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PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S STATEMENT ON FILIPINO INDEPENDENCE

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Source: *Current History (1916-1940)*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (APRIL, 1924), pp. 158-160

Published by: University of California Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45330732>

Accessed: 03-03-2022 01:26 UTC

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pealed to the United States to heed Japan's cherished desire "to be treated on the same footing with other independent nations." He continued: "The question of emigration from Japan to the United States has been definitely decided. For many years, knowing that our people were not wanted as immigrants, no passports were issued except to immediate relatives of Japanese who long had been residents of the United States, believing this to be mere human consideration for the family rights of the men. If this is deemed unsatisfactory, we are ready to discuss the matter anew, of restrictions or exclusion, which should be arranged by mutual consideration and consent in agreement, as is customary, instead of through needlessly arbitrary *ex parte* action." On Feb. 13 the Department of State made public a letter from Secretary of State Hughes to Chairman Johnson of the House Immigration Committee in which Mr. Hughes stated that the proposals which "single out Japanese immigrants for exclusion" are "inconsistent" with the treaty of 1911 and should be eliminated. "I believe," he added, "such legislative action would largely undo the work of the Washington Conference for Limitation of Armament, which

so greatly improved our relations with Japan." He suggested that Japan be placed on the same quota basis as other nations, which would mean less than 250 a year. The Japanese press promptly paid tribute to the "sagacity and fairness" of Mr. Hughes, and to the American people's "love of justice and fair play."

For some years an influential element in Japan has favored the resumption of relations with Russia. But an even larger element has feared the spread of radical ideas which have already gained a small following in the country. Unsuccessful conferences have already been held at Dairen and Changchun (Manchuria) and Tokio, between Russian and Japanese representatives. And on Feb. 24 the Foreign Office announced that it had sent a message to the Japanese Minister at Peking for presentation to M. Karahan, the Soviet envoy to China, stating that Japan was ready to assume negotiations on the basis of the preliminary Tokio conversations, provided the Soviet Government would recognize the Japanese Consul at Vladivostok and resume mail service. As Russia has, in the past, demanded recognition before negotiation, it is doubtful if much will be gained by the present advance.

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S STATEMENT ON FILIPINO INDEPENDENCE

FILIPINO hopes that the United States Congress would soon take steps to grant the Philippine Islands complete self-rule received a serious setback on March 5, with the publication at the White House of a letter sent by President Coolidge to Manuel Roxas, Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives and Chairman of the Philippine Independence Mission at Washington. Though this letter was dated Feb. 21, Señor Roxas declared that he received it only on the day when it was made public. In this letter, the text of which is published below, the President declared definitely that the Filipinos were not yet ready for independence. He further called the alleged grievances of the Filipinos unjustified and emphatically supported the administration of General Wood, Governor General of the Philippines, as against the bill of complaints filed against him by the Filipino leaders. The President's stand in this important statement was a bombshell to the hopes of the Filipino mis-

sion that the United States Congress would take measures in the near future to grant the Filipino people independence.

The letter was a specific reply to a previous communication received by the President from Señor Roxas, enclosing the resolutions adopted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines regarding the relations between the Filipino people and the United States Government. Señor Roxas declared that the long delay in transmission and publication of the President's reply was deliberate and timed to prevent imminent action by Congress to introduce proposals favorable to Filipino aspirations. On March 3 the Committee on Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives had paved the way for Congressional consideration of the Philippine question by agreeing to prepare a measure providing for the islands' independence. The vote favoring this was 11 to 5; some of those who voted in the affirmative, however, were said to be opposed to inde-

pendence and to have voted favorably only in order to bring the Philippine issue before the House for discussion. The publication of the President's letter put a quietus upon this projected consideration by Congress of the Filipino claims to independence, though Señor Roxas declared that these claims would not be abandoned and that the activities of the Filipino mission to obtain Congressional action would continue. The text of the President's letter was as follows:

The White House,
Washington, Feb. 21, 1924.

My Dear Mr. Roxas:

The resolutions adopted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines, touching upon the relations between the Filipino people and the Government of the United States, have been received. I have noted carefully all that you have said regarding the history of these relations. I have sought to inform myself, so thoroughly as might be, as to the occasions of current irritation between the Legislature of the Philippines and the executive authority of the islands.

In your presentment you have set forth more or less definitely a series of grievances, the gravamen of which is that the present executive authority of the islands, designated by the United States Government, is in your opinion out of sympathy with the reasonable national aspirations of the Filipino people.

If I do not misinterpret your protest, you are disposed to doubt whether your people may reasonably expect, if the present executive policy shall continue, that the Government of the United States will in reasonable time justify the hopes which your people entertain of ultimate independence.

The declaration of the Commission of Independence charges the Governor General with illegal, arbitrary and undemocratic policies, in consequence of which the leaders of Filipino participation in the Government have resigned and their resignations have been accepted by the Governor General.

The Commission of Independence declares that it is necessary "to take all lawful steps, and to make use of all lawful means within our power to obtain the complete vindication of the liberties of the country now violated and invaded." It proceeds: "And we declare, finally, that this event, grave and serious as it is, once more demonstrates that the immediate and absolute independence of the Philippines, which the whole country demands, is the only complete and satisfactory settlement of the Philippine problem."

It is occasion for satisfaction to all concerned that this declaration is couched in terms of moderation, and that it goes no further than to invoke "all lawful means within our power." So long as such discussions as this shall be confined to the consideration of lawful means, there will be reason to anticipate mutually beneficent conclusions. It is, therefore, a matter of congratulation which I herewith extend, that you have chosen to carry on this discussion within the bounds of lawful claims and means. That you have thus declared the purpose to restrict your modes of appeal and methods of enforcing is gratifying evidence of the progress which the Filipino people, under American auspices, have made toward a demonstrated capacity for self-government.

The extent to which the grievances which you suggest are shared by the Filipino people has been a subject of some disagreement. The American Government has information which justifies it in the confidence that a very large proportion at any rate, and possibly a majority, of the substantial citizenry of the island does not support the claim that there are grounds for serious grievance. A considerable section of the Filipino people is, further, of the opinion that at this time any change which would weaken the tie between the Filipinos and the American nation would be a misfortune to the islands.

The world is in a state of high tension and unsettlement. The possibility of either economic or political disorders calculated to bring misfortune, if not disaster, to the Filipino people unless they are strongly supported, is not to be ignored.

It should not be overlooked that within the past two years, as a result of international arrangements negotiated by the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armament and problems of the Far East, the position of the Filipino people has been greatly improved and assured. For the stabilizing advantages which accrue to them in virtue of the assurance of peace in the Pacific, they are directly indebted to the initiative and efforts of the American Government. They can ill afford in a time of so much uncertainty in the world to underrate the value of these contributions to their security.

By reason of their assurance against attack by any power; by reason also of that financial and economic strength which inevitably accrues to them; by reason of the expanded and still expanding opportunities for industrial and economic development—because of all these considerations the Filipino people would do well to consider most carefully the value of their intimate association with the American nation.

TIME FOR INDEPENDENCE NOT RIPE

Although they have made wonderful advance in the last quarter century, the Filipino people are by no means equipped, either in wealth or experience, to undertake the heavy burden which would be imposed upon them with political independence. Their position in the world is such that without American protection there would be the unrestricted temptation to maintain an extensive and costly diplomatic service and an ineffective but costly military and naval service.

It is to be doubted whether, with the utmost exertion, the most complete solidarity among themselves, the most unqualified and devoted patriotism, it would be possible for the people of the islands to maintain an independent place in the world for an indefinite future. In presenting these considerations, it is perhaps worth while to draw your attention to the conditions in which some other peoples find themselves by reason of lacking such guarantees and assurances as the Filipino people enjoy. The burdens of armament and of governmental expenses which many small nations are compelled to bear in these times are so great that we see everywhere the evidence of national prosperity and community progress hindered, if not destroyed, because of them.

During the World War the Filipino people were comparatively undisturbed in their ordinary pursuits, left free to continue their fine progress. But it may well be doubted whether, if they had been shorn of the protection afforded by the United States, they could have enjoyed so fortunate an experience. Much more probably they would have become involved in the great conflict and their independence and nationality would have become, as did those of many other peoples, pawns in the great world reorganization. There could be no more unfortunate posture in which to place a people such as your own. You have set your feet firmly in the path of advancement and improvement. But you need, above all else, assured opportunity of continuing in that course without interference from the outside or turmoil within. Working out the highest destiny of even the most talented and advanced of peoples is a matter of many generations.

A fair appraisal of all these considerations and others which suggest themselves which do not require enumeration will, I am sure, justify the frank statement that the Government of the United States would not feel that it had performed its full duty by the Filipino people, or discharged all of its obligations to civilization, if it should yield at this time to your aspiration for national independence.

The present relationship between the American nation and the Filipino people arose out of a strange and almost unparalleled turn of international affairs. A great responsibility came unsought to the American people. It was not imposed upon them because they had yielded to

any designs of imperialism or of colonial expansion. The fortunes of war brought American power to your islands playing the part of an unexpected and a welcome delivery. You may be very sure that the American people have never entertained purposes of exploiting the Filipino people or their country.

There have, indeed, been different opinions among our own people as to the precisely proper relationship with the Filipinos. There were some among us, as there are some among your people, who believe that immediate independence of the Filipinos would be best for both. I should be less than candid with you, however, if I did not say that in my judgment the strongest argument that has been used in the United States in support of immediate independence of the Philippines is not the argument that it would benefit the Filipinos, but that it would be of advantage to the United States. Feeling as I do, and as I am convinced the great majority of Americans do, regarding our obligations to the Filipino people, I have to say that I regard such arguments as unworthy. The American people will not evade or repudiate the responsibility they have assumed in this matter. The American Government is convinced that it has the overwhelming support of the American Nation in its conviction that present independence would be a misfortune and might easily become a disaster to the Filipino people. Upon that conviction, the policy of the Government is based.

CONFIDENCE IN GENERAL WOOD

Thus far I have suggested only some of the reasons related to international concerns, which seem to me to urge strongly against independence at this time. I wish now to review for a moment some domestic concerns of the Philippine Islands which seem also to argue against present independence. The American Government has been most liberal in opening to the Filipino people the opportunities of the largest practicable participation in, and control of, their own Administration. It has been a matter of pride and satisfaction to us, as I am sure it must also have been to your people, that this attitude has met with so fine a response. In education, in cultural advancement, in political conceptions and institutional development, the Filipino people have demonstrated a capacity which cannot but justify high hopes for their future. But it would be idle and insincere to suggest that they have yet proved their possession of the completely developed political capacity which is necessary to a minor nation assuming the full responsibility of maintaining itself in the family of nations. I am frankly convinced that the very mission upon which you have addressed me is itself an evidence that something is yet lacking in development of political consciousness and capability.

One who examines the grounds on which are based the protests against the present situation is forced to conclude that there has not been, thus far, a full realization of the fundamental ideals of Democratic-Republican Government. There have been evidences of a certain inability, or unwillingness, to recognize that this type of governmental organization rests upon the theory of complete separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial functions. There have been many evidences of disposition to extend the functions of the Legislature, and thereby to curtail the proper authority of the executive.

It has been charged that the present Governor General has in some matters exceeded his proper authority, but an examination of the facts seems rather to support the charge that the legislative branch of the Insular Government has been the real offender, through seeking to extend its own authority into some areas of what should properly be the executive realm.

The Government of the United States has full confidence in the ability, good intentions, fairness and sincerity of the present Governor General. It is convinced that he has intended to act, and has acted, within the scope of his proper and constitutional authority. Thus convinced, it is determined to sustain him, and its purpose will be to encourage the broadest and most intelligent

cooperation of the Filipino people in this policy. Looking at the whole situation fairly and impartially, one cannot but feel that if the Filipino people cannot cooperate in the support and encouragement of as good administration as has been afforded under Governor General Wood, their failure will be rather a testimony of unpreparedness for the full obligations of citizenship than an evidence of patriotic eagerness to advance their country.

I am convinced that Governor General Wood has at no time been other than a hard-working, painstaking and conscientious administrator. I have found no evidence that he has exceeded his proper authority or that he has acted with any other than the purpose of best serving the real interest of the Filipino people. Thus believing, I feel that I am serving those same interests by saying frankly that it is not possible to consider the extension of a larger measure of autonomy to the Filipino people until they shall have demonstrated a readiness and capacity to cooperate fully and effectively with the American Government and authorities.

For such cooperation I earnestly appeal to every friend of the islands and their people. I feel all confidence that in the measure in which it shall be extended, the American Government will be disposed to grant in increasing degree the aspirations of your people. Nothing could more regrettably affect the relations of the two peoples than that the Filipinos should commit themselves to a program calculated to inspire the fear that possibly the governmental concessions already made have been in any measure premature.

In conclusion, let me say that I have given careful and somewhat extended consideration to the representations you have laid before me. I have sought counsel of a large number of men whom I believed able to give the best advice. Particularly I have had in mind always that the American nation could not entertain the purpose of holding any other people in a position of vassalage.

In accepting the obligations which came to them with the sovereignty of the Philippine Islands, the American people had only the wish to serve, advance and improve the condition of the Filipino people. That thought has been uppermost in every American determination concerning the islands. You may be sure that it will continue the dominating factor in the American consideration of the many problems which must inevitably grow out of such relationship as exists.

In any survey of the history of the islands in the last quarter-century, I think the conclusion inescapable that the Filipino people, not the people of the United States, have been the gainers. It is not possible to believe that the American people would wish otherwise to continue their responsibility in regard to the sovereignty and administration of the islands. It is not conceivable that they would desire, merely because they possessed the power, to continue exercising any measure of authority over a people who would better govern themselves on a basis of complete independence.

If the time comes when it is apparent that independence would be better for the people of the Philippines, from the point of view of both their domestic concerns and their status in the world, and if when that time comes the Filipino people desire complete independence, it is not possible to doubt that the American Government and people will gladly accord it. Frankly, it is not felt that that time has come. It is felt that in the present state of world relationship the American Government owes an obligation to continue extending a protecting arm to the people of these islands. It is felt, also, that, quite aside from this consideration, there remain to be achieved by the Filipino people many greater advances on the road of education, culture, economic and political capacity, before they should undertake the full responsibility for their administration. The American Government will assuredly cooperate in every way to encourage and inspire the full measure of progress which still seems a necessary preliminary to independence.

Yours very truly,

CALVIN COOLIDGE.