

# Japanese and American Expansion in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

*A German Perspective from the Writings of Max von Brandt*

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AT THE END OF THE nineteenth century, two growing economic and military powers, the United States and Japan, began to assume a more prominent role in the area of international power politics. Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 marked its emergence as another player competing with the major European powers and the United States for influence in East Asia. A few years later, after the Spanish American War in 1898, the United States of America acquired overseas territory in the Philippines and annexed Hawaii, greatly increasing its presence in East Asia and the Pacific Ocean. As Japan and the United States expanded their interests in East Asia and the Pacific during the following years, several areas of conflict arose between the two powers: Japanese influence in China and Manchuria, American control of Hawaii and the Philippines, the immigration of Japanese to Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States, and the naval buildup in both countries. The tension between Japan and the United States continued for decades, eventually culminating in armed conflict between the two powers.

However, it is important to remember that the relations between Japan and the United States developed in the wider context of international relations in East Asia. Both Japan and the United States pursued their interests in East Asia and the Pacific in a framework of international relations that existed from the late nineteenth century until World War One and that is often referred to as the “diplomacy of imperialism.”<sup>1</sup> The diplomacy of imperialism was characterized by the efforts of the major world powers, including Japan and the United States, to expand and protect their interests through alliances and agreements aimed at recognizing

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mutual spheres of interest and preventing any major changes in the balance of power. In this framework of international relations, the East Asian policies of the major powers were linked to considerations of their global interests. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as Japan and the United States expanded their often conflicting interests in East Asia and the Pacific, international concern arose over the possibility of military hostilities between the two powers. War scares occurred periodically not only in Japan and the United States but also in Europe. The tension arising from Japanese and American expansion had become an important element in international affairs.

This paper will examine the nature of Japanese-American relations at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. It will shed light on the significance of Japanese and American expansion in the context of international relations during this period by studying the views of Max von Brandt, a prominent German diplomat and recognized expert on East Asian affairs. Brandt began his thirty-three-year-long diplomatic career as an attaché on the Prussian Expedition to East Asia (1860–1862) and served as Prussian consul and German minister in Japan (1862–1875) and China (1875–1893). He resigned his post in 1893 to marry the daughter of the American minister in Korea. Because of his long diplomatic experience, Brandt's advice was sought repeatedly by the German Foreign Ministry, especially during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, at the time of the acquisition and occupation of Kiaochow Bay in 1897, and during the so-called Boxer Rebellion.

Upon his return to Germany, Brandt settled in Wiesbaden, later Weimar, and embarked on an active "second career" as a writer, producing more than twenty books and over 175 periodical articles on topics concerning East Asia, China, Japan, international affairs, and other current events.<sup>2</sup> A topic of special interest for him was the international situation in East Asia, including the growing power and influence of Japan. What were Brandt's views of Japanese expansion? How did he see the growing power of the United States in the Pacific and East Asia? What was the significance of the expansion of the two powers for international relations? By examining Brandt's views on these issues, this paper will shed light on the meaning of the Japanese-American rivalry in the wider context of international relations. The paper will first describe Brandt's views on the origins and nature of Japanese and American expansion from the end of the nineteenth century. The paper will then examine Brandt's observations on the growing tension between the two powers in the years after the Russo-Japanese War over such issues as Japanese intentions in

Manchuria, the immigration question, and naval buildup, and his views on the significance of this tension for international relations.

### **Brandt's Views on Japanese Expansion**

One thing that strikes the reader of Brandt's writings on East Asian affairs is his generally negative view of Japan. In his view, the greatest danger to stability in East Asia was the expansion of Japanese political, military, and economic power. From the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), Brandt warned continuously of the danger of Japanese expansion in China and East Asia. In the face of repeated Japanese victories, Brandt had urged active German support for China and lobbied for German participation in an intervention by the Western powers. After its defeat by Japan, China negotiated the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895. China was to recognize the independence of Korea, and ceded Formosa, the Pescadores, and Liaotung Peninsula to Japan along with a large indemnity. However, in the diplomatic action known as the Triple Intervention, Japan yielded to strong pressure by Russia, France, and Germany and gave back the Liaotung Peninsula in return for an increased indemnity.

As an adviser to the German Foreign ministry, Brandt lobbied strongly with several arguments for intervention. He warned of the danger that the Japanese victory and subsequent domination of China and East Asia would upset the balance of power, lead to the division of China by the great powers, and give Japan an unfair economic advantage. Brandt was concerned that Germany might be left out of the spoils in the potential territorial division of China and believed that cooperation with Russia in the intervention would promote a rapprochement and help divert Russian attention to the Far East, relieving tension between Russia and Germany in Europe.<sup>3</sup> But he was especially concerned about the threat of Japanese expansion in China. Among the concessions gained by Japan were the right to engage in industry anywhere in the country and the commutation of certain duties at a lower fixed rate. Brandt maintained that together with the lower wages and transportation costs of Japanese industry, these concessions would make its products cheaper than those of European countries.<sup>4</sup>

The arguments Brandt presented to the Foreign Ministry were echoed in his many writings on the topic of the Sino-Japanese War and its aftermath. During the war, from the autumn of 1894 to summer of 1895, Brandt wrote several articles concerning the Sino-Japanese conflict for the

monthly review *Deutsche Rundschau*. In 1895, he wrote an eighty-page booklet entitled *Die Zukunft Ostasiens* [The Future of East Asia], which appeared in two editions in 1895 and a third in 1903, and published two books on East Asian affairs in 1897.<sup>5</sup>

Brandt's most important observations on Japanese expansion in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War can be summarized in three points. First, he depicted the Sino-Japanese war as merely the latest instance in a long history of unprovoked Japanese aggression in Asia since the 16th century.<sup>6</sup> Second, according to Brandt, a major purpose of the war was to divert attention from domestic problems by allowing a belligerent radical group in the country to vent its dissatisfaction and frustrations on an external target.<sup>7</sup> Third, and most important for Brandt, a Japanese victory in the war would have serious economic consequences. Aiming to dispel what he considered the mistaken notion that a Japanese victory in the war would help open up China for economic development to the ultimate benefit of European and German trade, Brandt argued that the only beneficiaries would be the few bankers and industrialists who made the initial investments. The end result, according to Brandt, would be a modern, industrialized competitor for Europe and Germany.<sup>8</sup> Since China could pay the high indemnity demanded by the Japanese only through raising customs and other duties, this would harm foreign trade and industry. Furthermore, Brandt claimed, China might follow the Japanese example of nationalistic and protectionist economic policy that excluded foreign personnel and capital in industry, allowing it to take advantage of European knowledge for development, but refusing to allow Europe to share in the profits through capital investment.<sup>9</sup> Brandt also warned of growing Japanese economic power. While conceding that in principle a developed country was a better consumer and trading partner than a poor one, Brandt maintained that in practice the industrialization of Japan had not produced an accompanying increase in consumer demand. Rather, the cheaper labor and transportation costs of Japanese industry had driven certain foreign products out of the market in Japan and East Asia, and this trend would only become stronger and more damaging to German industry in the future.<sup>10</sup> Such factors as cheap fuel and labor, low transportation costs, and lack of patent laws would enable Japan to undercut European industry, especially in coal and steel production and in cotton manufacturing.<sup>11</sup>

After the Sino-Japanese War, the powers continued to vie for influence in China, setting up spheres of influence in which they could discriminate in favor of trade and other interests of their own nationals. For its part in the Triple Intervention, Russia had gained China's permission to extend

the Trans-Siberian Railway across northern Manchuria to Vladivostok along with economic and policing rights, and France had gained territorial and economic concessions in southwestern China. Germany failed to gain any major concessions, but the murder of two German Catholic missionaries by a xenophobic Chinese secret society at the end of 1897 provided a pretext to occupy Kiaochow and wrest economic concessions from China in Shantung. In 1898 Britain occupied Weihai-wei and Russia obtained the lease of the Liaotung Peninsula, the very territory that Japan had been forced to return to China at the end of the Sino-Japanese War. With the lease, Russia acquired the right to build and police a railroad, the South Manchuria Railway from Harbin in South Manchuria to Port Arthur, where it built a naval base. To protect its interests, the United States depended on the so-called Open Door policy championed by Secretary of State John Hay, which was to guarantee equal treatment for the trade of all nations in China. After an exchange of diplomatic notes, Hay announced in March 1900 that the United States considered the other major powers—Great Britain, Germany, Russia, France, Italy and Japan—to have accepted the policy.

However, the powers continued their efforts to expand their various spheres of interest. The most visible striver was Russia. Russia used the occasion of the “Boxer” disturbances in the summer of 1900 to send troops to Manchuria. Anxious over Russian designs, Britain entered into the Yangtze Agreement with Germany. This agreement provided for the maintenance of the “Open Door” and the integrity of China, but did not apply to Manchuria, since Germany wished to allow Russia a free hand to divert its attention from Europe. To thwart Russian encroachments, Britain turned to Japan and formed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. Both countries recognized their respective spheres of influence in China and Korea and promised to remain neutral in case of a war with a third power, but would be bound to join the ally if involved in a war with two or more powers.

Russian encroachment was also a source of tension with Japan. The failure of Russia to withdraw troops from Manchuria, and its increased penetration into northern Korea, together with Japanese involvement in reforms in southern Korea, were major points of conflict. After negotiations to settle the question of their respective spheres of influence in Korea and Manchuria broke down, Japan opened hostilities against Russia without a formal declaration of war.

Although this Russian encroachment represented a shift in the balance of influence among the powers in East Asia, Brandt continued to see Japanese expansion as the greater threat to stability. In a review article in

1902, for instance, Brandt agreed with the author of a recent book on Japan who maintained that a proud and ignorant, but powerful, generation was coming into influence in Japan, and predicted serious trouble if the government should channel internal dissent outward as it did in 1894. Furthermore, Brandt argued that Japan, bolstered by the success of the Sino-Japanese War and the recent renewal of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, was aiming to increase its influence in China by posing as its friend and teacher, and pursue a policy of "Asia for the Asians." He also predicted that the continued presence of Russia in Korea would eventually lead to war with Japan.<sup>12</sup> In an article written in 1903, Brandt charged that Japan was planning a confrontation with Russia over Korea. Its people, army, navy, press, and parliament were ready for war and Japan could not give up its claims in Korea without a political crisis, since yielding to Russia would mean the downfall of the dynasty and loss of the Japanese influence and role in China.<sup>13</sup>

When war broke out in February 1904, Brandt took a decidedly anti-Japanese stance. While also recognizing Russian intransigence in negotiating with Japan over conflicting interests in Sakhalin, the Liaotung Peninsula, and the Russian refusal to withdraw from Manchuria after the Boxer Rebellion, Brandt pointed out that Russia had never seriously considered war, whereas Japan had been preparing for the war for years and was fully prepared when it attacked without a formal declaration of war.<sup>14</sup> Once the war was concluded, Brandt imputed Japanese motives, arguing that the real reason for ending the war and renouncing the indemnity was not humanitarian concern or even financial necessity, but rather the desire to endear itself to China and recoup some of its losses by returning Manchuria to Chinese control. He also claimed that Japan's position had been further strengthened by the recent renewal of the Anglo-Japanese treaty.<sup>15</sup>

The consequences of a Japanese victory, in Brandt's view, could only be dangerous for stability in East Asia. Not only would Russia try to revenge its defeat, but the military party in Japan was also dissatisfied with the peace and if it united with the new industrial proletariat, radical and social-democratic parties, and half-educated students, there would be sufficient tinder for future conflicts in East Asia.<sup>16</sup> Brandt also attributed the recent progress of Japan to the efforts of several statesmen who had adopted a skillful Realpolitik and had resisted the chauvinism of the masses. Now, however, the growth of democratic and demagogic tendencies, such as the movement for universal suffrage, would soon lead Japan to an "outbreak of unjustified and unpredictable chauvinism."<sup>17</sup>

Brandt was very concerned about the impact of Japanese control of

Korea, and the expansion of its interests in Manchuria and China. In his view, Japan was infiltrating China with teachers, Buddhist missionaries, merchants, and newspapers with a strong demagogic coloring. The inner discipline of Japanese students destroyed by superficial contact with Western culture, and the influence of the some 6,000 Chinese students in Japan, could only have a bad effect on China. Furthermore, Japan would try to turn its political influence in East Asia into industrial and commercial influence in China.<sup>18</sup> Brandt feared that China, impressed with recent Japanese successes, would try to imitate Japan by sending its students there to learn how to deal with the ways of the West. However, Brandt argued, the situation could be saved and the interests of the Western powers protected if foreign capital, knowledge, and technical and commercial training came to China's aid to counterbalance the Japanese influence.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Brandt's Views of American Expansion**

Brandt's animosity toward Japan is quite obvious. It is clear that he saw Japanese expansion as very dangerous to the stability of East Asia. But how did he see the expansion of the United States in the area? With the acquisition of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War and the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, the United States had also become an imperialist power with overseas possessions. What effect would this expansion of the United States have on international relations? Brandt addressed this question in several articles he wrote at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries on the Spanish-American War and its consequences.

In June 1898, Brandt wrote three articles on the Spanish-American War in which he analyzed the factors involved in the decision of the United States government to intervene in Cuba. In explaining the American move, he pointed to various economic and political considerations as well as to the nature of contemporary American society. In general, he described the American action against Spain less as a matter of foreign policy and more as a function of American internal politics. Brandt maintained that the intervention in Cuba was determined by circumstances that had little to do with the actual situation there. In his view, there were two main reasons behind the American action. The first was a question of economics. As Brandt pointed out, since the annexations of Texas and other territories after the Mexican American war, official United States government policy had in general discouraged the filibustering attempts of its citizens. For example, he observed, the government withdrew pro-

tection from citizens who had gone to Canada to join a rebellion in 1837, and had taken no notice of the failure of the expedition to Cuba of General Lopez, who had trained a band of troops in the United States. The United States government had also remained neutral during the years of rebellion in Cuba from 1868–1878. In view of this policy of non-intervention, Brandt observed, it took a long period of Spanish mismanagement of Cuban affairs and the activities of Cuban revolutionaries to move public opinion in the United States and bring about a change in official policy toward Cuba.<sup>20</sup> Because of the recent growth of United States industry, especially the sugar industry, which aimed at increasing exports of tropical products from Cuba, there was more support for the 1895 rising in Cuba than ever before. Certain persons and groups involved in the sugar industry had wanted closer ties with Cuba to further their commercial interests, and when intervention finally came in Cuba, it was a response to a real and justifiable commercial need.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, however, Brandt also recognized the importance of public opinion and the impetus of a widespread and deep indignation among citizens in the country as another major factor in the decision of the United States government to intervene in Cuba. Brandt explained that the reasons for the war were to be found not so much in the personalities of political leaders, nor in a conflict over different systems of government, but in something deeper. Brandt agreed with the assertion of Carl Shurz, the liberal reformer, that most Americans were selfless and noble, not noisy jingoists or unconscionable speculators or colonialists. Nor were all Americans self-seeking politicians or newspapermen. However, Brandt observed, while most Americans probably did see the war as an altruistic sacrifice of American blood and money without desire for gain, the majority of citizens hardly ever got involved in politics, and when they did, they were usually unknowingly and unwillingly manipulated by those who actually controlled affairs in public life. For Brandt, the recent outpouring of public sentiment for intervention and war was mainly the result of public indignation provoked by two incidents: the intercepted private letter of Dupuy de Lôme, Spanish minister in Washington, and the explosion of the *Maine* in Havana harbor. The letter had dismissed McKinley as weak and had cast doubts on Spain's good faith in negotiating on the Cuban question. Although the Spanish minister resigned, the episode caused great resentment among the American public. Similarly, the explosion of the *Maine* under mysterious circumstances served to galvanize public opinion, uniting all classes of Americans in a groundswell of support for intervention that made any further hesitation on the part of the administration impossible.<sup>22</sup>

On the question of the execution of the war, Brandt found much ground for criticism of the United States. Conceding that it was impossible to justify or condone the Spanish mismanagement in Cuba, Brandt at the same time pointed out that the risings in Cuba would never have been possible had they not been organized and supported by certain groups within the United States. And while such Spanish atrocities as driving the population out of their homes was inexcusable, Brandt also pointed to the equally reckless behavior of the insurgents, who destroyed haciendas to deprive the state of revenues.<sup>23</sup> Brandt also criticized the United States for alienating governments and people in other countries that were also dissatisfied with Spanish mishandling of Cuba and the Philippines. Brandt faulted the United States for its failure to suppress the training and supplying of the Cubans on American soil, and for putting pressure only on Spain, and not also on the insurgents, for a cease-fire.<sup>24</sup> He accused the United States of trying to establish a new principle of international law whereby a third party wishing to intervene in a conflict would need to demand a cessation of hostilities from only one of the belligerent parties in order to establish peace.<sup>25</sup>

As for the impact of the war on German and other European interests, Brandt claimed that the only correct attitude was to observe neutrality. However, he pointed out that the new situation resulting from the American victory would make for a complicated international order. For example, Brandt believed that the problems the United States hoped to solve by intervening would only create more. The occupation of Cuba and the Philippines, Brandt claimed, would contradict the avowed goals of the American action, involve the United States in the internal problems of the two lands, and start it on a new path of overseas domination that would bring it many difficulties. Nor would the establishment of independent governments under a protectorate of the United States be advisable, since historical experience did not provide any encouraging examples for the establishment and maintenance of stable democracies in tropical lands. The only alternative would be to leave Cuba and the Philippines to fend for themselves. This, however, would improve the situation neither for the native populations nor for those who have intercourse with them. In the end, Brandt insisted that the only correct attitude for the European powers was to observe strict neutrality, although this would not prevent them from feeling a certain sympathy for the young king and the queen-regent of Spain.<sup>26</sup>

While the future of Cuba and the Philippines was still unclear, Brandt urged the United States to proceed with caution: "These are questions that will be decided only after the weapons have fallen silent, and for

whose best solution one can only wish the United States will find that which has been most often missing in its policies to the present: *respect for the rights and dignity of others.*"<sup>27</sup> In another article, Brandt wrote that Germany's position on the disposition of the former Spanish territory of the Philippines should be based on the same attitude it took during the war: the correct and proper insistence on the maintenance of German trading interests in the event of annexation by the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Actually, the Spanish-American war served to sour relations between Germany and the United States. As Manfred Jonas points out, in the framework of international relations at the end of the nineteenth century, the United States began to see its interests better served by cooperation with Britain. With its active Weltpolitik, Germany came to be considered a competitor and potential threat to American interests. Although public opinion in Germany was pro-Spanish, the German government observed strict neutrality, even refusing efforts by Britain and other powers to send a strong note to the United States urging peace. However, public opinion was affected by British anti-German press reports, and some German mistakes, such as the presence of German warships in Manila. Although Britain, France, and Japan had also sent warships to the area, the large size of the German fleet and disagreement between Dewey and the German commander over interpretation of the rules of blockade led American public opinion to see German intrigues at play. The United States government also became annoyed at what it considered Germany's unwarranted meddling by raising the possibility of German support for American annexations in return for a free hand in Samoa and naval bases and coaling stations in the former Spanish territories, although the idea was given up when American intentions became clear.<sup>29</sup>

The question of how to dispose of Spain's former colonies of Cuba and the Philippines provoked widespread discussion and debate in the United States. Just as Brandt saw the question of intervention in Cuba as a function of American domestic politics, he also foresaw important implications for the makeup of the political system of the United States as a result of the new imperialist course. For example, in one of his articles Brandt viewed the resolution of the Philippines question as an important domestic problem for America, and considered it might become an issue in the 1900 presidential election. He predicted that differing opinions on the issue of annexation could result in the split of the Republican Party and the formation of a new political alignment comprised of the conservative wing of the Republicans and the Democrats, if the latter would drop the silver/paper standard policy from its platform.<sup>30</sup>

Brandt predicted that the United States, as an imperialist power in the

international scene, would face difficulties in trying to establish effective control in the Philippines. Given the sad history of the treatment of native Americans by the United States government, such as the "Trail of Tears" in which whole tribes were effectively driven off their land, Brandt claimed that the Filipinos would perhaps in future have reason to look back on Spanish rule with nostalgia. Similarly, drawing a parallel with the recent laws excluding the Chinese from the United States, Brandt pointed out that the Chinese in the Philippines would also not fare well under American rule, although it would be difficult to exclude them entirely because of the proximity of the Philippines to China.<sup>31</sup>

In his analysis of the significance of the new imperialist course of the United States in the aftermath of the war with Spain, Brandt made some interesting observations on the nature of American politics and society. For example, he explained the desire for colonial acquisition in the United States as a result of two things: 1) the pressure of capitalist interests and political circles, especially in Hawaii, and 2) popular indignation at the Maine incident. The relationship between capitalism and politics was closer in the United States than anywhere else, Brandt claimed. Furthermore, he cautioned his readers that one should not underestimate the emotional element in US politics. In this regard, Brandt cited with approval such organs of the American press as *Scribner's Magazine* and *Harper's Magazine* as more reasonable, since they treated the question of annexation more calmly than the daily press. In Brandt's view, both *Scribner's* and *Harper's* saw the new American imperialist role as something to be discouraged, yet at the same time the United States must face its responsibility to administer the affairs of the foreign lands now under its control. Brandt also approved of the two magazines' appraisal of the imperialist spirit as a counterweight to the prevailing attitude that glorified commercial and industrial activity as the only form of distinction for Americans. Public life used to be a counterweight against the tyranny of businessmen, but now the rich and big business had the biggest influence in America. The colonial service, if administered justly and honestly, could make a person more prominent than a millionaire. However, Brandt concluded, it was hard to say whether a diversion to external affairs would lead to real change in the United States' political character, or only result in the emigration of party bosses and caucuses. In the end it all depended on whether the colonial administration would be partisan, or honest and fair.<sup>32</sup>

When addressing the question of the annexations of Hawaii and the Philippines, Brandt viewed the United States as another player in the game of international power politics. He saw the expansion of the United

States as a natural development. In one of his articles, Brandt first outlined the history of the annexation of territory by the United States—the Louisiana Purchase, Texas, territories acquired after the Mexican-American War, Oregon, and Alaska—and argued that just as the objections brought against them (such as the high price of labor, low price of land, harsh climate, poor quality of land) had proved unconvincing in the past, so now would they be insufficient to deter annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines. As for the wider significance of the annexations, Brandt declared that he had written the article with two purposes in mind. The first was to dispel the mistaken belief of certain individuals and parties in Germany that the United States could develop and grow as a great nation without colonial ambitions. Brandt insisted that one should not underestimate the desire and capacity of the United States for expansion. The second purpose of his article was to make people in Germany realize that it was detrimental to the fatherland to put a crimp on the natural expansion of empire.<sup>33</sup> For Brandt, expansion was an important part of the dynamic development of nations, and it determined the basis of relations among the great powers. He clearly viewed the United States as an important element in the framework of international politics, in which the major nations competed for power and influence in the world.

### **Brandt's Views on Japanese-American Tensions**

So far we have described Brandt's views on Japanese and American expansion at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. We have seen how he considered the rise of Japan to great-power status in East Asia as a threat not only to the economic interests of the other great powers, but also as a destabilizing element in the system of international power politics. Similarly, Brandt saw the expansion of the United States in the Philippines as a possible threat to German and European trading and commercial interests. He also saw the emergence of the United States as an imperialist power after the Spanish-American War as representing a major change in its basic foreign policy of non-intervention, with implications for the makeup of international relations.

Brandt had always seen Asian affairs as an important part of international affairs, but with the increased expansion of Japan and the United States from the end of the nineteenth century, Brandt saw a new era dawning in international relations. Writing in the *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* in March 1900, Brandt asserted that recent events in East Asia, including the American annexation of the Philippines, showed that the

Pacific was becoming as important for world trade and politics as the Mediterranean had been until then. He also predicted that the next great war would be a trade war, and urged the strengthening of German naval forces to protect Germany's trading and shipping interests in East Asia.<sup>34</sup>

The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War resulted in a shift in the balance of power in East Asia in favor of Japan. By the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth, Russia recognized Japan's interests in Korea, ceded the southern half of Sakhalin, all Russian rights in the Liaotung Peninsula, and the South Manchuria Railway. In August, the Anglo-Japanese alliance was renewed. In November, Japan gained by treaty the control of Korea's foreign relations. Further treaties with France (June 1907) and Russia (July 1907), while providing for maintenance of the "Open Door" and the integrity of China, in effect assured mutual recognition for the respective spheres of interests of the contracting parties. This meant that Japan's paramount interests in Korea and Manchuria were respected by all the major powers except the United States and Germany. In fact, spurred on by these international agreements and the growing tension between Japan and the United States, Germany attempted to forge an alliance with the United States to thwart Japanese expansion in East Asia. However, as scholars have pointed out, such an alliance was unrealistic, mainly because Theodore Roosevelt decided that American interests in Asia and the Pacific could be best served by reaching an agreement with Japan rather than an alliance with Germany, which would complicate American relations with Britain.<sup>35</sup>

In the years after the Russo-Japanese War, conflicting interests between Japan and the United States sharpened considerably. The expansion of Japanese influence in Manchuria, the presence of Japanese immigrants in California, and the buildup of the navy in both countries produced an atmosphere of heightened tensions. War scares often erupted in the press, while Japanese and American negotiators tried to reach agreements on the issues of Manchuria and immigration. In several articles written at this time, Brandt addressed such issues as Japanese immigration to the West Coast, naval expansion of the two countries, and conflicting interests in China.

In one article written in 1907 entitled "Japan und die Vereinigten Staaten" [Japan and the United States], for example, Brandt observed that the center of *Weltpolitik* was shifting from West to East, specifically the Pacific Ocean, after American expansion in Hawaii, Samoa, and the Philippines and Japanese expansion in Korea and Manchuria. In this new era of international relations, Brandt predicted, it was essentially economic questions that would be the cause of conflicts between nations, and

he warned of future conflicts between these two Pacific powers. He argued that Japan's long history of aggression and hostility against Taiwan, China, and Korea, its recent military and political successes in wars against China and Russia, its treaties with England and France recognizing Japan's claims in China and Korea, and the exaggerated admiration in some Western circles for Japan's politics, ethics, and literature, had made it proud and adventuresome. He also predicted that the problem of the exclusion of Japanese from California and Hawaii could easily lead to a confrontation between the two powers, since the Japanese were as emotionally excitable as the Americans.<sup>36</sup>

The exclusion question was indeed very emotional. Many Japanese, still eager for equal treatment and recognition in the circle of great powers, especially after its defeat of Russia, considered the policy racist. Some Americans warned of the danger of being overrun by a tide of cheap Japanese immigrant laborers. Sensationalist and jingoistic elements on both sides of the Pacific engaged in warlike talk. The tension reached crisis proportions in 1906 and 1907, with incidents of anti-Japanese school segregation, and other forms of discrimination and even riots. As Raymond Esthus observes, this was the most serious problem yet in Japanese-American relations, "a crisis that was to leave such ugly memories on both sides of the Pacific that the cordiality that had characterized previous relations could never be fully restored."<sup>37</sup>

Brandt addressed the question of American exclusion of Japanese immigrants in another article written in 1907. Here, Brandt wrote that the exclusion of Japanese children from California public schools was only a symptom of a greater conflict in Japanese and American relations. The action against the twenty-four children involved was the immediate result of the reaction of American workers against a perceived threat of competition from cheaper Asiatic labor. In Brandt's view, the incident had received so much publicity because of the importance of the workers' organizations in California politics. A deeper cause of the tension in Japanese-American relations lay in the American belief that because of its recent acquisitions in Hawaii and the Philippines, it was destined to become the master of the Pacific, which would become a new Mediterranean Sea. However, this belief had been challenged by expansion into the same area by the Japanese, with their long history of aggression and adventurousness bolstered by recent military and political successes. While Brandt considered the war scare an exaggeration of the sensationalist press, he maintained that a conflict would come eventually. For the moment, Japan was in a stronger position, but the United States would eventually become dominant. Not only did the United States have

more people, more capital and more industry, but the opening of the Panama Canal and the establishment of a Pacific fleet would also strengthen its position.<sup>38</sup>

Brandt had also addressed the problem of immigration in an earlier article. Writing in 1897, Brandt reported on a recent incident in which some 500 Japanese immigrants were deported from Hawaii. The newspapers in Hawaii had been describing the recently increasing numbers of Japanese immigrants as a danger to all trading nations, and feared that Japan would try to annex the island. Although the deportation was in violation of a treaty that regulated Japanese immigration, Brandt considered it justified because of the danger of Japanese expansion in the Pacific after the Sino-Japanese War. Furthermore, Brandt described the Japanese as adventurous by nature and interested in the exotic, pointing out that Japanese had engaged in lively trade before the period of isolation from 1637 to the 1870s. On the other hand, Brandt also pointed to other reasons for Japanese emigration, such as population pressure (which, however, could be relieved by the settlement of Hokkaido), and the need for new markets for native industries. Brandt cited a Japanese newspaper that called for the government to support Japanese emigrants in places like Hawaii, San Francisco, Vancouver, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, Vladivostok, and Korea, even protecting them with military force, if necessary. Brandt maintained that it is only natural that such views of the press and the jingoism of the Japanese and their statesmen should provoke a fear and mistrust of the Japanese, even in places where the term "yellow peril" was not yet common.<sup>39</sup>

The term "yellow peril" was often heard in the period of heightened tensions between Japan and United States in the context of the immigration issue. As Heinz Gollwitzer points out, the term "yellow peril" has a wide and varied usage. The term apparently came into circulation around the time of the Sino-Japanese War, when the German Emperor William II commissioned a drawing depicting the armies of Europe prepared to battle the forces of East Asia. Gollwitzer maintains that Brandt encouraged William's fear of a "yellow peril" and that he may have been the spiritual father of the Kaiser's famous sketch.<sup>40</sup> It is true that in the advice he gave to the German Foreign Ministry to enter the Triple Intervention, Brandt did warn of the possibility of Japan and China overcoming their differences, at least temporarily, to form an alliance against the Western powers. He even compared this possible alliance with the Mongol hordes and Turkish armies that once controlled much of Eurasia. "We would then have an alliance of the yellow race that could lead to a result similar to that of the unification of the Mongolian or Turkish tribes in earlier cen-

turies." However, at the same time Brandt maintained that there was no danger of an invasion of Europe, but rather that a conflict with China and Japan would be on the economic front.<sup>41</sup>

While recognizing the threat posed by a strong Japan and China to Western economic and trade interests, Brandt usually avoided using the term "yellow peril," because he did not like its more sensational aspects. For example, in an essay written in 1911 with the title "Die gelbe Gefahr" [The Yellow Peril], Brandt criticized the chauvinistic and sensational aspects of the term, and concentrated instead on what he saw as the greater danger, namely, the enchantment of certain circles in Europe and the United States with Oriental, including Japanese, culture, literature, art, and philosophy. The "yellow peril," according to Brandt, was not an organized anti-Western conspiracy but, rather, only the natural antagonism that appeared whenever a native people was subjugated by foreign rulers. In his view, the true yellow peril was the loss among Europeans and Americans, but especially the Germans, of an appropriate sense of pride and self-confidence in their own past and their own civilization and an enchantment with the exotic quality of the art, literature, philosophy, and other cultural aspects of the Orient.<sup>42</sup>

As significant as it was for the heightened tension in Japanese-American relations, the immigration issue by itself would not lead to a war between Japan and the United States, in Brandt's opinion. Rather, war would come from a collision over conflicting interests of the two countries as they both expanded in the Pacific. In *Deutsche Revue* in March 1908, Brandt entitled an article "Der kommende Kampf in Ostasien?" [The Coming Fight In East Asia?] referring to a recent book on the potential for war between the US and Japan. The movement of the American battleship fleet to the Pacific Ocean in 1907, later expanded into an around-the-world cruise, had been widely publicized. Despite reports in the press about the anti-Japanese nature of this move, Brandt believed that it had little to do with the immediate problem of Japanese immigration. For Brandt, it was a reaction to the expanding Japanese influence in Asia and the Pacific. As he saw it, the dispatch of the fleet represented an American attempt to assert its domination in the Pacific and to secure access to the Chinese market by insisting on the observation of the Open Door policy, which had been thwarted by Japanese ambitions to expand its position in Manchuria and China. Brandt maintained that a conflict between the United States and Japan would not be enkindled by an immigration issue, unless the Americans committed a public outrage against the Japanese.<sup>43</sup>

The dispatch of the American fleet to the Pacific also served to involve Brandt in a controversy in the pages of the *Deutsche Revue*. In March 1908,

A. Laubeuf, a former French naval engineer, wrote an article in which he predicted a confrontation of the American and Japanese fleets in the Pacific. He further claimed that Japan would take the Philippines and Hawaii, because it had larger, if fewer, ships and had more experienced and better trained crews.<sup>44</sup> In a postscript to the article, Brandt downplayed the problems of the American fleet and dismissed Laubeuf's predictions as based on hypothetical assumptions. The immigration question in itself, he argued, was neither a reason nor excuse for war, which would come from other reasons.<sup>45</sup>

In its April issue, the *Deutsche Revue* published a letter from Laubeuf along with Brandt's reply. Laubeuf reasserted his claims that the Japanese fleet was superior because of the greater number of its large ships and the quality of its crews, and challenged Brandt to demonstrate how his predictions of the future were hypothetical. In his reply, Brandt cited the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 to show that the question of whether larger ships can defeat a greater number of smaller ships was debatable, and repeated his claim that Laubeuf's predictions of the locale and course of the conflict was based on speculation. Brandt also referred Laubeuf to his March 1908 article mentioned above, for an explanation of his views on the improbability of war between Japan and the United States.<sup>46</sup>

As it turned out, the Japanese and Americans came to an understanding on the immigration question through a series of diplomatic notes known as the "Gentleman's Agreement," in which the Japanese government agreed to voluntarily limit the emigration of workers to the United States. Roosevelt had also put pressure on the authorities in California to rescind the offensive legislation. Actually, both governments wished to come to a solution, and the majority of people in both countries agreed with the official policy of their governments. There were, however, certain sensationalist and jingoistic elements in Japan and the United States that were very vocal and contributed to the crisis and atmosphere of tension.<sup>47</sup> The crisis in Japanese-American relations was also alleviated by the Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908, whereby Japan and the United States pledged to respect the sovereignty of each other's territorial possessions and to preserve the common interests of all powers in China.

However, the potential for conflict remained. Competing interests in Manchuria were a particular sore point, especially because of the emphasis that the Taft administration and the new Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, gave to securing entry of American capital in China, a policy often called "dollar diplomacy." In the spring of 1910, Brandt wrote an article commenting on a speech by an American financier in New York in

March 1910, who claimed to foresee war in East Asia because of Japanese, Russian and British collusion to reduce China to a vassal state. Brandt also cited the *New York Times* of 9 March 1910, which said that such a war in East Asia would be an economic one fought between Japan and the United States, mainly because Japan had failed to keep its promise to maintain the "Open Door" principle. The newspaper pointed to the Russian and Japanese opposition to Knox's proposal for neutralization of railroads in Manchuria as proof that China had only an appearance of control there, since it could act only with the approval of Japan and Russia. For this reason, Americans were justified to see the situation as injurious to all treaties and agreements on the integrity of China, especially since the United States, which was the third largest trader in Manchuria, stood to lose much if it didn't insist on its rights.<sup>48</sup>

Brandt agreed with this assessment of the situation. However, he took a wider view of the implications of the Manchurian situation, and put responsibility not only on Russia and Japan but also on China and Britain. China, for example, failed to build up its army after defeat by the Japanese in 1895, and now found itself unwelcome as an ally to any of the powers. However, China would probably become more serious about defending itself against Russian and Japanese encroachments if Britain should decide to expand its influence in the Yangtze Valley. Brandt also charged England with hypocrisy, since it had criticized Germany in the past for not supporting the integrity of China in Manchuria before the Sino-Japanese war, but was now itself intent on a policy of recognizing Russian and Japanese interests in Manchuria and Japanese interests in Korea in order to gain the goodwill of those countries.<sup>49</sup> For Brandt, the Manchurian question was not only a problem in Japanese-American relations, it was also an issue in the wider context of international relations. Of course, conflicting interests in China and Manchuria continued to be a sore point between Japan and the United States, eventually leading to war in 1941.

### **Conclusion**

Our examination of Brandt's views on Japanese and American expansion, and the tension and antagonism that this produced, shows how he considered the rivalry between the two countries to be one played out in a wider context of international power politics. Brandt's hostility towards Japan was quite obvious, as he viewed the Japanese expansion in China, Manchuria and Korea as a threat to the balance of power among the international powers. He also saw the Japanese as having unfair economic

advantages that would enable it to dominate trade and industry in China, to the detriment of the economic and trade interests of Germany and the other European powers. Brandt also saw the expansion of the United States as a new, destabilizing element in the framework of international relations in East Asia. In expressing his misgivings on the new imperialist course of American policy, Brandt saw it necessary for Germany and the European powers to insist on the maintenance of their rights in the Philippines after the American annexation.

For Brandt, the expansion of Japan and the United States represented a major shift in the balance of power in East Asia and the Pacific, an area of the world that would assume greater importance in international affairs. He predicted that the competition between the two rival Pacific powers would eventually result in war, but he was wise enough to downplay the war scares prevalent in the yellow press. As an astute observer of international affairs, he predicted correctly that the competition for power and influence in the Pacific between Japan and the United States would be one of the major factors in international relations in the decades to come: "the struggle for domination in East Asia between Japan and America will be one of the events to leave its imprint on the twentieth century."<sup>50</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is the title of a standard treatment of the subject, William F. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> For a list of the works by Max von Brandt see the bibliography in Richard F. Szippel, "Max von Brandt and German Imperialism in East Asia in the Late Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1989), 311–24.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed treatment of Brandt's views on the Sino-Japanese War can be found in Richard F. Szippel, "End of the Century Japan through German Eyes: Max von Brandt and Japan 1894–1914," *German History* 9 (1991): 308–26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 314–316.

<sup>5</sup> The two books were *Drei Jahre ostasiatischer Politik 1894–1897. Beiträge zur Geschichte des chinesisch-japanischen Krieges und seiner Folgen* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Moser, 1897) and *Ostasiatische Fragen: China, Japan, Korea. Altes und Neues* (Berlin: Verlag Gebrüder Paetel, 1897), a collection of fourteen previously published essays on Chinese-Japanese relations and two new essays on the history of Japanese aggression in Korea.

<sup>6</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Koreanische Frage," *Deutsche Rundschau*, 80 (September 1894), 459–62; Brandt, *Drei Jahre ostasiatischer Politik 1894–1897*, 9–31; *Ostasiatische Fragen*, 53–87; Max v. Brandt, "China, Japan, Korea und die neueste Geschichte Ostasiens," in *Weltgeschichte*, 2nd ed., ed. Arnim Tille (Leipzig und Wien: Verlag des bibliographischen Instituts, 1913–1922), 1:210.

<sup>7</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Ostasiatische Probleme," *Deutsche Rundschau*, 81 (November 1894), 265–266; Max v. Brandt, *Die Zukunft Ostasiens. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum Verständnis der ostasiatischen Frage* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Moser, 1895), 8–9.

<sup>8</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Der chinesisch-japanische Conflict," *Deutsche Rundschau* 82 (February 1895): 296–97.

<sup>9</sup> Brandt, *Die Zukunft Ostasiens*, 58–68.

<sup>10</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Zur ostasiatischen Fragen," *Ostasiatische Fragen*, 275–79. This article was originally published in *Deutsche Rundschau*, 84 (July 1895).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 43–44, 46–51.

<sup>12</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Das moderne Japan," *Die Nation* 20 (14 March 1902): 372.

<sup>13</sup> Max v. Brandt, "England, Rußland und Japan in Ostasien," *Die Nation* 21 (26 December 1903): 195–96.

<sup>14</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Der Ursprung des russisch-japanischen Krieges und die Vorbereitungen zu demselben," *Die Umschau* 9 (18 March 1905): 221–25.

<sup>15</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Der Kampf um Ostasien," *Deutsche Rundschau* 125 (October 1905): 115.

<sup>16</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Zukunft Ostasiens," *Die Umschau* 9 (16 September 1905): 743.

<sup>17</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Nach dem Kriege. Japan in politischer und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung," *Globus* 88 (1905): 216.

<sup>18</sup> Brandt, "Die Zukunft Ostasiens," 743–44.

<sup>19</sup> Brandt, "Der Kampf um Ostasien," 117–18.

<sup>20</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Spanien," *Deutsche Rundschau* 95 (June 1898): 430–31.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 431; Max v. Brandt, "Das spanisch-amerikanische Konflikt," *Cosmopolis. Internationale Revue* 10 (June 1898): 839.

<sup>22</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Cosas d'España," *Deutsche Revue* 23 (June 1898): 257–59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>24</sup> Brandt, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Spanien," 432–33.

<sup>25</sup> Brandt, "Das spanisch-amerikanische Konflikt," 840.

<sup>26</sup> Brandt, "Cosas d'España," 257–61.

<sup>27</sup> Brandt, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Spanien," 433.

<sup>28</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Ex Oriente Lis," *Deutsche Revue* 24,1 (March 1899): 360.

<sup>29</sup> Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 56–9.

<sup>30</sup> Brandt, "Ex Oriente Lis", 359–360.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 362. Brandt makes the same point in "Das spanisch-amerikanische Konflikt," 839–40.

<sup>32</sup> Brandt, "Ex Oriente Lis," 360–61.

<sup>33</sup> Brandt, "Die Annexionen der Vereinigten Staaten," *Zeitfragen*, 332–30.

<sup>34</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Entwicklung [sic] der Dinge im fernen Osten," *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* 11 March 1900, reprinted in Brandt, *Zeitfragen*, 371–77.

<sup>35</sup> For a treatment of the attempted German-American alliance see: Jonas, *The United States and Germany*, 87–91; Werner Stingl, *Der Ferne Osten in der deutschen Politik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg 1902–1914* (Frankfurt a.M.: Haag + Herchen, 1978), 2: 599–629; Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967), 257–62.

<sup>36</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Japan und die Vereinigten Staaten," *Deutsche Rundschau* 133 (October 1907): 94–104.

<sup>37</sup> Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, 128

<sup>38</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Der Gegensatz der Japaner und der Nordamerikaner im Stillen Ozean," *Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft* 10 (1907): 160–64.

<sup>39</sup> Brandt, "Hawaii und Japan," *Die Umschau* 1 (7 March 1897): 471–73.

<sup>40</sup> Heinz Gollwitzer, *Die gelbe Gefahr. Geschichte eines Schlagwortes. Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 210.

<sup>41</sup> Promemoria Max v. Brandt Berlin, 8 April 1895, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, China 20, vol. 29.

<sup>42</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die gelbe Gefahr," *Deutsche Revue* 36, 2 (April 1911): 63–64.

<sup>43</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Der kommende Kampf in Ostasien?" *Deutsche Revue* 33,1 (March 1908): 259–60.

<sup>44</sup> A. Laubeuf, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Japan," *Deutsche Revue*, 33,1 (March, 1908): 344–56.

<sup>45</sup> Max v. Brandt, Afterword to A. Laubeuf, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Japan," *Deutsche Revue* 33,1 (March, 1908): 356.

<sup>46</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Vereinigten Staaten und Japan," *Deutsche Revue* 33,2 (April 1908), 123–25.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Bailey, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises: An Account of the International Complications Arising from the Race Problem on the Pacific Coast* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), 322–25.

<sup>48</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Stellung Rußlands, Japans und der Vereinigten Staaten in Ostasien. Eine Gefahr für den Weltfrieden," *Deutsche Revue* 35 (May, 1910): 194–99.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 199–200.

<sup>50</sup> Max v. Brandt, "Die Grundlagen der japanischen Kulturentwicklung," *Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft Kunst und Technik* 2 (26 December 1908): 1651.