

ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. JOSE P. LAUREL, REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE PHILIPPINES

November 5, 1943

Your Excellency, Your Excellencies, Gentlemen:

In all humility, I rise to say a few words in behalf of the Republic of the Philippines on this momentous and glorious occasion. My first words shall be those of profound appreciation and gratitude to the great Empire of Japan and to her great leader, His Excellency Premier General Hideki Tojo, who is sponsoring this great convention of leaders of the peoples of the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, so that they may discuss the common problems affecting their safety and their general welfare and so that, also, they may, through personal contact, know one another and thereby hasten the establishment and perpetuation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, for the glorification not only of the Asiatic peoples but of the entire mankind.

My second thought is one of greetings to Your Excellency, to His Excellency the Representative of China, to His Royal Highness the Representative of Thailand, to His Excellency the Representative of Manchoukuo, to His Excellency the Representative of Burma, and if I may be allowed, Your Excellency, to His Excellency Subbas Chandra Bose, who represents a new epoch in world history—the fight of the Asiatics for the freedom of the Indian people.

In fact, as I look back, Your Excellency, and recall the history of human civilization, I feel that this meeting of the peoples of Greater East Asia should have been held a long time ago. Whereas, in the past we have been kept as strangers, one and all, it is really gratifying to note that through the trying efforts of the great Empire of Japan, for the first time in history we are gathered

and grouped together, never again to be separated as in the past, ready to fight oppression, exploitation and tyranny so that we may proclaim to the world that, no longer shall the one billion peoples of Asia be subjected to domination and exploitation by a few Western Powers. At this juncture, will you allow me, Your Excellency, to mention three reasons, why, in my opinion, we have not been permitted to meet, unite and discuss our common problems here?

The first reason is that the policy of the Western Powers, especially of England and America, has always been to dominate politically and exploit economically the oppressed peoples of Greater East Asia, with the possible exception of Japan, and naturally, that policy of exploitation and domination has weakened the peoples of Asia, has sapped their vitality and, therefore, has deterred and dwarfed their initiative; and because of that policy of the peoples of England and America, we have not been able to meet earlier to discuss the common problems of Greater East Asia.

The second reason is, in accordance with that policy and as a corollary to that policy, that America and England have always intended to divide the peoples of Greater East Asia in accordance with the principle of "divide et impera", in order to weaken the morale, the vigor and vitality of the peoples of Greater East Asia, America and England have divided these peoples by establishing divisions in their religion, in their classes and by encouraging political differences among them. They have divided, at least, the people of my country. They have divided, I am sure, the people of China, and I am sure they have divided the peoples in other parts under their jurisdiction and sovereignty, so that the peoples of Greater East Asia divided and weakened, may not be able to consolidate their forces and rise to uphold the honor and dignity of the Orient.

The third reason is based on the experience of the small and young Republic of the Philippines. America and England have taught us to hate the Japanese on the pretext that Japan is a

conquering power, greedy and imperialistic; that Japan desires to expand her authority and prestige and that, when we have come in contact with her people, we shall be exploited and oppressed. Realizing that Japan is the only country in this part of the world which could not be subdued because of her great spiritual and material powers and because its people are united, Western diplomacy maneuvered to create a feeling of hatred and suspicion towards the Japanese people, making us think and believe that they were our enemies and not our friends and brothers. These, in my opinion, are the reasons why the peoples of Greater East Asia have not been able to unite and band together for the purpose of discussing their security, their prestige and their very honor.

I was, Your Excellency, very deeply touched the first time that the Representatives of the participating countries were asked to partake of Your Excellency's hospitality. As I entered your reception room, tears flowed from my eyes and I felt strengthened and inspired and said, "One billion Orientals; one billion peoples of Greater East Asia! How could they have been dominated, a great portion of them, by particularly England and America? I wonder!" And so it is really with the utmost pride and satisfaction that I have come to represent a small republic like the Philippines and extend my greetings to Their Excellencies who have come in response to the invitation of the illustrious leader of the great Japanese Empire.

I have listened with attention and enthusiasm to the following words employed by His Excellency, Premier General Hideki Tojo, and I will ask your permission just to read a few lines which I believe express fundamentally the guiding principles which, under the leadership of Japan, will guide and govern the conduct of the Oriental peoples, the peoples of Greater East Asia, and which will make me go on forward until the war is won and until the principles of the Co-Prosperity Sphere shall have been firmly laid. His Excellency said: "The nations of Greater East Asia, which mutually recognizing their autonomy and independence, must, as a whole, establish among themselves relations of

brotherly amity. Such relations cannot be created if one country should utilize another as a means to an end. I believe that they come into being only when there is mutual respect for one another's autonomy and independence, when one prospers through another's prosperity and all countries give expression to their true selves."

In other words, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere is not being established for the benefit of any integral unit of that Sphere. According to His Excellency, the starting point of the establishment of the Sphere is recognition, respect for the autonomy and independence of every integral unit, so that, with that recognition of political independence and territorial integrity, each nation may develop in accordance with its own institutions, without any particular member monopolizing the resulting prosperity of any given country or nation, but with the object in view of extending that welfare and that prosperity to the other integral units, on the theory that the prosperity of all is the prosperity of the integral parts, but that the prosperity of the integral parts is not necessarily the prosperity of the whole.

In other words, co-existence, co-operation and co-prosperity, if I may be allowed to say so, are the three words, the three magic words, which underlie the sacred cause championed by the great Empire of Japan and subscribed to by the other peoples and nations of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. To enable the peoples and nations of Greater East Asia to enjoy the natural right to live, the great Empire of Japan is sacrificing life and prosperity and is staking even her very existence in this sacred war. She is fighting not for the Japanese alone, but for all the peoples of Greater East Asia. Japan will not be happy, I know, to live alone and see her brethren in East Asia die. She wants to live, it is true. At the same time, however, she wants her brother Orientals to also live, and to co-exist with her. Japan lives, China lives, Thailand lives, Manchoukuo lives, Burma lives, India lives, the Philippines lives, and, all of us living, we shall endeavor to achieve, not alone the prosperity of China or any other nation or

integral unit, but the prosperity of all and working together in the achievement of the means necessary for national existence, co-operate with each other – co-operate for the establishment of a sphere of common prosperity, no longer to be dominated by Western Powers, but occupying a rightful place under the sun, with peoples happy under their own respective laws and institutions, welded together into one compact and solid bloc and contributing to the happiness and well-being, not of Asia and Asiatics only, but also and as well of the entire world.

There is another part of the speech masterly delivered by His Excellency, the Premier, which I would like to obtain permission to quote and to emphasize for the benefit of myself, and for the benefit, perchance, of the other gentlemen who have been invited to this gathering, so that we may preach and enlighten our peoples when we go back and give them an account of what transpired in this Assembly. The quotation has reference to Oriental culture, to the much-needed spiritualization of Oriental peoples. And I desire to quote it particularly, Gentlemen, because I need it for my own country. His Excellency said: “A superior order of culture has existed in Greater East Asia from the very beginning. Especially is the spiritual essence of the culture of Greater East Asia the most sublime in the world. It is my belief that, in the wide diffusion throughout the world of this culture of Greater East Asia by its further cultivation and refinement lies the salvation of mankind from the curse of materialistic civilization and our contribution to the welfare of all humanity.” His Excellency enjoins upon us all mutually to respect one another’s glorious traditions and to develop the creative spirit and genius of our peoples and thereby enhance even more the culture of Greater East Asia. This spiritualization, this efflorescence of cultural supremacy of the Oriental type, is something that we shall not only conceive and preserve and transmit as a heritage to generations yet unborn but, as a basic idea, as it does from the lips of His Excellency, should be planted deep in the hearts of all Orientals, especially those coming from a country, as weak and small as mine and which,

unfortunately, languished long under the domination and influence of materialistic Western Powers, under Spain for more than 300 years and under America for forty years. And that is the reason why this spiritualization of the people particularly of my country is necessary. Indeed, we the leaders of our respective countries should renovate and change our entire educational systems so that our peoples may feel, think and act as Orientals. That is perhaps the best way of helping the Japanese to obtain the spiritualization of all the peoples of Great East Asia

It is needless for me to say anything about the military aspect here. That is taken for granted because we cannot enjoy our freedom – neither Burma nor the Philippines can enjoy the freedom that has been granted to them for any length of time – unless Japanese arms emerge victorious in the current war. We fully realize this and, while we are undergoing difficulties, we are determined to carry on and forge ahead until the goal of victory is achieved by the Empire of Japan. The fight of China, the fight of Thailand, the fight of all the peoples of Greater East Asia for freedom and integrity, depends upon that victory. The establishment of the Co-Prosperity Sphere depends upon that victory. The attainment of the supreme aspirations of the peoples of Greater East Asia depend upon that victory. Without that victory there can not be a Co-Prosperity Sphere; nor can there be freedom for my country or for any other country in East Asia. There can never be prestige for the Orientals and, as in the past, Occidental Powers will try to dominate us more and more unto exhaustion and even death.

May I be permitted, Your Excellency, on this occasion to pledge my support and the support of my people to Your Excellency. May I offer also to their Excellencies, the Representatives of different countries, the sympathy and co-operation of my country, however small and however newly born it may be, and our desire to lend at least the encouragement and sympathy of eighteen million Filipinos who, dominated by a spirit of materialism in the past, in keeping with the general trend

of events, have awakened to the consciousness of their true Oriental character and are called upon to play the role which God in Heaven has assigned to them.

Your Excellency, it has been my privilege to join this conference with one single purpose in mind and that is, to contribute in a small measure to the general awakening of the peoples of our part of the globe. At the same time, I desire to express officially the gratitude and appreciation of the Filipino people for the great boon of independence which has just been granted to them and which has enable me to come and attend this conference and meet the worthy representatives of the peoples of Greater East Asia to this august Assembly.

May I express the hope, Your Excellency and Gentlemen; that, linked together as we are, not only in body and the spirit but in all that is needed for the successful prosecution of the current war, after the termination of this war in favor of the great Empire of Japan, no longer shall we have a bleeding China, a country inhabited by five hundred million divided and exploited Orientals, but a happy and unified China which will be a decisive factor in co-operation with Japan, in trying to make this part of the world a safe place for Orientals to live-in. When the time comes for us to close our eyes and go to our graves, we can do so happily, knowing that our children no longer would be exploited and dominated by Western Powers. May I also express the hope that no longer shall India, now under the able and inspiring leadership of Mr. Bose, be dominated and divided religiously and politically by the British; no longer shall India's 350,000,000 strong be subjected to the influence , tyranny and oppression of Great Britain or any other power, for that matter. And may I express the belief, Your Excellency, that with the co-operation of Burma, of Manchoukuo, of Thailand, of China; and of the peoples of Java, Borneo and Sumatra whose interest cannot be different from those of other peoples of Great East Asia, may I express the belief, I repeat, that united with Japan, united together one and all into a compact and solid organization, there can no longer be any power

that can stop or deter the acquisition by the one billion Orientals of the free and untrammled right and opportunity of shaping their own destiny, without the oppressive intervention of any power of the West.

The East is the cradle of human civilization. It has given to the West its religion and its culture, and yet the West has used the same civilization to exploit the peoples and countries from whence that civilization came. God is His infinite wisdom the peoples of Greater East Asia. God will come and descend from Heaven, weep with us and glorify the courage and bravery of our peoples and enable us to liberate ourselves and to make our children and children's children free, happy and prosperous. I thank you.