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# **What China Expects of America in the Present Crisis**

by **Dr. Hu Shih**

*From:*

**THE FAR EASTERN MAGAZINE**, vol 1, no. 1 (November, 1937), pp. 14-16

# What China Expects of America in the Present Crisis\*

by Dr. Hu Shih

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Ever since my arrival in this country six days ago, this question has been constantly put to me wherever I go. What can China expect of America? At the very onset, let me assure you that clear thinking people in China do not expect the American nation to get involved in the war. China has no right to expect any other third power to join us in this present struggle in the East. I for one have always had the greatest sympathy with the widespread desire of the American people to keep out of the war. I have lived more than seven years and a half in this country. I am thoroughly convinced that the American people are truly war-weary and truly peace-loving. I am quite fully aware that at least 99 % of your people are in sympathy with the Chinese people in our present struggle to defend ourselves against the aggressor, but that sympathy cannot and should not lead you to undertake armed intervention in the Sino-Japanese war.

It is therefore perfectly consistent for this overwhelming sympathy for China to exist side by side with the equally overwhelming desire to keep America out of the war. It is not because you love China less, it is simply because you love your own country better. All this is what it ought to be. This is why I wish it to be understood once and for all that no clear-headed Chinese would dream of dragging the American republic into the war. It is perfectly right and legitimate that your people should do your best to remain neutral and keep out of the war.

but allow me to sound a word of warning. Is this mere negative pacificism really sufficient to keep you out of the war? Can you really keep out of the war by merely peace-loving and remaining neutral? Let me tell you a recent episode in history. I was a student in this country when the last war broke out in 1914. I well remember -- and I am sure you will all remember -- President Wilson's proclamation of neutrality in which he commanded all the American people to remain neutral, neutral not only in action but also in spirit. Indeed, America succeeded in keeping out of the war for almost three years. In spite of your racial and cultural sympathy with England, in spite of your profound historic gratitude towards France, in spite of your tremendous sentimental sympathy for Belgium,

in spite of all this your nation kept out of the war for three long years, and the great Woodrow Wilson was reelected in 1917 as the one man who "kept you out of war." But then the tide turned. The same great President who had kept you out of the war for three years had to go to Congress early in '17 to ask for a mandate to sever diplomatic relations with Germany and later to declare war on Germany. Before I sailed back for China in 1917 the United States was already in the war, fighting on the side of the Allies, fighting the war that was to end war, and to make the world safe for democracy,

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*\*This article had been disclosed by the author over the Columbia Broadcasting System in October of this year.---Editor.*

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What had happened? What was it that dragged your people into the last great war? Certainly it was not the eloquent pleadings of the propagandists for the cause of the Allies, for these had apparently failed during the first three years of the war. Certainly it was not the banking interests and the munition-makers, for Woodrow Wilson was surely no friend of Wall Street and of the war-profiteers. What actually brought America into the war was a long series of incidents ranging from the German intrigues on the Mexican borders to the unrestricted submarine warfare on the high seas. Indeed, it was the infinite stupidity of the German militarists that forced your nation to join the last war. This story is only twenty years old and must still be fresh in your memory. The moral of this story is that mere peace-loving, mere negative pacificism without a constructive and intelligent policy to make peace possible, is never adequate to safeguard a nation from being involved in a war.

In this modern world of radio and transocean clippers, there is no such thing as an isolated nation. In this world of ours, war as well as peace is truly indivisible. Any war that is fought for a sufficiently long time will not fail to gradually involve many other nations into it. Neither neutrality nor pacificism will ever succeed in keeping you out of it. And the same stupidity of the militarists of an aggressive nation which forced you into the last war will not be lacking to drag you into the present one. We must not forget that what unrestricted submarine warfare did in the last war is exactly what unrestricted aerial warfare will do in the present war. You will find, therefore, before very long there will be incidents piled upon incidents, protests heaping on protests,

and the time will come when your peace-loving nation may suddenly find yourself in the midst of a war psychology and a war situation. And then you will find all those pacifist organizations which now work fervently for keeping you out of the war may be working equally feverishly to justify the second great war that will again end war and once more make the world safe for democracy.

This then is my proposition. While I fully sympathize with your nation-wide desire to keep out of the war, I cannot help thinking that mere negative pacificism without being backed by a constructive peace policy is never sufficient to guarantee to you the peace you so dearly desire. What China expects of America -- indeed, what the whole civilized world expects of America -- is an active and positive leadership in international peace and justice, a leadership to prevent wars, to call a halt to aggressions, to plan and cooperate with the democracies of the world to bring about collective security, and to make this world at least safe for humanity to live in. I am sure that the people of this great republic have enough imagination to realize that this country is sufficiently powerful to undertake such constructive leadership for international peace without incurring the risk of being involved in international intrigues and wars. On the contrary, it may turn out that such active international leadership may be after all the only effective means to achieve the end of keeping yourselves out of war. When, 32 years ago, a great American President called a halt to a bloody war and brought about peace between Japan and Russia, did he thereby involve this country in a war? When, again 17 years ago, the American government called a Washington conference which gave ten years of peace

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to the Far East and which put a complete isolation of the horse and brake on the rivalry in naval armaments for ten years, did it thereby involve this country in a world war?

I'm sure the time will soon come when this great nation of yours will have to decide whether it will itself to live a national life of complete isolation of the horse and buggy days, of whether it will be inspired to play the role of effective and active international leadership, becoming the most powerful nation in a modern world of radio communication and aerial transportation.