he expected of China. Second, Roosevelt was concerned that failure to include China in the "great power club" could give rise to the charge "that the white races were undertaking to dominate the world."[48] Third, Roosevelt rated China's potential power highly. When Churchill had stayed at the White House immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan and told Roosevelt how much he felt "American opinion over-estimated the contribution which China could make to the general war," Roosevelt had differed strongly and said, "[t]here were five hundred million people in China. What would happen if this enormous population developed in the same way as Japan had done in the last century and got hold of modern weapons?"[49]

As this conversation with Churchill shows, Roosevelt's high regard for China's potential was based on his view of population as a major source of national power. To be sure, his remarks about the size of China's population were not constant, such as saying five hundred million or four hundred million. During the war, however, Roosevelt consistently rated China's potential highly based on its huge population.

In this regard, a pundit interestingly sees the impact of the Yellow Peril on Roosevelt's view of China.[50] Roosevelt was reared at the turn of the century, when the Yellow Peril became increasingly prevalent in Western societies. He was also a fan of Alfred Thayer Mahan, who was a proponent of the Yellow Peril. What Mahan perceived as a main threat to Western societies from his long-term

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46) *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, *1943,* pp.531 – 532.
47) *FRUS: 1942* 3, p.568.
48) Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History,* p.186.
49) Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate,* Vol.9 of *The Second World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p.119.
50) Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1959), pp.178 – 179.

perspective was Chinese people. He wrote in his book *The Problem of Asia* as follows:

> "[I]t is difficult to contemplate with equanimity such a vast mass as the four hundred millions of China concentrated into one effective political organization, equipped with modern appliances, and cooped within a territory already narrow for it.[51)]

It is quite possible that Mahan's arguments about the Yellow Peril were aroused in Roosevelt's mind by his strong awareness of race during the Second World War, and then, had a certain impact on his postwar visions. Previous studies have pointed out that Roosevelt's pro-Chinese sentiment nurtured in relation to his grandfather, who had made a huge fortune in trade with China, was an important source of his postwar vision of making China a great power. This might be the case, but the perception of China as a threat rather than such a lukewarm feeling toward it should be emphasized as a factor that defined Roosevelt's vision of China.

In his book, Mahan argues that "a process has begun which must end either in bringing the Eastern and Western civilizations face to face, as opponents who have nothing in common, or else in receiving the new elements, the Chinese especially," into our civilization.[52)] Roosevelt's vision of China was clearly to pursue the latter course. Behind that choice, there was also a consideration that it would be "easier to influence China's development internationally and internally if she were on the inside of any special relationship among the big Powers than if she were on the outside."[53)] Moreover, Roosevelt's vision of China aimed to build long-term and stable relationships with all of Asia's colored peoples, which were estimated at 1,100,000,000. In January 1943, Roosevelt told Welles about the aim as follows:

> [T]he Western world, for its own safety's sake, must abandon once and for all the idea that the Asiatic peoples were inferior races, and must work wholeheartedly with China from the outset as the best means of preventing a fundamental cleavage between the West and the East in the years to come.[54)]

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51) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Problem of Asia* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1900), p.88.
52) *Ibid.,* pp.90 – 91.
53) Hull, *The Memoirs*, Vol.2, p.1257.
54) Welles, *Seven Decisions that Shaped History*, pp.154 – 155.

If we judge from these words that Roosevelt positioned China as an equal partner, we would be misunderstanding the essence of his postwar vision of China. His vision put China on an equal footing in form with the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union, to be sure. However, it should be noted, his perception of colored peoples as a threat was closely connected to his patriarchal view of them, as clearly observed in his plan of international trusteeship. Given Roosevelt's low evaluation of China's situation, it is unlikely that Chinese people were outside the scope of his patriarchal thinking. Therefore, the above-mentioned view that it would be "easier to influence China's development" "if she were on the inside of any special relationship among the big Powers" should be understood not only as a reflection of Roosevelt's perception of China as a threat but also as a manifestation of his patriarchal thinking toward Chinese people. For Roosevelt, China was a nation that needed to be given special treatment due to its usefulness and potential but, at the same time, had to be guided for progress. In this sense, China was positioned lower than the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union.

In fact, the Chinese government was rarely given opportunities to discuss with these countries postwar order issues such as the creation of a universal international organization. Even military strategies against the Axis powers were often decided without consulting the Chinese government. Chiang Kai-shek was dissatisfied with this and repeatedly urged the United States to allow China to join the Combined Chiefs of Staff comprising American and British representatives.[55] However, his appeal was never accepted.

After all, Roosevelt's postwar vision was to position China as a junior partner for the time being, at least until China achieved unification and modernization. Furthermore, given that the United States was to be a policeman in East Asia, it can be said that Roosevelt sought to establish an American hegemonic order in the region. His postwar vision was to reproduce the Western Hemispheric order in East Asia more comprehensively than in other regions.

The postwar base plan, JCS570/2, clearly reflected this vision of his. According to the plan, the United States was to set up a number of military bases in wide areas extending from the Western Hemisphere to East Asia.[56]

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55) For example, see *FRUS: 1942, China* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956), pp.33-34; Maurice Matloff and E. M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941 – 1942* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1999), p.205; and Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p.235.

56) See Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783 – 2011* (Santa Monica, CA: ↗

Technically, JCS570/2 was a base plan applicable just for the period until a universal international organization was established. Moreover, it was created only for the air force.

However, the JCS believed that JCS570/2 would be "a sound basis" on which to build a permanent base system in the future.[57] In January 1944, Roosevelt sent a letter to Hull and ordered him to "initiate negotiations with the government concerned to acquire permanent or long-term benefit of the bases, facilities and rights required, at the earliest possible moment."[58] The following month, Roosevelt sent another letter to Hull and instructed him that the State Department, in their negotiations with foreign governments, "will not limit themselves to the subject of air bases alone, but will consider the related questions of adequate base facilities for naval and ground forces."[59]

It was the Assistant Secretary of State Adolf A. Berle, who took charge of diplomatic negotiations on the base issue. He wrote in his diary about JCS570/2 as follows:

> It is quite a proposition, and in a sense tends to delimit what might be called the "American Empire."[60]

5. Conclusion

During the Second World War, President Roosevelt sought to make China, along with the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, one of the so-called Four Policemen. Taking the American good neighbor policy as a model, China was supposed to take the responsibility of establishing a stable and open international order in postwar East Asia. It should be noted, however, that Roosevelt neither positioned China as an equal partner, as Hull's memoir describes, nor intended to allow it to make East Asia its sphere of influence, as Spellman's memorandum reports. According to Roosevelt's postwar vision, the United States was to continue handling Asian affairs after the war and be the dominant power in the region for

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↘RAND Corporation, 2012), p.51.

57) JCS570, "U.S. Requirements for Post-War Air Bases," November 6, 1943, Folder: CCS360 (12-9-42), Sec. 2, Box: 270, Central Decimal File, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG218, National Archives.

58) From Roosevelt to Hull, January 7, 1944, ibid.

59) From Roosevelt to Hull, February 1, 1944, ibid.

60) Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, *Navigating the Rapids, 1918 – 1971* (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), p.449.

the time being, at least until China achieved unification and modernization. In short, Roosevelt's postwar vision of China was to prepare for the possibility of China becoming a real great power while, at the time, positioning it as a junior partner and aiming to expand American hegemony from the Western Hemisphere to East Asia.

In his book published in 2017, Asia specialist Michael J. Green argues that "[i]f there is one central theme in American strategic culture as it has applied to the Far East over time, it is that the United States will not tolerate any other power establishing exclusive hegemonic control over Asia or the Pacific." "Put another way," he continues, "for over two centuries, the national interest of the United States has been identified by key leaders as ensuring that the Pacific Ocean remains a conduit for American ideas and goods to flow westward, and not for threats to flow eastward toward the homeland."[61] This argument applies to Roosevelt's postwar vision of making China a great power, though Green does not explore it in detail.

After the Second World War, Roosevelt's postwar vision of China collapsed due to the outbreak of civil war in China and the victory of the Chinese Communist Party. Nevertheless, American interests in East Asia did not diminish, forming the Cold War strategy in the region. Positioned as a junior partner in that strategy was Japan.

Postwar Japan has been an ideal junior partner for the United States. Unlike China, which fell into a civil war, Japan has maintained its domestic stability well, and also unlike China, which is under communist rule, Japan has been willing to accept American military presence in Asia; in spite of its enormous power, it has developed restrained diplomacy that can be called good neighbor diplomacy. It is true that China has become a great power in a real sense, but its recent international behavior makes it hard to avoid the impression that it is much different from the China Roosevelt had envisioned as one of the four policemen. His postwar vision of China during the Second World War implies that there would be less possibility of the United States abolishing its Japan-centered East Asia policy and pursuing a bipolar condominium with China as we see it today.

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61) Michael J. Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific since 1783* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), p.5.