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## Memorandum on Far Eastern Policy, May 22, 1933

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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Memorandum on Far Eastern Policy.

Theodore Roosevelt wrote to President Taft:--"I do not believe in our taking any position, any where, unless we can make good; and as regards Manchuria, if the Japanese choose to follow a course of conduct to which we are adverse, we cannot stop it unless we are prepared to go to war -----". Here is a fundamental, and one ignored by the Hoover-Stimson diplomacy. Another fundamental ignored was one taught in the kindergarten of diplomacy, namely, never to say "never" or "forever".

To commit the nation to a position such that it may have either to go to war or to back down, except in a cause of undeniable vital interest and which the nation will support, shows a frivolous trusteeship. The prestige and power of the nation are a sacred trust. They should be used sparingly and reserved for the promotion of vital interests.

The so-called "Stimson Doctrine", or "Hoover Doctrin", declaring that the United States will never recognize changes brought about by force, uttered in connection with Japan's position in Manchuria, violates both the above mentioned fundamentals of sound policy. It is characteristic of the diplomacy of the recent Administration, one singularly lacking in realism, legalistic and dogmatic, meddlesome, and rash in futile commitments.

There is a good deal to be said in extenuation of Japan's actions in Manchuria. The Chinese side of the question has been unduely sentimentalized and due weight has not been given to the fact that China's course has resulted in two decades of chaos. The whole question will require re-examination more impartially and with a real

conception of American interests. Ultimate recognition of Manchukuo is inevitable. Some face-saving mode of retreat from the Stimson doctrine will have to be discovered and gradually made use of, - in return for valuable considerations. China has several open doors, - especially if England and America keep up proper fleets.

The recent policy in the Far East has had no good effect and several bad effects. It has returned the United States to the objectionable position of chief heckler of Japan and quixotic knight errant of China, thus gaining Japanese hostility while instilling false hopes among the Chinese. Its ineffectiveness has been a blow to American prestige. Its inflexible dogmatism has much increased the discrediting of treaty obligations. It has encouraged the League of Nations to take untenable positions, leaving the United States to bear the brunt of the resultant dislike. It has thus, among many things, harmed also the prestige of the League of Nations, - reserving the question whether that institution, as constituted, at present, is of great practical value.

I think it should be borne in mind that in view of the chaos of China and the frank aim of Soviet Russia to foment violent communistic revolution in all countries, it may well be advantageous in the long run that Japan should have considerable strength in Eastern Asia.

As to commerce, it is by no means clear that Japanese ascendancy in Manchuria need interfere with American trade in China at large. Moreover, an orderly Manchuria under not unfriendly Japanese dominance will be a much better customer for American goods than it has been before.

May 22, 1933.

(signed) F.M. Huntington-Wilson