

PROTECTION OF COMMERCIAL RIGHTS IN CHINA

Exchange of notes at Tokyo December 20 and 26, 1899

Entered into force December 26, 1899

*Became obsolete May 20, 1943*¹

Department of State files

The American Minister to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

No. 176

TOKYO, December 20, 1899

SIR:

Referring to our recent conversation, in which I informed Your Excellency that I have received telegraphic information from my Government that, on the 13th ultimo, there had been mailed to me a communication for the information of Your Excellency's Government, containing the representations of the United States in respect to their commercial interests in China, as presented in notes to Russia, Germany and Great Britain, which information Your Excellency had expressed a desire to obtain, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that I have now received the communication desired, which I am instructed to submit to Your Excellency's Government and which reads as follows:

"This (the United States) Government, animated with a sincere desire to insure to the commerce and industry of the United States and of all other nations perfect equality of treatment within the limits of the Chinese Empire for their trade and navigation, especially within the so-called 'spheres of influence or interest' claimed by certain European Powers in China, has deemed the present an opportune moment to make representations in this direction to Germany, Great Britain and Russia.

"To obtain the object it has in view and to remove possible causes of international irritation and reestablish confidence so essential to commerce, it has seemed to this Government highly desirable that the various Powers claiming 'spheres of interest or influence' in China should give formal assurances that:

"1st. They will in no way interfere with any treaty port or any vested interest within any so-called 'sphere of interest' or leased territory they may have in China.

¹ Date on which the United States relinquished extraterritorial rights in China pursuant to treaty of Jan. 11, 1943 (TS 984, *ante*, vol. 6, p. 739, CHINA).