

## Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Attempt to Form a German-American-Chinese Alliance against Japan

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AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, Germany found itself increasingly isolated not only in Europe but also on the international stage as well. In East Asia, for example, agreements between England and Japan (1902, 1905), France and Japan (1907), and Russia and Japan (1907) left Germany and the United States as the only major Western powers that did not recognize Japan's predominance in East Asia. To counter the growing Japanese influence in East Asia, Germany made attempts to form an alliance with the United States and China in 1907 and 1908. Such an alliance would be a way for Germany to safeguard its position in the Far East, and by drawing the United States away from Britain would also help strengthen Germany's position in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

In 1907 there were a number of reasons to believe that a German-American-Chinese alliance was feasible. Most important, relations between the United States and Germany were, in general, friendly. Apart from trade friction arising from American agricultural exports to Germany and German manufactured exports to the United States,<sup>2</sup> and some residual ill will against Germany for its naval actions during the Spanish-American War and the Venezuela crisis of 1902–1903,<sup>3</sup> there were no major policy conflicts between the two countries. Germany had also been making overtures to Great Britain for a formal alliance, but when the negotiations broke down, Germany's attention turned toward forming friendly relations with the United States, with the aim of decreasing British influence on the United States and even to drive the United States away from Britain.<sup>4</sup> The German approach to the United States took the form of friendly public gestures, intercultural contacts, and attempts to create a basis for common action with the United States in the Far East and in Morocco. In 1905

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and 1906, Kaiser Wilhelm and President Roosevelt had been in personal contact during the Russo-Japanese War and the Moroccan Crisis. The Kaiser's influence with the Russian Tsar helped Roosevelt mediate the war between Russia and Japan, and German-American cooperation had helped bring about the international conference at Algeciras.

In addition to these precedents of diplomatic cooperation, a number of other factors also boded well for the further strengthening of German-American relations. The German ambassador in Washington, Baron Speck von Sternburg, was a close personal friend of Roosevelt's and relations were cordial because of a recent tariff agreement. Furthermore, Germany and the United States had a common interest in cooperating to thwart Japanese expansion in East Asia. Public opinion in the United States supported the Open Door policy and there was a strong anti-Japanese feeling on account of Japanese immigration on the West Coast, Japanese economic penetration of Manchuria, and the fear of Japanese military expansion in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>5</sup> Apart from Germany, the United States was the only other power without an agreement recognizing Japan's predominant position in East Asia. Despite settlement of the immigration issue through the Gentlemen's Agreement, tensions between Japan and the United States were still high and the threat of war was still present. Rumors of war were rampant when the American fleet was sent to the Pacific on its round-the-world cruise in 1908, a move seen by some as a provocation of Japan.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, relations of both the United States and Germany with China, the other potential member of a three-way alliance, were relatively friendly. The United States and China were on good terms after the American decision to return part of the Boxer indemnity and because of the official American Open Door policy in China, with its ostensible aim of preserving China's integrity.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the Open Door championed by the United States fit in well with a recent shift in German policy toward China that emphasized cultural activity and economic development.<sup>8</sup> In short, the three countries appeared to be natural allies: the Chinese were anxious to gain support against Japan and its friends, while the United States and Germany were afraid of being excluded from China and East Asia by the other powers, especially Japan.<sup>9</sup> The common interests shared by the three countries notwithstanding, and despite considerable energy expended by Germany, a three-way alliance never materialized. This paper aims to shed light on the problems that proved to be insurmountable in the attempt to form a German-American-Chinese entente, with special attention given to the role played by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II.

### **The Attempt at a German-American-Chinese Alliance**

Kaiser Wilhelm II is well known for his personal interest in and attention to affairs of state. Indeed, the diplomatic record of German relations with the

United States and China reveals an excited Kaiser eager to forge closer ties and even a formal alliance with both countries. The Kaiser himself claimed to have been the first to propose the idea of a German alliance to the Chinese in a meeting with Yin-cheng,<sup>10</sup> the departing Chinese ambassador in Berlin in 1906.<sup>11</sup> But it was the Franco-Japanese agreement of 10 June 1907 that provided the direct stimulus for the plan for a German-American-Chinese entente. The Franco-Japanese agreement, apart from recognizing the Open Door, the integrity of China, and the status quo in East Asia, also contained a mutual promise concerning the security of Chinese territory in each country's respective sphere of interest. The agreement understandably caused grave concern to the Chinese government. As the German representatives in Tokyo and Peking reported to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin in July 1907, the local press emphasized how undignified it was for China to allow other nations to guarantee its integrity. These newspapers also criticized the aggressive nature of the agreement, which ensured only the interests of the signatories. One paper even called the mutual recognition of interests an invitation to the division of China.<sup>12</sup> Correspondents of Japanese newspapers also filed similar reports from China.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, Count von Rex, the German envoy in Peking, reported to Berlin that the Chinese government was concerned about the potential danger to China in the agreement. He urged that Germany come to an understanding with Russia and the United States to show China that it need not subject itself to Japan, France, and Britain, but could rely on the support of the other powers. Rex emphasized that an isolated Germany would suffer economically as the French, Japanese, and British maneuvered to supply loans and weapons to China.<sup>14</sup>

The Foreign Ministry found Rex's observations pertinent enough to forward his report in September 1907 to Baron Speck von Sternburg, the German ambassador in Washington. Sternburg was also instructed to sound out the possibility of an understanding with the United States over China to protect the economic interests of both countries against the encroachment of Japan, England, and France. A formal treaty, however, was ruled out as impossible, at least under the present circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, Sternburg reported that he had had an occasion to discuss Japan and the East Asian situation with President Roosevelt. In that conversation Sternburg emphasized the Kaiser's long-held idea that Japanese encroachment represented a grave danger to the Christian West, which must unite to resist it. They also discussed the American naval program, in the course of which Roosevelt bemoaned the fact that the United States had no naval base in the Far East. Roosevelt explained that he could discuss such confidential matters because of the great respect and trust that he had for the German ambassador.<sup>16</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that a month later, on 15 October 1907, Rex telegraphed from Peking that reliable sources indicated that the Chinese government had decided to instruct its envoys in Germany and the United States to

sound out the possibility of a three-way alliance. Rex suggested that this might be a good opportunity for Germany to approach the United States with a plan to strengthen the integrity of China. The Kaiser gave his approval, emphasizing that Germany must give its support to China and not reject this display of confidence.<sup>17</sup>

The Foreign Ministry instructed Sternburg to broach the subject to Roosevelt confidentially, assuring him that Germany would cooperate as on the occasion of the Russo-Japanese War. Germany wished to strengthen China's position against Japan, to maintain the integrity of China, and to protect the Open Door for German trade in China.<sup>18</sup>

Twice Sternburg reported by telegram that Roosevelt was too busy to see him, although he had been assured that the United States would work closely with Germany for the integrity of China.<sup>19</sup> On 8 November 1907 Sternburg cabled Berlin that he had had a long talk with Roosevelt. The president told Sternburg that, although he had received reports of Chinese concerns about the various agreements among the powers, there had been no approach from the Chinese for American support. Roosevelt did not think the time was ripe for an alliance among China, Germany, and the United States, because it would provoke ill will among the other powers. Nevertheless, Roosevelt asked Sternburg to tell the Kaiser that he wanted to work hand in hand with him and would welcome his suggestions for maintaining the integrity of China, as well as his views on the alliance to be proposed by China. It is interesting in hindsight to note that Sternburg and Roosevelt even discussed the possibility of war between Japan and the United States. Roosevelt mentioned that cooperation between the American and German fleets would probably be necessary, since the United States lacked a naval base in East Asia. Sternburg asked whether the German army might be of help in defending the American mainland from Japanese attack. Roosevelt replied that, although the support of German troops would ensure a military victory, it would be better for the United States army to fight on its own, even suffer defeat, in order to convince the public that a thorough reorganization of the army was necessary. Once reorganized the army could then make good the initial defeat.<sup>20</sup>

On 22 November 1907, after outlining his plans to the Kaiser and gaining his approval, Reichskanzler von Bülow instructed Sternburg to reassure Roosevelt of the Kaiser's intention to cooperate. He should further relay the Kaiser's opinion that the Chinese proposal for an alliance deserved serious consideration, but the initiative should come from the Chinese side.<sup>21</sup> Sternburg replied that Roosevelt was in complete agreement with the Kaiser.<sup>22</sup>

In the meantime, additional reports had arrived from Rex, who wrote of increasing pressure from Japan on China, and a possible break between the two. He also advised against dealing with China as an equal, since it was weak militarily and had no understanding of diplomatic or political action to safeguard its own interests.<sup>23</sup> On 30 November Rex reported that Liang Tun-yen, the vice

president of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had visited him to sound him out privately in the matter of an approach to Germany and the United States. Liang explained that the Chinese government had not yet agreed on a course of action, but would soon make an approach to the governments in Washington and Berlin.<sup>24</sup> Sternburg was also informed of this Chinese approach to Rex. When he mentioned it to Roosevelt, the president responded that because of the present circumstances a formal alliance was impossible, but that an agreement concerning common action of the three powers could be reached.<sup>25</sup>

However, the Chinese approach to the German and American governments was not forthcoming. This made reaching an agreement very difficult, because the German government could not appear to be too eager. Everything depended on the initiative of the Chinese. In a telegram that arrived in Berlin on 14 December 1907, Rex reported that he was told that the Chinese government had not yet instructed its envoys in Washington or Berlin, because of concern about Chinese domestic problems.<sup>26</sup> Sternburg was duly informed of this.<sup>27</sup>

In the meantime, the Kaiser was becoming impatient. A letter had been forwarded to Berlin from Generalkonsul Bünz, who had accompanied American Secretary of War Taft on his voyage to New York and had discussed the East Asia situation with him. Bünz reported Taft's view that Japan was interested in economic and military preponderance in China, and his comment that the Chinese government was looking towards the United States for support, which should not remain passive. In his comments on the letter the Kaiser wrote, "Your report shows that we must come to an agreement with China, and soon! Too much time has been lost already."<sup>28</sup>

At this juncture, the German Foreign Ministry began to seriously formulate a policy for the possible alliance. At the end of December, a long report arrived from Rex outlining his view of the situation with concrete suggestions for a possible alliance of China, Germany, and the United States. Rex observed that the Chinese were motivated by the fear that the recent East Asian agreements among the powers included secret agreements to intervene in China in case of unrest or rebellion, which would be the pretext for a subsequent division of China. In such a division, Japan would take the lion's share, with Britain, France, and Russia getting the rest, leaving Germany and the United States with nothing. It was therefore in the interests of not only China, but also Germany and the United States, to prevent this. Rex suggested two separate agreements for the content of the alliance. First, there would be a treaty between China, Germany, and the United States guaranteeing the integrity of China proper and stipulating certain economic advantages for Germany and the United States. Second, an agreement, to be kept secret from China, between Germany, the United States, and Russia committing all parties to act in common against a Japanese attack on China north of the Hoang Hoa [Hwang Hwo]. After a foreseeable (and successful) war with Japan, Russia would be given a free hand to expand its influence into Mongolia, East Turkestan, Manchuria, and Korea.

There would be no territorial gain for Germany and the United States, but the principle of the Open Door would be maintained in China proper.<sup>29</sup>

As Luella Hall points out, it is noteworthy that there is no mention of territorial gain for Germany. The main concern is for commercial advantage.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Werner Stingl indicates, German policy in China had become oriented towards improving its economic position in China. There was a movement among business circles to do more. In 1907, Rex made a plan for intensifying German *Kulturpropaganda* efforts through schools and scientific training to make China more open to German economic expansion in China. Germany lagged behind the other powers in such cultural efforts.<sup>31</sup>

When he read Rex's report, the Kaiser could scarcely contain his enthusiasm. In his comment at the end of the report, he wrote: "Excellent! My views exactly, which I expressed to Yin-cheng [Chinese ambassador to Berlin until his recall in 1906]. . . . That was a year ago, and we have nothing until now. Something must be done now. Immediately, subito."<sup>32</sup>

On the next day, the Kaiser wrote a long letter to Bülow in which he gave vent to his thoughts on what was to be done in the matter of the alliance. The Kaiser claimed that he shared Rex's views exactly, that he had made similar suggestions himself, and that he had even suggested an entente guaranteeing China's integrity to the departing Chinese envoy Yin-cheng last year. The Kaiser further directed that Rex's proposal should be made the "basis for *immediate* negotiations. An Entente Cordiale with China *for maintaining the status quo* is absolutely necessary for us. Otherwise our entire Weltpolitik will go down the drain" (emphases in original).<sup>33</sup>

Kaiser Wilhelm's letter reveals several striking, if unrealistic, elements in his rationale for the entente. First of all, he welcomed the dispatch of the American fleet to the Pacific, since it would thwart Japanese expansion and force the British to send a stronger naval squadron to the East, thus weakening its position in Europe. The presence of the American fleet in the Pacific, preferably stationed in the Philippines or China, would also thwart British predominance in the Yangtze Valley and thus strengthen Germany's position in Shantung. The Kaiser also believed that since the Japanese fleet was not yet ready to fight the United States, it would be a good time to unite the German and American fleets, to keep Japan and the other powers from dividing China. In addition, an entente guaranteeing the status quo would also serve American interests, since it would deter a Japanese attack, and protect American trade and commercial interests. For Russia, an agreement would hinder encroachment of other powers on the Russian sphere of influence in East Asia.

Concretely, the Kaiser suggested using Sternburg's friendship to influence Roosevelt to accept the supposedly forthcoming Chinese proposal. But above all, the Kaiser called for immediate action: "We must make an agreement as soon as possible. I have worked for this moment for years! . . . Forward! We

have considered the matter long enough! Enough words have been exchanged. Let us now see action!"<sup>34</sup>

The course of action that was actually taken, however, was neither as decisive nor as far-reaching as the Kaiser had envisioned. The instructions Bülow sent to Rex reflect a more realistic moderation of the Kaiser's grand vision. First, Bülow pointed out what Roosevelt had already indicated, that a formal alliance was impossible, since it would never get the necessary approval from the United States Senate. Any agreement would therefore have to be limited to an exchange of declarations. Here China must first ask Germany and the United States for support in its policy of not ceding territory to any power, and of holding the door open for trade with all countries. The United States and Germany would then declare their readiness to support this policy and the maintenance of China's integrity and independence. Third, a secret agreement allowing special economic advantages to the United States and Germany must be avoided under all circumstances, since it would violate the Open Door and would be impossible to keep secret. Fourth, the time was not ripe for an approach to Russia in the matter. Finally Bülow warned Rex that he must avoid giving the impression that Germany had any special interest in such an exchange of declarations. Rather, the initiative must come from China, which must also win the acceptance of the United States. Rex was therefore to indirectly encourage the Chinese to make an approach to the United States.<sup>35</sup> Similar instructions were also sent to Sternburg, asking him to do his best to persuade Roosevelt to accept the Chinese approach.<sup>36</sup>

Especially noteworthy here is Bülow's grasp of reality and caution: the impossibility of a formal alliance, and the necessity that Germany not be seen as the initiator, to avoid creating mistrust among the powers. Since the move was directed against Japan and Great Britain and based on the premise of continued Japanese-American hostility, Germany could not be seen as trying to stir up trouble among the powers. Perhaps the greatest factor in the ultimate failure of the attempt to form a German-American-Chinese entente was that the whole project depended on the initiative of the Chinese, which was not forthcoming, much to the consternation of the impatient Kaiser. The Chinese hesitated from almost a year, until November 1908, before making a direct approach to the United States. By then, however, it was too late, since the Japanese and Americans had in the Root-Takahira Agreement reached an understanding on the major points of tension between them, thus undermining the Japanese-American conflict that would lie at the basis of any potential entente among China, Germany, and the United States.

In the next few months, Rex referred several times to moves in the Chinese government concerning a possible alliance. Towards the end of January 1908, he reported to Berlin that the matter was to be brought before the Empress Dowager and the Prince Regent. He also mentioned that the government intended to send a special envoy to the United States concerning the Boxer indemnity, but

the occasion would also be used to broach the subject of a three-way alliance among China, the United States, and Germany.<sup>37</sup>

In the meantime, Sternburg reported from Washington that the statements of Professor Burgess, an American guest lecturer in Berlin, who had called for closer cooperation between Germany and the United States, had been received very negatively in American circles. As Sternburg explained, most Americans recognized the common interests shared by Germany and the United States, but the long tradition of forming no foreign alliances made official cooperation difficult. Since Burgess's views were seen as inspired by Germany, his utterances were poisoning the diplomatic atmosphere. Sternburg therefore urged that the German press treat the issue with great care and reserve.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the German government made efforts to make relations with China as cordial as possible by reversing a previous decision not to honor the request for four Chinese officers to train with the German field artillery. The reason given for the change was that in case of an agreement with China and the United States, it would be in Germany's interests that China should have an army trained in German models and methods, and equipped with Krupp cannon.<sup>39</sup> The four Chinese officers were admitted to the second class of the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* from 5 February to 25 May 1908.<sup>40</sup>

At the end of February 1908, some three months after sending his proposal for the contents of the alliance, Rex reported to Berlin that the Chinese now appeared ready to make an approach concerning the alliance. Rex had had a discussion with Chang Chi-tung, a high official and member of the Council of State, who brought up the question of the possibility of a German-Chinese agreement. This was the first time that Rex had discussed the idea with anyone besides Liang Tun-yen, the vice-president of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chang had said that he personally thought such an alliance very desirable and so did many leading members of the Chinese government. In Chang's view, the participation of the United States was essential and the Chinese would therefore approach Roosevelt first. Chang had, however, voiced two reservations to Rex. First, the negotiations must be kept secret so as not to cause any animosity among the other powers. Second, since China was in a weak position, it would not be able to reciprocate in offering military and naval support. Rex considered the interview significant because it showed that the two most important members of the Chinese government next to Prince Ching, namely, Chang Chi-tung and Yuan Shi Kai, were apparently in favor of the agreement and supportive. Rex also reported that the Chinese government intended to send either Chang or Tang Shao-yi (Governor of Mukden) to the United States as special envoy. As could be expected, the Kaiser was excited by the prospects of the Chinese finally making the move. In his concluding comments to the report he wrote that, after discussions among the three parties, Germany and the United States must issue a "statement of policy" guaranteeing the status quo and integrity of China.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, in Washington, Sternburg had been notified of Rex's report of

the impending Chinese move, which he brought up in a conversation with Roosevelt. The president had said that he was happy to hear of the Chinese government's apparent decision, but added that the new Chinese envoy in Washington had made no mention of a possible agreement. On the other hand, Roosevelt said nothing when Sternburg brought up Wilhelm's idea of a "statement of policy."<sup>42</sup>

Later in April, a telegram from Rex gave the Kaiser further room for encouragement. Rex reported that the Chinese throne had given its approval to a proposal by Prince Ching and Yuan Shi-kai to send Liang Tun-yen to the United States as special envoy to express gratitude for the remission of the Boxer indemnity and to discuss the possibility of an entente.<sup>43</sup> On 17 April, Wilhelm replied to a letter from Roosevelt in which the president wrote that the Chinese envoy in Washington had not broached the subject of a declaration of policy on China. In his reply, Wilhelm assured Roosevelt that according to Rex, Liang Tun-yen would be sent in two months to the United States as special envoy. He added, "I sincerely hope that we shall be able to come to an agreement about a statement of policy which will help to maintain the integrity of the Chinese Empire and assure the open door to the trade of all nations."<sup>44</sup>

While both the Germans and the Americans were awaiting the arrival of the special envoy, Sternburg reported some discouraging developments. In May, for example, he wrote of difficulties that stood in the way of the agreement. For one thing, despite Roosevelt's interest in cooperation between Germany and the United States, the president was wary of Congress and American public opinion. Sternburg also referred to other difficulties in the relations between Germany and the United States, such as the statements of Professor Burgess mentioned above, and the Kaiser's rather indiscreet comments on the appointment of Hill as United States ambassador to Germany. All of this had made it very difficult for Roosevelt to follow through with any common action with Germany. Still, according to Rex, Roosevelt wanted to do what he could, and only time would tell if the problems of Congress and public opinion could be overcome.<sup>45</sup>

Another major indiscretion of the Kaiser, an interview with William B. Hale of the *New York Times* in July 1908, could only reinforce Roosevelt's reluctance. In his rambling comments, Wilhelm had spoken of the *gelbe Gefahr* ("the yellow peril"), the collapse of the British empire, the inevitable conflict between Japan and the United States, and an imminent agreement between the United States and Germany to defend China. Although Roosevelt wisely saw to it that the interview was never published, knowledge of its content leaked out both in Europe and the United States.<sup>46</sup> Not only did the interview destroy the German Foreign Ministry's strategy of making the initiative appear to originate with the Chinese, it also angered Roosevelt and demonstrated the unreliability of Germany as a partner.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, in Peking, Rex had become impatient. As he reported in June, Rex had inquired from Yuan Shi-kai about the status of the proposal for the three-way entente. Rex was told that the Chinese government had definitely

decided to make an agreement with Germany and the United States, but had not yet determined how to go about it. The Chinese were afraid of provoking the other powers and unsure of how the United States would reply to the approach from them. For his part, Rex suggested that the Chinese need only refer to the present situation of China, pressured as it was by the various recent agreements among the powers and ask whether America might be ready to help support China in case she fell into difficulties. The reply to this question would reveal how far the United States would engage itself for China. Rex also answered Yuan's question whether an agreement between China, Germany, and the United States would be sufficient to counterbalance the preponderance of France, Britain, and Japan. Rex replied that none of these powers would act aggressively against Germany and the United States, and stressed that neither Japan nor Britain would dare do anything against the United States. Finally, he asked whether Rex thought a written agreement was necessary. Rex replied that a formal treaty was out of the question, since there were no prospects for approval by the United States Senate. An exchange of notes outlining each nation's obligations to the others would suffice. The Kaiser's impatience is clear in his marginal comments, where he noted that these issues had already been addressed a year earlier and that the cooperation of Roosevelt had been assured.<sup>48</sup>

Two months later, in August, Rex reported that Tang Shao-yi had been appointed special envoy to the United States, ostensibly to express Chinese gratitude for the remission of the Boxer indemnity, but also to discuss the subject of entente. Tang had also requested Rex to ask the German ambassador in Washington for his help in the matter.<sup>49</sup> In a report at the end of September, Rex wrote that he had met Tang before his departure. According to Rex, Tang was especially worried about how to inform the United States of Germany's willingness to help. Rex advised him to simply say that Germany had such friendly relations with China that the United States could assume that Germany would support its policy. Rex requested the Foreign Ministry to instruct the German envoy in Washington to help Tang in making the approach to the United States and enclosed Tang's personality profile and a brief description of his career.<sup>50</sup>

Tang, however, did not arrive in Washington until November. On his way, he stopped in Japan to discuss financial questions with the Japanese government. It appears that the Japanese tried to discourage a possible rapprochement between China and Germany or the United States. As Rex reported on 4 October 1908, a Chinese newspaper published a story claiming that the Japanese chargé in Peking had spoken with Tang before his departure and supposedly warned him that, although China and Japan enjoyed friendly relations, rash diplomatic actions could have unfavorable consequences. Tang is said to have replied that China was free to act as it wished and that any problems in Sino-Japanese relations were Japan's fault. Rex could not verify the account, but said he believed it was probably true.<sup>51</sup>

The press in China, Japan, and the United States also reported that there was more to Tang's mission than the avowed purpose of the indemnity issue and financial matters. According to Rex, a Chinese paper with ties to official Chinese circles had published an article openly pointing out the advantages of a Chinese-American alliance, especially in counterbalancing the threat to Chinese independence from foreign powers.<sup>52</sup> In the United States, Generakonsul Bünz reported a discussion with Roosevelt about a controversy unleashed by the *New York Herald* in August, when it published a leading article calling for an alliance between the United States and China to protect the latter's interests against Japan. It had also published an interview with Wu Ting-fang, the Chinese envoy in Washington, who had said that China was endangered by increasing Japanese influence, which could be eased by a Chinese-American agreement. The articles had unleashed much protest in Japan, where some circles were calling for Wu's recall. Roosevelt told Bünz that there was no special significance to the agitation in the *Herald* for a Chinese and American treaty. Bünz wrote that Roosevelt told him that "neither he nor Root had ever seriously concerned themselves with such thoughts."<sup>53</sup>

An editorial in the Japanese *Hochi Shinbun* dated 15 January 1909 claimed, "When T'ang Shao-yi left China for America last year, it was an open secret that he had an important diplomatic mission besides that of conveying the gratitude of the Chinese people for the remission. . . . He also intended to conclude an alliance with America, and if possible to induce Germany to enter it, so that the influence of the Anglo-Japanese alliance might be counter-balanced."<sup>54</sup> At any rate, on his visit to Japan, Tang claimed that he was warned that any alliance between China and another power would not be received favorably by Japan.<sup>55</sup> Apparently Japan had been fully informed of the Kaiser's scheme for an alliance and paid close attention to Tang's visit, since Takahira had sent to Tokyo a detailed account of the Hale interview, which he had been able to obtain. However, since Takahira also knew of Roosevelt's rejection of the Kaiser's plan, there was no great alarm in Tokyo.<sup>56</sup>

Some have suggested that Japan deliberately rushed the Root-Takahira negotiations to thwart Tang's mission. At any rate, as Luella Hall has pointed out, after Takahira's return to Washington in the spring of 1908, Japan had tried to smooth things over with the United States. A general arbitration treaty had been signed in May, and the American fleet had been received cordially in Japan in October. The friendly relations continued to improve to the point where Takahira suggested an exchange of notes on the Open Door, the Root-Takahira agreement of 30 November 1908.<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, in view of the pending exchange of notes concerning the Root-Takahira agreement, the United States was taking pains not to offend Japan. As Paul von Hatzfeldt reported from Washington in October, the American government did not welcome attention in the press to any possible alliance or the political meaning of the special envoy. The American government wished to

avoid upsetting Japan, especially now that the U.S. fleet was in Yokohama. A month later, in November, Hatzfeldt reported that Tang had arrived in Washington, but added that he personally doubted that Tang would have anything to offer the U.S. that was worth risking antagonizing Japan over.<sup>58</sup>

The Root-Takahira Agreement was formally signed on 30 November, 1908, a few days after Tang's arrival in Washington. It was a fatal blow to the potential rapprochement of China, Germany, and the United States. In essence, Japan and the United States agreed to recognize each other's possessions in East Asia, disavowed all aggressive intentions, and promised to uphold China's independence and integrity and the Open Door. It greatly reduced tension between the United States and Japan, and as such, took away one of the major motivations of the German-American leg of the alliance, which was based on the premise of Japanese-American hostility.

Tang had been given a chance to see an advance copy of the text, which had also been sent to Tokyo, Peking, St. Petersburg, London, Paris, and Berlin. The Chinese were understandably upset. Yuan Shih-kai expressed his disappointment to Rockhill, the U.S. envoy in Peking, complaining that the United States should have waited for Tang's arrival in Washington before negotiating the agreement.<sup>59</sup> From China Rex similarly reported the Chinese government's disappointment and their belief that the Japanese had deliberately concluded the agreement in order to settle the matter before Tang arrived in Washington.<sup>60</sup>

At any rate, when Tang finally met Roosevelt on 9 December, no mention was made of the Chinese-German-American Alliance.<sup>61</sup> Ambassador Sternburg died of cancer in August 1908. Count Bernstorff, his replacement, reported that Tang made no mention of the proposed agreement when they met. Moreover, Tang had told him that the purpose of his trip was to get financial information about the United States. Bernstorff had heard from various circles that Tang had not been able to accomplish anything. The Kaiser's marginal comments betray his disappointment: "Very regrettable. Japan has precluded it."<sup>62</sup>

According to a report from Rex at the end of January, the Chinese still had not realized the full implications of the Japanese-American exchange of notes. Liang Tun-yen had approached Rex a few days after the announcement of the Root-Takahira Agreement to see if he had heard any news about the Chinese-American-German rapprochement. Rex had replied that he had no news and expected no news, since it was clear to him that an entente was now meaningless because of the Japanese-American agreement. Rex then reminded Liang that he had already told him a year ago that the United States and Germany would be favorable towards a rapprochement and that China should act immediately.

A report from Bernstorff at the beginning of January sheds some light on the change in attitude of the Americans. Bernstorff wrote that he had met Roosevelt for an hour and they talked over cigars. When Bernstorff presented a letter and gift from the Kaiser, Roosevelt expressed his joy at both. He also said that he wanted to show the letter to Taft, since he wanted him to have the same close

relations with Germany through the help of the Kaiser and the German representatives in Washington. Roosevelt also said that he would speak as confidentially to Bernstorff as he had with Sternburg. As for American relations with China and Japan, Roosevelt said that he had spoken with Sternburg about a joint guarantee of Chinese integrity, but had not been able to follow up on it, since this would encourage China to take an anti-Japanese stance and might provoke war. In such a case China would be helpless, and neither Germany nor the United States could protect it. The United States could not send its fleet to the Pacific and would never go to war over China, since American public opinion would never support such a war. If it came to a war with Japan, the United States would have to fight for its own interests and in such a way that the American people could support wholeheartedly and win. Roosevelt said he had told the same thing to Tang Shao-yi. Concerning Japan, Roosevelt said that he foresaw friendly relations with Japan for the next few years. When problems arose, the United States would treat Japan in a friendly manner, but at the same time show it was ready for war if necessary. The disappointed Kaiser wrote in his marginal comments that Roosevelt was deceiving himself about Japan and China.<sup>63</sup>

At the beginning of January, in a reply to a letter of condolence from the Kaiser on the occasion of Sternburg's death, Roosevelt referred to the recent changes in China with the dismissal of Yuan Shih-kai as a sign that one could not deal with the Chinese. "The Chinese," he wrote, "are so helpless to carry out any fixt [sic] policy, whether home or foreign, that it is difficult to have any but the most cautious dealings with them."<sup>64</sup>

Since the Root-Takahira Agreement pledged the preservation of the integrity of China and the maintenance of the Open Door, in the strict sense China and Germany had nothing to complain about. Publicly, Bülow declared in a Reichstag speech that it was in agreement with German interests.<sup>65</sup> The Kaiser made no public statement, but his marginal comments cited above indicate that he privately blamed Japan for the failure of Tang's mission and criticized Roosevelt for misunderstanding the true nature of Japan's and China's position.

### **Further Attempts to Foster German-American Cooperation**

Although the Root-Takahira Agreement had precluded the possibility of the entente envisioned by the Kaiser, he did not give up on the idea. About a year later, on 2 January 1910, Rex reported that Russia was becoming increasingly disturbed at Japanese road and railroad building in Manchuria and Korea, which could serve military purposes. Japanese actions in Manchuria had also provoked protests from the Chinese. While dismissing the immediate prospects of war, Rex claimed that Japan would not be satisfied with south Manchuria and would eventually want North Manchuria, Harbin, and even Vladivostok. In Rex's view, Japan was striving for predominance in China. China was helpless and only Germany and the United States could help her.

Impressed by the content and tone of the report, the Kaiser wrote a long comment in the margins. First, Rex should be congratulated for the fine report. It was exactly what the Kaiser had been preaching for the last 14 to 15 years. "I could have written it myself!" he noted. The Kaiser also wrote that Germany must make an agreement with the United States to guarantee the integrity of China. The Kaiser predicted that Japan would make military preparations and take Vladivostok before 1914 or 1915, that is, before the scheduled completion of the Panama Canal, which would greatly enhance United States influence in the Pacific. The Kaiser reasoned that the United States would need German friendship to counter the Japanese threat and recommended handling the tariff question accordingly.<sup>66</sup>

A month later, in February, Bernstorff reported from Washington that he had spoken with Secretary of State Knox about the Far East. Knox had told him that Russia and Japan were intimidating China, whose position could be strengthened only by the two unselfish powers, i.e., Germany and the United States. For his part, Bernstorff mentioned to Cox that he had had occasion to discuss the same issue with Roosevelt. Bernstorff concluded the report by asking for permission to "pick up the thread that was dropped a year and a quarter ago, when Japan and the United States made the agreement"<sup>67</sup> The Foreign Ministry's answer, however, was negative. There was a fear that a German-U.S. agreement concerning China would arouse the mistrust of the other European powers, and Germany might have to take the blame for the failure of the American Manchurian policy. Bernstorff was instructed that if the U.S. should raise the question, he was to tell them that Germany was prepared, now as before, to cooperate in the matter of the Open Door. Germany would be able to join in a formal agreement only if Great Britain were a partner.<sup>68</sup> This reflects the fact that Germany was also trying to foster closer relations with Great Britain.

When Bernstorff reported a short time later that Knox had again brought up the Asian question and spoke of general cooperation with Germany,<sup>69</sup> he was instructed to avoid giving the impression that Germany would do anything to oppose the other powers in Manchuria. In fact, Germany had already refused to support a Russian plan for a railroad to Peking, and so it could not now support any U.S. project without offending Russia.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the Kaiser was still quite interested in a possible German-American-Chinese alliance, as can be seen from his marginal comments on another report of Bernstorff on American Far East policy. "Yes, we must go about it with vigor. With the Russian, Japanese, British alliance, we need a Chinese-American-[German] three-way alliance for the maintenance of the status quo of China and the Open Door, similar to our Yangtze Agreement with Britain."<sup>71</sup>

In the meantime, the Chinese had again become interested in closer cooperation with Germany and the United States. In September 1910, Rex forwarded a letter from the Prince Regent to the Kaiser asking for Germany's help in administration and military reforms. The Prince Regent was going to send Liang, the

vice-president of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, as a special envoy to Europe and the United States, and he would visit Germany to discuss the matter. According to Rex, the Prince Regent expressed his openness to further suggestions from the Kaiser for improving relations between Germany and China.<sup>72</sup>

At this time, reports of the upcoming visit of Liang to Europe and the United States appeared in the German, American, British, and Chinese press along with rumors of a Chinese-American and Chinese-German rapprochement.<sup>73</sup>

At the end of September 1910, Kanzler Bethmann-Hollweg sent a report to the Kaiser, writing that Rex had been requested to forward the Prince Regent's letter and introduce Liang as special envoy. The Prince Regent called for closer relations with Germany and asked for German help in military and commercial reforms. Bethmann-Hollweg, however, was of the opinion that it would be best to be dilatory when Liang came and not make any conclusions until after the return of the crown prince from his trip to East Asia. He felt it was important to keep the discussions secret because such negotiations would anger Japan. In his comments, Wilhelm wrote that he was in complete agreement with the idea of supporting China, and stated that it should not matter what the other countries thought or said. France, Britain, and Russia had complained about German support of Turkey, but Turkey and China were the only two countries that still had a relationship of trust with Germany. In the Kaiser's view, Germany must support both countries against the deleterious effects of British financial policy.<sup>74</sup>

About a month later, on 21 October 1910, Bethmann-Hollweg wrote another report to the Kaiser, in which he summarized his conversation with the Chinese special envoy, Liang Tun-yen. Liang had said that the purpose of his mission was to strengthen relations between China and the United States and at first wanted to ask Germany for a statement of support for the maintenance of the sovereignty and integrity of China, also in regard to Manchuria. But since this might cause mistrust and animosity among the powers, he now wanted to send a note to all the concerned powers guaranteeing the sovereignty and integrity of China. Specifically, the powers would agree to respect the full sovereignty of China, would make no territorial concessions to the benefit of other powers, and would keep the door open to equal trading conditions for all the powers. The Kanzler said he found the plan very practical and commendable and that the German government would gladly accept it. He also suggested that Germany keep its acceptance secret to make it look like China was first approaching the United States. Then, if the United States agreed to the statement, Liang could say he would ask Germany's opinion. Liang also requested German officers to help train the Chinese army and asked for German support for an international conference on tariff revision. The Kanzler promised German support for both, and described the entire conversation as very satisfactory. In his final comments, Wilhelm called Liang's proposal "reasonable and practical."<sup>75</sup>

During the next few months, Bernstorff reported from Washington that he had discussed the East Asian question with Taft a number of times. Taft was happy about the recent agreement on a loan by international financial circles to aid in Chinese reforms. Taft had also said Germany was the only country that supported the Open Door.<sup>76</sup> According to Bernstorff, Dr. Wheeler, president of University of California and well known in Germany, had been asked by Taft to write a letter to the Kaiser asking for the closest possible cooperation with Germany. The reasoning was that if the British saw Germany and the United States coming together, they would drop their ties with Japan lest they be left out of the combination. This would help thaw British-German relations and promote cooperation of Britain, Germany, and the United States against Japanese expansion.<sup>77</sup> In January 1911, Bernstorff reported that Taft had once again brought up his favorite theme, East Asia. Taft said that he shared the views of the Kaiser, and wished to do all he could to keep the Open Door, but Britain was the biggest obstacle.<sup>78</sup>

In February 1911, Bernstorff reported on a meeting with Liang, who told him that he had met Knox. Liang told Bernstorff that Knox would not go into the question of the declaration of China's integrity because he said it would weaken previous statements by the powers concerning China. Knox did, however, agree to Liang's proposal for an arbitration treaty that would deal with all questions that could not be settled by diplomacy, provided that the other powers also agreed. Liang asked Bernstorff if Germany would agree and would try to persuade Italy and Austria to go along, since Knox had promised to try to get Britain to accept.<sup>79</sup> However, Bernstorff was instructed that Germany could not agree to an arbitration treaty, since this would make a precedent for other nations to press Germany for similar arbitration treaties, something that Germany did not want to do in view of its isolated position in Europe.<sup>80</sup> Reporting on his next meeting with the Chinese envoy, Bernstorff wrote that Liang was disappointed that Germany could not agree to an arbitration treaty. Since he did not want to return to China empty-handed, Liang made another proposal: China would send a note to all the nations asking them to bring before an arbitration court all questions that could not be settled through diplomatic channels. He thought that Russia and Japan would go along, and that the United States could persuade Britain to join, and wanted Germany to persuade Italy and Austria. According to Bernstorff, Liang was very taken with his plan, which he saw as a kind of neutralization of China.<sup>81</sup>

The Foreign Ministry replied that the same reservations still held for the new proposal, since a diplomatic note would carry the same weight as a treaty. Rather, Liang's original proposal for a declaration of integrity would better serve Chi-

na's interests, and would enhance the value of earlier statements.<sup>82</sup> Bernstorff reported in March 1911 that Liang said he would bring up his original proposal to Knox again, even though Knox was very cautious about China after the failure of his neutrality plan and difficulties with the proposed international loan to China.<sup>83</sup> However, as Bernstorff subsequently reported, when Liang brought up the proposal once more, Knox refused again, insisting that a repetition of a declaration upholding the sovereignty and integrity of China would weaken earlier declarations.<sup>84</sup>

At the end of 1911, there was another opportunity for cooperation. Revolution had broken out in China, and the United States was concerned about the possibility of Japanese military intervention. Knox had told Bernstorff that it was his long-standing wish for close cooperation with Germany.<sup>85</sup>

At the end of December 1911, when the German Foreign Ministry received reports from Tokyo that Japan was mobilizing troops for a possible intervention in China, it seized the opportunity to suggest to the United States that it issue a statement, which Germany would support. The statement would say that all powers have agreed to respect the sovereignty and integrity of China and the Open Door, and since both the imperial and revolutionary factions have respected the life and property of foreigners, there was no need to intervene now. Only if the situation changed would a common action of all the powers be acceptable in order to avoid misunderstanding. It would be expected that the United States, Russia, Britain, and France would go along, and Japan would have to as well, so as not to become isolated. The Foreign Ministry instructed Bernstorff to approach the United States government in Washington, while it would talk with the American envoy in Berlin.<sup>86</sup>

As Bernstorff reported at the end of January 1912, Knox was at first reluctant to agree to a repetition of the statement, since it would weaken the previous declarations, and would give the impression that the powers would not intervene, thus encouraging the Chinese to continue the fighting. Nevertheless, he would be inclined to issue a statement if he had a clarification of the British position.<sup>87</sup>

The Foreign Ministry instructed Bernstorff to reply that the British envoy in Berlin had given assurances that Great Britain greatly desired China to remain intact and not be broken up. In addition, Bernstorff was told, the Russian ambassador had said that Russia would not question the integrity of China, and would settle problems in Mongolia by negotiating with the Chinese government.<sup>88</sup>

On 29 January 1912, Bernstorff replied that Knox was in principle in agreement with Germany about the need to prevent unilateral action by Japan, but was reluctant to offend the other powers by a repetition of earlier declarations. Knox therefore suggested that the German government ask the United States

its position on China, to which the United States would reply by issuing a statement along the lines suggested by the Foreign Ministry.<sup>89</sup> Bernstorff was thereupon instructed to tell Knox of the German government's agreement.<sup>90</sup>

Some days later, Knox sent a note to all the major powers informing them of the United States' answer to Germany on the Chinese question. The note began by stating that all nations had pledged to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of China and had shown agreement in position towards China. It then went on to say that there was no need to intervene as of yet, but if intervention did become necessary, the United States favored a policy of concerted action of the powers, so as to avoid misunderstandings. The representatives of the powers had accepted the note and war preparations in Japan were stopped. Knox related to Bernstorff how happy he and Taft were at the success of the note and that the agreement of the United States and Germany had been proclaimed publicly. Knox was especially pleased that it was German initiative that brought about this happy result.<sup>91</sup> Bernstorff was instructed to notify Knox of the official satisfaction of the German government and say that the United States policy was in complete harmony with Germany's views.<sup>92</sup>

The announcement of this note represents a high point of German-American cooperation in East Asian affairs. However, although a certain level of cooperation between the United States and Germany was possible, it never led to the more substantial alliance envisioned by Kaiser Wilhelm. There were, in fact, several factors that hindered any advance in German-American relations. For one thing, the end of Roosevelt's term in the spring of 1909 ended the personal contact between the president and the Kaiser. Sternburg, who was personally on friendly terms with Roosevelt, had also died in the meantime. While Taft, Roosevelt's adviser, would have welcomed German cooperation in China, he did not enjoy the same level of personal friendship with Wilhelm. For its part, Germany would have liked to cooperate with the United States, but because of the increasingly difficult situation in Europe, Germany could not risk antagonizing the other powers in Asia. Under Kanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, Germany sought closer cooperation with Britain, which had a common interest with Germany in promoting economic and political stability in Latin America, and dislike of the discriminatory American fees for the Panama Canal. There were also new economic conflicts between Germany and the United States over tariff negotiations.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, as Manfred Jonas points out, the "dollar diplomacy" of Taft, Roosevelt's successor, was intended as a substitute for political and military action, and was even less likely to result in an alliance. In addition, Germany was becoming increasingly involved in the Balkans and the Middle East, where the United States had little interest.<sup>94</sup> All these factors made any further German approaches to the United States problematic.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **Reasons for the Failure of the German-American-Chinese Alliance**

There are several reasons for the failure of the attempt to form a German-American-Chinese entente. One crucial factor was the Chinese hesitation to make a direct approach to the United States. Since Germany could not take the leading role for fear of creating mistrust among the powers and further isolating itself, it was dependent on Chinese initiative and American willingness to cooperate. However, China was reluctant to act for fear of antagonizing Japan. For the United States, a formal treaty was out of the question because of a long-standing tradition against foreign alliances. The anti-British intent of the entente could also have endangered the good working relationship between the United States and Britain.

A second factor was Germany's overestimation of Japanese-American hostility. Unknown to the Germans, the Japanese and Americans had already reached a basic understanding in July 1905 to recognize their respective interests in East Asia and the Pacific. This was one of the very developments against which Germany was trying to enlist American aid.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement between Japan and the United States had smoothed over the immigration issue and the corresponding tensions. Furthermore, a general arbitration treaty had been signed in May 1908, and the American fleet had been received cordially in Japan in October 1908. These friendly relations had developed to the point where the Root-Takahira Agreement of 30 November 1908 became possible.<sup>96</sup>

Third, the Germans had also overestimated the value of appealing to the Open Door as the basis for German-American cooperation. Germany's interests in China were not primarily economic but political. Germany wanted to protect its position in Shantung and to divert Russian attention to Asia, giving Germany a freer hand in Europe. German cooperation with the United States could not be allowed to antagonize Russia, while the United States had economic interests in Manchuria that were threatened by Russian encroachment. Nor was the United States eager to support Germany in Shantung since this would antagonize Great Britain. Thus the only real common interest between Germany and the United States in the Far East was to keep the powers from dividing up China.<sup>97</sup>

Fourth, it was difficult to dispel a basic American mistrust of German intentions. German attempts at courting the Americans through gifts, cultural exchanges, and Sternburg's friendship with Roosevelt did not always have the desired effect. While the friendship of Sternburg helped Roosevelt deal with the difficult Kaiser, his faithful reporting of Roosevelt's flattering statements helped create a false illusion of Roosevelt's friendship for the Kaiser.<sup>98</sup> While Roosevelt's correspondence with Wilhelm is filled with flattery, his private correspondence with others shows that he did not take Wilhelm seriously. For example, in a letter written in 1905 to Cecil Spring Rice, a British diplomat and

close friend, Roosevelt described the Kaiser as “too jumpy, too volatile in his policies, too lacking the power of continuous and sustained thought and action.”<sup>99</sup> As many have pointed out, the personal contact between Roosevelt and Wilhelm has been overrated.<sup>100</sup>

In a word, German dependence on a reluctant China to take the initiative and an overestimation of Japanese-American tensions and common interests in China combined with the pitfalls of personal diplomacy led to the failure of the attempt to form a German-American-Chinese alliance against Japan.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Germany was becoming more and more dependent on American raw materials and was having trouble maintaining its market share in the United States; it thus ended up with an unfavorable trade balance. In the midst of these tensions, the commercial treaties that had been concluded between the two nations were generally the result of German concessions at the last minute to avoid a tariff war. Ragnhild Fiebig-von Hase, “Die Rolle Kaiser Wilhelms II. in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen 1890–1914,” in *Der Ort Kaiser Wilhelms II. in der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. John C. G. Röhl (München: Oldenbourg, 1991), p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> During the Venezuela crisis, Germany and Britain undertook a blockade of Venezuela to force the collection of debts. The crisis was resolved when the debt question was submitted to arbitration. Reichskanzler Bülow had hoped that cooperation with Great Britain would draw Great Britain and Germany together and drive Britain and the United States apart. Fiebig-von Hase, “Die Rolle Kaiser Wilhelms II.,” p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> Luella J. Hall, “The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente of 1907–1908,” *Journal of Modern History* 1 (1929): 222.

<sup>6</sup> Jonas, *The United States and Germany*, p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> Hall, “The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente,” pp. 229–30.

<sup>8</sup> Werner Stingl, *Der Ferne Osten in der deutschen Politik vor dem ersten Weltkrieg (1902–1914)* 2 vols. (Frankfurt/Main: Haag Herchen, 1978), 2:601–602.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 603.

<sup>10</sup> To avoid confusion, transliterations of Chinese proper names conform to the usage of the original documents.

<sup>11</sup> Wilhelm to Bülow, 30 December 1907, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amtes, Bonn (hereafter referred to as PAAA), China 30 secreta, vol. 1. Reproduced in *Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871–1914*, ed. Johannes Lepsius et al., vol. 25 (Berlin, 1922) (hereafter referred to as GP), pp. 87–89.

<sup>12</sup> Rex to Bülow, Peking, 4 July 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Reproduced in GP, 25:67–69; Rex to Bülow, Peking, 18 July 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1.; Rex to Bülow, Peking, 2 August 1907, PAAA, *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Mumm to Bülow, Tokyo, 5 August 1907, PAAA, Japan 16. Reproduced in GP, 25:69–71.

<sup>14</sup> Rex to Bülow, Peking, 4 July 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Reproduced in GP, 25:67–69.

<sup>15</sup> Tschirsky to Sternburg, Berlin, 15 September 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Reproduced in GP, 25:71.

<sup>16</sup> Sternburg to Bülow, Dublin, N.H., 9 September 1907, PAAA, Vereinigten Staaten von Nord Amerika, 29. Reproduced in GP, 25:72–74. In his marginal comments, the Kaiser wrote that Sternburg should be congratulated by telegram for his report.

<sup>17</sup> Telegram Rex to Foreign Ministry, 15 October 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Wilhelm's comments: "Wir müssen ihnen unbedingt den Rücken stärken und ihr Vertrauen nicht zurückweisen. Vielleicht hat unser früherer Gesandter [Mumm] dabei mitgewirkt mit dem ich diesen Punkt öfters mit Ew. Durchlaut Einverständnis besprach. So am Tage seiner Abmeldung noch. Ich bin sehr dafür."

<sup>18</sup> [Draft] telegram Bülow to Sternburg, Klein-Flottbek, 17 October 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Reproduced in GP, 25:75–76.

<sup>19</sup> Sternburg to Bülow, Tel. 144, 18 October 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; Sternburg to Bülow, Tel. 152, 4 November 1907, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Sternburg to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 158, 8 November 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Reproduced in GP, 25:78–79.

<sup>21</sup> Immediatbericht Bülow to the Kaiser, Berlin, 12 November 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1. Copy of Schoen to Sternburg, Tel. 136, Berlin, 22 November 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:79–80.

<sup>22</sup> Sternburg to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 166, Washington, 24 November 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 217, Peking, 31 October 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:75–77.

<sup>24</sup> Rex to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 164, Peking [arrived in Berlin 30 November 1907], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Sternburg to Foreign Ministry, No. 100, Washington, 5 December 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:80.

<sup>26</sup> Rex to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 170, Peking [arrived in Berlin 14 December 1907], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Schoen to Sternburg, Tel. 143, Berlin, 15 December 1907, PAAA, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Schoen to Kaiser, Berlin, 13 December 1907, PAAA, *ibid.* Wilhelm's comments: "Ihr Bericht beweist, daß wir mit China ins Vereinkommen müßten und das bald! Es ist schon zu viel Zeit verloren worden."

<sup>29</sup> Rex to Bülow, Peking, No. 250, 7 December 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:81–86.

<sup>30</sup> Hall, "The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente," p. 227.

<sup>31</sup> Stingl, *Der Ferne Osten*, 2:601–602.

<sup>32</sup> Rex to Bülow, Peking, No. 250, 7 December 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:81–86. Wilhelm's comments: "Ausgezeichnet! Ganz meine

Anschaunungen, die ich auch Yin-cheng gegenüber geäußert! Nicht nur Juan-shi-kai, sondern auch Yin-Cheng hat diese Anfrage an uns veranlaßt, auf Grund der von mir direkt bei I[hrrer] M[ajestät] angeregten Entente mit uns! Das ist ein Jahr her, und wir haben bisher nichts darin gethan! Jetzt wird aber gearbeitet werden! Sofort, subito!”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Wilhelm's comments: “. . . muß zur Basis sofortiger Verhandlungen gemacht werden. Eine Entente Cordiale mit China zur *Aufrechterhaltung des status quo* ist absolut nöthig für uns. Sonst ist unsere ganze Weltpolitik in die Binsen zu werfen” (emphasis in the original).

<sup>34</sup> Wilhelm II to Bülow, Berlin, 30 December 1907, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1, reproduced in GP, 25:87–89. Wilhelm's comments: “Wir müssen unbedingt so bald als möglich abschließen! Auf diesen Moment habe ich seit Jahren hingearbeitet und gewirkt! . . . vorwärts, überlegt is lange genug! Der Worte sind genug gewechselt, jetzt laßt uns Thaten sehen!”

<sup>35</sup> Draft of Bülow to Rex, Tel. 2, Berlin, 3 January 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1; reproduced in GP, 25:89–90.

<sup>36</sup> Schoen to Sternburg, 6 January 1908, GP, 25:90–91.

<sup>37</sup> Rex to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 10, Peking [arrived in Berlin 20 January 1908], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Sternburg to Foreign Office, Tel. 6, Washington [arrived in Berlin 18 January 1908] PAAA, Nord Amerika 16 vol. 22; Sternburg to Bülow, No. 4, Washington, 11 January 1908, PAAA, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Schoen to War Minister, Berlin, 14 January 1908, PAAA, China 5, vol. 24.

<sup>40</sup> Wachs to Bülow, Berlin, 25 January 1908, *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 68, Peking, 28 February 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2. The content of the report is reproduced in Schoen to Sternburg, No. 227, Berlin, 21 March 1908, GP, 25:92–93. Wilhelm's comments: “Es muß nach Besprechung mit China, Amerika und uns von hier und Washington aus ein ‘statement of policy’ gemacht werden, welches allen anderen Nationen zur Kenntnis mitgeteilt wird. Das genügt vollkommen. Darin steht als Hauptsache: Open door, status quo und integrity of Chinese Empire.”

<sup>42</sup> Sternburg to Bülow, Tel. 68, Washington, 7 April 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2; reproduced in GP, 25:94.

<sup>43</sup> Rex to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 42, Peking [arrived in Berlin 13 April 1908], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Wilhelm to Roosevelt, Achilleon, April 1908, PAAA, Deutschland 127, No. 22, vol. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Sternburg to Bülow, No. 121, Washington, 15 May 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Fiebig-von Hase, “Die Rolle Kaiser Wilhelms II.,” pp. 252–54. Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 258–59.

<sup>47</sup> Stingl, *Der Ferne Osten*, 2:615–16.

<sup>48</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 122, Peking, 1 June 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2; reproduced in GP, 25:94–96. Wilhelm's comments: “Umstandsbaron! ist ihnen vor einem Jahr schon auseinandergesetzt worden” “Time is not money” “Das is ja alles bereits mit Roseveldt [sic] abgemacht! und den Himmlischen Söhnen mitgetheilt!”

<sup>49</sup> Rex to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 68, Peking, August 1908 [arrived in Berlin 5 August 1908], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2; reproduced in GP, 25:96.

<sup>50</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 189, Peking, 30 September 1908, PAAA, China secr., vol. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 192, Peking, 4 October 1908, PAAA, *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 201, Peking, 4 October 1908, PAAA, *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Bünz to Foreign Ministry, Oyster Bay, Long Island, 13 September 1908, PAAA, Nord Amerika 11, vol. 16: "Weder er, noch Root, hätten sich mit diesen Gedanken jemals ernstlich beschäftigt." Mumm had reported on Japanese reactions to the *Herald* articles in Mumm to Bülow, No. 321, Tokyo, 15 August 1908, China 30 secr., vol. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Cited in Gloria Blazsik, "Theodore Roosevelt's Far Eastern Policy and the T'ang Shao-yi Mission" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1969), p. 100, footnote 47.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108. Blazsik cites a confidential memorandum of interview between Tang and Root, according to which Tang was told in Japan that the Japanese government would regard any alliance between China and another power as an unfriendly act. See also Stigl, *Der Ferne Osten*, 2:617; Werner Levi, *Modern China's Foreign Policy* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1953), p. 103.

<sup>56</sup> Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, p. 261.

<sup>57</sup> Hall, "The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente," p. 232.

<sup>58</sup> Hatzfeldt to Bülow, No. 196, Washington, 17 October 1908, PAAA, China secr., vol. 2; [Copy of] Hatzfeldt to Bülow, No. 207, Washington, 25 November 1908, PAAA, *ibid.* Original in China 24, No. 3, vol. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Jonas, *The United States and Germany*, p. 91.

<sup>60</sup> [Copy] Rex to Bülow, No. 243, Peking, 15 December 1908, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2, original in China 33, vol. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Blazsik, *Theodore Roosevelt's Far Eastern Policy*, p. 113.

<sup>62</sup> Bernstorff to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 6, Washington, January 1909 [arrived in Berlin 9 January 1909], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 2. Wilhelm's comments: "Sehr bedauerlich. Japan hat vorgebaut."

<sup>63</sup> Bernstorff to Foreign Ministry, No. 4, Washington, 1 January 1909, PAAA, Nord Amerika 11, vol. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Roosevelt to Wilhelm, Washington, 2 January 1909, PAAA, Nord Amerika 11, vol. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags, 12. Wahlperiode, 1. Session, 7. Band, S. 6048.

<sup>66</sup> Rex to Bülow, No. 1, Peking, 2 January 1909, PAAA, China Gen. 5, copy in China 30 secr., vol. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Bernstorff to AA, Tel. 45, Washington, February 1910 [arrived in Berlin 6 February 1910], PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.

<sup>68</sup> [Draft] Schoen to Bernstorff, Tel. 174, Berlin, 15 February 1910, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Bernstorff to AA, Tel. 52, Washington, February 1910 [arrived in Berlin 18 February 1910], China 4, vol. 24; Bernstorff to AA, Tel. 62, March 1910 [arrived in Berlin 4 March], PAAA, *ibid.*

- <sup>70</sup> [Draft] Schoen to Bernstorff, Tel. 46, Berlin, 6 March 1910, PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, No. 94, Washington, 1 July 1910, PAAA, Nord Amerika 11, vol. 19. Wilhelm's comments: "Ja, dazu müssen wir uns aber energisch aufraffen. Mit dem unerhörten Russ. Jap. Engl. Bündnis ein China-Amerikanisches 3 Bundbündnis zu Erhaltung des Status Quo Chinas und open door ähnlich wie unser Yangtze Vertrag mit England."
- <sup>72</sup> Rex to Bethmann-Hollweg, No. 208, Peking, 5 September 1910, Peking, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>73</sup> See the clippings from the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* of 21 September 1910, the *Daily Telegraph* of 20 September 1910, and the *New York Herald* of 21 September in PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>74</sup> Immediatbericht Bethmann-Hollweg, Hohenfinow, 28 September 1910, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>75</sup> Immediatbericht Bethmann-Hollweg, Berlin, 21 October 1910, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>76</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Washington, 5 November 1910, PAAA, China 3, vol. 25.
- <sup>77</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Washington, 11 December 1910, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>78</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, No. 4, Washington, 14 January 1911, PAAA, China 30 secr., vol. 3.
- <sup>79</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Tel. 29, Washington, 21 February 1911, PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>80</sup> [Draft] Kiderlen to Bernstorff, Tel. 15, 2 March 1911, PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>81</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Tel. 31, Washington, February 1911 [arrived in Berlin 4 March 1911], PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> [Draft] State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry [Kiderlen] to Bernstorff, Tel. 18, Berlin, 9 March 1911, PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Tel. 35, Washington, March 1911 [arrived in Berlin 11 March 1911], PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, No. 104, Washington, 10 June 1911, PAAA, *ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> Bernstorff to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 125, Washington, 10 December 1911, PAAA, China 1, vol. 81b.
- <sup>86</sup> [Draft] Under State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Zimmerman to Bernstorff, Tel. 7, Berlin, 25 December 1911, PAAA, China 1, vol. 84.
- <sup>87</sup> Bernstorff to Bethmann-Hollweg, Tel. 16, Washington [arrived in Berlin 27 January 1912], PAAA, China 1, vol. 88.
- <sup>88</sup> [Draft] Zimmermann to Bernstorff, Berlin, Tel. 10, Berlin, 28 January 1912, PAAA, China 1, vol. 89.
- <sup>89</sup> Bernstorff to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 12, Washington, 29 January 1912, PAAA, *ibid.*; reproduced in GP, 32:255.
- <sup>90</sup> [Draft] Zimmermann to Bernstorff, Tel. 11, Berlin, 31 January 1912, PAAA, China 1, vol. 89.

<sup>91</sup> Bernstorff to Foreign Ministry, Tel. 28, Washington, February 1912 [arrived in Berlin 12 February 1912], PAAA, China 1 vol. 90; reproduced in GP, 32:257–58.

<sup>92</sup> [Draft] Kiderlen to Bernstorff, Tel. 15, Berlin, 13 February 1912, PAAA, China 1, vol. 90, reproduced in GP, 32:258.

<sup>93</sup> Fiebig-von Hase, “Die Rolle Kaiser Wilhelms II.,” pp. 254–56.

<sup>94</sup> Jonas, *The United States and Germany*, pp. 93–94.

<sup>95</sup> Hall, “The Abortive German-American-Chinese Entente,” p. 235.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>97</sup> Fiebig-von Hase, “Die Rolle Kaiser Wilhelms II.,” p. 249.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245–47.

<sup>99</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>100</sup> Hans Gatzke, “The United States and Germany on the Eve of World War I,” in *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Immanuel Geiss and Bernd Jürgen Wendt (Düsseldorf: Bertlemann Universitätsverlag, 1974), pp. 277–79.