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HOW ROOSEVELT KEPT PEACE

By WILLIAM HARD
In METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE

It seems to me I once heard a man say: "Now if Roosevelt were president, we would have been plunged into this terrible war straight off." In truth I heard this remark so frequently that I determined to go over the diplomatic records of the two Roosevelt administrations.

I find that Roosevelt had many bully opportunities to plunge the United States into foreign conflicts. I find that he was obliged to face and handle three great crises with three of the greatest countries in the world. I find that he was obliged to take a hand, a decisive future-fixing hand, in the affairs of three small countries—small but near-by and turbulent and dangerous to the world's peace. I find that he was obliged to have dealings with many other countries in matters capable of bearing fruit either of friendship or of hatred. I find that he wrote on a visiting card the terms on which a violent European controversy was settled. I find that foreigners think of him as a great historical figure not because of the part he took in railway legislation or in pure-food legislation or in conservation legislation or in any other activity of domestic politics, but because of the part he took in international politics—in the politics of the world at large. I find that Europe and Asia regard him as having been primarily—for good or for ill—the diplomat.

This is the Roosevelt least known to Americans.

The Alaskan Boundary Question.
His first difficulty was with Great Britain. It was acute. It had to do with the Alaskan boundary. The British put forth a claim which, as Roosevelt remarked, was "just as indefensible as if they should now suddenly claim the island of Nantucket."

Alaska is a kite. It has a main body and then, fluttering southward along the Pacific coast toward the state of Washington, a tail. The dimensions of this tail were determined long before Alaska passed from Russia to the United States, by a treaty of the year 1825 between Russia and Great Britain. It provided that the boundary between Alaska and the British possessions should run along the crest of the mountain or by the line of the coast, whichever was the most advantageous to the United States. The United States accordingly occupied the coast region without resistance.

In 1898, however, there was a discovery of a considerable quantity of gold in the Klondike. The Canadians immediately insisted on the extension of a semi-submerged coastal mountain range which spent a large part of its time under the waters of the Pacific and which, when it rose to the surface, rose principally in the form of scattered headlands. Here was the boundary, along the crest of this submerged range, leading from headland to headland across great bodies of navigable water. The United States would get a succession of headland-tips and Canada would get a succession of deep-water inlets, on one of which was situated Skagway, the best entrance to the Klondike.

This line, calculated to fatten the part of any vaudeville performer, became diplomatically serious in the extreme. Under McKinley a "Joint Commission" was appointed to consider twelve topics in dispute between the British Empire and the American Republic. One of the twelve was the Alaskan boundary. The representatives of the Empire refused to come to terms on any of the others until their version of the Alaskan boundary had been conceded to them. It could not be conceded, and the "Joint Commission" collapsed.

At this point Roosevelt became president. Quietly, in the routine of diplomatic intercourse, he refused absolutely to accept Great Britain's amphibious mountain-range line and refused also, with equal absoluteness, to arbitrate it. John Hay, Secretary of State, pointed out "the fatal tendency of arbitrators to compromise." This matter could not be compromised. As Roosevelt said on another occasion, "Uncle Sam does not intend to wrong any one, but neither does he intend, if his pocket is picked on, to be slapped, to 'arbitrate' with the wrongdoer." What then? A Commission was erected. It was not a Commission with a third-party arbitrator on it. It was a Commission equally divided between the two countries. The representatives of the United States were Lodge of Massachusetts and Root of New York and Turner of Washington. The representatives of the British Empire were two Canadians and one Englishman. The Englishman was England's Lord Chief Justice—Alverstone.

This Commission met in London in 1903. Its purpose was indicated by Roosevelt and by Hay. Roosevelt said (through strictly diplomatic channels): "I wish to make one last effort to bring about an agreement which will enable the people of both countries to say that the result represents the feelings of the representatives of both countries."

In the meantime Roosevelt moved United States troops into Alaska. He let it be strictly diplomatically known that those troops, if the Commission should fail, would be used "to reduce the country to possession." He paused.

On October 20, 1903, the submission uttered its decision. Lord Alverstone voted with the three representatives of the United States against his own two Canadian colleagues. Great Britain bowed to the applause of the world. The Pacificists perceived that the honor of a nation can easily be preserved without the slightest threat of force. Roosevelt withdrew the United States troops from Alaska. The friendship of two great peoples had not suffered one moment's public interruption. The boundary of the United States in Alaska ran unmoled along its lawful line.

The Dispute With Germany.
In the midst of this engagement with Great Britain, Roosevelt had been forced into an engagement with Germany. Germany had certain "peculiar claims" against Venezuela.

For instance, had been built in Venezuela at the request of Venezuela by German capital at a cost of \$20,000,000. Venezuela had guaranteed the interest on that \$20,000,000. It was not paying it. When pressed, it added a moral delinquency to its financial delinquency. It not only refused to pay, but it refused to enter into any effective plan looking toward payment. Germany had a good case and Venezuela had a very poor one.

At last, on December 8, 1902, Germany broke off diplomatic relations with Venezuela, and so did Great Britain, and also did Great Britain, and also did Italy, had established a blockade in Venezuelan waters. Certain war vessels belonging to Venezuela were captured and the town of Puerto Cabello was bombarded.

Roosevelt did not attempt to make the United States take a public pose as "sovereign" of the Caribbean. He launched no public "fat." His intervention of the Monroe Doctrine was moderate not only in its rhetoric but also in its action. In his message of December 3, 1901, glancing at the Venezuelan dispute, he said: "We do not guarantee any state against punishment if it misconducts itself." Germany had every reason to be pleased with this recognition.

At the same time, in order that there might be no misunderstanding of the one vital part of the Monroe Doctrine, Roosevelt added "provided the punishment does not take the form of the acquisition of territory by any non-American power."

At first it seemed that Germany was content to abide by this proviso. On December 11, 1901, the German ambassador at Washington stated that his government had "no purpose or intention to make even the smallest acquisition of territory on the South American continent." It later appeared, however, that "acquisition" in this statement meant "permanent acquisition." Germany would make no acquisition that was permanent. It did not consider itself bound to make an acquisition that was temporary. It was looking forward to such an acquisition.

Roosevelt at once objected. He recalled the fact that in China there were many "temporary" acquisitions of territory by foreign powers and that in all such cases the word "temporary" seemed to mean "while time lasts." Notes ensued. They continued to ensue. They threatened to keep Washington reading and writing till the Germans had landed on Venezuelan soil. Roosevelt laid down his pen and sent for the German ambassador and determined to get the matter settled personally without one word more on paper.

Roosevelt told von Holleben, the German ambassador, that he wanted "assurances." He told him that Dewey was maneuvering in the Caribbean; that the "assurances" in question would be expected to arrive in Berlin within three days; that if they did not arrive Dewey would be ordered to sail southward and "to see that no possession, even temporary, was taken of any place in Venezuela." Von Holleben replied that his government would certainly refuse to give the United States the "assurance" requested.

A week later von Holleben visited the White House to speak of another matter. He spoke of it and turned to leave. Roosevelt: "Have you heard anything from Berlin about Venezuela?" Von Holleben: "No." Roosevelt: "It will not be necessary then for me to wait through all the remaining three days. I will wait just twenty-four hours more. Twenty-four hours from now Dewey will sail." At the end of twelve hours von Holleben returned to the White House and said that he had heard from Berlin and that he had the honor to request the President of the United States to act as arbitrator in the settlement of the differences which had unfortunately arisen between the German government and the government of Venezuela.

The point is not that Germany capitulated. Its position was untenable and it could not avoid capitulation. The point is that one of the most dangerous and one of the most decisive moments in the history of the international relations of the United States passed by without one public act or one public word to open the slightest rift in the cordial popular friendship between the United States and the foreign nation concerned.

"Four Lessons to Europe."
It turned out, after all, that Roosevelt did not do the arbitrating between Germany and Venezuela. The Hague Court was in existence. It needed business. Roosevelt had already given it its first case. That was a dispute between the United States and Mexico in the year 1902 over "The Pious Fund of the Californias." It amounted to a claim against Mexico by certain American Roman Catholic bishops. The Hague Court decided that Mexico was to pay those bishops an immediate lump sum of \$1,400,000 and a future annual sum of \$42,000, Mexican money.

Roosevelt now gave The Hague Court the Venezuelan dispute. In so doing, he won a special word of praise from the most distinguished of French Pacificists. Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, who, a few years later, in summing up Roosevelt's greatest contributions to realistic Pacificism, said: "President Roosevelt has given four striking lessons to Europe: first, in having brought before the Arbitration Tribunal at The Hague the question between Mexico and the United States over the Pious Fund claims, while Europe was scoffing at the peace court which it had created; second, in obliging Europe to settle the Venezuelan dispute peacefully; third, in proposing a second Peace Conference at The Hague to complete the work of the first and, fourth, in now intervening to put an end to the conflict between Russia and Japan in the Far East."

The decision was made in 1904. In that year certain powers notified Roosevelt that they were about to proceed against the custom-houses of San Domingo. Roosevelt learned something from Venezuela and he had learned something from The Hague. He had learned that this bombarding and blockading of Caribbean islands was not to be tolerated unless the United States managed the cajole or coerce delinquent Caribbean countries into some sort of solvency.

It is being suggested that Mexico should be annexed to this country for her own good. Tell it to Carranza.

Speaking of strikes reminds us that it is about time for the underpaid newspaper publishers to strike for higher subscription rates, increased job printing prices, and better compensation in every way. With printer's supplies up in price from 25 to 100 per cent, about the only profit left the publisher is his experience, and that has never yet satisfied a gnawing stomach.

The loafer, the kicker and the bluffer are three of a kind, and the bread is not conducive to the welfare of any community. If they could see themselves as others see them they would not be seen at all.

"Letting the other fellow do it" may save you a little exertion today and lose you your job tomorrow. Do it yourself.

Change of program every night at the opera house.

The fellow who has families dependent upon them are being discharged from the regiments on the border. In time, no doubt, unless something "breaks loose," the dependent families will multiply many fold. Plowing corn on a hot day is no sinecure, but it is a paradise compared to patrolling the border with no immediate scrap in sight.

I still have a few good Duroc Jersey boars for sale at \$10 each if sold soon.—Charles Biehl.

He thereupon invented the policy which was denounced by all Pacificists but which brought peace—the policy of custom-house protectorates.

Speaking of Cuba, if Roosevelt had desired bloodshed, he could have had it there in streams. It was under Roosevelt that we were obliged to begin our second occupation of Cuban soil. In 1906 the Liberals revolted against the Moderates. Our agreement with Cuba was that we were to "intervene for the maintenance of government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty." The "Des Moines" happened into the harbor of Havana. The president of Cuba, Palma, was powerless and terrified. He asked for marines. The "Des Moines" sent them. It looked as if we were about to take Cuba by force of arms. Roosevelt called the marines back to their ship. In place of marines, he sent Taft. It was a great contrast. Taft, unarmed and disarming, proceeded to Havana, and conferred. He tried at first to set up a new native government. It could not be done. The Cubans could not agree among themselves. Palma resigned. There was then no government at all. Taft stepped into the vacuum and completely filled it. He became "Provisional Governor." There was no battle. The president of Cuba, just as he had previously gone into Santo Domingo—by diplomatic seepage.

The Question of Japanese Immigration.
In October of 1905, the school authorities of San Francisco excluded all Japanese of all ages from the regular public school and directed them to attend a special public school in which they were to be segregated. Japan protested proudly and bitterly, both by popular demonstrations in Tokio and by diplomatic representations at Washington, appealing to the treaty of 1892.

In December, within two months after the issuance of the San Francisco school order, Roosevelt said to Congress: "In the matter now before me, affecting the Japanese, everything that is in my power to do will be done and by force of the military and civil of the United States which I may lawfully employ, will be so employed . . . to enforce the rights of aliens under treaties."

This sentence penetrated Asia to its farthest literate regions. In the Light of India, the Bharati responded: "The American president has proved himself to be the one ruler of the modern world who has his finger on the pulse of world politics of the present and of the future."

Roosevelt had promised to use the military force of the United States. He did so. He enlarged the garrison of United States troops in San Francisco and let it be known that all violence directed against Japanese would be quenched.

He believed that Japanese mass-immigration was intolerable, and did not hesitate to say so. The Japanese would themselves not tolerate the intrusion into their country of a mass of Americans who would displace Japanese in the business of the land. The people of California are right in insisting that the Japanese shall not come thick in mass.

He entered into negotiations with the Japanese government. Again there was no public international controversy. That porcupine, the published diplomatic note, armed with a thousand quills and every one of them poisonous, was allowed to hibernate. Personally, in conferences, where phrases may be unguarded and also unguarded, the representatives of the United States and the representatives of Japan agreed that thereafter no passports would be issued to Japanese coolies entitling them to leave Japan for United States ports. This agreement has been kept honorably and with a scientific strictness by the accurate gentlemen of Japan.

The material difficulties were adjusted. A psychological one arose. Because Roosevelt was so ready to use garrisons and law-courts to protect the Japanese in California, it began to be thought in Japan that the United States feared Japan. Therefore in November the United States fleet started for Japan. It was Roosevelt's greatest service to peace. He got the Nobel Peace Prize for doing a thing which, by comparison, was a minor trick. He got it for intervening between two spout duellists. He introduced a physically groggy Russia to a financially trembling Japan at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Pacificism gave him \$40,000 and a diploma for doing that. The time when he was a real peacemaker and not a mere peace-shower was when he himself was a possible combatant and when, instead of waiting for the explosion, he walked up to the burning fuses of war in San Francisco and Japan and snuffed them out with his own hand.

In the harbor of Yokohama the Japanese saw sixteen American battleships, doing a globe-circumnavigation which many European critics had declared impossible. They saw; they admired; like the men Roosevelt knew them to be, they were thrilled to respect.

Roosevelt did not "avoid" war. He saw it coming and went out to meet it and fetched it a watchful wallop across its brow and left it dead.

A Genius for Diplomacy.
The foundation of all Roosevelt's diplomacy was that he kept the fleet at the top-notch of fighting efficiency. When he said to von Holleben, "What I say goes; but if it doesn't, the fleet does," he said it clearly and promptly and changelessly; and von Holleben, looking straight at him, knew that he meant it; but that was not enough. What produced enough was that von Holleben also knew that at that very moment the fleet was where Roosevelt delighted to keep it—in battle color doing battle maneuvers in the open sea.

His domestic policies rose out of active study and counsel. His foreign policies rose out of active study and instinct.

History will surely say that he had a genius it was for diplomacy.

History will also surely say that his diplomacy of 1916 was merely the publication, in private life, of the method by which, from 1901 to 1905 he destroyed every cause of war that raised its head against the United States, and so gained the prestige enabling him to become the world's most acclaimed—not Pacificist—but Pacificator.

The fellow who trades at home never has to do his kicking by mail. And then, on second thought, he has no reason to kick.

The fellow who considers himself the wise man of town is generally rated by others as the biggest fool.

The Washington government has issued a "White Book" on the war in Europe and its diplomatic angles. And, government like, has forgotten our existence in the distribution of free copies. Keep 'em!

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Brains and energy make a splendid team, but in single harness neither is worth a hot dog.

If all sinners were suddenly removed from this world we would still have editors and a few others left.

Keep right on telling people this is a good town and in time they will make you believe it yourself.

Occasionally, however, the roar of our political candidates is heard above that of the battle front.