

BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS JAPANESE  
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN KOREA,  
SOUTH MANCHURIA, KWANTUNG AND SHANTUNG 1904-1922

by

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ABSTRACT

The working of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance has been studied in detail by some scholars but no systematic attempt has hitherto been made to assess how far British diplomatic attitudes were affected by Japan's steady expansion into North East Asia during the period of its existence. This thesis attempts to provide an answer to that question.

The thesis shows consistent British support for Japan's hegemony in Korea, South Manchuria and Kwantung in place of Russia during the early stages of the second Alliance. This policy continued even when Japan and Russia entered into accord to resist encroachments on their rights in those territories by certain British business interests and by the Chinese and United States Governments. Nor did it change when Japan annexed Korea.

Although Britain made no change of policy towards Japan after the Russo-Japanese accord and the annexation of Korea, she felt that Japan aimed at dominating South Manchuria and Kwantung to the exclusion of other foreign interests. When, therefore, Britain's position in the Yangtze appeared to be threatened by French and Japanese business interests, the Foreign Office reasserted Britain's rights in the region against all other Powers and consequently was precluded from attempting to restrain Japan's moves to strengthen Japanese control over South Manchuria and from supporting prospective British concessionaires in the region.

During the first world war, Britain needed Japanese assistance in the Far East but she felt unable to resist possible Japanese encroachments on China. She, therefore, tried to contain this threat

by offering Japan the German lease of Kiaochow. Britain then found herself in difficulty as a result of her commitment to the Japan on one hand and American and Chinese opposition on the other. She tried unsuccessfully to extricate herself from this difficulty at the Peace Conference.

The end of the war witnessed demonstrations in Korea and China against Japanese policies. These developments provoked a review of British and Japanese policies in East Asia by the Foreign Office, which came out with proposals for either the replacement of the Alliance with an Anglo-American-Japanese Entente or a radical modification of the Treaty of Alliance.



ABBREVIATIONS

Add Mss	Balfour papers
CAB	British cabinet papers
DBFP	Documents on British foreign policy, 1919-39.
F	Lloyd George papers.
F.O.	Foreign Office records.
FRUS	Foreign relations of the United States.
FRUS PPC	Foreign relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference.
GD	Lothian papers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Too much has already been written on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 and the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 and their impacts to merit any further discussions of these events.<sup>1</sup> These earlier works were, however, designed to emphasize the naval and military aspects of the subject and the general political situation in China and the Far East. It is the aim of this contribution to focus attention mainly on the later British responses to the economic and political activities of Japan in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung. The importance of such a study can be discerned by taking a momentary review of Japanese interests in these regions prior to the signing of the first alliance and Britain's position in the Far East at the turn of this century.

Relations between Japan and Korea had been formal but far from close since Hideyoshi invaded the peninsula in the 16th century. The fall of the Tokugawa Bakufu and the restoration of the Meiji Dynasty in 1868, however, brought a new pattern into Japanese-Korean relations. These events, accompanied as they were by the opening of Japan to Western influence and intercourse, led to the reshaping of the whole fabric of the Japanese polity.<sup>2</sup> Korea, on the other hand, refused to open her doors to the Western Powers on

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Ian H. Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907 (London, 1966); G.W. Monger, 'The end of isolation: Britain, Germany and Japan' in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, fifth series No. 13 (1963), pp. 103-121; Ram Prakash Dua, Anglo-Japanese Relations during the First World War (New Delhi, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> For details of this subject see for example W.G. Beasley, The Meiji Restoration (London, 1973).



the ground that such a move would be contrary to the established ways and for this reason she declined to recognise the changes initiated by the Meiji Government. Pressure from Tokyo failed to move the Korean Government from its stance. Not only did the rejection of this advice create an air of indignation throughout Japan but ~~some~~<sup>many</sup> people in Japan felt that Korea's insular attitude could be used as an excuse by Japan to invade her and establish Japanese influence in the peninsula. What was more, many people felt that an invasion of Korea might be a good diversion for those people who did not favour Japanese relations with the West as well as provide a useful outlet to and reward for the frustrated samurai class in the Japanese society. These arguments, however, failed to move the Japanese Government and as a result it had to contend with the two major uprisings by those who were advocating an invasion of the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

The next stage in the Korean-Japanese drama began with attempts by Japan to improve relations with the Peninsula and China's opposition to the moves. In 1876, a treaty of friendship and commerce was signed between Japan and Korea which provided for diplomatic representation in each other's capital and the opening of a number of Korean ports to Japanese trade. The intention of the Japanese Government was 'to hope that other Powers would establish relations with Korea, trusting that this would push open the door for advantages that Japan might be able to corner, and that it would forestall any sudden Korean coup meditated by Russia', who had been showing increasing interest in that country.<sup>2</sup> But no sooner had

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<sup>1</sup>Hilary F. Conroy, The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868-1910: A study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations (Philadelphia, 1960), pp. 21-77.

<sup>2</sup>E.V.G. Kiernan, British Diplomacy in China, 1880 to 1885 (Cambridge, 1939), p. 75.



this agreement been signed than China challenged it on the grounds that Korea, being a Chinese vassal state, had no authority to conclude such a treaty on her own initiative. In Korea itself, the government was bitterly divided over the issue with one party supporting the Chinese stand and the other upholding the validity of the agreement. The natural sequel of these developments was to elevate the Japanese-Korean dispute into the arena of European politics in the Far East. In Britain, it was generally held that the imposition of Russian influence in Korea would inevitably lead to St. Petersburg obtaining ice-free bases from where it could confront the British fleet based in the British territory of Hong Kong for which no new British acquisitions in the region could ever compensate.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the British Minister in Peking, Thomas Wade, held that 'the loss of Korea would be politically serious for China, and the only way to avert it was to allow several Powers such a vested interest in the country that no one of them would be able to annex it. He also feared that the Americans, who wanted a treaty with Korea might turn for help to the designing Russians, with whom they were already too much inclined to fraternise.'<sup>2</sup> As regards France, her whole Korean policy seemed to have been geared towards increasing the tension in the peninsula, thereby creating a diversion and keeping eyes away from Indo-China, where she was in dispute with China regarding the status of Tongking.<sup>3</sup> While this

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.83.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-100.



controversy suited the German plan of trying to avoid a war of revenge from France as a result of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and to edge Russia away from the arena of European politics by the existing conflict of interests in Korea, she was, at the same time, not prepared to be left behind in the battle for concessions and influence in the Far East. For this reason, she also wanted trade links with Korea as a means of boosting German prestige in the region. Quite aware of these developments, Wade tried to avoid unnecessary complications by advising the Chinese that it would be in their own interest to announce the opening of Korea to treaty relations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he managed to sign a treaty of commerce and friendship between Britain and Korea and lent his support to Germany and France in obtaining a similar agreement with Seoul.<sup>2</sup> These events did not, however, prevent a clash between Chinese and Japanese troops in Seoul towards the end of 1884 over their respective claims in the peninsula. But peace was soon restored by an agreement in the spring of 1885 under which both parties undertook to withdraw their respective forces from Korea.<sup>3</sup>

The Sino-Japanese agreement effecting the withdrawal of their respective troops from the peninsula did not, however, settle the issue of Korea's status nor the validity of the Korean-Japanese treaty of 1876. This became quite evident in the next political

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.79.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-83, 101-112.

<sup>3</sup> For details of this event see Conroy, op.cit., pp. 84-168.



crisis in the peninsula. In June 1894, a group of anti-western Koreans, the Tong-haks, broke out in a revolt against the government. The Korean King, acknowledging his vassal status, called on China to send troops to the peninsula to help restore order. Upon the arrival of these soldiers, Japan protested against the action on the ground that it contravened the accord of 1885. For this reason, Japan also sent in troops to the peninsula. On this occasion, however, diplomacy failed to resolve the question. The war which followed resulted in a resounding Japanese victory. Under an agreement signed at Shimonoseki in April 1895 ending hostilities, therefore, China agreed to renounce her suzerainty over Korea and to recognise the country as an independent state. In addition, China agreed to cede the island of Formosa and the Liaotung peninsula, including Port Arthur, to Japan. Furthermore, China consented to the opening of four additional towns to Japanese trade and to a substantial war indemnity in cash.<sup>1</sup> This victory and the harsh treaty did not, however, end Japan's difficulties with China in respect of the peninsula nor did it give Japan an unchallengeable position in Korean affairs.

By her quick and decisive victory over China, Japan opened herself to international recognition as a power to be reckoned with in Far Eastern politics and played <sup>herself</sup> into the global power rivalry going on between Britain, France, Russia and Germany. These factors became apparent soon after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Barely a week after the signing of the treaty, Russia, France and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 221-286.



Germany informed Tokyo that they viewed with much concern the prospect of Japan occupying the Liaotung peninsula on the grounds that it might threaten the security of Peking and act as a fertile field for future conflict in the region. They, therefore, advised Japan to return the territory to China. The reasons for this 'advice' were by no means as altruistic as the three Powers made it appear. The real aim behind the Russian move was to leave the region free for her own territorial ambitions. The French, who were in alliance with St. Petersburg, endorsed the Russian move. The German Government, desperate to edge Russia and France from the confluence of European politics, felt the proposed action would be a good diversion for the two Powers. Germany, therefore, also willingly endorsed the 'advice'. When these developments were reported to London, the British Government 'took an intermediate position, neither joining the powers nor advising Japan to resist' the advice of the three. In taking this stance, London was influenced 'by considerations of international policy. This was a period when in Armenia, Siam, Africa and on the Indian frontier, Britain was trying to work with France and Russia. This made the cabinet reluctant to refuse Russia's request for co-operation in the Far East; but the intervention seemed to Britain to be unjustified and contrary to her best interests in China. On the other hand, when Britain was asked by Japan for support against the Triple Alliance, she naturally declined because she had no wish to risk an incident, which might provoke a war against them. Britain had no wish to become committed to Japan whose expansionist ambitions



in China had already been reported by the Tokyo legation.<sup>1</sup> The Americans also showed no signs of willingness to oppose the three Powers. Faced with the uncooperative attitudes of Britain and the United States, and fearing that Russia might induce her partners to use force for the acceptance of the 'advice', Tokyo bowed to the demand after making a face-saving move by increasing the war indemnity.<sup>2</sup>

The withdrawal of the Japanese demands in respect of Liaotung did not, however, open the way for peaceful developments in the region. For in May 1896, Russia signed a defensive treaty with China against Japan. Article one of this treaty provided that:

'Every aggression directed by Japan, whether against Russian territory in East Asia, or against the territory of China or that of Korea, shall be regarded as necessarily bringing about the immediate application of the present treaty.'

In this case the two High Contracting Parties engage to support each other reciprocally by all land and sea forces of which they can dispose at that moment, and to assist each other as much as possible for the victualling of their respective forces.'

It was further provided that as soon as the two parties were engaged in such a common action, no treaty of peace should be concluded by one of them with Japan without the consent of the other.

In addition, it was stipulated that in case of war with Japan, China should open every Chinese port necessary for military and naval operations to Russian warships. In order to facilitate the access of Russian land troops to any points in China, and to ensure

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.34; Conroy, op.cit., pp. 282-92.



their means of subsistence in case of war, the Chinese Government consented to the construction of a railway line across the Chinese provinces of Heilungchian and Kirin, in Manchuria in the direction of the Russian port of Vladivostock. It was, however, provided that the junction of the proposed railway with the Russian railway should not serve as a pretext for any encroachment on Chinese territory or sovereign rights in the region. On the other hand, it was agreed that the construction and operation of the line should be accorded to the Russo-Chinese Bank, a Russian Government financial and colonial-orientated institution. The details of the contract and the operation of the line, it was further agreed, should later be discussed and settled between the Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg and officials of the Russo-Chinese Bank.<sup>1</sup>

The Russo-Chinese treaty of alliance of May 1896 having provided that the details of the contract should be discussed between the Chinese Minister in Russia and the Russo-Chinese Bank, the Russian Government wasted no time in coming to a working arrangement with the Chinese on 8 September 1896.<sup>2</sup> A month later, another arrangement, the 'Cassini Convention', was signed between China and Russia as a means of 'connecting ... the railway system of the Three Provinces [Fengtien, Kirin, and Heilungchian] with that of the Imperial Russian railway in the province of Siberia, with the object of facilitating the transport of goods between the two empires and of

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<sup>1</sup> John V. MacMurray, Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China, 1894-1919 (New York 1921), Vol. 1, pp. 81-82.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-77.



strengthening the frontier defences and seacoasts'. And, furthermore, ~~the convention provided for~~ to agree upon 'certain special privileges to be conceded by China to Russia as a response to the loyal aid given by Russia in the retrocession of Liaotung and its dependencies'. It provided for the prolongation of the Russian Great Siberian Railway from Vladivostock through Hunch'un to the provincial capital of Kirin and from any city in Siberia through Aigun, Tsitsihar, Putune to the provincial capital of Kirin. All these lines, the agreement provided, should 'be built at the sole expense of Russia and the regulations and building thereof shall be solely on the Russian system, with which China has nothing to do, and the entire control shall be in the hands of Russia for the space of thirty years'. At the end of the thirty years, however, China would 'be allowed to prepare the necessary funds wherewith, after proper estimation of the value of the railways, she shall redeem them, the rolling stock, machine shops, and the buildings connected therewith. But as to how China will at that date redeem these railways shall be left for future consideration.' In addition, Russia secured the right to provide funds for the construction of another line from the provincial capital of Fengtien, Mukden, to the capital of Kirin any time that the Chinese Government decided on building such a line. It was further stipulated that the railway to be built by China from Shankaikuan in Fengtien through Newchwang, Kaiping, Chinchow to Port Arthur and then to Talienwan (Dairen or Dalny) and their dependencies should 'follow the Russian Railway regulations in order to facilitate the commercial intercourse between the respective Empires'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.79.



The convention then defined the powers of both Russia and China in the regions through which all the Russian-financed railways were to run. It provided that the routes along which these railways passed must be protected by local Chinese civil and military officials. These officials were, however, to afford every facility and aid to all Russian artisans and labourers associated with the railways. This provision was then modified by another stipulation that 'owing to the fact that the said railways will pass for the greater part through barren and sparsely inhabited territory in which it will be difficult for the Chinese authorities to be always able to grant the necessary protection and aid, Russia shall be allowed to place special battalions of horse and foot soldiers at the various important stations for the better protection of the railway property'. The convention then lifted the ban which had for a long time been placed on the exploitation of mines in Heilungchiang and Kirin provinces and the Ch'angpai (the Long White Mountain range) by permitting Russian and Chinese subjects to ~~exploit~~ and open any of the mines within these regions. In addition, it was provided that as the ports of Talienwan and Port Arthur and their dependencies were 'important strategical points, it shall be incumbent upon China to properly fortify them with all haste, and to repair all their fortifications, etc., in order to provide against future dangers; Russia shall therefore lend all necessary assistance in helping to protect these two ports and shall not permit any Foreign Power to encroach upon them'. For her part, China engaged never to cede the ports to another Power; 'but, if in future the exigencies of the case require it and Russia



should find herself involved in a war, China consents to allow Russia temporarily to concentrate her land and naval forces within the said ports in order ... to enable Russia to attack the enemy or to guard her own position'.<sup>1</sup>

Three months after the signing of the Cassini Convention, Russia took steps in translating the agreement into reality by organising the Chinese Eastern Railway Company for the construction and working of the railways. In addition, the company was charged with the opening and working of the mines as well as organising a police force for the maintenance of 'law and order on the lands assigned to the railway and its appurtenances'. The share capital of the company, fixed at five million nominal credit roubles and divided into a thousand shares at five thousand nominal roubles and guaranteed by the Russian Government, was reserved to Russian and Chinese subjects.<sup>2</sup>

While these developments posed greater danger to Japanese interests than did the situation prior to the Sino-Japanese war, they were the beginning of the threat. In November 1897 the murder of two German Catholic priests in Shantung gave Germany an excuse to occupy that province's port of Kiaochow. The negotiations which followed this action between Peking and Berlin secured for Germany the use of Kiaochow as a naval base and extensive political and economic concessions in the province.<sup>3</sup> News of these concessions

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-8.

<sup>3</sup>See Chapter Six below.



precipitated a scramble for similar rights by the other Powers. Russia, which had an understanding with China to occupy Kiaochow temporarily at some future date for a period of fifteen years,<sup>1</sup> took the opportunity of securing the lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan, together with the water areas contiguous to these ports for twenty-five years. In addition, the Chinese Eastern Railway Company obtained a number of railway and mining concessions similar to the terms of the Cassini Convention throughout the leased territories.<sup>2</sup> A month later, the French also moved in and acquired a base at Kwangchow-wan and railway rights in Yunnan province. At the same time, they obtained a promise from China not to alienate Yunnan, Kwantung or Kwangsi province to any other Power.<sup>3</sup> These developments naturally forced the British Government to review its strategic position in China and to take adequate measures to safeguard them. On 11 February 1898, the British Minister in Peking, Claude MacDonald, secured an agreement with the Chinese for the non-alienation of the Yangtze region to another Power. He also secured an extension of the Hong Kong territory 'for the proper defence and protection of the Colony'.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by another agreement on 1 July 1898 for the lease of Wei-hai Wei in the province of Shantung to Britain 'for so long as Port Arthur shall remain in the occupation of Russia'.<sup>5</sup> In engaging in the latter

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. I, p.80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 119-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 124-5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 104-5.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-1.



action, Britain took the necessary step of informing Tokyo of her intentions owing to article eight of the treaty of Shimonoseki, under which it was provided that Japan should occupy the territory temporarily until the war indemnity provisions therein had been fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> The Russians replied to these developments by securing *Chinese* *acquiescence* <sup>in</sup> an extension of their railway network in Manchuria from any point on the main Chinese Eastern Railway to the sea-ports of Dalny and Port Arthur to be known as 'the Southern Manchurian Branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway'.<sup>2</sup>

The net result of these moves on the political scene both in China and Japan was very profound. In Tokyo, although the government managed to obtain a promise from China for the non-alienation of Fukien, a province opposite Formosa, there was much anxiety over the activities of Germany, Russia and France in such close regions to Japan; yet there was no concrete step she could take to alleviate the danger.<sup>3</sup> In China, on the other hand, the activities of the Powers flared in an anti-foreign revolt known as the Boxer Uprising. By the spring of 1900, the organizers of the uprising had managed to seize all approaches to Peking and were laying siege to the various foreign legations in the country. The natural sequel of this action was a decision by the Powers to intervene militarily to quell the uprising. Japan, being the only country capable of sending urgent reinforcements whenever the

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 53-4.

<sup>2</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 152-3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.126.



situation demanded it, played a vital role - providing about half of the international force charged with the operations - in relieving the various foreign legations and occupying Peking. More significant, perhaps, was the reported gentleness of the Japanese soldiers during the operations and the government's observance of strict etiquette demanded by such an occasion. These reports greatly enhanced her reputation on the international scene and earned her a voice in the settling of the affairs of China. For the moment, therefore, Japan appeared to be moving from the era of utter despondency which was inaugurated by the scramble for concessions.<sup>1</sup> The atmosphere was, however, far from settled yet.

During the Boxer disturbances, Russia sent a large force into Manchuria, ostensibly to protect her investments in the region against brigands. She followed this up by replacing Chinese officials throughout the three provinces with Russian army officers on the grounds that as China was in no position to exercise her full authority in Manchuria at that moment, it was incumbent upon Russia to exercise the same in the name of her vested interests until the situation was back to normality. In the intensive diplomatic negotiations that followed after the defeat of the Boxers, Russia agreed to allow all the Chinese officials to return to their respective posts but she secured the right to maintain a police force

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed study of this subject see for example Victor Purcell, The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study (Cambridge 1963); Arthur H. Smith, China in Convulsion, Vols. 1 and 2 (New York 1901); W.A.P. Martin, The Siege in Peking: China against the World (New York 1900); Paul A. Varg, 'The Foreign Policy of Japan and the Boxer Revolt' in Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 15 (1946), pp. 279-85.



'in large places to the number of 500 men, in medium sized places 300 men, in others 200'.<sup>1</sup> A month later, the two countries signed another secret agreement regarding Manchuria. Dated February 1901, the agreement provided that China should not transfer to another Power or subjects of a third country mines or other interests in Manchuria, Mongolia or Sinkiang without the consent of Russia. In addition, China consented not to construct any railways herself throughout Manchuria, and except in Newchwang, not to lease or make grants of land to the nationals of another country. Furthermore, China agreed to indemnify the Chinese Eastern Railway Company for the damage done to its assets during the Boxer uprising and to grant it the right to build a railroad linking Peking with the Great Wall in the north. Until these conditions had been met, the agreement provided that Russian railway guards in the region should maintain law and order throughout Manchuria. In addition, it was stipulated that until 'the Manchurian Railways shall have been completed, China shall not quarter any troops [there]. If she is to place troops there in future, it shall be decided in consultation with Russia. Moreover, the importation of arms and ammunition into Manchuria shall be prohibited'. It was further provided that local Chinese officials in Manchuria should, at the request of Russia, 'dismiss anyone who obstructs relations between Russia and China. If China establishes infantry patrols in Manchuria, the personnel shall be decided

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.329.



in consultation with Russia'. In addition, China agreed not to employ foreigners other than Russians as military or naval instructors 'in the various Provinces of northern China'.<sup>1</sup>

To all intents and purposes, this agreement made Manchuria a Russian protectorate. Russian ambition did not, however, appear to be confined to the three eastern provinces alone. As early as 1884, the Korean Government had agreed to the training of its soldiers by Russian officers. For her part, Russia had expectations of securing the use of the Korean port of Lazareff as a naval base. By 1895, however, this Russian influence seemed to be on the wane, mainly as a result of the outcome of the Sino-Japanese war and the conditions imposed at Shimonoseki in respect of Korean independence. For a brief period, therefore, Japan was virtually the master of Korean affairs and directing reform programmes in the peninsula. Events, however, came to a head when a revolt broke out against the Japanese and their reforming schemes in which the Queen of Korea was killed. The Russians quickly seized the opportunity to bolster their position by sending troops to Seoul and offering protection to the Korean King. Japan replied by backing down and agreeing to the Yamagata-Lobanoff Protocol of 14 May 1896 in which both sides engaged to withdraw their respective forces from the country and to co-operate in the reform of the chaotic Korean finances. This agreement was, however, doomed to failure by the mere fact that under an arrangement with the Korean Government, the Russians obtained the right to mine along the Tumen river and to fell timber along the Yalu river. Instead of withdrawing her forces from the peninsula, Russia sent them down to the above-named areas

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.330.



disguised as civilians exploiting the concessions. Another Russo-Japanese agreement on the subject, therefore, became necessary. This was the essence of the Nishi-Rosen Convention of 24 April 1898 under which both Powers agreed not to interfere with the organization of the Korean army without first seeking the permission of the other and to make no attempt at controlling Korean finances. Again, there appeared to be no change of heart on the part of Russia. There therefore followed a period of intensive competition between the two Powers for ascendancy in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

These developments excited much interest in London, primarily because of the political, economic and strategic significance of the Russian moves. Firstly, among all the Powers vying for influence in China, Britain was easily ahead of them in the Chinese 'trade and did not want to destroy the Empire if that could be helped'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, 'Manchuria, with its abundant natural resources... attracted the interest of the United States and Britain as a place for investment'.<sup>3</sup> The Russian moves in Manchuria if not checked would naturally lead to the dismemberment of the region from the Empire and close the three provinces to other foreign investments. On the other hand, it was recognised in Britain that Russia had made such inroads in Manchuria in the field of railway construction that no British railway enterprise in the region could succeed without the co-operation of Russia. For this reason, she agreed with Russia in 1899 that Britain would not seek any railway concessions north of the Great

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<sup>1</sup>Conroy, op.cit., pp. 300-24.

<sup>2</sup>Kiernan, op.cit., p.4.

<sup>3</sup>George A.Lensen, Korea and Manchuria Between Russia and Japan 1895-1904 (Tallahassee, Florida, 1966), p.3.



Wall and that Russia would abstain from seeking similar ventures in the Yangtze basin.<sup>1</sup> As regards Korea, the principal objective of the British government was to 'ensure that Korean territory and Korean harbours are not made the base for schemes for territorial aggrandisement so as to disturb the balance in the Far East and give to one Power a maritime supremacy in the Eastern seas' that might threaten British possessions in that region.<sup>2</sup> Despite this wish, there was no concrete step London could take to halt the struggle for supremacy between Japan and Russia in the region. In the meantime, however, there was a growing demand in Britain for a sort of an alliance with Japan for mutual protection of their interests in the Far East against Russia so as to enable Britain to concentrate on other developments elsewhere which were posing a threat to her colonial possessions. The formal and initial approach for such co-operation, however, came from Japan in July 1901. This was followed by intensive negotiations until 30 January 1902 when a final agreement was reached between the two.<sup>3</sup>

Briefly stated, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance recognised the independence of both China and Korea. At the same time, however, the agreement recognised 'their special interests, of which those of Great Britain relate principally to China, while Japan, in addition to the interests which she possesses in China, is interested in

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 74-5.

<sup>2</sup>W.L.Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York, 1951), p.457.

<sup>3</sup>For details of this subject see Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 143-216.



a particular degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Korea'. With these special interests in view, both parties agreed to take such measures as might be indispensable in order to safeguard those interests if threatened either by the aggressive action of any other Power, or by disturbances arising in China or Korea. Such measures, the treaty provided, might be taken independently by the parties to protect 'lives or property of its subjects'. If in pursuance of this policy, however, any of the parties came into conflict with another Power, the other contracting party would remain neutral, while, at the same time, using its power to prevent intervention by a third party on the enemy side. Failing to prevent this sort of intervention by another Power, it would be incumbent upon the other contracting party to join the conflict on the side of its ally to prosecute war and peace in common. The treaty was to last for five years and was subject to renewal after that period.<sup>1</sup>

There was no doubt when this agreement was made public that it had nothing else in view other than to check Russian ambitions both in China and Korea. Faced with this threat, Russia immediately made a retreat. In a convention dated 8 April 1902, she agreed to withdraw her forces from Manchuria in three stages and at an interval of six months as well as to restore the Chinese-financed Shanhaikwan-Sinmintung railway seized during the Boxer uprising to the Chinese Government.<sup>2</sup> The first of the evacuations due in October

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 324-5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 326-9.



1902 was duly carried out, though the troops were reported to have been transferred elsewhere in the region. The second stage expected in April 1903 was not, however, effected. In June 1903, therefore, Tokyo decided to discuss the matter directly with St. Petersburg with the view to coming to some arrangement on the issue. Upon this decision, the Japanese proposed a joint undertaking by both Japan and Russia to respect the territorial integrity of both China and Korea as well as a recognition of Russian railway interests in Manchuria and Japanese political and economic interests in Korea. Russia replied <sup>only</sup> with a demand for ~~only~~ a recognition of Korean independence and an undertaking by Japan not to fortify any of the Korean ports. She also requested Japan to undertake that Manchuria was outside her sphere of interest. Buttressed by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and her armed forces stream-lined to meet such a threat, Japan did not take lightly the Russian reply. In January 1904, therefore, the Japanese Government sent another note to the Russians in the form of an ultimatum as being its minimum requirements on the negotiations. When this note was ignored, Japan declared war.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above brief account that the issues that led Japan into the various diplomatic complications and two wars within a space of nine years were mainly due to her desire to prevent any hostile Power close to her borders and thereby blocking her best routes to north-eastern China. These routes, it was

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<sup>1</sup>For details of the Russo-Japanese negotiations see for instance J.A. White, The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War (Princeton, 1964), pp. 95-131.



held in Tokyo, could only be secured by an independent Korea and the prevention of any of the 'hostile' western Powers from obtaining an exclusive control of the eastern periphery of China. Hence, her interests in Korea, Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung at the turn of the century can be described as mainly strategic and political in nature. As part of her strategy to keep Korea outside the orbit of Russian influence, however, Japan began a comprehensive scheme of investments and Japanese immigration into the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> By the beginning of the century, therefore, she could legitimately claim to have an economic interest in Korea as well. It was for these reasons that she sought a defensive and an offensive alliance with Britain to sustain these interests. While the main militating factor which influenced Britain in welcoming the alliance proposal was the fear for her influence in China and the safety of her eastern possessions if the Russian occupation of Manchuria, Kwantung and Korea were to prove permanent, a realization of the Japanese interests would naturally benefit British interests as well. But how far would London support any Japanese action designed to check the Russian threat and realize their own political and economic ambitions in the north eastern periphery of China and in Korea? How far would similar factors affect British diplomatic thinking as regards the German position in Shantung when Berlin and not St. Petersburg was the principal adversary of London? After

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 59-60.



Japan had obtained a paramount position in these territories in place of Russia and Germany, would Britain regard Tokyo's economic and political policies in these regions as being in conformity with the original spirit of the alliance? If not, what were the differences between the two Powers and how far would these differences affect British diplomatic thinking on the alliance? These questions set the scene for the present contribution to the existing works on the alliance between the 'Two Island Empires' of modern history that helped in shaping the international politics of our time.

Manchuria should Japan and Russia be divided. If so, what would be the various Japanese demands on the subject and how would it be prepared to control such a vast area? In Manchuria provided similar conditions were maintained as in Japan in Korea.<sup>1</sup> The question as these negotiations went on, therefore, was whether the Koreans would accept the replacement of Japanese influence in the peninsula with that of Japan if the Japanese were admitted to Korea. If, on the other hand, Russia rejected the proposal and went on, what would be Japan's reaction towards the possibility of such strategic considerations, there was little doubt that Korea would witness one of the initial naval and military encounters in the event of hostilities. Thus, whatever the outcome of the negotiations, unless in the unlikely case of Russia agreeing to withdraw

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 12.



## Chapter One

### KOREA AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

The Far Eastern crisis of 1903 in respect of Russian and Japanese influence in Manchuria and Korea was by no means limited to the two parties directly involved in the negotiations. Whatever the results of these parleys turned out to be, it was certain that they would raise a number of questions involving Chinese rights in Manchuria and Korean sovereignty. As regards the former issue, there was little doubt that Peking would observe its treaty obligations to St. Petersburg in respect of Manchuria should Japan and Russia so decide. It was also certain from the various Japanese memoranda on the subject that Tokyo would be prepared to concede enough ground to St. Petersburg in Manchuria provided similar concessions were made by Russia to Japan in Korea.<sup>1</sup> The question as these negotiations were going on, therefore, was whether the Korean Government would willingly endorse the replacement of Russian influence in the peninsula with that of Japan if the Japanese scheme were accepted by Russia. If, on the other hand, Russia rejected the programme and war broke out, what would be Japan's reaction towards the peninsula? From mere strategic considerations, there was little doubt that Korea would witness one of the initial naval and military manoeuvres in the event of hostilities. Thus, whatever the outcome of the negotiations, unless in the unlikely case of Russia agreeing to with-

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.264.



draw completely from Manchuria, Kwantung and the peninsula, Korean sovereignty would seriously be called into question. In such an event, what would be Britain's reaction to a violation of one of the cardinal principles of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance? Would the British Government support Korea against Japan? This chapter aims at finding answers to these questions.

#### A. Korea and Neutrality

The direct bearing of the outcome of the Russo-Japanese negotiations on Korean sovereignty was by no means misconstrued by the Korean Government. On the same day that Japan communicated her final demands to Russia, therefore, the Korean authorities began feverish diplomatic moves to prevent outbreak of hostilities between the two Powers; procure international endorsement of Korean independence and secure the country's neutrality against a possible Russo-Japanese war. It was in these endeavours that on 13 January 1904 the Korean Chargé d'Affaires in London, Yi Han Eung, communicated a note to the Foreign Office requesting the British Government to give fresh guarantees similar to the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in respect of the territorial integrity of Korea. At the same time, the note suggested a five-point programme along which Britain could secure similar guarantees from the other Powers on behalf of Korea. The programme included a joint declaration by Russia and Japan to respect 'the independence, sovereignty and integrity of Corea according to the features of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty'. In addition the note called for an international action to prevent 'any aggressive Power from taking..... control of the Korean Government in any respect' or



'bringing troops into The Korean interior without serious disturbances which threaten the lives and properties therein'. Should any disturbances or riots break out in the peninsula, the note urged, the Korean Government 'must have first and full duty to restore order in consequence of its sovereignty'. In conclusion, the note urged that in case of war between Japan and Russia, Britain should do everything she possibly could to ensure the preservation of 'the independence, sovereignty, integrity and privileges of Korea as they are now by come Sic to understanding with different powers, on whichever side the victory may be decided'.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate reaction of both Francis Campbell, the Superintending Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in charge of the Far Eastern Department, and Walter Langley, the Senior Clerk in the same Department, was that the note failed to outline the precise nature of the request. On the other hand, they agreed that the note was asking 'for something like a guarantee of the independence of Korea'. Since Britain alone could not give such an undertaking and promise to secure the concurrence of the other Powers to it and since the Foreign Office did not wish to be seen as interfering in the Russo-Japanese negotiations on the subject, Campbell suggested that 'it would be better to give only a verbal answer' to the request the next time Yi called at the Foreign Office.<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon of 19 January, when Yi called at the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Yi Han Eung to Foreign Office, 13 January 1904.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon. It must be admitted in fairness to Campbell and Langley that the note was written in the most incomprehensible language. For details of the British position in the negotiations, see Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 263-82.



Foreign Office, however, he handed in another note in which he spelt out his ideas as to how peace could best be maintained in the Far East.

In this highly illustrated memorandum, Yi contended that as long as Britain and France remained in two separate and opposing alliances,<sup>1</sup> they were bound to clash with each other in the Far East. In such an eventuality, he urged, China and Korea would be incapable of maintaining their independent status. In addition, he warned, there would always be other Powers in the region waiting to take any political advantage that might accrue from such a clash. As a precaution against such an Anglo-French conflict and its sinister results, therefore, Yi suggested the formation of an Anglo-French entente in Europe. In this way, he argued, 'China and Korea will be saved. British position in the Far East will be strengthened, and the third powers in Europe and the Far East could not try to seek for their political advantage'. Yi anticipated no difficulties if Britain made such an initial move to France for this sort of understanding as it would secure a strong European and oriental front for France any time she found herself involved in a war with another Power.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Yi continued, an Anglo-French alliance alone could not achieve peace in the Far East and the world in general. This was because, he contended, an Anglo-French understanding would still leave a number of fundamental questions between

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed history of the world alliances to which the note referred, see for instance, A.J.P.Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1913 (Oxford 1957); A.F.Pribram, England and the International Policy of the European Great Powers 1871-1914 (Revised edition, London 1966).

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1662, Memorandum dated 13th January 1904 communicated by Yi Han Eung.



Japan and Russia, who had proved incapable of reaching any concrete and lasting agreement, unsettled in the orient. As a Russo-Japanese understanding, he wrote, was

'not natural and durable, but a joint one for the moment, and it won't maintain the political balances as far as possible ... it would be much better to put an Anglo-French stick inside the Russo-Japanese one, then the political machine would be so strong enough as long as the Anglo-French stick is there, and this can be done by Great Britain and France acting as umpires to settle Russo-Japanese dispute and guarantee their mutual interests in Manchuria and Corea, which has always been the question and does ~~[sic]~~ not come to our agreement on the ground of their mutual suspicion ~~[of]~~ being attacked or injured by either in the future.'

The umpire position which Britain and France would assume to sustain any Russo-Japanese agreement regarding their interests in the Far East, Yi argued, could well be transformed into

'a quadruple treaty with Japan and Russia in order ~~[to]~~ settle the present difficulty in a satisfactory manner, and that they have immense interests in the Far East to be safeguarded, and their treaty obligations that they ~~[are]~~ bound to share common interests and common danger'.

If, on the other hand, the idea of a quadruple alliance did not appeal very much to the British Government, 'then it is advisable for Great Britain and France to keep their ~~[separate]~~ alliances as far as possible'. At all events, Yi maintained his strong conviction that

'the Anglo-Japanese and Franco-Russian alliances are ~~[not]~~ the durable ones, and ... it is high time for Great Britain and France to ~~[so]~~ create a treaty of four powers for Far Eastern affairs as well as for the worlds'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Memorandum by Yi Han Eung dated 19 January 1904.



Yi Han Eung's memorandum appears, at its face value, to be a confusing document. It is, therefore, not surprising that he decided later on to supplement his ideas of 13 January with an elaborate picture of the quadruple alliance. It is only when this latter memorandum is read in conjunction with the first one that one sees what he was driving at. The two memoranda were more than a virtual 'request for a British guarantee of Korea against Japan as well as Russia' as the British Foreign Secretary, <sup>Lord</sup> ~~Henry~~ Lansdowne, interpreted them.<sup>1</sup> It was a call for the remodelling of the world alliance systems for the sake of peace in the Far East and not merely for the security of the territorial integrity and independence of Korea. British misunderstanding of Yi's memoranda, however, led Campbell to assure him that all the Powers were 'in favour of the independence and integrity of Corea ... But that it was out of the question that H.M.Govt. should give Corea a guarantee to that effect'.<sup>2</sup> Put in more categorical terms as Lansdowne did,

'the policy of H.M.Gov't in respect of Corea may be gathered from the Anglo-Japanese agreement and They are not prepared to supplement that Agreement by a further agreement such as the Korean Government apparently desire'.<sup>3</sup>

All efforts by Korea to secure a fresh guarantee from Britain to render her immune from the possible Russo-Japanese war were, by 20 January, a complete failure. On 21 January, and even before

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Minute by Lansdowne on Memorandum by Yi Han Eung dated 13 January 1904.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minute by Campbell.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1662, Lansdowne to Yi Han Eung, 28 January 1904.



the Powers, headed by Germany and the United States, began diplomatic moves to secure the neutrality of China with the exception of Russian-held parts of Manchuria, the Korean Government, in a telegram to all the Powers, declared its neutrality in the impending conflict.<sup>1</sup> By this time, however, events had come to a stalemate in Russo-Japanese negotiations to resolve their differences and the only expectation of most of the Powers was the occurrence of a minor episode to spark off hostilities.<sup>2</sup> With such a view, strengthened pari passu by a calculation that Korea 'would be obliged to act at the direction of the belligerent Power which first occupy her capital', an action which the War Office reckoned Japan would be the first to initiate, Campbell felt that the declared neutrality was 'hardly necessary'.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the British Government decided to acknowledge the Korean telegram, apparently with no 'increased weight' attached to the British reply.<sup>4</sup> The justification of the Foreign Office's action is clearly illustrated by reports from Korea on the general political situation in the country and Japanese moves to counteract what they viewed as Korean obstructions.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Korean Foreign Minister to the British Foreign Office, 21 January 1904. According to Jordan, the telegram was 'said to have been drawn up by the Palace with the help of the Belgian Adviser M. Delcoigne, but without consulting the Foreign Minister, who was only asked to affix his seal to it when it was ready to be despatched'. FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (no. 26 confidential), 1 February 1904. Raymond A. Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1966), pp. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup>J.A. White, op.cit., pp. 91-131. S. Okamoto, The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War (New York and London 1970), pp. 95-196.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 56 Secret), 25 February 1904 and FO/17/1662, Minute by Campbell on Korean Foreign Minister to the British Foreign Office, 21 January 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1661, Lansdowne to Jordan (Telegram No. 4), 21 January 1904 and minute by Campbell on Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 23), 30 January 1904.



## B. Korean Political Climate

The situation in and around Seoul at the time when the country was declared neutral in the event of a Russo-Japanese war, was far from satisfactory. The atmosphere was one of a disturbed peace. Precautions for the protection of the various Legations were, therefore, fully under way. On 2 January 1904, John Jordan, the British Minister in Korea, following the example of his American colleague, asked for a guard of twenty men 'as a precautionary measure' against any riots that might occur as soon as Japanese troops began to occupy Seoul and other strategic parts of the country. The Intelligence Division of the War Office quickly acceded to Jordan's request on account of reports of the tense atmosphere prevailing throughout the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

Since the beginning of the year, Jordan had been reporting on the development of a movement in Korea which appeared to him to bear a close resemblance to the Boxers in China but which had its own ethnic features characterized not only by anti-foreign feelings but also by general disorders. On 13 January, he wrote to Lansdowne that

'reports from the interior show that an insurrectionary movement something on the nature of the Tong Haks in 1894, is spreading in several provinces, and in Seoul itself, robberies, many of which are attributed to /Korean/ soldiers, are so frequent that people are afraid to leave their houses after night fall'.<sup>2</sup>

He followed this report with another communication on 20 January to the effect that the 'notorious' court official, Yi Yong Yik,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 2), 2 January 1904, and minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 11 confidential), 13 January 1904.



'who is alleged to have given a personal guarantee to the Palace that no foreign troops would come to Seoul', had purchased a large consignment of munitions and had stored them in a disused arsenal in Seoul, apparently without the knowledge of the government.<sup>1</sup>

Yi Yong Yik's activities did not appear to have been confined to the defence of his country's territorial integrity. In addition, he carried on a wild anti-foreign propaganda campaign aimed at soliciting support for his planned task. As a vehicle of this propaganda, he was reported to have bought the Che-guk Sin-mun (the 'Empire' Newspaper) through which he could reach the mass of the population.<sup>2</sup> In the 22 January issue of this newspaper, for instance, appeared a leading article entitled 'An Official cannot shirk his duty' aimed principally at appealing to the literary class of the Korean population for support. Writing under this caption, a direct and earnest appeal was made to all government officials to close their ranks and expel all foreign soldiers from Korea even at the cost of their lives.<sup>3</sup> On 23 January, the Che-guk Sin-mun justified the 'clear sighted Prince Tuan and Tung Fu Hsiang' in arousing the 'Boxer soldiers... against the Legations and Consulates' for the contemptuous way foreigners had behaved towards China.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 18), 20 January 1904, and Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 22), 23 January 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 14), 19 January 1904; Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 17), 20 January 1904; Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 20), 22 January 1904, and Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 22), 23 January 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Che-guk Sin-mun, 22 January 1904 enclosed in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 20), 22 January 1904. From the tone of the article this included the various Legation guards. See below.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1659, Che-guk Sin-mun, 23 January 1904, an article entitled 'The Foreign Guards', enclosed in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 22), 23 January 1904.



Articles such as these did not fail to enlist British protestations in view of the restlessness of the Korean population at this crucial time as illustrated by the coolies' strike at Makpo and reports of other disorders as discussed above.<sup>1</sup> In this connection, Jordan took advantage of a visit by Ko Hei Kiung, a palace official, who had for some time been acting as a liaison between the British Legation and the Court, to draw the Emperor's attention to these obnoxious articles.<sup>2</sup> He was then assured that all necessary action would be taken to rectify the situation.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of this assurance the atmosphere in the country looked very bleak for the safety of foreigners. On 24 January, a mob of about 500 Koreans wrecked a car on the Seoul electric tram way and mauled the motor-man to death before the presence of Korean policemen and soldiers, order being restored only after the arrival of twenty American marines.<sup>4</sup> Reports reaching Seoul from the provinces were no more satisfactory. A communication made in response to a request by the United States Minister in Seoul, Horace Allen, 'for a calm and accurate report on the question of robberies by native soldiers, organisation of "Tonghaks" et cetera, from the American community at Pyong Yang, a copy of which was forwarded to London, showed that 'robberies by uniformed soldiers and police were numerous'. The report also indicated that the alleged Tonghaks were aggressive everywhere and that 'open propaganda threats were being carried

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 21), 1 January 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 20), 22 January 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 22), 23 January 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 21), 24 January 1904; FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 25), 24 January 1904.



out/ against Christians and foreigners /Throughout/ the country'. The report went on to say that there were rumours to the effect that the third Korean month, or soon after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, would be the occasion for overthrowing the existing dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

From the above account, it could clearly be seen that if Japan occupied parts of Korea, as had been reckoned, she would face enormous difficulties. As Yun Chi Ho, the former President of the Independence Club and the then Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted in a letter to Hayashi Gonsuke, the Japanese Minister in Seoul, 'a tumultuous Korea will decidedly hinder Japan in the war'.<sup>2</sup> This statement aptly summed up the British view on the subject and their answer was an immediate occupation of the country by Japan before events got out of hand.<sup>3</sup> In coming to this conclusion, Britain did not see Japan acting solely in consonance with article one of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, but also had in mind the effects of such 'lawlessness' and 'anti-foreign propaganda' would have on the war efforts of her ally, if hostilities were to break out. This British attitude becomes clearer if a discussion of Japanese moves to counteract the Korean situation is taken up.

By the end of January 1904, it had become evident, <sup>very clear</sup> that Japan would definitely take counter-measures in Korea not

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 24), 28 January 1904. There was a mix up of despatch numbers between 24 and 28 January. See above.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 92, very confidential), 28 March 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Minute by Langley on Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 17), 20 January 1904, and Minute by Campbell on Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 24), 28 January 1904.



merely with a view to curbing the reported disorders but also as a step to gain strategic advantage in the impending war. With this action in view, the Korean Government began intensive diplomatic manoeuvres in London to prevent a violation of her declared neutrality by the landing of Japanese troops in the country. On 4 February, Yi Han Eung requested an interview with Campbell in order to communicate a message from his government.<sup>1</sup> In his reply to Yi on 9 February, Campbell felt that 'it would be more convenient for purposes of record to receive the communication in writing'.<sup>2</sup> On receipt of this reply, however, Yi asked for a time to enable him to receive further instructions from his government on the subject matter of the communication.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, one cannot help but agree with Yi demanding further instructions from Seoul by 13 February, for the situation in the Far East had entered a new phase. After their initial attack on Port Arthur, there was nothing to stop the Japanese from landing troops in Korea. On 7 February, Hayashi informed Jordan that a Japanese fleet would arrive off the Korean port of Chemulpo on the following day. He supplemented this information on 8 February to the effect that, within the next few days, a force of between 2,000 and 3,000 Japanese troops would be arriving in Seoul.<sup>4</sup> By 13 February, therefore, almost all the strategic areas of the country had been occupied by Japanese forces. The Korean Emperor,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Yi Han Eung to Campbell, 4 February 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1662, Campbell to Yi Han Eung, 9 February 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1662, Yi Han Eung to Campbell, 13 February 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 34), 7 February 1904.



having received a definite assurance from Hayashi through Jordan that under no circumstances would he be disturbed by the Japanese troops as long as he did not oppose them, Yi needed to exercise caution in his diplomatic moves in London.<sup>1</sup>

Almost immediately after landing her troops in Korea, Japan began consolidating her position in that country. On 9 February, Hayashi asked Jordan, on the authority of his government, to request Parlov, the Russian Minister in Seoul, to withdraw his staff and the entire Legation from Korea. Such a request, however, failed to commend itself to Lansdowne as he could not see Jordan having any locus standi in the matter.<sup>2</sup> On account of this, and the desire on the part of Britain to appear as neutral as possible in the conflict, Jordan was instructed not to interfere in the matter as such an action on his part would be misinterpreted by Russia. He was then advised to explain the British position to Hayashi.<sup>3</sup> Under the auspices of the French Minister, however, the Russians acceded to the Japanese demands on 12 February.<sup>4</sup> The expulsion of the Russians from Korea was followed two days later by the Japanese taking control over the entire Korean telegraph system 'with the approval of the Emperor of Corea'.<sup>5</sup> While a disinterested observer would question most of the Japanese actions in Korea so far, would such criticisms be acceptable to a neutral

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 34 Confidential), 8 February 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 40), 9 February 1904 and Minute by Lansdowne.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1661, Lansdowne to Jordan (Telegram No. 7), 10 February 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 41), 12 February 1904.

<sup>5</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 51), 15 February 1904.



Power like Britain? It is doubtful.

The British attitude to Japanese-Korean relations up till this time might appear to have been dictated mainly by her treaty obligation to Japan and the reports emanating from Korea of unrests and complete breakdown of law and order. It is true that Britain had remained out of the scene and was doing all she could to steer clear of any move which could be interpreted as putting obstacles in the way of Russo-Japanese negotiations regarding Manchuria and Korea. On the other hand, as Nish points out, Britain did not wish war and if that was inevitable, she desired to be kept from any sort of direct involvement in it.<sup>1</sup> In taking such a stand, however, she favoured Japan more than Russia in Manchuria and in Korea. This was because of the British fear of the 'Russian menace', which had gained strong influence in those two regions and the possibility of it spreading further afield if it were left unchecked. Britain, therefore, had to take a stand in any Russo-Japanese conflict, a stand which everybody knew was pro-Japanese. As Pooley observed, 'when the first alliance was signed its honest ultima ratio, so far as England was concerned, was fear of Russian aggression on India and Constantinople... England was to keep the ring whilst Japan [checked]... Russia' in the Far East.<sup>2</sup> If the chance had come, therefore, to effect this goal, Britain in spite of not being enthusiastic about the war had, at least, to offer her ally moral support. In addition,

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.249.

<sup>2</sup>A.M.Pooley, Secret Memoirs of Count Hayashi (London 1915), p.64.



if Korea, through her activities would hinder Japan in her endeavours, the latter must take every necessary action to silence her.

The need for Japan to take these measures in Korea and the moral support which she needed was emphasised time and again by reports coming from Korea. In this connection Jordan sent reports confirming that the Korean

'Emperor and the Palace Party generally, as well as a number of officials, who had already committed themselves to the Power whose eventual domination of the East they regarded as inevitable, would have undoubtedly preferred the Russians installed in Seoul.'<sup>1</sup>

Such a policy would neither be in the interest of Britain nor Japan, hence the reasons behind the apparent unsympathetic British attitude towards Korean entreaties to be saved from falling under Japanese military occupation. In adopting such a stand, however, it must be emphasised that the British Government appeared to have been influenced not only by the need to prevent Korean obstruction in Japanese efforts to check Russian advancement. Apart from the military and strategic considerations detailed above, the British attitude was also influenced by the nature of the Korean administration, which Jordan asserted to be the root cause of the unrest in the country and no mean contributory factor in the rupture of Russo-Japanese relations. What then was the nature of the Korean administration as seen through British diplomatic circles?

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 72 Confidential), 7 March 1904.



On many occasions, as Jordan stated, he had forwarded reports on the nature of the Korean administration and its shortcomings to London. Some time in January 1904, therefore, he commissioned one Reverend Gale, a Canadian missionary who, according to Jordan, spoke authoritatively on Korean affairs, to compile a report on the nature of the administration. In his report dated 20 January 1904, Gale concluded that the Korean Government was in a complete state of confusion and that it had virtually no support among the majority of the people. For reasons which did not appear clear to him, Gale found out that

'the body politic has at present day entirely lost "face" and His Majesty, who used to be referred to as "flawless", "peerless", "immaculate" and doubtless was regarded so, is no longer an object of worship, but has hosts of bitter enemies, who would be glad to see him put out of the way. The present political crisis with its rumours circulating concerning the partitioning of Corea, the occupation of it by Japan or Russia have intensified the present hatred of a large class of influential people against the Government.'<sup>1</sup>

If Gale could not understand the reasons behind what Jordan called the 'gradual alienation which has arisen between the governed and the governing classes in Corea, and of widespread and growing discontent with the order of things', both Claude MacDonald, the British Minister in Tokyo, and Jordan claimed to have a grasp of the facts.<sup>2</sup> These two diplomats traced the ills in the administration to the unique position of the Emperor in the day-to-day affairs of the country. According to MacDonald, the Korean 'Emperor was a great difficulty and hostile... to any kind of progress or reforms and devoted heart and soul to intrigue.' In this way, he

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 17), 20 January 1904 and enclosed memorandum.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



implied, the Emperor was always in direct conflict with the rising generation who were devoted to improvements and advancement of the country. Hence, there was constant disorder in Korea which in turn bred fertile ground for possible Russo-Japanese clashes on account of their political, economic and strategic interests in that country.<sup>1</sup> Although Jordan did see the situation in a similar light and did agree with MacDonald that something ought to be done about the personal rule of the Emperor, they were by no means in agreement as to how the issue should be approached.<sup>2</sup> In Jordan's opinion, 'nothing short of actual compulsion will ever lead ... The Emperor to abandon the role which he has played for forty years.'<sup>3</sup> In MacDonald's view, however, the Emperor had to be handled with great delicacy as he could otherwise become a 'nucleus of trouble'.<sup>4</sup>

It is perhaps difficult to assess accurately the extent to which such reports of the widening of the gap between the governing and the governed as well as the unwillingness of the Emperor to lead Korea towards 'progress' and 'advancement' affected London as they did Washington. President Theodore Roosevelt of the United States, after receiving similar reports from Allen, did not hesitate to tell Baron Suyematsu, during his visit to Washington,

<sup>1</sup> FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 195), 29 June 1904.

<sup>2</sup> FO/17/1659, Jordan to Campbell Private 29 March 1904. There is nothing in the files indicating that there was an open debate between MacDonald and Jordan. It must be noted, however, that as copies of each other's despatches were exchanged they were both aware of each other's views on the subject.

<sup>3</sup> FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 91 Confidential), 26 March 1904.

<sup>4</sup> FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 195), 29 June 1904.



that 'Japan should have a position with Korea "just like we have with Cuba"'.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office, on the other hand, simply found the reports 'interesting'.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, not beyond reasonable speculation that the British, although unwilling to make an overt statement as the Americans did, were in accord with Roosevelt's position and did agree with Jordan and MacDonald that there was a need to put affairs in Korea in the right direction so as to help reduce tensions in the Far East. In consonance with the line of British policy at this time, no other Power in the Orient was favoured to undertake this onerous task more than Japan. This was because Japan was generally seen in Britain as a country capable of cleansing efficiently her own internal administrative ills and extending help to other nations who needed the same readjustments, as exemplified by her achievements in Formosa. As an illustration of the general opinion then held in Britain about Japan and her 'civilizing influence' in the Far East, it may perhaps now be appropriate to look into unofficial sources also to establish this point further.

Among the numerous articles which appeared in the British press about Japan was one in the London Times entitled 'Japan as a Colonizing Power'. Under this caption, the writer contended that, when Japan first went into Formosa,

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<sup>1</sup>Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 97-101.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Unsigned minute on Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 17), 20 January 1904.



'she found the coast at the mercy of pirates. The interior ... ruled by savage aborigines ... who plundered ships wrecked on the coast and murdered the crews who approached the island'.

But through a calculated policy of not hurting the susceptibility of the inhabitants by meddling in their religion and other customs, the article continued, Japan had given 'tangible proof of Japanese rule by improving in every respect the conditions of the people' and had removed the country from the orbit of international dispute involving principally the United States and China. The writer went on to argue that there were certain discernible qualities in any nation capable of being a successful colonizer and a civilizing influence. These qualities, the writer had no doubt, Japan fully possessed.<sup>1</sup> This and other articles in the British press about Japan clearly indicated the then held opinion in Britain about their ally; and with a similar breakdown of law and order, there appeared no illusions in British minds that Japan was capable of 'civilizing' Korea with similar laudable achievements. This line of thought in both official and unofficial circles in Britain becomes still more striking if one surveys the steps Japan began to take in Korea after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war and how Britain reacted to these steps.

#### C. Japanese Political Concessions in Korea

It was evident from the very day the Russian Minister left Seoul that Hayashi was in some form of negotiations with the Korean authorities, the nature of which could be broadly guessed from the

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 24 September 1904.



recent Russo-Japanese negotiations as regards their respective positions in Manchuria and Korea.<sup>1</sup> In Tokyo, MacDonald was informed by the Japanese Foreign Minister, Komura Jutaro, on 23 February, that negotiations were going on between Japan and Korea

'with a view to coming to some arrangement or agreement to regularize the situation which, as Korea is an independent State, has declared her neutrality, and is in Japanese occupation, is somewhat involved.'<sup>2</sup>

On the same day that Komura divulged this information officially to MacDonald, Jordan obtained a draft copy of an agreement reached between the two countries from a Korean source.<sup>3</sup> On his asking Hayashi for details of this agreement, Jordan was simply told that it 'virtually embodied proposals made by Japan to Russia during the recent negotiation'.<sup>4</sup> In the evening of 24 February, however, the Korean Foreign Minister, Yi Chi Yong, gave Jordan a signed copy of the document.<sup>5</sup>

Briefly stated, this Japanese-Korean agreement dated 23 February, provided that

'the Korean Government, reposing the confidence in Japan, undertake to give effect to the disinterested advice of the Imperial Japanese Government with regard to Administrative reform.'

While Korea promised to follow the advice of Japan, the latter agreed to guarantee the safety of the Imperial House of Korea and

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<sup>1</sup>White, op.cit., pp. 349-358.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/581, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 80 Secret), 23 February 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 61 ), 23 February 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 63), 24 February 1904.

<sup>5</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 64), 24 February 1904



'definitely guarantee the independence of Korea and the integrity of her territory.'

In addition, the agreement stipulated that:

'In the event of encroachment by a third Power or internal disturbance threatening the security of the Imperial Household or the integrity of Korean Territory, the Japanese Government shall take immediately such action as circumstances may require and the Korean Government will at the same time afford every facility to the action of the Japanese Government.'

Both parties further agreed that

'they will not come to any subsequent arrangement with a third Power that shall be contrary to the terms of the present Agreement:'

and that any matters not covered within this agreement

'shall be the subject of mutual arrangement between ~~The~~ Japanese Representative and the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs'.<sup>1</sup>

A mere perusal of the terms of this agreement leaves no doubt that Korea had been virtually stripped of her independent status. The British Government was quite alive to this fact. In this respect Langley minuted:

'In view of the conditions embodied in other articles of this agreement the "independence" of article 3 is a misnomer'.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of this obvious fact that Korea had lost her independence, Komura informed MacDonald on 25 February that the agreement could not be regarded as conclusive in itself. On the contrary, Komura continued, it might be regarded as a first step to an 'alliance' between Japan and Korea.<sup>3</sup> This statement did not take the British

<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 56 Secret), 25 February 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1661, Minute by Langley (Telegram No. 61), 23 February 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/581, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 81), 25 February 1904.



Government by surprise in view of the flexible nature of the terms of the agreement. The Foreign Office foresaw, as will be clearer in the course of the present discussion, that the agreement was to be a lever for Japanese hegemony over Korea. Even though the realisation of this objective by Japan would be in direct contravention of the Anglo-Japanese alliance as to guaranteeing the independence and territorial integrity of China and Korea, for military, strategic and political reasons, Britain made no protests against the Japanese intention. The British action was rather geared towards offering advice to Japan as regards her moves in the peninsula, when necessary, and, at the same time, gather as much information as she could regarding the next step of her ally in Korea.

The first concrete information divulged to Britain regarding Japan's ultimate intentions in Korea was in an interview MacDonald held with Komura. At this interview MacDonald was told that

'during the consultations which preceded the Anglo-Japanese alliance, the Japanese Cabinet were un-animously of the opinion that neither China nor Korea could possibly be considered as a "Power" in terms of the alliance, for they were quite incapable of preserving their independence unaided [and that] they are still of this opinion.'<sup>1</sup>

Did this statement mean that Japan was still committed to maintaining the independence of Korea or was it merely aimed at soothing British susceptibilities in view of the agreement of 23 February

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/577, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 60), 26 February 1904.



which pointed to the contrary and which contravened an important article of the alliance of 1902? Whatever the intentions of Japan were towards Korea at this time, her actions in the peninsula did not suggest that she intended to respect the independent existence of the country. In this connection, Ito Hirobumi, President of the Japanese Privy Council, told MacDonald on 11 March that his verdict on the Korean administration would be that it 'was "hopelessly rotten"' in line with his verdict on the Chinese Government in 1898 during his special mission to that country.<sup>1</sup>

Even though neither China nor Korea was regarded as a Power by Japan in terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and she considered both governments as "hopelessly rotten", 'the attitude of the Government at Tokio with regard to Corea', Hayashi informed Jordan, 'was exactly the reverse of what it was towards China'.<sup>2</sup> Hayashi elaborated on this point in an interview with MacDonald while on a consultative visit to Tokyo five weeks later. He told MacDonald that:

'He disbelieved in the reformation of China, for as soon as the efforts of well-meaning persons or Powers create an educated and enlightened Chinese, he is hostile to his Government; while any support afforded to that Government is weight lent to crush the germs of enlightenment and education. In this way, the people and Government are in inevitable opposition.'

But, whilst it was possible to nourish at least some hope of reforms in China, there seems to be no room for such hopes whatever in regard to Corea'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/577, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 70), 12 March 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 129 Confidential), 20 May 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 195), 29 June 1904.



It is, perhaps, very tempting to assume that Hayashi's statement was a personal expression of his views on the subject, but as MacDonald did caution in the same despatch, no one should take Hayashi lightly in his judgement. Not only had he had considerable experience in China and a five-year residence in Seoul as Japanese representative, but also, his advice carried no mean weight in the formation of Japan's Chinese and Korean policies. MacDonald's assessment of the situation could not have been more correct, for Ito held precisely the same view when he talked to him on 4 September 1907.<sup>1</sup> Whether Ito's views were a later conviction, Hayashi's comments, at least, showed that there existed a powerful faction in Tokyo whose policies were being pursued in Korea and whose programme Ito later came to appreciate and fully endorse.

As expressed in the agreement of 23 February 1904, Japan's aim in Korea at this period appeared to be geared towards inaugurating an era of 'administrative reforms' in the peninsula in such a way that her own influence could be felt in every corner of the governmental machinery. In pursuance of this objective, however, Jordan observed that the

'greatest difficulty of the Japanese would ... probably be with the Korean Emperor himself, who will not accept with resignation the unambitious role of a political nonentity, and for whom no other part seems reserved in the Japanese programme.'<sup>2</sup>

In view of the dangers involved in any attempt at tampering with the functions of the Emperor in the existing situation of war, it

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/383, MacDonald to Grey (No. 191 Confidential), 5 September 1907.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 72 Confidential), 7 March 1904.



was widely held in London that any reforms involving the position of the monarchy in the administration of the country would have to be postponed until the Japanese could 'consolidate their military position'.<sup>1</sup> It was in this light that London saw the virtual inactivity of Tokyo in formulating any definite administrative reform programme in Korea between February and July of 1904. Indications of Japan's determination to put Korean affairs in the right perspective, however, were the various reports emanating from Seoul regarding the numerous development projects she was initiating in the country.<sup>2</sup>

While this was the line of thought in London, it was also realised that sooner or later Japan would have to take positive steps towards presenting the Korean authorities with the inevitable.<sup>3</sup> When on 23 June, therefore, Komura informed MacDonald that 'the Japanese Government were certainly about to undertake reforms in Korea', and that they wished to start with the debased currency and the award of government contracts, it was widely held in Britain that no more auspicious moment and projects could have been chosen.<sup>4</sup> To this list were later added the reduction in strength (personnel) of the Korean army and the end to the contracts of the bulk of 'foreign advisers who now draw in salaries an aggregate sum of over Twenty thousand pounds a year' from the Korean purse.<sup>5</sup> From the latest move, it became

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Minute on Jordan to Campbell [Private], 29 March 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 105), 13 April 1904. FO/17/1660, Jordan to Campbell [Private], 7 June 1904 and 30 June 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 137 Confidential), 10 June 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 182), 24 June 1904.

<sup>5</sup>FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 195), 29 June 1904. FO/17/1659, Jordan to Campbell [Private], 3 March 1904. FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 92), 28 June 1905. FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 137 Confidential), 10 June 1904.



clear that Japan aimed at fashioning Korean foreign relations so as to fall strictly in line with her own foreign policies.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, on 13 August 1904, Jordan reported that Japan had presented her programme of reforms to the Korean authorities, Britain, at least, knew of the broad outline of the programme, which involved:

1. Financial reorganisation under the guidance of a Japanese financial adviser;
2. A reduction in the Korean army from 9,000 to 1,500;
3. Abolition of the system of employing foreign advisers and a reduction in the number of Korean office holders and offering higher salaries to the rest;
4. Appointment of an American as an adviser to the Korean Foreign Office; and
5. The withdrawal of all Korean Legations abroad.<sup>2</sup>

This policy of carrying out reforms in Korea through foreign advisers appointed by Japan highly commended itself to London. This was because, as Jordan had earlier observed, it was felt that Japan would find

'some difficulty in procuring the services of efficient Korean Agents to initiate and carry out the administrative reforms foreshadowed in the Protocol of 23 February'.<sup>3</sup>

The problem, as he later explained, was

'not that Korea is without reformers, some of them of an almost revolutionary type, but they are mostly young men, members of the defunct Independence Club, who have little practical experience of affairs, and no great influence in the country'.<sup>4</sup>

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Jordan to Campbell (Private), 3 March 1904. FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 97), 28 June 1905. FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 127 Confidential), 10 June 1904.

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1FO/17/1661, Minute by Campbell/Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 107). 19 May 1904.

2FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram Nos. 121 Confidential and 122 Confidential), 13 August 1904.

3FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 72 Confidential), 7 March 1904.

4FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 91 Confidential), 26 March 1904.



If Korea was lacking in statesmen capable of carrying out the much needed reforms, it must be concluded, Japan was justified in recommending competent foreigners to do the job under her supervision. Britain's only concern in this respect was the position of MacLeavy Brown, a Briton and the Chief Commissioner of the Korean Maritime Customs, whom Britain wanted Japan to maintain owing to her increasing commercial interests in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> She was, however, assured that Japan had no immediate intentions of interfering with Brown's post. Thus, with an American adviser, Durham W. Stevens, attached to the Korean Foreign Office and the administration of the maritime customs retained in British hands, Japan appeared to London to be aiming at fully associating Britain and America in reforming Korea and not aiming at creating a political enclave for herself in that region. If this was Japan's objective, London concluded, then her scheme 'appears to be satisfactory'.<sup>2</sup>

The satisfaction expressed by Britain over Japan's handling of the 'Korean problem' was not only over the security the arrangement seemed to afford to British commercial interests in the peninsula nor the international character Japan gave to the scheme. It was also an expression of the then prevailing opinion in British diplomatic circles that Japan had taken upon herself the yeoman's job in Korea which was only comparable to what Britain had done and was doing in Egypt and other areas of the

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter Two below.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 123), 16 August and minute by Montgomery thereon.



World. Jordan gave vent to this prevailing opinion when he wrote

'that Japan will succeed in Egyptianising Korea no observer of her own national development can possibly doubt, but the task is a formidable one and in its accomplishment she will receive less assistance from the native element than the British Authorities need in Egypt'.<sup>1</sup>

Japan's determination to follow the British example in Egypt on her endeavours in Korea was given an outward sign when at the time of her announcement that she was going to put her reform programmes into effect, Hayashi told MacDonald that he was 'very anxious to obtain copies of Lord Cromer's report on Egypt'.<sup>2</sup> Japan, Jordan reported, fully realised the implications and the difficulties involved in following British colonial footsteps but, he added:

'If England, the Japanese argue, has given her best talent for the reorganisation of Egypt, Japan, if she hopes for similar success, must do the same for Korea'.<sup>3</sup>

These expressions of Japan's determination to follow Britain's footsteps in her colonial venture were given concrete manifestations in the details of the arrangement for the employment of a Japanese adviser, Megata Tanetaro, to the Korean Finance Ministry on 3 October 1904. For the sake of analysis, it is convenient here to repeat some of the articles in this arrangement in detail. Among other things, the agreement provided that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne, (No. 82 Confidential), 16 March 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 195), 29 June 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 137 Confidential), 10 June 1904.



1. It will be the duty of Mr. Megata to superintend the reform of the Korean financial system. He will with the utmost faithfulness investigate and bring to conclusion every variety of financial business.
2. In all matters affecting the finances of the Korean Government, action will be taken only after Mr. Megata's assent shall have been obtained. Mr. Megata will be present at all meetings held by the Council of State to discuss financial business, and his views at any time on financial questions will be conveyed to the Council of State by the Finance Minister. After the Council of State shall have come to a decision upon any matter affecting the finances of a Government Department, Mr. Megata will first signify his assent under seal before His Majesty's sanction can be requested.
3. Mr. Megata may obtain an Audience upon any financial question and make a personal report to His Majesty.<sup>1</sup>

Jordan's observations on the articles quoted above are very interesting indeed. He wrote to London that, in his opinion, the Japanese authorities

'in drawing this document ... appear to have followed with some closeness the model set by Britain in Egypt and to have given concrete expression at the outset to the functions which, as gradually defined, were exercised by the early British Financial Adviser in that country.

The decision of the British Government with regard to the latter functionary that "no financial decision could be taken without his assent" finds its liberal counterpart in the Clause of the Agreement which provides that "in all matters affecting the finances of the Korean Government action will be taken only after Mr. Megata's assent shall have been given.

In like manner, the stipulation in virtue of which Mr. Megata "will be present at all meetings held by the Council of State to discuss financial business" corresponds with the arrangement by which the Financial Adviser in Egypt held a seat on the Council of Ministers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 199 Confidential), 19 October 1904.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



In spite of these similarities in the position of the earlier British financial adviser in Egypt and that of the Japanese in Korea, Jordan saw some marked differences in the strength of the British adviser and Megata. He observed in this connection that despite the fact that the British adviser in Egypt had a seat on the Council of Ministers,

'he had not a right to vote, and neither apparently Mr. Megata, but the latter possesses, under the immediate Clause of the Agreement, the right to veto any financial decision of the Council of State.

This vetoing, as Lord Milner points out in his "England in Egypt", makes the Financial Adviser master of the situation, and as he there adds "when the person who is already master of the situation by virtue of his functions, also happens to be a citizen of the State which is in military occupation of the country, there is no need to dwell at tedious length upon the magnitude of his powers".<sup>1</sup>

Thus as early as October 1904, Britain had come to realise that Japan's military occupation of Korea was going to be transformed into a political hegemony never before attained by either Russia or Japan herself in the annals of their diplomatic intrigues to gain political ascendancy in the peninsula. Britain had no objection to Japan's ascendancy in Korea partly because of the military and strategic reasons and partly because of her unqualified words about maintaining equal commercial and industrial opportunities for all nations in Korea.<sup>2</sup> There is much to be said in favour of the British position. After all, Japan was operating in a different country - giving allowance, of course, to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/17/1660, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 173), 31 August 1904.



all the similarities one can enumerate - and, if she had shown and expressed her desire to follow British footsteps in her colonial venture, she was not bound to follow it without modifications to suit local conditions. It was, perhaps, in such a light that Britain saw the differences in the relative positions of Megata and her own earlier adviser in Egypt. Moreover, this financial arrangement was a logical outcome of the agreements of 23 February and 22 August 1904, which were so vaguely worded as to leave the Japanese with room to manoeuvre to attain a say in every aspect of the governmental machinery of Korea. This is not to deny the fact that Britain realised that the agreement of 23 February 1904, from which those of 22 August and 3 October were derived, was not made out of the free will of the Korean authorities.<sup>1</sup> However, the British position was that since the Korean Government did not protest against the first agreement, any move by the British Government against the Japanese action was bound to be interpreted as an unfriendly act by Tokyo. It is, however, doubtful whether Britain would have entered a protest, in any form, against Tokyo had the Korean authorities so requested. This point becomes self-evident if one briefly considers the British attitudes towards Korean intrigues to prevent the Japanese assuming control over their Legation in London.

No serious student of Russo-Japanese bickering over Korea could fail to realise that one of the major actions Japan would

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 72 Confidential), 7 March 1904.



undertake soon after effecting her military occupation of the territory would be the refashioning of Korean foreign relations to suit Japan's pattern of diplomacy. The first step, as we have already seen, was to sever Korean relations with Russia.<sup>1</sup> So completely and quickly was Korea forced to abandon all pro-Russian sentiments in her foreign relations that when in May 1904 it was announced that Korea had decided to cancel all her existing treaties and conventions with Russia, Campbell felt that such an action was highly unnecessary again.<sup>2</sup> It was, therefore, not surprising to the British Government that the Japanese included in their reform programme of 12 August 1904 the appointment of a pro-Japanese American as adviser to the Korean Legations abroad.<sup>3</sup> Explaining the nature of the programme in this respect, Jordan was informed by the Japanese Legation in Seoul that

'with an Adviser of their own selection, of whom they have had long experience, attached to The Korean Foreign Office, and with Korean relations with Foreign Countries committed to the charge of their own Legations abroad, the Japanese will control Korean foreign policy almost as effectively as the British Government did that of the late Transvaal Republic or as the Ameer of Afghanistan'.<sup>4</sup>

Korea's immediate response to this was to approach the British Government secretly so that it could appoint a Briton as an adviser to her Foreign Ministry but this request was flatly turned down.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 73), 2 March 1904. FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 175 Confidential), Pom-chi, 5 September 1904. The Korean Minister in St. Petersburg, Yi Pom-chi, was ordered to leave Russia for Paris on 1 March 1904 by the Japanese authorities and upon his refusal to comply with this instruction, he was relieved of his post.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 107), 19 May 1904 and minute by Campbell.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 121 Confidential), 13 August 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 167 Confidential), 16 August 1904.

<sup>5</sup>FO/17/1661, Minutes by Campbell and Langley on Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 122 Confidential), 13 August 1904; Lansdowne to Jordan (Telegram No. 26), 15 August 1904.



In spite of Britain's refusal to intervene on its behalf to have a Briton appointed as the adviser to the Korean Foreign Office, the Korean Government did not give up its efforts to ease Japanese control over its foreign relations. Both Yi Han Eung and the Emperor initiated various moves in an attempt to have the Korean Legation in London upgraded. In this endeavour Yi asked the Foreign Office on 21 September 1904 that Jordan should be instructed 'to urge the Corean Government to send a Minister to London as... he was most unwell'. Yi was, however, told that it would be better if Jordan was first instructed to enquire whether the Korean Government needed such a change. Upon this, Campbell wrote privately to Jordan to make the necessary enquiries.<sup>1</sup> Between 24 September and 6 October, however, Yi heard nothing from the Foreign Office regarding the results of the enquiries. On 7 October, therefore, he wrote requesting that Lansdowne should

'despatch a telegraphic message, if the inquiries were made otherwise to ... Jordan in his convenience and instruct His Excellency to strongly urge the Corean Government to send a minister to London as soon as possible in view of the urgent necessity of a minister in London...'<sup>2</sup>

He was, however, informed by Campbell that his initial request had been laid before Lansdowne, who had forwarded it to Jordan in Seoul. In view of this, it would 'be advisable to await his

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(Telegram No. 122 Confidential), 15 August 1904: Lansdowne to Jordan (Telegram No. 121, 15 August 1904).

<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1662, Memorandum by Montgomery, 21 September 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1662, Yi Han Eung to Montgomery, 7 October 1904.



answer before any further steps are taken in the matter'.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until 23 November that Jordan replied to Campbell's letter. He noted that the result of his investigations showed that the request was

'prompted by the Emperor here who wishes to escape from restrictions which the Japanese are placing upon his maintenance of diplomatic representation abroad.'

He added that in a similar fashion, he had

'been frequently told ... that Lord Lansdowne is anxious to have a Korean Minister in London and I have been asked to recommend the appointment to the Emperor.'

From a conversation he had had with Hayashi on the subject, however, Jordan continued, he gathered that Tokyo would definitely not favour any such an appointment.<sup>1</sup> Jordan followed this report with further information to the effect that he had received a message from the Emperor, being a telegram from Yi Han Eung, asserting that the British Government had instructed him, Jordan, to approach the Korean Government with a view to having a Korean Minister appointed to London, but he replied that he had received no such instruction. He learnt from the messenger who brought the message to him, however, that the real object of the Emperor's communication was to circumvent the Japanese. Jordan, on the other hand, did not allow the issue to settle at that stage. He saw Hayashi on the subject and the latter reiterated the Japanese position with the additional information that the Japanese Government had

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Campbell Private7, 23 November 1904.



'even wished to do away with the post at Tokio, but the Korean Emperor took advantage of the Mikado's birthday to send a Representative to offer his congratulations and it was felt that it would be ingracious to refuse to receive him.'<sup>1</sup>

This piece of diplomatic intrigue on the part of the Korean authorities seemed to have gone a long way to destroy the little bit of credibility which they had in London, and indeed Yi Han Eung had long lost his.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that the British Government showed not the slightest sympathy towards the Korean court when the Japanese began to move against it.

By the end of 1904, the war had gone far enough in Japan's favour to enable her to embark upon tackling the position of the Emperor. On 3 January 1905, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in Korea, General Hasegawa, announced in a proclamation that the duties of the Korean police in connection with the preservation of law and order in and around Seoul would be performed by a Japanese gendarmarie.<sup>3</sup> This was followed by the dismissal of the Belgian adviser to the Imperial Household Department, Delcoigne.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Shidehara Tadashi and Taniko Takohashi, were appointed as adviser to the Ministry of Education and doctor of the Imperial Household Department respectively.<sup>5</sup> In February, the former superintendent of police at Nagasaki, Murayama, was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Campbell Private, 2 December 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1662, Memorandum by Montgomery, 21 September 1904, and minutes thereon.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 12 Confidential), 28 January 1905.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 8), 23 January 1905.

<sup>5</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 52 Confidential), 4 April 1905.



posted to Korea to reorganise the police system in Seoul and a number of other Japanese police officers were attached to the Korean Adviser's Department for administrative work.<sup>1</sup> On 30 March 1905, in an agreement, Korea handed over all her postal, telegraph and telephone administration to the management of the Japanese Government.<sup>2</sup> By May 1905, therefore, there was no single department in the Korean administration that was not under the watchful eye of a Japanese appointee.

The British attitudes towards these appointments are extremely interesting. In spite of the fact that London saw much in Tokyo's assertion that for the advancement of the peninsula into a modern state, it was essential that Seoul accepted well-intentioned advice from competent advisers of Japan's choice, not all the appointments fell into line with British opinion. Jordan, for instance, described the appointment of the Japanese military attaché in Seoul, Lieutenant Colonel Nodzu, as an adviser to the Korean War Office in March 1904, as not

'likely to produce any marked result as the new Adviser, although intimately acquainted with Corea, is scarcely the stamp of man to initiate and carry through any radical programme of reform.'<sup>3</sup>

In the same fashion, he reported that his impressions of Megata

'are not particularly favourable so far. He has a great reputation at Tokio as a financial expert, but somehow he does not strike one as a person likely to initiate or carry through any great measure of reform.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 51 Confidential), 4 April 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 52 Confidential), 4 April 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdown (No. 93 Confidential), 29 March 1904.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Campbell [Private], 4 November 1904.



On the whole, Jordan felt that

'The rapid multiplication of appointments of this kind, many of which, if the experience of the past can be accepted as a guide for the future, are likely to prove little more than sinecures, rather shakes one's faith in the Japanese assurance that formed the forefront of their programme of reforms and which aimed at the abolition of unnecessary posts.'<sup>1</sup>

London, on the other hand, did not fully agree with all Jordan's criticisms. According to the Foreign Office, Japan had already committed herself to the path of reforms in Korea and she 'dared' not allow these advisers to remain merely on the pay-roll of the Korean Government.<sup>2</sup> It was in the light of this that Britain and America started discussions on the future of Korea and Manchuria in accordance with Japanese successes in the war.

#### D. Secret Anglo-American Understanding

No candid observer of Russo-Japanese relations in respect of Korea and Manchuria would fail to realise ~~that~~ after the fall of Port Arthur to the Japanese on 2 January 1905 and the great inroads they had made along the Russian-controlled parts of Manchuria as well as the grip they had over affairs in Korea, that Japan would ~~claim to be allowed to~~ remain in the latter territory and demand substantial concessions from Russia in Manchuria. These facts were clearly known in most capitals of the Powers. In addition, it was widely held in some quarters that now that

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 25 Confidential), 18 February 1905.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minute by Campbell.



Port Arthur had fallen, 'the Russian Government might feel disposed to consider the possibilities of peace, more particularly so as the internal condition of Russia might make her Administration more inclined to negotiate' if the Japanese terms of peace were moderate.<sup>1</sup>

It was against this background and the desire of Roosevelt to take 'a leading role' in any Russo-Japanese peace negotiations as well as his wish 'not to place the United States in opposition to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance but to associate the United States with that dominant diplomatic combination' that he began to consult Britain as to whether his ideas on the future role of Japan in Korea and Manchuria were in line with British diplomatic attitudes.<sup>2</sup> It was in this endeavour that he told the British Ambassador in Washington, Durand, on 23 January 1905, that in his opinion

'if Japan continues to withstand Russia she should be permitted to retain Port Arthur and paramount influence in Corea while Manchuria should revert to China perhaps under international guarantee. He is strongly opposed to any interference by neutral Powers to deprive Japan of their conquests. He does not however think [The] U.S. would seriously oppose Russian claim to retain Northern Manchuria if not dispossessed by [The] Japanese and wishes to know whether we should [sic] take the same view.'<sup>3</sup>

This view was warmly welcomed by Lansdowne. At the same time, and in line with the anticipated peace negotiations and Anglo-American discussions of the subject, the British Government was

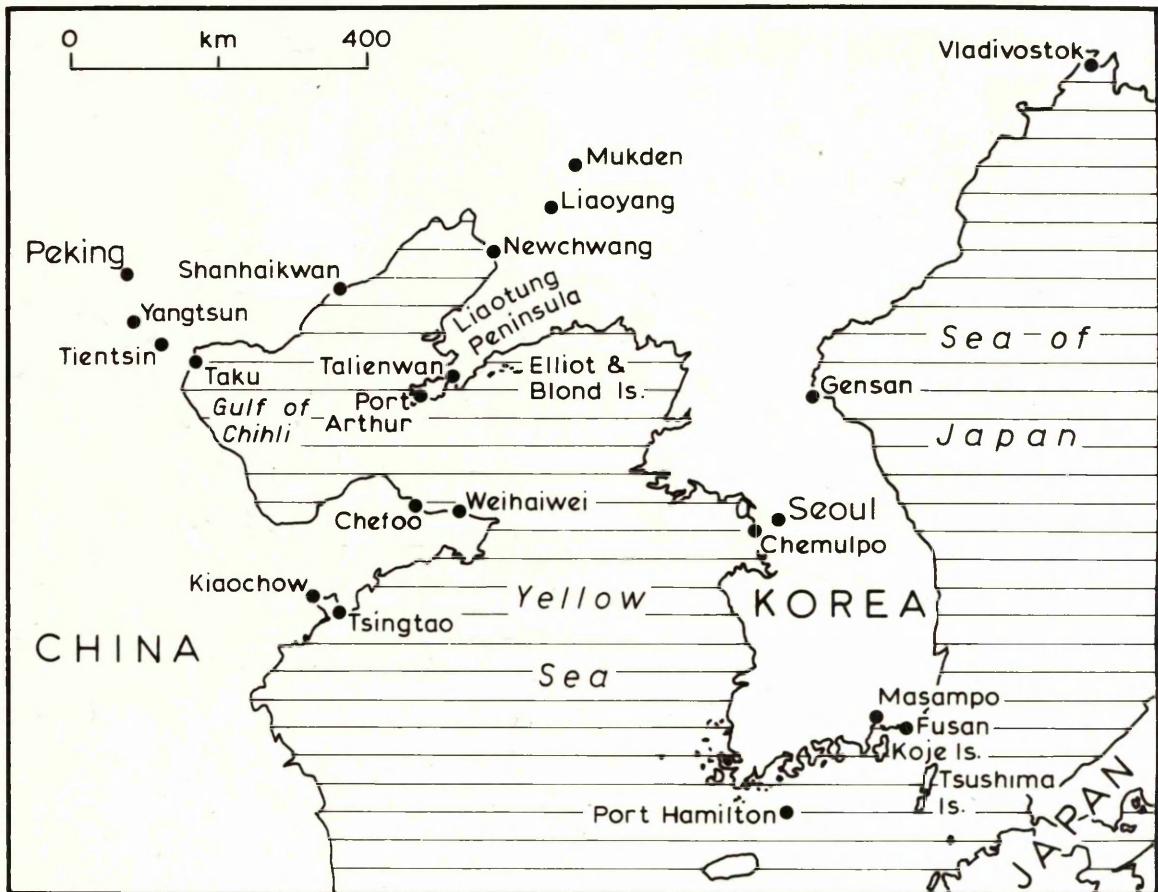
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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/591, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 24 Secret), 25 January 1905.

<sup>2</sup>Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 40 and 111.

<sup>3</sup>FO/5/2581, Durand to Lansdowne (Private Telegram, Secret), 23 January 1905.





KOREA AND NORTH EAST CHINA



sounding Japan as to her possible peace proposals. On this score, MacDonald was informed by Komura on 25 January that Japan would definitely insist on the following 'inflexible' conditions:

'The first was with regard to Port Arthur: this place, and the so-called territory, must remain in Japanese possession, Japan taking over the lease on the same terms as had been granted to Russia by China.'

Secondly, Manchuria, outside the leased territory, to revert to China, the territorial integrity of China in this province, outside the leased territory, to be confirmed and recognised by Russia.

Thirdly, Korea to come completely within the exclusive sphere of Japanese influence, and no special or exclusive Russian interest to be permitted there. The destiny of Korea to be entirely under Japanese control.<sup>1</sup>

Komura then added, in the same conversation, that:

'On the important question of railways, ... that portion of the railway from Harbin to Port Arthur would follow the terms of the Port Arthur lease, and become Japanese to the same extent to which it had been Russian before the war. The railway from Vladivostoc to Harbin and thence to the Russian frontier would remain Russian.'

He, however, sounded a note of caution:

'This, at any rate', Komura told MacDonald, 'would be the arrangement in case peace negotiations were commenced forthwith; should the fortunes of war favour the Japanese, and the Russians be driven out of Manchuria, the railway question might assume a different aspect.'<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office found these terms as being 'very reasonable, and in accordance with general anticipation'.<sup>3</sup> As this

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/591, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 24 Secret), 25 January 1905.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/595, Minute by Campbell on MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 22 Secret), 25 January 1905.



intimation fell within the context of the Anglo-American discussions on the subject, Roosevelt was immediately and secretly informed of it, and the British response to the terms.<sup>1</sup> On 30 January, however, Hayashi Tadasu, the Japanese Minister in London, called on Lansdowne and elaborated on his government's possible peace terms as had earlier been disclosed to MacDonald and their future policies in regard to Korea, Manchuria, and the leased territory of Kwantung.<sup>2</sup> On the same day, Roosevelt expressed his unqualified agreement with the British position as communicated to him through Durand. On the other hand, Durand informed Lansdowne that the American President was very

'anxious that we should keep our views entirely to ourselves and avoid exciting alarm or criticism by any open evident agreement. He said "England and America must stand together, but to avoid unnecessary difficulties we must show that we stand together only by our actions." It is I think very important that no suspicion of an understanding between the two countries should get about.'

Thus, even before the most decisive battles of the war had been fought, Britain and the United States were in an unwritten agreement as to what Japan's equitable share in Korea, Manchuria and Kwantung should be in order to guarantee her safety, check Russian ambitions and compensate her for her gallantry.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/5/2581, Lansdowne to Durand (Telegram No. 10 Secret), 28 January 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 18 Secret), 30 January 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/5/2581, Durand to Lansdowne [Private telegram], 30 January 1905.



Chapter TwoTHE TRANSFER AGREEMENTS

The Anglo-American understanding of January 1905 was reached at a time when it was far from certain what course the Russo-Japanese war might assume in the next few months ahead. Admittedly Russia had lost a lot of ground to Japan, yet she could not be said to have totally lost the war. Her Far Eastern fleet had yet to be fully committed to the campaign and she still had a large number of undeployed forces along the railway zone in Manchuria. Events, however, began to change when on 9 March 1905, Mukden was captured by the Japanese. This latest victory brought the Anglo-American understanding into a more realistic light in as much as it now became clear that it would take the Russians a lot of effort before they could dislodge the Japanese from Korea, South Manchuria and Kwantung. Unless, therefore, Tokyo had more in mind than what it had intimated were its remaining objectives in continuing the war, there appeared to be every hope in London that Japan would now be more responsive to American initiatives to achieve peace.

While desiring peace, London was unwilling to be seen in Tokyo as pushing Japan towards that end. The Foreign Office, however, felt that Britain could do more in this direction by making efforts towards the renewal of the alliance with Japan. This was held to be the case because it was widely believed that, if Britain could indicate at this crucial period of the war that she was prepared to strengthen her political and military ties with Japan, St. Petersburg might be compelled to give favourable consideration to Washington's peace initiatives.



By the middle of March 1905, therefore, there appeared to be a well planned British strategy towards ending the war. Firstly, America should be encouraged to continue her peace initiatives. Secondly, Britain should make it known that she was prepared to strengthen her military and naval ties with Japan. The net result of these moves, it was hoped, would be to bring the warring nations to a conference table to resolve their differences. If such an end was achieved, Britain should back the Japanese demands on Korea, South Manchuria and Kwantung as communicated to them in January 1905. How then did Britain approach the issue of the alliance?

#### A. The Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office's view of the first alliance in relation to the changing political and military situation in East Asia appeared at the outset to be a parochial one in as much as its continuation was seen mostly in terms of facilitating the peace between Russia and Japan.<sup>2</sup> The fall of Mukden, however, gave new dimensions to the issue. By this victory, greater weight was added to the prevailing opinion at the Foreign Office as to Japan's military might and the advantages Britain could derive by extending the alliance to cover the defence of her East Asian

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<sup>1</sup>In discussing this issue, every attempt will be made to avoid entering into discussions on the other aspects of the alliance but unrelated to our present study. For the details of the whole negotiations see Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 298-344. It should also be noted that as the Japanese demands in respect of South Manchuria and Kwantung were merely a transfer of the Russian rights, that issue might have been considered as not affecting the first alliance, hence its deletion from the negotiations.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 299-300.



possessions. From this period onwards, therefore, the question of continuing the alliance was not seen solely as a move towards achieving peace but also as an action towards ensuring greater protection for British colonial interests in Asia especially India and its adjoining territories. As the terms of the first alliance did not cover these regions, talks about the alliance in relation to current realities shifted from that of mere continuation to its revision and extension.<sup>1</sup>

While Britain's principal objectives in seeking a revision of the alliance was to help end the war and extend her military and naval ties to cover her East Asian possessions, the major preoccupation of Japan at this time was to find a way of securing British support to enable her to assume<sup>a</sup>/paramount political, economic and military position in Korea.<sup>2</sup> This being so, MacDonald noted, 'the Anglo-Japanese alliance, as it at present stands, would be a most inconvenient stumbling block. For ... the language of the preamble and the first article lays down that "Great Britain and Japan are especially interested in maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Korea."' Hence, he concluded, 'the present Anglo-Japanese alliance must disappear' to enable Japan to realise her objective.<sup>3</sup>

With such a desire on both sides, Tokyo did not hesitate in responding to London's invitation for a discussion of the subject. On 10 May 1905, Hayashi Tadasu communicated a note to Lansdowne in which he presented his government's claims in regard to Korea.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-304.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 155), 23 June 1905.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 83), 10 May 1905.



He followed this up in another note on 26 May. Article IV of this latter communication called for a British recognition of the

'Right of Japan to take such measures as she may deem right and necessary in order to safeguard her special political, military and economical interests in Corea.'

In three separate articles which were to be kept secret, the note proposed, among other things, that:

'In case Japan finds it necessary to establish protectorate over Corea in order to check aggressive action of any third Power; and to prevent complications in connection with foreign relations of Corea, Great Britain engages to support the action of Japan.'<sup>1</sup>

Explaining the Japanese position in regard to these 'secret articles', Komura observed that as the Russo-Japanese war was the

'outcome of Korean intrigues in their dealings with other Powers and the "similar influence of Russia"; the latter power by trying to gain paramount influence in Corea brought about war. In order to obviate a recurrence of this, Japanese Government are determined to establish a protectorate over Corea and take foreign relations of that country into their hands; existing treaties with other powers will be of course respected and upheld'.<sup>2</sup>

Using these stipulations as a base, the British Government acquiesced in the position Japan asked for in Korea on the proviso that any measures she might deem necessary to safeguard her interests in the peninsula did 'not infringe the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industries of all nations'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673. Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 92), 26 May 1905. Komura later informed MacDonald that this communication was not the first Japanese draft but rather a summary of the main points they wanted to discuss, FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 127 most secret), 27 May 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 127 most secret), 27 May 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, Enclosure in Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 101), 10 June 1905.



At this stage of the negotiations, one might expect that Japan would give Britain an assurance regarding the continuation of the open door policy in Korea and London might settle for that. This was, however, far from the intentions of the British Government. Tokyo's demands in respect of Korea were made conditional upon Britain's own demands for the extension of the alliance for the security of India and its adjoining territories, arguing that the two stipulations 'balance one another'. The Japanese, on the other hand, opined that British interests in the regions adjacent to the Indian frontier were not open to question as was the case with Japan's in Korea.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese, however, accepted the position that 'the quid pro quo for this co-operation in India was England's acquiescence in Japan's protectorate over Korea'.<sup>2</sup>

Tokyo's acceptance of the above position was, however, nullified by its military successes. When the Committee of Imperial Defence discussed the first British draft, the military situation was far from certain. It was doubted whether Japan would be able to withstand the might of the Russian Far Eastern Fleet which was then making preparations towards what appeared to be the last desperate effort to salvage the crumbling national honour. Any major Japanese reverses in the coming battle would, therefore, leave the defence of India as one of the main concerns of Britain in East Asia, and many believed this would be the situation. Hence, a lot of reliance was placed on the continual menace of

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 109), 23 June 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 155), 23 June 1905.



Russian naval power to India in the first British draft.<sup>1</sup> This view, however, proved false when the entire Russian Fleet was destroyed at the battle of the Japan Sea. By this fact, as Nish has pointed out, 'the next strongest naval force in the Far East became that of the United States ... which Britain had no intention of outrivalling.'<sup>2</sup> With the removal of this naval menace, Britain's immediate anxiety over the safety of India diminished and she took up the question regarding the safety of her growing commercial interests in Korea in the light of Tokyo's intention towards that empire. Hence, in its second draft, London insisted upon Japan not only according equal commercial and industrial opportunities to British nationals but also undertaking that the protectorate would not prejudicially affect the treaty rights of the Powers in the peninsula. Explaining the reason for this stipulation, MacDonald pointed out that, there were fears in London that if Japan was given a free hand in Korea, she might 'find it convenient to do away with Consular jurisdiction, or make such alterations in the Customs Tariff as would tend to her benefit, and not to that of other Powers'.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Britain's concern over a strict adherence to the open door policy in Korea began as soon as it became evident that Japan aimed at obtaining a paramount position in the peninsula. This was logical enough for under the Scott-Mouravieff Convention

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 305-7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.325.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 200), 31 July 1905.



and the Anglo-German Declaration of 1898, British investors were precluded from seeking any railway concessions in China, north of the Great Wall and the extension of 'any railroad communication from Wei-hai Wei and the district leased therewith into the interior of the Province of Shantung', respectively.<sup>1</sup> Korea, therefore, became one of the few regions in the north-eastern periphery of 'China' where prospective investors were free to seek concessions of their own choice. It was, therefore, not surprising that London should be keen in maintaining this situation unaltered, which was most probably based on the assumption that such prospective investors and traders could use Korea as their base in operating in Manchuria and Shantung. In addition, there seemed to be some fear that as there was no guarantee that Japan would not follow the examples of her predecessor in practising the exclusionist policies in Kwantung and South Manchuria after she had secured the cession of those territories from Russia, it was essential that Britain ensured the security of the Korean market. In the peninsula itself, the British share of the import trade had been showing steady growth and had been maintaining the lead in the major items of imports.<sup>2</sup> It was, therefore, not surprising that as early as March 1904, Jordan observed that Korean foreign trade could 'no longer ... be considered a negligible quantity from the commercial point of view nor is the British share in that trade an inconsiderable factor'.<sup>3</sup> With this conclusion in mind,

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 152 and 204.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1659, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 84), 16 March 1904.



he warned London just before negotiations began towards the revision of the alliance that:

'Whatever may be the future political status of Korea, the interests of British trade imperatively require the maintenance of the present tariff arrangements and that object can best be attained by continued British direction of the customs administration.'<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this issue in understanding the British stand in regard to the Korean article in the negotiations can best be appreciated by taking a momentary review of their stand on the question of the post of the Chief Commissioner of the Korean Maritime Customs Administration since 1904.

Barely three months after the signature of the Japanese-Korean agreement of February 1904, the various Japanese Chambers of Commerce in the peninsula met at Chemulpo and passed an eight-point resolution aimed at promoting their interests in the country by establishing a customs union between Japan and Korea.<sup>2</sup> Commenting on these resolutions, Jordan opined that the points raised 'at the meeting may be taken as representing the aspirations of the Japanese residents in this country, with one omission which is somewhat significant'. For a period of time, he continued,

'the Japanese newspapers at several of the ports have been urging upon the Japanese Government the necessity of assuming control of the Foreign Customs Service, and it was understood that the proposal found favour with the Japanese mercantile communities, but for some reason it has not been endorsed by the Chambers of Commerce. It is not unlikely that the latter may have been given to understand that any demand of this kind would be premature and inopportune.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 68 confidential), 8 May 1905.

<sup>2</sup>For details of these resolutions, see Ninsen Shoho, 21 May 1904, enclosure in FO/17/1660; Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 36), 21 May 1904.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 130), 23 May 1904.



Jordan's analysis of the situation was confirmed when Komura informed MacDonald on 23 June 1904, that his government 'had no immediate intention of touching' the offices of the maritime customs, which were almost wholly a British manned bureau.<sup>1</sup>

The indefinite nature of Komura's assurance left London in a state of suspicion as to Tokyo's ultimate intentions, especially as regards the post of the Chief Commissioner held by a Briton, MacLeavy Brown. When, on 13 August 1904, therefore, Jordan reported that Japan had decided to dispense with the services of all the foreign advisers in the Korean Government, an immediate inquiry was ordered to find out whether this included Brown. Hayashi Gonsuke, however, reassured Jordan that he would be retained.<sup>2</sup> Based upon this new assurance, moves were soon made to assure that the post continued to remain in British hands after Brown had retired.

When Tokyo announced its intention to phase out foreign advisers from the Korean Government, MacLeavy Brown's contract had only a year and a half to run. Taking this fact into consideration, as well as the forty-three years he had spent in the east and 'the natural course of things' in the peninsula, Jordan concluded that the renewal of Brown's contract was most unlikely. Finding no Briton in the Korean customs service suitable for the post, he impressed upon Brown 'the absolute necessity' of helping in a search

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/578, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 182), 24 June 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1661, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 121 Confidential), 13 August 1904; Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 123), 16 August 1904.



for a qualified and competent British subject 'to take over the duties at a moment's notice'. As regards the other personnel of the administration, however, he observed that it was

'Only just and reasonable that the Japanese should, if they desire it, have a much larger share of the appointments than they possess at present, but they would ... be ill advised to attempt to place the direction of the services in the hands of a Japanese for at least some years to come'.<sup>1</sup>

After this approach by Jordan, Brown, in consultation with Robert Hart, the Inspector General of the Chinese maritime customs, nominated one Bowra, who was serving in the Chinese service, to succeed to the post in Korea.<sup>2</sup> By this time, however, it had become clear that the Japanese would declare a protectorate over the peninsula. For this reason, it was felt in London that if the Japanese took such an action immediately, they might possibly allow Bowra to succeed Brown, but Britain would hardly be able to extract from them a promise as to the succession. If, on the other hand, a protectorate was declared before Brown retired, Bowra's chances of succeeding him were regarded as poor. On the whole, Bowra was seen as being in a 'rather false position' and there was nothing London could do to help him secure the appointment.<sup>3</sup> Bowra might well have seen the situation in a similar light. He, therefore, declined the post immediately he had personally ascertained the trend of events in the peninsula.<sup>4</sup> This incident weakened any chances Britain might have had of achieving her objective and when

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1660, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 167 Confidential), 16 August 1904; Jordan to Campbell [Private], 19 August 1904.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 68 Confidential), 8 May 1905.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1692, Jordan to Campbell [Private], 30 May 1905.



Hayashi Tadasu later informed Lansdowne that Tokyo intended

'to place the administration of the Korean customs upon a new basis, and they had come to the conclusion that it would be impossible to find any position in which Mr M'leavy Brown's services could advantageously be retained'.

Lansdowne had no proposition at hand to offer other than that

'it might be possible for them to discuss the matter amicably with Mr Brown, and to induce him of his own accord to place his resignation in the hands of the Japanese Government'.<sup>1</sup>

With these developments in mind, it was quite natural that the British Government should adopt a stronger stance that would ensure the security of British commerce and industry in the peninsula. Indeed, this was the course it took as soon as it became evident that there could be no immediate Russian threat to the safety of India and its adjoining territories.<sup>2</sup>

But the demand that Japan should undertake to respect the 'treaty rights of the Powers' in Korea was an issue that could give rise to grave international complications. Not only would it revive the question of the annulled Russo-Korean treaties, but it would also open wide avenues for any Power, having political ambitions in Korea, to claim certain untenable rights under the most-favoured-nation clause. It was a recognition of these facts that when Tokyo appealed to London to delete the phrase 'treaty rights' from its second draft Britain readily acquiesced.<sup>3</sup> Having deleted

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 140A), 12 August 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 125), 19 July 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 124), 18 July 1905 and its enclosure; MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 200), 31 July 1905.



the objectionable phrase, however, the British Government sought to obtain a written confirmation from the Japanese to the effect that

'it has been clearly understood between ... Britain and Japan that the Korean article did<sup>1</sup> not contemplate the adoption of any measures in Korea which would be in violation of the Treaty rights, and that the Japanese Government would not consider themselves entitled to call upon His Majesty's Government under the Article to come to their assistance in support of measures of such a character.'<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese were extremely irritated by this latest British move. Katsura gave vent to this anger when he told MacDonald that the British proposal could

'not be accepted by the Japanese Government for in omitting the reference to the Treaty rights in Article 3, the English Government had ... done all in their power to meet Japanese views, but in suggesting the note, which contained the reference, and in a somewhat stronger form, the good effect had been nullified. In fact, His Majesty's Government had "taken away, with one hand, what they had given with the other".'

MacDonald, on the other hand, informed him that what the British Government wanted to avoid was a situation whereby it would be called upon to go to war on account of Japan violating the legitimate rights of another Power in Korea.<sup>2</sup>

MacDonald's explanation went a long way to mollify Katsura, yet he was still unprepared to have any note of that nature either as part of the treaty or as a secret exchange between the two governments.<sup>3</sup> This was made clear to Lansdowne when Hayashi Tadasu told him that Tokyo

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Enclosure 2 in Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 125), 19 July 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 199), 25 July 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 200), 31 July 1905.



'held strongly to the sanctity of the treaty rights of the Powers, and they had no intention whatever of violating them. They therefore regarded the Note, as it stood, as involving a kind of slight upon their moral character as a nation'.

Moreover, he continued,

"in their view an attack resulting from a deliberate violation of treaty rights would certainly not be an unprovoked attack" for which Britain would be called upon to assist Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, as Katsura observed,

'in the view of the Imperial Government, absolute silence on an imaginary case of war resulting from Japan's violation of the treaty rights of another Power... would be more in conformity with Japanese home politics, and more particularly, for insuring the full effectiveness of the agreement.'

In addition, he continued, if the existence of this note ever became known, 'it might encourage other Powers to raise difficulties in the matter of infringement of treaties, and then invoke this alliance to their assistance'.<sup>2</sup> When Lansdowne submitted these explanations to the cabinet, they were found to be a 'satisfactory settlement of the matter' and the government dropped the issue of the note.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the fourth British draft, in the end, met most of what Japan set out to achieve in respect of Korea. She gained British assent to assume paramount political, economic and military position

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 133), 2 August 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 212), 9 August 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 134), 3 August 1905.



in the peninsula and to take

'such measures of guidance, control and protection in Korea as she might deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance those interests, provided always that such measures are not contrary to the principles of equal opportunities, for the commerce and industry of all nations.'<sup>1</sup>

Implicit in this agreement was an understanding that Japan would respect all existing Anglo-Korean treaties, conventions and agreements in respect of land ownership, mining rights, consular jurisdiction, trade-marks and other sundry issues.<sup>2</sup> Attached to these provisions, however, was an unwritten understanding that Japan would not call upon British assistance in any war resulting from a deliberate Japanese violation of the treaty rights of another Power in the peninsula and a British promise to keep this interpretation of the Korean article as a secret.<sup>3</sup>

In the long run, therefore, Britain secured guarantees for the protection of her growing commercial interests in Korea. It is, however, doubtful whether these guarantees were adequate in safeguarding these interests in view of the enormous political changes which the alliance was anticipating in the peninsula. It appears Japan had been allowed too much freedom in commercial matters so that she could use her political control of the territory to create a more favourable economic atmosphere for her own nationals than for other foreigners. This position was well appreciated by the Foreign

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 137), 8 August 1905.

<sup>2</sup>For details of various British treaty rights in Korea, see Residency General, Treaties and Conventions between Korea and Foreign Powers (Seoul 1908), pp. 1-10.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 100), 9 August 1905; MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 191), 11 August 1905.



Office. Time, however, did not allow the Foreign Office to extract further guarantees from Tokyo. By the beginning of August 1905, it had become certain that Japan and Russia would start talks aimed at ending the war. Since one of Britain's principal objects in arranging for the renewal of the alliance was to facilitate the terms upon which Japan would make peace, it was decided to drop any further discussion on this subject until after the peace conference. On 12 August 1905, therefore, the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed by both parties. It was, however, agreed between them that the publication of its terms should be delayed until the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations, which had just begun at Portsmouth under the auspices of Roosevelt, so as not to prejudice its proceedings.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. The Portsmouth Treaty

Roosevelt's desire and efforts to play a leading role in any Russo-Japanese peace conference were rewarded when in June 1905 St. Petersburg accepted Washington's intervention in arranging for peace, after numerous behind-the-scene moves by Japan for American initiative towards that end. By mid-July all the official arrangements had been completed for the two warring nations to meet at Portsmouth in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Just around this time, broad agreement had been reached on the Korean article in the Anglo-Japanese peace negotiations. Aware of the importance which this

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 101), 12 August 1905.

<sup>2</sup>For details of the various diplomatic moves towards Portsmouth, see Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 56-75.



particular article might have on the impending Russo-Japanese peace negotiations, Durand was instructed by London to communicate that clause, in strict confidence, to Roosevelt. The latter, upon reading the article, expressed his entire satisfaction with it.<sup>1</sup> But would Seoul succumb to this international 'coup d'état' without a struggle and how would Peking react to any Russo-Japanese stipulation that would affect any portion of the Chinese Empire?

As far as Seoul was concerned, there appeared to be little or no anxiety either in Washington or in London that it would be able to resist the inevitable outcome of the Russo-Japanese war. The situation was, however, different with Peking. The Chinese Government, realizing the turn of events by the Japanese occupation of Kwantung and the railway zone in South Manchuria as well as the trend of affairs in Korea, started initiating a number of precautionary measures to protect its rights and interests in the impending negotiations. Their first move was to signal that China might send a representative to the peace conference to watch over Chinese interests. The Japanese counteracted this by pointing out to Peking that

'A Chinese Commissioner, if appointed might not be becomingly received ... that the interposition of a third Power in the negotiation - for peace between the two warring nations was out of the question, and ... that ... Japan would arrange all matters affecting Chinese interests with China after the peace was concluded with Russia.'<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese accepted this intimation but then on 6 July 1905, they sent a communication to both Russia and Japan declaring that

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/673, Lansdowne to Durand (Telegram No. 109), 29 July 1905; FO/5/2581, Durand to Lansdowne (Private telegram), 4 August 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/672, Satow to Lansdowne (No. 241), 8 July 1905.



'should the peace conditions contain any stipulation affecting China which has not been previously determined in consultation with China, the Chinese Government will be wholly unable to recognise it.'<sup>1</sup>

Realising that this attitude might create enormous difficulties for Japan at the conference Campbell, then in Peking, and Ernest Satow, the British Minister in China, sought to mollify the Chinese leaders. In this endeavour, Campbell told a member of the Chinese Foreign Ministry (Wai-Chiao Pu) on 7 July that if Peking really favoured an early conclusion of peace

'the obvious course for them was to do nothing which would tend to embarrass the negotiations. It was true that the note merely announced that China would not be bound by any stipulations affecting her interests in which she was not consulted, but that was a rather self-evident species of declaration, and clearly one which the Chinese Government might make, or omit to make, without seriously affecting their position. The general impression must be that at this juncture it helped the Russian side of the negotiations rather than the Japanese. Russia was in possession of certain rights and privileges in Manchuria which had been given her by China, and which must inevitably come within the purview of the peace negotiations, and in the diplomatic struggle which Russia would no doubt maintain to the last at Washington to retain as many as possible of those rights and privileges, it was conceivable that the Circular note of the 6th July could be used to greater purpose by Russia than by Japan. Japan being the victor, it was for her to receive and for Russia to give. Of the two, she was evidently more liable to be hampered by the independent action of China, and, judging strictly from the standpoint of Chinese interests, it would seem to be a false move on China's part to do anything which could hamper her. His Excellency might be quite sure that, under the circumstances, Japan would not conclude peace until she got what she wanted, after the sacrifices she had made and the risks she had run, that might be postulated with some confidence, and when the final reckoning came it would not make matters easier for China, if, in Japan's opinion she could be accused of not maintaining a reasonably neutral attitude to the end.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1672, Enclosure in Satow to Lansdowne (No. 239), 8 July 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1672, Satow to Lansdowne (No. 241), 8 July 1905.



He then tried to force the Chinese to confirm his suspicion that the Russians had a hand in issuing the circular. They, however, denied this and refused to withdraw the declaration.<sup>1</sup> By the beginning of August, therefore, it was not clear what attitudes the Chinese would adopt towards proceedings at Portsmouth.

The refusal of the Chinese to withdraw the circular of 6 July did not, however, affect proceedings at Portsmouth. The first session of the conference was held on 9 August. The Japanese proposals in respect of Korea, Manchuria and Kwantung corresponded, in the main, with those they had communicated to Britain in January 1905, and the Korean article of the second alliance.<sup>2</sup> The Russian counter-proposals met almost all the Japanese demands but upon certain conditions. As regards Korea, they agreed to recognise Japan's paramount political, military and economic interests in the peninsula and her right to take such measures as she might consider necessary to safeguard those interests in the peninsula provided that:

'Russia and Russian subjects will enjoy all rights which belong, or will belong, to other foreign Powers and their subjects or citizens. Also it is understood that execution by Japan of the above-mentioned measures will not bring prejudice to the sovereign rights of the Emperor of Korea. As to the military measures particularly, Japan, in order to remove any cause of misunderstanding, will abstain from taking measures which might menace security of Russian territory on the frontier of Korea.'<sup>3</sup>

Japan readily agreed to the first part of the proviso. With regard to the stipulation about the 'sovereign rights' of the Korean Emperor, Tokyo refused to have it included as part of the treaty.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/590, Enclosed memorandum in Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 140 Confidential), 12 August 1905.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



A compromise was, however, reached on this issue by both parties agreeing to insert a note in the procès-verbal recording this fact. As regards the security of the Russian frontier, each agreed 'not to take any military measures which might menace [the] general security of the Korean frontier.'<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese proposals for the transfer of the Russian rights and privileges in connection with or as part of the lease of Port Arthur, and the adjacent territory of Kwantung to them was made conditional upon Tokyo's later moves to secure the consent of Peking to the transfer and guaranteeing the rights of private individuals in the whole of the region affected by the lease. As regards the transfer of the railway between Harbin and Port Arthur, and all its branches, privileges, and properties appertaining thereto, and all coal mines belonging to or worked for the benefit of the railway to Japan free of charge, the Russians had no objection. They stated, however, that

'they could abandon only the part of the railway which is actually occupied in fact by Japanese troops. Terminus of each portion of railway to be ceded on these conditions shall be determined on common accord. It is, however, indispensable to keep in view that it is to a private company that the concession for constructing and exploiting the line has been granted by China, which conserves sovereign rights thereon, and that military occupation should bring no prejudice to the rights of this Company. Imperial Government are ready to take upon themselves to arrange, with the said Company, authorizing Chinese Government, to exercise from now right of purchasing line in question. Premium of the purchase accruing to Company will be ceded to Japan. By virtue of Section 2 of the Act of 27th August (8th September,) 1896, granting to Russo-Chinese Bank the construction of [the] railway, ... the Chinese Government has right to purchase line at the expiration of the term of thirty-six years from the day of completion and opening [of the] line.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Japan accepted these conditions in principle but they were not included in the final treaty, which was signed on 5 September 1905. It was, however, provided that both parties should 'exploit their respective railways in Manchuria exclusively for commercial and industrial purposes and in no wise for strategic purposes' as well as the withdrawal of their respective troops from Manchuria.<sup>1</sup>

In the final agreement, therefore, Japan obtained a diplomatic confirmation of what her armed forces had achieved on the war front. Immediately it became clear that Russia was ready to make this confirmation, London began preparations towards the publication of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. At the same time, a declaration was considered necessary explaining London's change of attitude towards Korea. In a draft communication to British envoys, therefore, Lansdowne noted that it had become

'evident that Korea, owing to its close proximity to the Japanese Empire, its inability to stand alone and the danger arising from its weakness as well as its chronic misgovernment, must fall under the control and tutelage of Japan. HM Government observe with satisfaction that this point was readily conceded by Russia in the Treaty of Peace recently concluded with Japan, and they have every reason to believe that similar views are held by other Powers with regard to the relations which should subsist between Japan and Korea.'

The words 'as well as from chronic misgovernment' were however objected to by Campbell as he felt 'they seem hardly necessary and might hurt the feelings of Korea'. This objection was sustained and was not included in the final communications to the envoys.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For details of the Portsmouth Treaty see MacMurray, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 522-8.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/673. The draft communication was dated 6 September 1905 and Campbell's objection 5 September 1905. It is most likely that the draft was written on the 5th but dated 6th, the day it was supposed to be given to Arthur Balfour, the Prime Minister, and the King for their comments.



No matter what explanation London might give for going back on its word as expressed in the first alliance, Korea did not accept the realities with equanimity. In a note to Jordan, 17 October, Foreign Minister Pak Se Sun, expressed his government's deep disappointment with the terms of the alliance, which 'they considered inconsistent with the treaty between Britain and Korea.' Jordan, on the other hand, proposed sending no reply to the communication 'as even formal acknowledgement might encourage further protests'. The Foreign Office endorsed this proposal on the ground that Jordan was 'the best judge of the effect which an answer might have upon the Korean Government'.<sup>1</sup> With Jordan's mind already made up as regards Korean independence and his hands strengthened by the second alliance and the Portsmouth treaty, it was not surprising that he suggested that if Pak Se Sun sent in another note, he would point out to him that the new alliance contained

'nothing which had not already been conceded by Korea herself to Japan in the Agreements entered into between the two Powers on the 23rd February and 23rd August 1904 and 1st April 1905, and that they cannot reasonably object to the recognition by Great Britain of a state of things which owes its existence to their own act and deed.'

Campbell found this proposed answer 'very much to the point', while Lansdowne viewed it as being conclusive enough.<sup>2</sup>

Jordan's proposed answer to the Korean Government gives the impression that the Korean clause of the second alliance was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1694, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 34), 17 October 1905 and minute thereon; FO/17/1693, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 142), 17 October 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 142), 17 October 1905 and minutes thereon.



derived directly from the various Korean-Japanese treaties between 1904 and 1905. While this represents part of the truth, it must be noted that on no occasion during the negotiations did London call into consideration any of the terms of these treaties to justify its giving Japan paramount political, economic and military position in the peninsula. Even if the essence of this position was inherent in those treaties, they were not as conclusive as the second alliance in giving Japan the right to declare a protectorate over Korea. It was in appreciation of this fact that Tokyo sought to formalise its newly acquired international status in the peninsula by a formal treaty with the Korean Government.

#### C. The Protectorate Agreement

No sooner had the second alliance been signed than Tokyo began moves in a bid to secure Seoul's assent to a new treaty that would formalise the de facto situation in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Three weeks after agreement had been reached at Portsmouth, therefore, Hayashi Tadasu called on Lansdowne and communicated to him Tokyo's views on the subject with an anticipated hope that the actions it intended taking could be worked out by an exchange of ideas between Britain and Japan.<sup>2</sup>

The communication asserted that grave dangers still existed in the conduct of Korean foreign affairs. The government and high officials of the peninsula, the statement claimed, had always

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/593, MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 263A), 1 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 151), 26 September 1905.



considered it to be in their best interest to manipulate Russian and Japanese influences so as to make them the object of mutual restraint and it was an undeniable fact that in pursuing this policy, they had not hesitated to enter into unwise engagements with other Powers as well. In fact, the statement went on, this was one of the direct causes of the recent Russo-Japanese war. The communication asserted further that in spite of the agreement of 22 August 1904, the Korean Government was still conducting certain important diplomatic business behind the backs of Tokyo. It then went on:

'The Japanese Government have also heard that some influential Koreans are said to be entertaining similar designs at the present time - and this even before peace is definitely established. What, therefore, their course of action will be when peace is restored, and the restrictions imposed upon their actions by the conditions of war cease to exist is not difficult to surmise.'

This state of affairs, the statement pointed out, would be appreciated if it were recognised that in spite of her commitment at Portsmouth, Russia might later on be induced by the continuation of this situation in the peninsula to resume her ante-bellum intrigues in Korea. In view of this, the only alternative left to Tokyo was

'to take radical steps to eliminate future evils, and in order to accomplish this effectively, the Imperial Government ... had decided to assume ... charge of the external relations of the Korean Government.'

As might be expected, Lansdowne told Hayashi Tadasu that:

'His Majesty's Government were entirely favourable to the development of Japanese influence in Korea, and that, so far as they were concerned, the Japanese Government were not likely to encounter any difficulties in giving effect to their policy.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



Reassured by this unqualified British support, Hayashi Gonsuke was ordered to Tokyo 'to receive instructions from his government as to steps to be taken for ensuring the formal recognition by Korea of the status accorded to Japan by the peace treaty and the recent Anglo-Japanese Alliance.'<sup>1</sup> A few days after Hayashi Gonsuke's arrival in Tokyo, it was reported that Ito would leave for Seoul on 4 November 'to take a look around and report on the general situation' in the country.<sup>2</sup> In course of a conversation, however, Ito revealed the main purpose of his mission to MacDonald with ~~an~~ additional information that a senior Japanese official

'would be doubtless appointed before long as a Resident or High Commissioner, with functions and powers similar to those of Lord Cromer in Egypt'.<sup>3</sup>

Leaving Japan as scheduled, Ito arrived in Seoul on 10 November and immediately entered into negotiations with the Korean authorities. After protracted sessions, an agreement was eventually reached on 18 November 1905. The new treaty gave Japan complete control of Korea's foreign relations and provided for the appointment of a Resident General at Seoul and Japanese residents at each of the Korean treaty posts.<sup>4</sup> Four days later, Hayashi Tadasu communicated the terms of the treaty to the Foreign Office and observed that

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1694, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 32), 5 October 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/595, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 254), 31 October 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/595, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 256 Very Confidential), 1 November 1905.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1694, Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 41 Secret), 18 November 1905. The agreement was signed at 1.00 p.m. on 18 November but, for some unknown reason, it was dated 17 November; see C.I., Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, Korea and the Politics of Imperialism (University of California Press, 1967), p.131.



'the existing treaties between the Powers and Korea will be respected by the Imperial Government and that the Imperial Government intends shortly to make a declaration to the effect that all proper commercial and industrial interests enjoyed by the Powers in Korea will in no way be injured.'<sup>1</sup>

To the terms of the agreement and the proposed declaration, London had no objection. On the other hand, it was felt that the 'changes' sought by the treaty 'will be rather nominal than real'.<sup>2</sup> This fear was based on the fact that most of 'the stipulations of the ... Agreement', as Jordan noted, 'had already been conceded in more or less formal instruments concluded between Japan and Korea in the course of the last eighteen months and the demand which was entirely new related to the appointment of a Resident General in Seoul and Residents at the Treaty Ports'.<sup>3</sup> If this was the case and Japan had failed to control Korea effectively, there seemed to be very little chance that the present changes sought by Japan could be achieved with any appreciable success. As far as London was concerned, therefore, the terms of the treaty were insignificant. Japan's success depended, to a large extent, on how she handled the political situation in the peninsula. This, in turn, depended upon who was appointed to the post of Resident General. As Jordan observed:

'If Japan can find a Lord Cromer for the post of Resident General in Seoul, she may in time succeed in effecting an appeasement of the bitter feeling that has so long existed between the two races, but her task in Korea is such a formidable one that nothing but considerations for her own national safety would I imagine justify her in undertaking it.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/600, Hayashi to Lansdowne, 22 November 1905; FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 190 Confidential), 22 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1694, Minute by Langley on Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 39), 16 November 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 160 Confidential), 18 November 1905.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



On the whole, therefore, London saw the new treaty only in terms of a weak structure on which Japan could stand to build a strong political hegemony in the peninsula.

The sympathy which London had shown to the Japanese cause in Korea since concluding the second alliance did not mean that it had stopped being apprehensive over the security of its interests in the peninsula. In spite of the guarantees provided under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the Portsmouth Treaty and the declaration following the protectorate agreement in respect of foreign economic and industrial rights in Korea, Britain was unwilling to leave her interests under the protection of the Japanese without additional safeguards and guarantees. This was reflected in her attitude towards Japan's demands for a reduction in the rank of all foreign representation in Seoul.

#### D. British Interests and the Protectorate

No sooner had Japan informed Britain that she was about to begin negotiations with Korea towards assuming control of the foreign relations of the peninsula than Campbell demanded better means of protecting British economic interests in the country. In a note to Lansdowne, he pointed out that:

'British trade and industrial interests in Korea are now in quite respectable proportions and increasing. Practically we divide the foreign trade of Korea with Japan, though the latter of course, owing to her position, takes the lion's share. They (the Japanese) will doubtless endeavour to make that share larger and larger and in commercial matters unfortunately our allies are not very trustworthy. It will, I believe, be necessary to have a dipl. Reprn. at Seoul to look after our interests and see fair play. A Consul does not carry the same weight, though of course a really good Consul General could do much.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1695, Campbell to Lansdowne, 26 October 1905.



When Hayashi Tadasu called on Lansdowne on 1 November, therefore, the latter told him that 'if any suspicion were entertained by other Powers, they would probably be much reassured if they found that the arrangements under which they were at present represented in Corea remain undisturbed'. On the other hand, he continued, Britain 'would endeavour to do what was acceptable to the Japanese Government'.<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was, however, turned down. In an interview with Lansdowne on 4 November, Hayashi Tadasu informed him that, according to Komura, the Japanese programme would involve the control of Korea's foreign relations through the Foreign Office in Tokyo (the Gaimusho). This, he went on, would mean that 'the function of the foreign Diplomatic Representatives in Seoul will cease ipso facto', but Japan would ensure the security of all foreign commercial and industrial interests in the country. He expressed the hope of his government that if such a communication was made to the Powers interested in Korea, they would spontaneously withdraw their Legations from Seoul.<sup>2</sup>

Any perceptive observer of Anglo-Japanese relations in Korea at this time would have anticipated that London would accept this intimation without demur. This was, however, far from the truth. It rather generated a heated debate at the Foreign Office whether Britain was obliged to accept the Japanese stand. This debate assumed much prominence soon after Korea had endorsed the new Japanese status in the peninsula. Looking through the new treaty, Langley opined that

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 171), 1 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 181), 9 November 1905.



'a natural consequence of the foreign affairs of Korea being directed thro. the F.O. at Tokio would be the withdrawal of the Diplomatic R.R. from Seoul.'

In response to this, Campbell noted that although this might

'be a "natural consequence" ... I should hope the Legation may be allowed to remain for a time. From the Japanese point of view it is surely wiser not to force the pace over much -as Lord Lansdowne has said already - and from our point of view the Embassy at Tokio will not be in a position to look after British interests, and keep us informed how things are going as a minister at Seoul can'.

To this, Lansdowne added that 'it might be argued that the Repres. shall remain, but transact business with and through the Japanese Resident General at Seoul'. Montague Selby, a Clerk at the Foreign Office, agreed with Lansdowne and argued that he was under the impression that there had been numerous precedents when foreign representatives had been

'maintained at a Court notwithstanding that arrangements have been made for entrusting its foreign relations to the Representatives abroad of some other country'.

He instanced Wurtemberg and Saxony during the process of German unification when they continued to maintain Ministers in London till 1875 as typical cases in point. This position was endorsed by Richard Brant, the Librarian and Keeper of the Papers at the Foreign Office. In spite of these arguments about precedents, opinions at the Foreign Office varied more than ever as to what position the government should adopt.<sup>1</sup>

With no apparent agreement amongst his staff, Lansdowne sounded Japanese views on ~~his own opinion~~ on the subject. On

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1695, Minutes on Jordan to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 41 Secret), 18 November 1905; FO/46/959, Minutes on MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 268), 22 November 1905.



making such an enquiry, he was told by Hayashi Tadasu that, although he had no instruction on the issue, he was of the opinion that Tokyo would not accept a situation whereby it would be left to individual Powers to decide whether they would withdraw their Legations from Seoul or not. He added that:

'He thought the idea of the Japanese Government was to place Korea very much in the same position which a British colony occupied towards the Mother Country in respect of its external relations'.<sup>1</sup>

This statement convinced Lansdowne that it would be extremely difficult to persuade Tokyo to accept the retention of the current system of British diplomatic representation. It is, however, possible to speculate that Lansdowne would have continued to press for the acceptance of his formula. Two major developments, on the other hand, rendered this course of action very ~~in~~politic. Firstly, on 23 November, Elihu Root, the American Secretary of State, was informed of the new Japanese-Korean treaty by Takahira Kogoro, the Japanese Minister in Washington. A day after receiving this information, Root telegraphed Edwin Morgan, the new American Minister in Seoul, ordering the withdrawal of the entire American legation from Seoul.<sup>2</sup> This action left London with no alternative but to follow the American example if Britain was to escape from accusations of hampering Japanese efforts in the peninsula. ~~More so~~ <sup>Furthermore there</sup> was the bad impression that would have been created by Britain refusing to withdraw her legation immediately from Seoul. This was particularly the case if it were realised that soon after signing the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/590, Lansdowne to MacDonald (No. 190 Confidential), 22 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>~~Is~~ thus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, p.110.



new treaty, the Korean Emperor launched a diplomatic campaign against the agreement.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, there were fears in London that any slight sign on its part indicating a misunderstanding with Japan in Korea might strengthen Chinese hands in the negotiations which were proceeding in Peking at the time for the transfer of rights in South Manchuria and Kwantung to Japan.<sup>2</sup>

In view of these developments, Lansdowne informed the French and Russian Ambassadors in London that even though he had received no communication from the Korean Government on the withdrawal of all diplomatic representatives from Seoul, Britain would withdraw her Minister and replace him by a Consul General.<sup>3</sup> Soon after this, MacDonald was authorised to inform the Gaimusho to announce the withdrawal of the legation 'in whatever manner they please'. This the Japanese did on 6 December.<sup>4</sup>

The sympathy which Britain exhibited towards Japan and the support she gave in Korea were equally exemplified during the Sino-Japanese negotiations towards the transfer of authority in the South Manchurian Railway and in Kwantung.

#### E. The Sino-Japanese Treaty

The treaty of Portsmouth having provided that the transfer of the lease of Kwantung and the South Manchurian railway to Japan be conditional upon China's assent, the Japanese Government began

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter Four below.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1675, Satow to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 219 very confidential), 22 November 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/594, Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 151), 29 November 1905.

<sup>4</sup>FO/46/594, Lansdowne to MacDonald (Telegram No. 152), 1 December 1905; FO/46/595, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 277), 6 December 1905.



preparations towards this end soon after ratifying the treaty of peace. By the beginning of November 1905 everything in this direction had been finalised. A special mission headed by Komura and made up of practically the same staff which accompanied him to America for the peace negotiations was, therefore, sent to Peking on 6 November 1905 to begin negotiations on that subject.

Before leaving Tokyo, however, Komura informed MacDonald that apart from securing Chinese assent to the rights conferred on Japan by the peace treaty, 'his first care would be opening treaty ports within the railway zone such as Kirin, Harbin and other trade centres. During Portsmouth negotiations Count Witte had promised that the Russian Govt. would offer no objections to this measure and it was entered in the proceedings.' On the question of the remainder of the 25 years lease of Port Arthur and the adjacent territory of Kwantung, Komura said that

'he did not intend to raise this point and if /the/ Chinese raised it he would decline to discuss it. He thought it would be time enough to talk about this when the lease had nearly expired when he considered ... /Japan would/ demand /the/ same length of lease as the Kiao-chau one on the score of most favoured treatment.

He earnestly hoped that HM Govt would retain Wei-hai-wei and ... would in the matter of length of lease act together with Japanese Govt.'<sup>1</sup>

The question of British retention of Wei-hai Wei was intricately inter-woven with the continued Russian occupation of Port Arthur. Following the famous Triple Intervention by Russia, Germany and France in 1895 which deprived Japan of most of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/46/595, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 260), 4 November 1905.



territorial concession she had gained under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, these Powers managed to secure the very territories for themselves. Firstly, Germany got the lease of Kiaochow for 99 years and a virtual industrial monopoly in the province of Shantung in a treaty with China on 6 March 1898. This was followed on 27 March 1898 by Russia leasing Port Arthur and the adjacent territory of Kwantung. Upon the latter development, the British Government asked and obtained the lease of Wei-hai Wei and the adjacent waters 'for as long a period as Port Arthur shall remain in the occupation of Russia.'<sup>1</sup> Owing to the terms on which the British lease was held, and immediately after the capture of Port Arthur by Japan, the China Association, an organization of British merchants and industrialists interested principally in investments in the Far East, asked the Foreign Office to approach the Chinese with a request for the renewal of the lease. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, felt that it would be a mistaken tactic to make such a request as it would tend to admit a doubt as to the British position. The British Government held to an almost untenable argument that since Russia's lease of Port Arthur was supposed to be for 25 years, Britain could legitimately claim, if the Chinese demanded retrocession of the territory, that notwithstanding Japan's new position in the region and the phrase in the convention, she was entitled to remain in Wei-hai Wei for the remainder of the original Russian lease. For this weak position, however, came support from Japan. In an interview with Komura on 25 January 1905,

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<sup>1</sup>For details of these developments see Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 23-57.



MacDonald was informed that:

'It was earnest hope of the Japanese Government that Great Britain should retain Wei-hai-Wei'.<sup>1</sup>

This position was reiterated a number of times by Komura and other Japanese leaders until 6 September 1905, when Satow told the Japanese Minister in China, Uchida Yasuya, that Britain wished

'to have Weihaiwei leased as the Germans hold Kiaochow and the French Kwangchowwan (that is ninety-nine years)'.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that this statement had a lot of impact in strengthening Japanese desire to extend the period of the lease especially after 1913. This was particularly the case if it is realised that Britain kept in close touch with Japan as soon as the Chinese eventually made their request and took the Japanese point of view into consideration before turning the Chinese demands down.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, leaving Japan on 6 November, Komura and his party arrived in Peking on 12 November. President Roosevelt, anticipating that Peking might offer stiff opposition to the Japanese, instructed William Rockhill, the United States Minister in China, to point out to the Chinese Government that he was of the strongest opinion that 'China ought to transfer to Japan all the rights and privileges enjoyed by Russia in the Liaotung peninsula' and to inform Uchida of his action.<sup>4</sup> On hearing of this instruction

<sup>1</sup>FO/46/595, MacDonald to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 23 secret), 26 25 January 1905 and minute thereon by Campbell.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1673, Satow to Lansdowne (Private letter), 6 September 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/35, See Foreign Office, Memorandum on Wei-hai-wei. It was circulated to the Cabinet on 6 November 1906.

<sup>4</sup>FO/17/1675, Satow to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 210 secret), 12 November 1905.



London immediately urged Satow to make a similar communication to the Chinese Government and to co-operate with Rockhill in giving 'any assistance possible' to Komura during the negotiations.<sup>1</sup> As it turned out, however, the only difficulties made by Peking were its claims to compensation for the damage done by the Japanese forces to life and property of Chinese subjects in Manchuria during the war. In addition, it objected to giving an undertaking to reform the administration in Manchuria. Furthermore, China claimed that the eighteen months fixed by the Portsmouth treaty for a complete withdrawal of Russian and Japanese troops from Chinese soil was too long. She also demanded a reduction in the number of railway guards fixed by the peace treaty per kilometre of the Russian and Japanese railways.<sup>2</sup>

By 22 December, however, the Chinese had capitulated on almost all their objections, and an agreement was signed on that date.<sup>3</sup> The treaty gave Japan the rights over the former Russian assets in South Manchuria, Port Arthur and the adjoining territory of Kwantung. China also agreed to open a number of centres throughout the three provinces of Manchuria for international trade. In addition, Japan obtained timber rights and the right to rebuild and operate the Antung-Mukden railway, which she constructed for military purposes during the war, for commercial use. Apart from these, the two parties signed a number of 'secret protocols' which

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1674, Lansdowne to Satow (Telegram No. 176), 13 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1675, Satow to Lansdowne (Telegram No. 219 very confidential), 22 November 1905.

<sup>3</sup>See White, op.cit., pp. 331-42, for a detailed account of the negotiations.



turned out to be the centre of international controversies regarding Japan's position in South Manchuria between 1906 and 1910. Among other things, the protocols provided that China should construct a railway between Changchun and Kirin with capital raised by herself. She, however, agreed a priori, to borrow from Japan the rest of the capital, amounting to one-half of the total sum required for the time, for a period of twenty-five years. It was also provided that the military railway constructed by Japan between Mukden and Hsinmintun would be sold to China at a price to be fairly determined in consultation by commissioners appointed for the purpose by the two governments. China engaged to reconstruct this line and to borrow from a Japanese corporation or corporations one-half of the capital required for the portion of the line east of Liao-ho for a term of eighteen years repayable in yearly instalments. Furthermore, China engaged, for the purpose of protecting the interests of the South Manchurian Railway, not to build any main line in the neighbourhood of and parallel to that railway, or any branch line which might be prejudicial to the interest of the above-mentioned railway.<sup>1</sup>

The text of the agreement was given to Edward Grey, the new British Foreign Secretary, on 10 January 1906, by Hayashi Tadasu, but it was not until the Japan Daily Mail and the Asahi began leaking the terms of the secret protocol that Kato Takaaki, now Foreign Minister, thought it expedient to divulge the terms to MacDonald.<sup>2</sup> Quite understandably, London's main interests hinged

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 549-55.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/84, Hayashi to Grey [I4397], 10 January 1906; MacDonald to Grey (No. 72 very confidential), 10 April 1906 and its enclosures.



upon the additional rights and privileges conferred upon Japan and the tenure of the lease of Port Arthur and Kwantung.

To the secret protocol, the British Government did not have any objections. Article XI of the 'Additional Agreement', which gave reciprocal and most-favoured-nation treatment to Chinese and Japanese goods at the Manchurian and Korean frontier, however, excited some fears at first. It was then held that the article would give Japan an unfair advantage over other foreign goods entering China. It was later made clear, however, that not only did Britain have similar arrangements with China at the Sino-Burmese and Sino-Tibetan borders but ~~it was also pointed out~~ that Japanese goods would hardly benefit by the provision as, if they were sent into Manchuria by way of Korea instead of direct by sea to Newchwang or Port Arthur, they would have to bear the additional cost of land carriage.<sup>1</sup> As regards the lease of Port Arthur and Kwantung, Kato told MacDonald on 18 January 1906 that, contrary to what Komura had told him on 4 November 1905 and confirmed on 12 January 1906, the then Foreign Minister had tried during the negotiations with the Chinese to have the tenure of the lease extended over the original twenty-five years but the latter refused to discuss that issue. Komura, on the other hand, being keen on the extension of the lease, managed to insert the most-favoured-nation treatment clause into article XII of the 'Additional Agreement' so that any time Japan

'wished to extend the lease, she might use this stipulation in regard to the favourable treatment granted to Germany in the ninety-nine years' lease of Kiaochou.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/84, Minutes on Hayashi to Grey L14397, 10 January 1906.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/84, MacDonald to Grey (No. 16 Secret), 18 January 1906.



Although Langley looked upon this as technically 'straining the interpretation of the m.f.n. article', Campbell felt that 'as an argument, it serves' its purpose and Grey saw it as 'a laches in which the Japanese have concluded something for future use'.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, London was quite pleased to know that the Japanese had no intention of leaving the region when the original twenty-five years' lease had expired as the terms were 'most favourable for our retention of Wei-hai-Wei. The Russian lease is not at end, - it has merely been transferred.' Hence, if the Chinese raised the subject, they would only point out this fact to them.<sup>2</sup> The question is, what were those Russian rights that were transferred to Japan?

It has often been wrongly assumed that the only Russian rights in South Manchuria and Kwantung transferred to Japan by the Sino-Japanese agreement were those textually mentioned in the Portsmouth Treaty. This is far from the truth. The fact is, the original Russian rights of 1896 and 1898 had by 1905 expanded tremendously by the conclusion of a number of bilateral Sino-Russian agreements some of which pre-dated the original railway concession and the Kwantung lease but which had close connection with the 1896 and 1898 rights. As Walter Young observed in connection with Kwantung:

'Japan, in thus acquiring the former Russian jurisdictional rights in the leased territory, together with the other railway and mining rights conceded at the same time, not only obtained the Russian rights but acquired the responsibilities as determined by the various bilateral agreements between China and Russia from 1895 to 1904.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/84, Minutes on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 5), 7 January 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Walter C. Young, The International Legal Status of the Kwantung Leased Territory (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1931), p.50.



Thus in addition to the railway and mining rights, the original rights of exclusive exercise of administrative and jurisdictional authority in the leased territory were transferred to Japan. Minor exceptions to these rights were the right of Chinese war vessels to use the harbours of Port Arthur and Dairen, the right of Chinese residents within the leased territory to be tried by the 'nearest Chinese authorities' in criminal cases and the right of the Chinese to organise their own municipal authority in the town of ~~Chinkow~~<sup>Kinchow</sup>.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in South Manchuria, in addition to the mines and railways, China transferred the Russian right of 'absolute and exclusive right of administration over the lands actually necessary for the construction, operation, and protection of the line, as also the lands in the vicinity of the line necessary for pouring sand, stone, lime etc ....' In addition, 'the right to construct on these lands buildings of all sorts, and likewise to construct and operate the telegraph necessary for the needs of the line' was transferred to Japan.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese, however, retained the right to try their own nationals within the railway zone for both criminal and civil offences.<sup>3</sup>

The problem with the former Russian rights in Manchuria and Kwantung was that some of them grew out of mere usage rather than from specific conventions and treaties. One of the main difficulties

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 119-121 and 127-8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 274-8 and 321-4.



which the Japanese Plenipotentiaries appeared to have faced at Portsmouth was, therefore, how to determine the precise nature of rights they were demanding from the Russians. Being unable to determine this, they had to ~~state~~ state their demands in all-embracing articles and in general terms and to depend on Russian precedents and future activities in North Manchuria as guides to their own moves in South Manchuria. The wisdom in this strategy was soon seen as Russo-Japanese relations improved over the years and as China began to move against both Powers to limit their holds over the region. Any Chinese moves against the Russians in the north were, therefore, seen in Tokyo as a reaction against them in the south. Hence they must, in most cases, support any Russian claim that would also give them advantages in the south. Provided such claims were based on ~~treaty stipulations~~ treaty stipulations, the position of London was either to remain completely silent or refuse to support the Chinese. Quite apart from the sanctity in which London held any treaty stipulation, the British refusal to support the Chinese was most probably based upon the detrimental effects the latter's moves might have on the Japanese position in the south vis-à-vis that of the Russians in the north. This did not, however, mean that Britain was naive <sup>about Japanese</sup> ~~of the fact that Japan had her own~~ ambitions in China. Unlike those of Russia, which were held to be mainly political in nature, Japan's ambitions in China were recognised at the Foreign Office to be predominantly strategic and economic. Given the nature of British interests in China, therefore, London must keep watchful eyes on Japanese activities in the south so that they did not operate to the detriment of British rights and interests



in the region. At the same time, it was noted, economic rivalry between Britain and Japan in China should not take precedence over the strategic importance of the Japanese position in the region to the Alliance. Hence, whenever the situation demanded it, some British rights and interests might have to be sacrificed insofar as such sacrifices were deemed essential for the maintenance of the Japanese position vis-à-vis that of Russia in those regions. This aspect of British diplomatic attitudes towards Japan in South Manchuria and Kwantung was the natural sequel of the threat posed to the Japanese position by Chinese and American policies in conjunction with some British investors. This is emphasised by taking a look at Anglo-Japanese relations in those regions in relation to Japan's ambitions there, and at the threat posed to her position by Chinese and other foreign interests.



### Chapter Three

#### JAPAN AND FOREIGN INTERESTS

#### IN SOUTH MANCHURIA

Although the Japanese Government had by January 1905 formulated its 'inflexible' conditions for ending the war with Russia, it had drawn no definite programme for managing the huge assets it had its eyes on in South Manchuria and Kwantung. The end of the war, therefore, saw the government divided over a number of vital issues connected with the administration of affairs within the regions. The first point of dispute was whether the railway should be run as an American-Japanese concern or as a purely Japanese enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Quite independent of this controversy but overlapping it was another point of dispute and this revolved around the question whether the newly acquired territories should be opened to foreign trade or be preserved as exclusive Japanese spheres of interest. While the first issue was resolved within a very short time in favour of those who urged full Japanese control and direction of the lines, the other point of dispute assumed greater importance because it was not purely a question of economic expediency but raised a major issue connected with the security of Japan itself. The system of government and the sort of policies Japan should institute in South Manchuria and Kwantung that could preserve her interests and security, therefore, became a subject of great national debate. What were the lines of the argument and how did Britain react to the dispute?

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of this subject see Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 113-5.



A. The Government General of South Manchuria and Kwantung

By the mere fact that South Manchuria was the principal centre of activity during the war, the Japanese administration in the region had been purely a military one. Under the Portsmouth Treaty, however, both Japan and Russia had eighteen months within which to withdraw their respective forces from the territory. This meant, in effect, that the Japanese military administration along the transferred railway zone would have to make way for a civil administration, as its maintenance could be interpreted as using the region for 'strategic purposes' instead of the 'commercial and industrial purposes' provided under the peace agreement. In its bid to implement this section of the treaty, the government found itself at the centre of two factions within the administration advocating different policies for the region and each claiming the right to administer the acquired territory. They were represented on one side by the Japanese Military Command and on the other by some of the most influential politicians.<sup>1</sup>

The Military Command, the so-called military party, was represented in the personalities of Yamagata Aritomo, President of the Privy Council, and Kodama Gentaro, Chief of the General Staff. The basis of its claim was that Russia had no intention of honouring her part of the disengagement clause of the peace treaty ~~by was pointing out~~ the delay in Russian preparations towards their eventual withdrawal. On account of this, it urged, it would be folly for

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<sup>1</sup>This was part of the struggle between the military and civilian authorities for political power in the newly acquired territories. See Chapter Four below.



Japan to begin pulling out of the region. In addition, the military party held that since a war of revenge by Russia was always possible, it would be impolitic to open South Manchuria to indiscriminate commerce. This position was based on two basic assumptions. Firstly, the party argued that, if the region was opened to free commerce, Russia would take advantage of such a situation and infest the whole railway zone with spies. On the outbreak of the war of revenge, therefore, Japan would be at a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis Russia. Secondly, it argued, if South Manchuria and Kwantung were opened for free trade, Japan would lose all the vital revenue needed to recoup her depleted finances before Russia launched her war of revenge.<sup>1</sup> For a period of time, therefore, as Raymond Esthus has noted:

'The Japanese military administration in Manchuria betrayed an exasperating indifference to the commercial ambitions of the foreign powers. Month after month the military authorities refused to open the interior of Manchuria to commercial agents, and they made it clear to the Japanese civilian leaders that they wanted no foreigners in Manchuria during the period of evacuation.'<sup>2</sup>

It was this attitude towards foreign trade in Manchuria that exposed the military party to international criticism and pressure from Britain and the United States on the Japanese Government to ~~alleviate~~ the situation.

Washington took the initiative in making a formal protest to Tokyo on the conduct of the military administration towards

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/180, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 63 very confidential), 27 May 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, p.118.



American trade in the region. This was followed, eleven days later, by a similar note from London. Uncertain of Russia's intentions at this time, the Japanese Government proved rather sensitive to the possibility of incurring the displeasure of London and Washington. Japan, therefore, made it known that she had no intention of monopolising the trade of South Manchuria and Kwantung in violation of the 'open door' policy.<sup>1</sup> Soon after this declaration, Saionji Kimmochi, the Japanese Prime Minister, embarked upon a month-long tour of inspection of the region through which, he hoped, he could ~~convince~~ <sup>persuade</sup> the military leaders on the spot to begin preparations towards the evacuation and the replacement of their administration by a civilian government. Nothing was, however, achieved by this tour.<sup>2</sup>

On his return to Tokyo, therefore, Saionji summoned a special meeting of all Cabinet Ministers, the Elder Statesmen (the Genro), Privy Councillors and the Heads of the Navy and Military Departments. Ito was specially invited from Seoul to take part in the discussions.<sup>3</sup>

The meeting was opened on 22 May, 1906 and Ito dominated the proceedings. He began by reviewing the whole course of Sino-Japanese relations and urged the importance of maintaining cordial relations with China, the United States and Britain. This, he asserted, would be jeopardised if Japan continued her military

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 118-21; FO /371/180 is devoted almost entirely to this issue.

<sup>2</sup> Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, p.121.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/180, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 63 very confidential), 27 May 1906. In a leading article on 25 May, 1906, the Jiji Shimpō tried to play down ~~on~~ this division by saying that the military and naval leaders were too moderate and 'modest' to act contrary to the civilian authorities' advice and wishes. Ito had, by then, been appointed Resident General of Korea after a similar struggle with the military party. See Chapter Four below.



presence in South Manchuria and refused to practise the 'open door' policy in the region. Using the basis of the military party's arguments for conducting foreign trade, Ito contended that the best way Japan could meet the feared war of revenge would be to encourage trade in the region. This, he continued, was the wisest policy because, by encouraging foreign commerce, Japan would be able to earn the money that would be needed for that war. When such a war did break out, he urged, 'money and not men would be Japan's greatest need'. It would, therefore, be folly on the part of Japan to close the avenue to the additional revenue she could earn by opening the region to foreign commercial enterprise. The sanity of such a policy, he went on, would be well appreciated if it were realised that Russia could not embark on any such war until she had doubled the Siberian railway and rebuilt a new naval fleet. Time would be needed by Russia to carry out these projects and, in the interim period, Japan should make use of her railways to recoup her depleted finance in order to be in a better position to meet the coming danger. He concluded by calling for the replacement of the military government by a civilian administration, which, he urged, would be in a better position to deal with the situation.<sup>1</sup>

When these developments were reported to London, the Foreign Office sympathised with Russia in view of the difficulties she had to face in carrying out her part of the disengagement clause of the peace treaty. It was noted that the <sup>Russian task of</sup> ~~task of Russia~~ bringing back

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, p.122.



home nearly a million disaffected troops during the winter months was not an easy task and this might have slowed down her preparations towards evacuating the region. The Foreign Office concluded, therefore, that it was a little too early for the military party in Japan to infer from the slowing down of the Russian operations that St Petersburg had no intention of withdrawing its troops from Manchuria. The contention of the military party, it was generally agreed at the Foreign Office, was therefore a ploy to maintain its presence in South Manchuria. If, on the other hand, Campbell observed on 28th May 1906,

'the Russians do not evacuate N. Manchuria we have no special *locus standi* to remonstrate, though China has. Primarily, however, it would be Japan's business to see that evacuation was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Portsmouth.

But it is to be feared if the military party win the day at Tokio, that Japan may be quite willing to see Russia remain in occupation of N. Manchuria, while she holds on to S. Manchuria.

Japan by her assurances and by the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance providing for the integrity of China is bound to us to evacuate; and I think our policy should be to urge her to do so, and insist upon Russia doing likewise. China is also in this matter, by no means a "*quantité négligible*" and she and Japan pulling together with the moral support of the other Powers ought to have no difficulty in making Russia carry out her engagements."<sup>1</sup>

Charles Hardinge, former British Ambassador in St. Petersburg and now Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, agreed with Campbell. He noted, however, that although Britain might be able to remonstrate to Japan if necessary,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/180, Minute by Campbell on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram no. 63 very confidential), 27 May 1906.



'we cannot do so to the Russians, but it seems to me that on general principles we should encourage Japan to observe her treaty obligations in which case Japan and China together should form a sufficient powerful lever to make Russia fulfil her part, if she shows hesitation in doing so'.<sup>1</sup>

Grey, on the other hand, felt that Britain could not 'urge Japan to act in advance of Russia' in the evacuation process. He, therefore, called for the suspension of any British move in the matter.<sup>2</sup>

By this time, however, Ito had been able to persuade the military party to agree to the evacuation of the region. On 1 June 1906, therefore, Hayashi Tadasu, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed MacDonald that the entire administration in South Manchuria and operation of the railway lines in the region would 'be in the hands of the civil power'.<sup>3</sup> Could this, therefore, be described as a victory for the civilian authorities? The answer to this question cannot be given in simple terms. It is, therefore, necessary to look at the details of the system of administration organised for South Manchuria and Kwantung.

Admittedly, the military administration closed down its offices in Mukden, Liaoyang, Tieling and other areas in August 1906, which enabled the Chinese to make preparations towards the reorganisation of their administration in the region.<sup>4</sup> It is also true that the army handed over the affairs of the railway to a civilian-manned South Manchuria Joint Stock Company, which was organised under Imperial Edict on 7 June 1906, 'for the purpose of engaging in railway traffic in Manchuria'.<sup>5</sup> It must, at the same time, be admitted

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minute thereon.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Minute by Grey thereon.

<sup>3</sup> See FO/371/475, MacDonald to Grey (No. 79 very confidential), 11 April 1908, for Kato's version of how Ito managed to resolve the issue; FO/371/180, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 65 very confidential), 1 June 1906.

<sup>4</sup> FO/371/28, Carnegie to Grey (Telegram No. 167), 10 September 1906.

<sup>5</sup> MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 555-65.



that the Imperial Ordinance of 31 July 1906, relating to the organisation of government for the region, made little difference to the position of the military in the affairs of South Manchuria and Kwantung.

Under the provisions of this ordinance, there was to be a Governor General for the province of Kwantung. He was to be a General or a Lieutenant-General appointed by the Emperor of Japan. In addition to his duties as the Governor General of the leased territory, he was charged with the 'protection and supervision of the railway lines in South Manchuria' as well as the general 'affairs of the South Manchuria Railway Joint Stock Company'. It was further provided that the Governor General should command any troops stationed in South Manchuria and ~~be~~ direct all political matters affecting the region. In his role as the commander of the troops stationed in South Manchuria,

'the Governor-General shall be subject to the Minister of War with reference to matters of military administration and the personal affairs of the soldiers and of those connected with the Army; to the chief of the General Staff with reference to plans of operation and mobilisation; to the Superintendent of Education in the Army with reference to military education'.<sup>1</sup>

As a political head of Kwantung and South Manchuria, the Governor General was placed under the supervision of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. As regards officials of the Government-General it was provided that *with regard to:*

'the promotion and dismissal of civil officials of the sonin /appointed by the Cabinet and reported to the Emperor/ rank, he shall report to the Emperor,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 565-6.



through the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister. With reference to the hanin /appointed by heads of departments/ rank and those lower, the Governor-General shall act entirely at his own discretion'.<sup>1</sup>

The most interesting feature of this ordinance was the extent of the Governor General's functions and the attempt towards providing a single administrative unit for South Manchuria and Kwantung. If it is realised that since the Governor General was to be on the active list, ipso facto, his allegiance would be to the General Staff and that his enormous freedom of action extended right over the affairs of the South Manchurian railway lines, then it would be odd to conclude that a civil administration had been set up in place of the military government in South Manchuria. The position remained the same, if not strengthened, when on 10 January 1908, Imperial Ordinance No. 2 amended the 1906 Ordinance.

Under the Imperial Ordinance No. 2 of 10 January 1908, military and civil affairs of the Government-General were separated and placed under two departments. The former was named Civil Administration Department and was headed by a civilian of Chokunin rank. He took charge of civil matters under the Government-General except foreign and police affairs, which were entrusted to Directors of Foreign Affairs and Police Affairs respectively. All matters concerned with the Army were placed under an Adjutant, who had to be a colonel or lieutenant in rank. In addition, civil administration offices were established throughout South Manchuria to 'enforce laws and ordinances, and control the administrative affairs within

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



their districts'. All these new officials were placed under the direct control, supervision and guidance of the Governor General.<sup>1</sup> With none of his functions and qualifications directly or indirectly affected by the amendment and his ability to exercise more effective control over South Manchuria through the newly created district administrative officers, the powers of the military commander in South Manchuria and Kwantung, the Governor General, remained almost as they were during the period of the military occupation.

It is interesting to note that neither Jordan nor MacDonald paid any particular attention to these administrative adjustments. Neither did London ever request a report from either Tokyo or Peking on how Japan was coping with the problem of organising a government for the region. Their attentions were rather directed at the issue of military evacuation of both Russia and Japan from Manchuria and the organisation of the South Manchurian Railway Company.<sup>2</sup> This clearly spells out the British Government's attitudes towards the Japanese political and economic activities in South Manchuria, Kwantung as well as in Korea. Unless a Japanese move in any of these regions was likely to disturb the international order or to jeopardise the economic interest of Britain, there was no need for London to interfere in Tokyo's affairs. There appears to be one basic assumption underlying this attitude. This was the belief at the Foreign Office that Tokyo's real interests in Korea, Kwantung, and South Manchuria were strategic and economic domination but not

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 566-67.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/36, MacDonald to Grey (Nos. 143, 169 and 179), 29 June 1906, 8 July 1906 and 30 August 1906 respectively.



political and territorial gains. As regards the economic ambition, London was under the impression that the civilian authorities would not dare to antagonise the rest of the Powers by working against the 'open door' policy as the army would like them to do. This division of opinion between the military and civil authorities was clearly demonstrated in 1906 and clearly spelt out later by the Acting British Consul at Newchwang, R.T. Tebbit, as a guide to understanding Japanese policy in Manchuria. He noted that:

'The Japanese policy in Manchuria is guided by two distinct influences, one military, and one civil ...

The military policy ... requires such steps to be taken in Manchuria as will strengthen Japan's strategic position vis-à-vis the Russians in the north, and therefore to prepare everything for the eventuality of another war.

The civil policy, on the other hand, is guided by an endeavour to either modify the military policy so as not to conflict with the various Treaty obligations entered into by Japan or else to assist it diplomatically ...

The Japanese policy in Manchuria being primarily military, [therefore] the commercial policy has to subordinate itself to it, and it can only become active where it does not conflict with military requirements."<sup>1</sup>

Given the stake Britain had in Japan being able to check Russian 'ambitions' in East Asia, this policy suited her. But with the changed political and military conditions in the Far East, would this policy be appreciated by the British commercial community in China and the press at home? Would the United States and China view a strong Japanese presence in China in place of Russia with a sense of equanimity? The answer to these questions is by no means simple if one considers the Japanese position in relation

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/473, Memorandum respecting Manchuria, Enclosure in Jordan to Grey (No. 271), 11 June 1908.



to Chinese and foreign aspirations in the region as a result of the Russo-Japanese war.

The position established by Japan in South Manchuria after the organization of the railway company and the Kwantung government general in relation to Chinese and foreign aspirations in the region was aptly described by the eminent Japanese scholar, Asakawa Kanichi in August 1908 in the following words:

'(1) that Japan has established in Manchuria, by her success in the recent war, with an effectiveness possible under no other method, the two fair principles of the new diplomacy /namely, that of maintaining the independence and sovereign rights of the Chinese Empire, and that of attaining equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all foreign nations - the principles of Chinese Sovereignty and of the "Open Door"; (2) that, also as a result of her victory, Japan has inherited from Russia certain legacies of the old diplomacy /that of the Powers vying among themselves for industrial and residential concessions, leased territories and spheres of interests and of influence in China - treaty rights; (3) that the presence of the old diplomacy, by the side of the new principles, seems at present more incongruous in Manchuria than in any other part of China /owing to the complex nature of the various treaty rights in the region; and (4) that Japan's delicate task of steering between the two mutually modifying elements of her Manchurian policy, on one hand, somewhat obscures her vision, and, on the other, brings her into conflict with both the rising national sentiment of China and the material interest of local foreign merchants'.<sup>1</sup>

Asakawa Kanichi's analysis of the situation raises a number of important issues. What were the main features of the principles of the 'Open Door' and 'Chinese Sovereignty'? What was the nature of 'the rising national sentiment of China and the material interest of local foreign merchants'? Would the 'rising national

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<sup>1</sup>Asakawa Kanichi, 'Japan in Manchuria, I', Yale Review, XVII (1908-09), p.186.



sentiment of China' admit or uphold all the features of 'the material interest of local merchants' if it were allowed to check the interests of Japan in South Manchuria? How did the British Government react to these developments? The answers to these questions can be adduced by a systematic analysis of the foreign material interests in Manchuria in relation to the 'Open Door policy' and Japan's aspirations and interests in the region.

#### B. The Open Door Policy in Manchuria

The 'Open Door policy' has been the subject of numerous academic discussions in various contexts.<sup>1</sup> It suffices here to say that it was first enunciated by the United States Secretary of State, John Hay, in 1899 and expounded by him in 1900.

By the 1890s, America had become an Oriental Power and a neighbour of China, 'accompanied by the singular condition that she was little hampered by any memory of political aggression upon the latter country, while yet entertaining great hopes of industrial expansion within her jurisdiction'.<sup>2</sup> On 6 September 1899, therefore, Hay despatched a circular to London, Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg urging their formal adherence to assurances that 'they will in no way interfere with any treaty port or any vested interest within any so-called "spheres of interest"

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Whitney A. Griswold, The Far Eastern Policy of the United States (New York, 1938), chapter II; Tyler Deunett, John Hay: From Poetry to Politics (New York, 1933), chapter XXIV; George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950 (Chicago, 1951), chapter II; Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 75-6; Raymond A. Esthus, 'Changing Concept of the Open Door', The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 46 (1959-60), pp. 435-54.

<sup>2</sup> Asakawa Kanichi, 'Japan in Manchuria, I', p.187.



or leased territory they may have in China'.<sup>1</sup> The terminology of this circular not being sufficiently clear, the Powers had no difficulty giving very evasive, though seemingly assenting responses to the proposition. In November, Japan asked and was invited to subscribe to the declaration.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of the Boxer troubles, Hay sent another note to the Powers declaring that the United States desired a solution to the uprising in such a way as would preserve China's 'territorial and administrative entity'. Similar responses were received from the Powers as was the case with the note of the previous year.<sup>3</sup> But could one maintain the so-called 'spheres of interest' and 'leased territory' with all their extra-territorial and administrative rights and at the same time claim to be preserving the 'territorial and administrative entity' of China? What were to be the limits within which the open door principle could operate without disturbing the vested rights of the Powers within their individual spheres of interests and leased territories? The vague nature of Hay's proposition did not lend itself to answer these questions. Neither did time enable the Powers to consider seriously the contradictions between the two declarations until after the end of the Russo-Japanese war.

The end of the Russo-Japanese war engendered very high hopes among the foreign communities in China for greater commercial and

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<sup>1</sup>Cited from Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Esthus, 'Changing Concept of the Open Door', p.436.



industrial activities in Manchuria. This was the point, the London Saturday Review made clear, even before the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty had been released to the press. In a leading article the paper noted that:

'There were many reasons, besides the supreme interest of the war, why the struggle in Manchuria should be watched anxiously by nations remote from the scene. It was not only the daring of Japan in matching herself against an adversary who loomed so hugely, by comparison on the map. Nor the fact that the struggle between enemies so apparently disproportioned was between an Eastern and a Western Power for supremacy in Eastern Asia. There remained, behind these political considerations, the question of the commercial future of a great region whose potentialities people were just beginning to perceive. The politics, that "in no part of the world is commercial power so directly conditioned upon political power as in the Far East", could receive no clear illustration than from recent events. The tenour of Russia's reply some years ago to Mr Hay's expression of hope that she would associate herself with the "open door" left her intentions at least open to suspicion. So that, besides and beyond the supreme interest of the Titanic fight between a great European Power and a newly arisen Asiatic Power for political supremacy, there lay the question whether the open door in Manchuria with all its commercial possibilities should be opened or closed. We have yet to await the full text of the treaty of peace; but the synopsis which has been published of Articles 3 and 5 indicates a sufficiently clear undertaking on the part of both nations - (1) to withdraw their troops from Manchuria; (2) to put no obstacles in the way of the "general measures (which shall be alike for all nations) that China may take for the development of the commerce and industry of Manchuria" - which must be taken to imply (3) a purpose of restoring the country to China with a request that she will administer it on the principle of the "open door". That is precisely the policy which everyone in this country has desired. It has been defined otherwise as "equality of opportunity", but there will be no jealousy of the possession by Japan of so much superiority of opportunity as may be due to her propinquity and acquired prestige'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Saturday Review, 16 September 1905, Article entitled "The Future of Manchuria".



Indeed, the commercial houses in Britain showed a remarkable zeal in taking up the challenge. The China Association, for instance, took immediate steps to ensure the maintenance or reintroduction of a more equitable customs system in the various entry ports now under Japanese control.<sup>1</sup> Various commercial agents were sent to Manchuria to assess the prospects for British investments in the region. One of such men was F.A. McKenzie, who was commissioned early in 1906 by the London Daily Mail for that purpose.<sup>2</sup> The reports of these agents, however, did not present a promising outlook. McKenzie's first report, for instance, was entitled 'Gloomy Outlook for British trade in Manchuria as a result of Japanese Policy'.<sup>3</sup> As other agents later corroborated, Japan was accused of preventing all foreigners, apart from Japanese, from penetrating into the interior of South Manchuria for commercial purposes, giving rebates to Japanese traders and discriminating in wharves and rail charges.<sup>4</sup> It was, however, the giant British-American Tobacco Company which brought the issue officially to the notice of the Foreign Office.<sup>5</sup> This was then followed by a barrage of parliamentary questions on the subject.<sup>6</sup> The net

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/180, China Association (Shanghai Branch) to Carnegie 27117, 20 June 1906; Memorandum communicated by Japanese Charge d'Affaires, 27419, 10 August 1906; Grey to Carnegie (Telegram No. 145), 11 August 1906; Grey to Matsui, 27419, 13 August 1906.

<sup>2</sup>The Daily Mail, 3 July 1906.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., China Association, Annual Report of the China Association, Microfilm M3055, Vol. 111 (Report for 1905-06), pp. 42-3; (Interim Report for 1906-7), pp. 69-75.

<sup>5</sup>FO/371/180, British American Tobacco Company to Foreign Office, 244, 1 January 1906.

<sup>6</sup>House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates: Hansard (Fourth Series), vol. 152 (1906), pp. 1291-2; vol. 154 (1906), pp. 57-8; vol. 158 (1906), pp. 47-9.



result of all these, as we have already noted, was a representation made by the British Government to Tokyo and the latter's promise to rectify the situation after the completion of the military evacuation of the territory.

The completion of Russian and Japanese evacuation of Manchuria, however, did not reduce the intensity of the charges. A report by Alex Hosie, the Commercial Attaché in Peking, who toured Manchuria with a view to examining the state of affairs on the spot, on the other hand, exonerated the Japanese from almost all the charges.<sup>1</sup> This was confirmed by a similar report by Fulford, the Consul General at Newchwang.<sup>2</sup> In reviewing the whole situation on 24 November, 1908, therefore, Selby noted, after recounting the new Chinese provincial administration in Manchuria, that

'it will be seen that China, except in the leased territory of Kwantung and in the disputed areas along the line of railway, has resumed possession of the province, Russia and Japan having faithfully carried out their engagements... to evacuate the region'.

This is an important point in considering the question of the discrimination by the Japanese in favour of their own trade, as showing the difference in the status of Manchuria before the war, when it was to all intents and purposes closed by the Russians to the outside world, and the status of the province to-day, when it has been restored to Chinese sovereignty, although Russia and Japan still retain certain privileges in connection with the railways which must of necessity give an advantage over their rivals in trade.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/435. See a complete review of this issue in Memorandum of Correspondence in regard to Trade and the Policy of the Open Door in Manchuria from the Close of the Russo-Japanese War, by W.H.Selby, 45531, 24 November 1908.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/87, Enclosure in Jordan to Grey (No. 439), 29 October 1906.



Passing now to the question of discrimination by the Japanese in the matter of placing restrictions on foreign trade, it must be admitted that in the first place the accusations in this respect against the Japanese which we have received in this Department have all along been of a very general nature, and in the second place that in every case in which there has been found to be a good cause for complaint, the Japanese have always been able to show good reasons for their action, and have subsequently rectified the evil as soon as a practicable opportunity offered....

We have further been the recipients of repeated assurances on the part of the Japanese Government that they intended no subversion of the policy of the open door in Manchuria, and this has certainly been corroborated by the action in regard to the cases enumerated above.<sup>1</sup>

But was this view shared by the foreign commercial community in China and by the foreign press? Decidedly not.

The vague nature of the 'open door' policy and its incompatibility with the idea of 'treaty rights' had, by 1908, created a deep gulf between the commercial houses and the government. This was not so only in Britain but also in the United States, France and in Germany. It was, however, in the first two countries that the division was brought to the international scene. The issue that elevated this division to the arena of international politics was a scheme mooted in Britain and the United States for a railway line from Hsinmintun in South Manchuria to Tsitsihar on the Russian controlled Chinese Eastern Railway border.

The history of the railway line from Hsinmintun to Tsitsihar began with the appointment of Lord Ffrench in 1907 and his despatch

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/435, Memorandum by Selby [455317, 24 November 1908.



to China as an agent of a British construction firm, Messrs. Pauling and Company. While on his way to Peking, Lord Ffrench passed through Mukden in Manchuria, where there had recently been two major developments of immense national and international significance. Firstly, the re-establishment of Chinese authority in the region resulted in the appointment of the American educated Tang Shao-yi as Governor of Fengtien province and Hsu Shih-chang as the viceroy of the three provinces. Both men were strong advocates of maintaining Chinese integrity and were prepared to use their positions to assert that authority all over Manchuria. Secondly, the United States Vice-Consul in Seoul, Willard Straight, was posted to the American consulate in Mukden.<sup>1</sup> Straight,

'As vice consul at Seoul in Seoul in 1905 ... witnessed the demise of Korea, and he felt that Manchuria could be saved from Japan only by an extensive programme of capitalistic investment carried out by the United States and other Western powers.'<sup>2</sup>

With such identity of objective, it was not surprising that strong personal relations developed between the three officials. It was in this sort of atmosphere that Lord Ffrench, accompanied by J.O.P. Bland, of the British and Chinese Corporation, arrived at Mukden.

On their arrival at Mukden, Lord Ffrench and Bland lodged with Straight. The sort of conversation that went on between the three and the nature of understanding reached between them are not clear. What is known is that Lord Ffrench managed to sign a contract

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<sup>1</sup>For the diverse character and career of this man, see Herbert Croly, Williard Straight (New York, Macmillan Company, 1924).

<sup>2</sup>Esthus, 'Changing Concept of the Open Door', p.440.



with Tang Shao-yi for the construction of a railway line from Hsinmintun to Tsitsihar in two stages.<sup>1</sup> The first phase, which was to begin as soon as it had received Imperial sanction, was to be a line from Hsinmintun to Fakumen in South Manchuria. It is, therefore, appropriate to take a look at how Japan responded to this project and the attitudes the British Government adopted towards the Japanese response.

C. The Hsinmintun-Fakumen Railway Line

Soon after signing the contract with Tang, Lord Ffrench left for Peking and divulged the nature of the agreement to Jordan. In reporting the matter to London, the latter noted that, as the agreement was subject to the approval of the central government, Japan might possibly have enough time to oppose its ratification, if she so desired. He, however, felt that at this stage of the project, the best policy for him was to lend his support to Pauling.<sup>2</sup>

After a careful consideration of the issue in London, it was generally agreed that the only ground upon which Japan could possibly object to the project was by invoking the Scott-Mouravieff Convention. It was, however, noted that Japan could hardly claim that by succeeding to the former Russian rights in South Manchuria, she, ipso facto, inherited all the private Anglo-Russian understandings in respect of that region. Moreover, it was held that it would be most improbable that 'the Japanese would raise the point, as

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<sup>1</sup>Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 234-5; FO/371/229, Jordan to Grey (No. 469), 2 October 1907.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/229, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 193), 11 November 1907.



they would then be bound to Britain by the obligations entered into by Russia, namely not to support any Japanese application for a railway concession in the Yangtze Valley'.<sup>1</sup> Having dismissed the probability of Japanese objection, the Foreign Office turned its attention to consider the question whether the projected line would not interfere with the rights held by the British and Chinese Corporation under the Northern Railway Loan Agreement of 10 October 1898, but it could not make any definite decision on the subject. In view of this the matter was referred to the British and Chinese Corporation.<sup>2</sup> On 14 October, Charles Addis, of the latter firm, called on Campbell and informed him that his company had no objection to Pauling's contract. Jordan was, therefore, authorised to lend all his support to Lord Ffrench.<sup>3</sup>

No sooner had Jordan received his instructions than Tokyo addressed a protest note to Peking pointing out that the contract was in contravention of its undertaking not to build or consent to the building of any railway line that would be parallel to the South Manchurian Railway. In their reply, the Chinese stated that they had no intention of constructing any line nearer to the South Manchurian railway than it was the usual practice in other countries to allow the building of another line close to an existing one. The noncommittal nature of the Chinese reply naturally failed to satisfy Tokyo. The Japanese Government, therefore, lodged another protest

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minute by Campbell thereon.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., For details of the 1898 loan agreement, see MacMurray, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 173-83.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/229, Minute by Campbell 377817, 14 November 1907; Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 123), 14 November 1907.



note with Peking. The latter, on the other hand, failed to acknowledge it and went ahead with initialling the draft agreement for the building of the line.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the fact that Jordan was quite aware of these developments, he informed the Chinese Government that Pauling had the full support of the British Government.<sup>2</sup> His main reason for doing this was that the importance of the Sino-Japanese secret protocol depended on the interpretation put upon it by the two parties concerned. He noted

'the importance of this engagement depends upon the construction put upon it by the parties. The further extension of the Northern Railway was contemplated by the Anglo-Chinese Loan Agreement of 10 October, 1898, Article 3, and I think we can reasonably hold that subsequent engagements in the interest of a railway which is now purely Japanese cannot be constructed to block a legitimate extension of the Chinese railway system on this side of the Liao River, and to exclude British enterprise from the development of Manchuria. The region which would be tapped by the proposed extension is at present entirely lacking in adequate means of communication, and the line at its most eastern point would be, I understand, over 30 miles to the west of the South Manchurian Railway.'<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, he recommended that London should not take any further action in the matter until the attitude of the Chinese could be determined or until Tokyo had approached London on the issue.<sup>4</sup> This view was approved by the Foreign Office.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/229, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 210), 4 December 1907.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/410, Jordan to Grey (No. 576 Confidential), 10 December 1907.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/229, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 210), 4 December 1907.

<sup>5</sup>FO/371/229, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 132), 6 December 1907.



This wait-and-see strategy was equally adopted by Peking and Tokyo. By mid-January 1908, therefore, nothing had transpired between the three governments on the subject. London was naturally worried. On 16 January 1908, therefore, the Foreign Office made enquiries from Jordan as to how the matter stood. Upon this request, Jordan saw the Chinese authorities who told him that they wished to leave the subject in abeyance until after the Chinese New Year's holidays and until all other outstanding questions between Britain and China had been settled. Owing to the number and the intricate nature of the issues existing between the two countries at this time, Jordan recommended that the best way to clear the situation would be his speaking to the Japanese Minister in Peking on the subject.<sup>1</sup> This was approved by London with an intimation that 'if the extension would actually injure the Japanese railway we cannot press for its extension'.<sup>2</sup>

A day after the above instructions were despatched to Jordan, Komura, now Japanese Ambassador in London, called on Grey to explain his government's position. As the minister responsible for negotiating the Sino-Japanese agreements of 1905, Komura told him that, the Hsinmintum-Fakumen railway was the very line which he had in mind when getting the promise from the Chinese not to consent to the building of any line parallel to the Japanese railway. He went on to say that:

'The South Manchurian Railway was the only paying concern the Japanese had obtained from the war. Korea,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/410, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 14), 17 January 1908, and minute by Alston thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/410, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 13), 20 January 1908.



for instance, was costing them money - not bringing it in. Even the railway was not paying, though it would do so in the future. It was, therefore, impossible that the Japanese should allow a competing line to be made, and they would have to take whatever steps were necessary to prevent it.<sup>1</sup>

On his part, Grey told Komura about his instructions to Jordan the previous day and explained to him that Britain was not interested in the line 'politically in any way'. What the British Government did was merely to recommend a reputable British firm to the Chinese who wished 'to employ them for their own purposes'.<sup>2</sup> Soon after this conversation, Grey telegraphed Jordan to the effect that, owing to the grounds of the Japanese objection, it would be impolitic for the government to continue its support for Pauling in securing the project.<sup>3</sup>

It might appear from this brief account that British policy changed mainly because of Japan's stand. However, in reality this change of policy was also based upon the political situation in China in relation to British interests in that country.<sup>4</sup> This was not a recent development. It had its strong roots just after the end of the Russo-Japanese war and a policy had already been formulated in London to deal with such a situation as the building of the Hsinmintun-Fakumen line. What ~~was this phenomenal development that a continual support of London for Pauling in the projected line was felt~~ <sup>led London to feel that continued support</sup> might affect British interests in China?

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/410, Grey to MacDonald (No. 12), 25 January 1908.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/410, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 19), 24 January 1908.

<sup>4</sup>For details of this subject see E-tu Zen Sun, Chinese Railways and British Interests (New York 1954); Geo Bronson Rea, 'Railway Loan Agreements and their relation to the open door: A plea for fair play to China', in The Far Eastern Review, No. 6 (November 1909), pp. 215-27.



On the eve of his departure from Peking as the British Minister Ernest Satow made a comprehensive review of the whole question of railway construction in China and its future prospects and effects on China's development. He noted that for both political and financial reasons, there was a strong desire on the part of the Chinese authorities to build and manage all future railways themselves, 'to cancel all the Preliminary Agreements which have not yet been transformed into Final Agreements, and ... also to buy back those railways which are being managed by foreigners ... These facts by themselves would sufficiently explain the obstacles which have arisen in the case of the railway agreements which we have been endeavouring for a long time past to get completed, such as Canton-Kowloon, Suchow-Hangchow-Ningpo, and Tien-tsin - Puk'ou, and - the refusal to hear anything of proposals put forward by the Chinese Central Railway (Limited) for building lines from Szechuan to Hankow and Canton to Hankow.'<sup>1</sup> These observations were greatly appreciated in London. Before Jordan left for Peking to replace Satow, therefore, it was thought advisable to formulate a new policy that would take into account these developments for his information and guidance.<sup>2</sup> The importance of these guidelines, which Grey described as 'to some extent a new departure in British policy' require extensive repetition here. It was noted to ~~him~~ Jordan that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/35, Satow to Grey (No. 177 very confidential), 16 April 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.



'The old policy with regard to China has been to extort concessions by pressure and to insist by force, when necessary, upon the letter to them.

In my opinion, the time has gone by when this policy could any longer be made effective, and the time is probably approaching when such a policy might be disastrous. It would certainly be resented by Chinese to-day more than ever, and it is becoming increasingly apparent that foreign trade in China cannot prosper in the face of Chinese ill-will. Apart from these considerations, I feel that a policy of force can only be defended with regard to a nation which is incapable of responding to any conciliatory method, of keeping its engagements or taking part in the development of its own resources.

I desire, therefore, to adapt the policy of His Majesty's Government to the new departure which China is apparently anxious to make. It may be that her aspirations are at present in advance of her strength and of her experience. But the tendency will be for this disparity to lessen; many of the Chinese are acquiring modern ideas and knowledge in other countries and are bringing them into China, and when one is disposed to learn, the mere contact with Europeans and Japanese in China itself will be a constant source of education.

I am aware that there is some risk in making any such change of policy towards China. Unless it is done very carefully, and unless firmness is combined with tact, it is possible that such a policy may not be understood; the Chinese Government may mistake conciliation for weakness, and seek to take unfair advantage of it instead of responding with good-will.

It will, therefore, be necessary to use great care in dealing with the opportunities which may arise, and in selecting those which are most suitable for the use of conciliation or of firmness respectively. It is for instance, indispensable in the interests of Chinese revenue, of the loans, and of trade generally, that there should for some time to come be no disturbance or serious change in the administration of the customs. His Majesty's Government will also expect China to fulfil in substance all binding engagements with regard to concessions which she has previously undertaken; though in some of these modifications may be introduced to secure good-will and smooth working, or to overcome inevitable difficulties with provincial officials. But if these be frankly recognized by China, and her obligations with regard to customs, and previous concessions loyally observed, His Majesty's Government will not press the Chinese Government to grant new concessions on terms which are embarrassing to China, and will, on the contrary, encourage and welcome



her efforts to develop the resources of the country under her own auspices, and on terms which will give her the help of foreign capital and experience when required, without being derogatory to her sovereignty or her independence.<sup>1</sup>

By 1908, however, China, according to the opinion at the Foreign Office, had proved 'incapable of responding to any conciliatory method, of keeping its engagements or of taking part in the development of its own resources'. These were evidenced by her continual ~~uncooperativeness~~ <sup>uncooperativeness</sup> in respect of some of the railways detailed above, her attempts to end the lease of Wei-hai Wei and her moves to nullify Japanese rights in the Antung-Mukden line.<sup>2</sup> There appeared to be a strong feeling in London that if the British Government supported Pauling against the Japanese and the former succeeded in obtaining the concession, the Chinese might be encouraged to find other avenues of nullifying not only the Japanese rights in Manchuria but those of Britain in other areas of China. This was the view which The Economist implied in a leading article welcoming the conclusion of the Anglo-Chinese negotiations on the projected Tientsin-Pukow line.<sup>3</sup> Apart from this, London did not view the grounds of the Japanese opposition as a singular breach of the open door policy, for the projected British-financed Shanghai-Nanking line of 9 July 1903 also contained a clause protecting it against parallel and competing lines.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/35, Grey to Jordan (No. 298 Confidential), 31 August 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Kia-ngau Chang, China's struggle for Railway Development (New York, 1943) gives an insight into these developments.

<sup>3</sup>The Economist, 22 February 1908.

<sup>4</sup>For the history of this line see MacMurray, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 387-409; FO/371/410, Minute by Grey on Brynmor Jones to Foreign Office [39937], 4 February 1908.



It was the above factors which influenced the British Government in withdrawing its support from Pauling. But then it came out with a new formula which, the Foreign Office felt, would take into account the growing cry 'China for the Chinese' and at the same time, protect Japanese as well as other foreign rights in China. It was simply this: all the attendant issues connected with the Hsinmintun-Fakumen line must be sorted out between the Japanese and the Chinese Governments first and then with Pauling without any form of intervention from London. It was only after this that the Foreign Office would accord all necessary diplomatic support to Pauling in carrying out their obligations.<sup>1</sup> This was to become the basic philosophy of the British Government in respect of any British firm seeking railway concessions in Manchuria. While a section of the British press led by The Times supported this position, the commercial houses, spear-headed by the China Association and a section of Members of Parliament, felt that the attitude of the government was nothing less than giving Japan the right to veto any genuine foreign industrial concession in South Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> Their efforts were, therefore, directed towards bringing pressure on the government to alter its position. But would the Foreign Office bow to this pressure and jeopardise Japanese and possibly British rights in China? It was doubtful. In fact, other developments in the United States made London more adamant to this pressure.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/229, Minute by Grey on Jordan to Grey (No. 540 very confidential), 14 November 1907. This despatch arrived in London on 28 December 1907, but it was not until 4 January 1908 that it began to be minuted. Grey noted this recommendation before he was informed of the ground of the Japanese objection.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 28 September 1908; China Association, op.cit., vol. IV, Annual Report 1907-8, pp. 74A-74E, 74A-74I, 47I-74L; Annual Report 1908-9, pp. 57-79, especially pp. 62-5, 71-5; Parliamentary Debates (fourth series), vol. 185 (1908), p.527; vol. 183 (1908), pp. 191-2; vol. 196 (1909), p.41.



The decision not to support Pauling in the Hsinmintun-Fakumen project against Japanese opposition coincided with the creation of a Far Eastern Division at the State Department in the United States under the supervision of Third Assistant Secretary, Huntington Wilson. Soon after the creation of this new Division, Wilson was commissioned to compile a comprehensive information series on the open door policy in China for the guidance of all American embassies and legations. In his report, Wilson accused the Japanese of being the sole violators of the policy mainly by examining their new administration in Kwantung and South Manchuria, and their attitudes towards foreign trade and the Hsinmintun-Fakumen railway project. Secretary of State, Elihu Root, however, rejected almost all the indictment contained in the report.<sup>1</sup> The net result was that America continued its new sympathetic attitudes towards the Japanese position in Kwantung and South Manchuria.

Events were, however, to alter the situation. In March 1909, the Roosevelt administration made way for that of William Taft. As Secretary of War, Taft had been won over by Willard Straight to support his campaign to check the growing Japanese power in Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> On assumption of duty, therefore, it was not surprising that Taft began surrounding himself with those officials who had shown some disposition to Straight's ideas. Huntington Wilson, who had been designated to Argentina, for instance, was instead appointed first assistant secretary of state and the chief adviser

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<sup>1</sup>Esthus, 'Changing Concept of the Open Door Policy', pp. 442-4.

<sup>2</sup>Esthus, Theodore Roosevelt and Japan, pp. 235-7.



on Far Eastern affairs to Secretary of State Philander Knox.<sup>1</sup> Straight himself, with the consent of Taft, resigned his position as temporary chief of the Far Eastern Division and was appointed as an agent of a newly formed American banking group consisting of J.P.Morgan and Company; Kuhn, Loeb and Company; the First National Bank; and the National City Bank; and one Edward H. Harriman, an American railway financier. The coming together of these giant institutions was the brain child of the State Department designed for the purpose of 'promoting American influence in China by means of American investment [and]... offered to Straight a position near the centre of the organisation, which afforded him an opportunity to influence its behaviour'.<sup>2</sup> It was at this point in time that Pauling signed another contract with Tang Shao-yi for the survey and construction of a railway line from Chinchow, ~~in China proper~~, to Aigun on the Russian frontier. By all accounts, this projected line was the second phase of the agreements between Lord Ffrench and Tang Shao-yi in 1907 for a railway line between Hsinmintun and Tsitsihar, a project in which Straight played no mean part. The American position as regards this line in relation to their plans in China and the policy of the British Government on railway investments in Manchuria became the focal point of diplomacy in the Far East for over ten years.

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<sup>1</sup>Esthus, 'Changing Concept of the Open Door Policy', p.451.

<sup>2</sup>Croly, op.cit., pp. 280-5.



D. The Chinchow-Aigun Railway Line

Although the agreement for the survey and construction of the Chinchow-Aigun line was signed on 26 September, 1908, it was not until late in April, 1909, that Pauling officially informed the Foreign Office of it and asked for its assistance in case of any diplomatic difficulties. More important, perhaps, was their erroneous information that the line was to terminate at Taonanfu and their failure to make it plain to the Foreign Office that the line was the second phase of the agreement between them and Tang in 1907 and that the Americans were involved or would, eventually, be involved in the project.<sup>1</sup> By this time, however, Jordan had already informed London about the project with an intimation that the line might not clash with the Japanese rights in the South Manchurian railway line. In view of this, the Foreign Office gave Pauling a guarded promise to the effect that if ever their anticipated fears became apparent, the government would do all it could to assist them.<sup>2</sup> On 7 May, however, Pauling informed the Foreign Office that, according to Lord Ffrench, in reply to a question put by the Chinese Government to the Japanese Minister in Peking as to the distance held by his government within which China could not construct railways, under the secret convention of December 1905, the Japanese minister refused to give any answer or to define the distance involved. On account of this, therefore, they asked the Foreign Office to take all the necessary steps before

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Pauling to Foreign Office L152427, 22 April 1909, and Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



the Japanese vetoed this line also.<sup>1</sup> In its reply, the Foreign Office pointed out to the firm that it could give no guarantee that the Japanese would not object to the scheme. In addition, Pauling was told that Jordan had already been instructed to give all the help he properly could, but the government must consider the circumstances as they arose before deciding what help could be given.<sup>2</sup>

The above reply failed to satisfy Pauling. The company, therefore, made another attempt to make the Foreign Office definitely promise them its support. In addition, Pauling noted that 'for reasons which at present are beyond our knowledge and criticism, His Majesty's Government have decided to adhere to the principle that the Official support of the Foreign Office must be confined to the operations of the British and Chinese Corporation and its associates'.<sup>3</sup> The above accusation was, however, nonsense. All the indications up to date showed that the Foreign Office was prepared to assist the firm provided the Japanese would not have a genuine ground for objecting to the construction of the line. Reviewing the activities of the firm from 1907 and the attitudes of the Foreign Office, therefore, Robert Collier, a clerk at the Foreign Office, observed:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Pauling to Foreign Office /I74797, 7 May 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Foreign Office to Pauling /I74797, 14 May 1909.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/636, Pauling to Foreign Office /218337, 10 June 1909.



'Our position is perfectly plain and logical. The Japanese have at a just expense of blood and treasure acquired a special interest in Manchuria, and one of the ways they propose to recoup themselves is by a railway monopoly. The Chinese wishing to undermine the Japanese position in Manchuria, and incidentally being not unwilling to embroil us with Japan, gave to Paulings/a contract for the Fakumen railway, whose construction was vetoed by the Japanese on the ground that it would be in competition with the Japanese railway. Frustrated in this attempt the Chinese tried to get the Japanese to say what the limits were within which a railway must be regarded as competing with the Japanese line. The Japanese refused to specify. The Chinese then put up Paulings to propose to build the Chinchow-Taonanfu line, still parallel to the Japanese line in Manchuria, but further from it ... We are of course perfectly prepared to give any British firm of good standing all the support we can in building a purely commercial railway in China, but for a line whose construction may be considered by Japan to be a political move on the part of China, it is quite obvious that we cannot promise a British contractor unconditional support'.<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, decided that before this position could be spelt out to Pauling, it was advisable to ascertain from Jordan the views held by the Japanese regarding the project.<sup>2</sup>

In his reply, Jordan stated that neither had the firm asked for his support nor had he any information as to the alleged attitude of Ijuin <sup>the Japanese Minister in Peking</sup>. He added that he did not see how the Japanese could reasonably object to the scheme.<sup>3</sup> Despite this information, the Foreign Office refused to commit itself to support Pauling until the Japanese position had been made clearer. It was not until 20 August that the Japanese Ambassador told Grey that his government would not oppose the making of the line provided China agreed 'to Japanese business participation in financing the line

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minute thereon.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon; FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 110), 15 June 1909.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/636, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 109), 17 June 1909.



and supplying engineers for its construction, and would agree to give up Sin-min-tung - Fakumen Railway'. Headed, however, that Japan could not propose negotiations on the issue to China, but she would be prepared to negotiate if China took the initiative. On account of this, therefore, Jordan was immediately instructed to confer with Ijuin as to whether any steps could be taken towards achieving this objective.<sup>1</sup>

Jordan's assessment of the situation was, however, not encouraging. He noted that although Ijuin agreed to his sounding the Chinese Government on the subject, he was personally of the opinion that

'it will be no easy task to persuade the Chinese into taking the first step and meeting the Japanese half way, as I interpret the action of the Mukden Viceroy in conveying to the British, German and American Consular Officers on the 19th August his desire that the proposed mining and railway developments in Manchuria should be financed with either British, or German, or American capital, as showing the anxiety of the Chinese authorities to put a check on Japanese activity in those regions.'<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps more significant was the information that the old Lord Ffrench - Straight combination was again involved in the proposed project. He noted:

'Lord f french tells me that at the same time as he was carrying through, on behalf of Paulings, the agreement for the survey and construction of the line, an arrangement was concluded, and is now in the hands of Mr. Straight, the representative of the American group, for the financing of the railway by American capital. In Lord f french's opinion, however, the existence of this agreement does not necessarily preclude the possibility of Japanese participation in the undertaking.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 132), 20 August 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 142), 27 August 1909.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



It is at this point that the relationship between the original Hsinmintun-Tsitsihar and the Chinchow-Aigun schemes becomes clear. By all accounts, the latter was the second phase of the same project, and Pauling and Straight did not hesitate to come to a working arrangement in the financing of the line. Quite apart from the political side of the issue, this arrangement was least pleasing to the Foreign Office as 'these triangular negotiations between Paulings, the Americans and the Japanese ... inspire no confidence in the trustworthiness of the British firm'.<sup>1</sup> The best that could be done in this sort of situation was to wait and look at the turn of events.

In the meantime, Jordan tried to smooth matters with the former Viceroy of Manchuria and now President of the Board of Communications, Hsu Shih-chang. The latter, however, strongly objected to any form of Japanese participation in the project.<sup>2</sup> At this stage, things did not look very promising, for Pauling had declared themselves favourable to Japanese participation and had started negotiations with the embassy in London towards this end. The company had, however, made it clear to the Japanese that they were bound to the Chinese and were, therefore, not at liberty to propose or entertain the idea of Japanese participation without Chinese consent. In view of this and the fact that the Japanese earlier apprehension on any extension of the line northwards was on the ground that it would tap the main line which would otherwise go by the South Manchuria Railway, it was feared in London that they

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/636 Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 143) 31 August 1909.



might maintain the same attitude unless the Chinese came to an agreement with them. As Britain could do nothing in such circumstances, Jordan was advised to keep out of the issue for the moment.<sup>1</sup>

While Pauling was negotiating with the Japanese embassy in London with a view to offering them participation at Chinese consent, they left all proceedings in Peking in the hands of Straight, apparently with the intention of keeping them out altogether.<sup>2</sup> When London learnt of this double game, it decided to keep out of the whole issue as much as it could.<sup>3</sup> The wisdom in this decision became more apparent on the same day when another cable was received from Jordan. According to this cable, Straight had informed Jordan that, the American Government

'were prepared to ignore Japanese protests, and the Chinese were firmly opposed to the Japanese being allowed to participate in any manner whatever. The proposal now under consideration was to create a company with American British and Chinese directors who would control the railway, and it was thought that such a scheme might perhaps eliminate the possibility of strategic objections on the part of Japan'.<sup>4</sup>

Grey's reaction to this news was quick and positive. He minuted;

'After what has passed we cannot give active support to a line, which would compete for traffic against the Japanese line, if it is to be made without any agreement with the Japanese, who have stated that they are willing to come to an arrangement with China about it.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 142), 1 September 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 144 Confidential), 2 September 1909.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/636, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 145), 3 September 1909.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Minute thereon.



He spelt out this position to the Japanese Ambassador four days later when he told him that:

'I should do nothing till the question was brought before me again, in which case I should take the line that, so long as Japanese Government was willing to come to agreement about railway development in Manchuria, the proper course was for the Chinese to agree with Japan as to terms which would safeguard the South Manchurian Railway from unfair competition.'

Barely a month after making this statement, the preliminary agreement for the financing, construction and operation of the line was signed by the viceroy and the Governor of Manchuria for the Chinese Government and by Lord ffrench and Straight on behalf of their respective companies. Under the agreement, the financing of the project was entrusted to the American group, who were, however, to have British associates, to whom they were at liberty to grant participation to the extent of a sum not exceeding 40 per cent of the total loan. The loan itself was to be guaranteed by the Chinese Government and secured by the projected line. The contract for the construction and supply of the equipment needed for the line was assigned to Pauling, in whom the appointment of the chief engineer was also vested, subject to the approval of the railway company. The agreement made it clear that the line was to go as far north as Aigun, on the Russian frontier.<sup>2</sup> London's response to this information was again definitive of its former attitude. The Foreign Office immediately instructed Jordan that, if the Japanese raised any issue connected with the line, he should 'make it clear that we had nothing to do with the agreement with the Americans and

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 145), 7 September 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Enclosure in Jordan to Grey (No. 365 confidential), 6 October 1909.



Pauling ...' and that Britain was prepared to adhere to her former policy of not supporting the project until China had settled <sup>its</sup> attendant issues with Japan.<sup>1</sup> Grey then spelt his government's position to the American Ambassador in London, Whitelaw Reid, and asked for information on the American view on the project.<sup>2</sup>

From this time onwards then, it became apparent that unless Pauling made a volte-face to continue discussions with the Japanese regarding their participation, the British Government would support the latter against the firm.<sup>3</sup> On 3 November, therefore, Percy Brown of Pauling called on Beilby Alston, a Senior Clerk at the Foreign Office, and told him that as far as his firm was concerned, they had no objection to the Japanese participation but that they had no locus standi for getting the Chinese agreement to it. In view of this, therefore, he urged the Foreign Office to endeavour to persuade the Chinese to allow the Japanese a share in the project.<sup>4</sup> This was considered by the Foreign Office a very sensible proposal. It, however, decided to inquire of Jordan whether he considered an attempt in this direction, backed, if necessary, by the United States, was likely to produce any positive result. At the same time it was made clear that if the Chinese maintained their opposition to the wishes of Tokyo, Britain should back down on any further action on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 164), 6 October 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Minutes on [394647], 20 October 1909.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/636, Minute by Grey on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 56 confidential), 7 October 1909.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/636, Minutes on [394647] 20 October 1909 and on Pauling to Foreign Office [403327], 1 November 1909.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; FO/371/636, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 178), 5 November 1909.



In his reply, Jordan advised,

'we should avoid any action which might be harmful to Pauling's interests or appear to place us on the Japanese as against the American side. I would, therefore, advise our not putting forward on our own account a proposal for Japanese participation, though I concur in the opinion... that what has occurred leaves us no option but to support such a proposal should the Japanese press it ...

If we desire to support Japanese participation in such a manner as not to injure the interests of the British firm, we can, I think, only do so by obtaining the co-operation of the United States Government and jointly urging on the Chinese Government the desirability of admitting the Japanese ... Such concerted action would have, at any rate, a chance of success, for the Chinese are inclined to pay attention to advice received from the Americans, who are not considered to be moved by political considerations to the same extent as ourselves in this connection'.<sup>1</sup>

He added that he had been told by the Russian Minister in Peking that his government would expect to be consulted about the railway, and he presumed that this claim would be based on the Scott-Mouravieff Convention.<sup>2</sup>

These observations were warmly accepted at the Foreign Office. It was, however, decided to ignore the Russian claim for the moment and to ascertain the views of the United States on the proposed action. This was done on the same day.<sup>3</sup>

On the following day, 9 November, Whitelaw Reid communicated a memorandum to the Foreign Office as his government's position specifically on the Chinchow-Aigun line and generally on railway construction and management in China. According to the memorandum:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 178), 7 November 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.



'The Government of the United States would be disposed to favour ultimate participation to a proper extent on the part of other interested Powers whose inclusion might be agreeable to China, and which are known to support the principle of equality of commercial opportunity and the maintenance of the integrity of the Chinese Empire.'<sup>1</sup>

The note then called for a consideration of two alternative and more comprehensive schemes regarding railway construction and management in China:

'Perhaps the most effective way to preserve the undisturbed enjoyment by China of all political rights in Manchuria, and to promote the development of those provinces under a practical application of the "open door" and equal commercial opportunity, would be to bring the Manchurian highways and the railroad under an economic, and scientific, and impartial administration by some plan vesting in China the ownership of the railroads through funds furnished for that purpose by the interested Powers willing to participate. Such loan should be for a period ample to make it reasonably certain that it could be met within the time fixed, and should be upon such terms as would make it attractive to bankers and investors. The plan should provide that nationals of the participating Powers should supervise the railroad system during the term of the loan, and the Governments concerned should enjoy for such period the usual preferences for their nationals and materials upon an equitable basis inter sese.

The execution of such a plan would naturally require the co-operation of China, and of Japan, and Russia, the reversionary and the concessionaries respectively of the existing Manchurian railroads, as well as that of Great Britain and the United States, whose special interests rest upon the existing contract relative to the Chin-Chou-Aigun railroad'.<sup>2</sup>

The natural advantages accruing to Japan and Russia by such a scheme were listed as shifting 'the separate duties, responsibilities, and expenses they have undertaken in the protection of their respective

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<sup>1</sup>FO/71/636, Memorandum by Whitelaw Reid /412517, 9 November 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



commercial and other interests for impartial assumption by the combined Powers including themselves, in proportion to their interests'. The note then went on to state that:

'Should this suggestion not be found feasible in its entirety, then the desired end would be approximated, if not attained, by Great Britain and the United States diplomatically supporting the Chin-Chou-Aigun arrangement, and inviting interested Powers friendly to the complete commercial neutrality of Manchuria to participate in the financing and construction of that line, and of such additional lines as future commercial development may demand, and at the same time to supply funds for the purchase by China for such of the existing lines as might be offered for inclusion in this system.'<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that this memorandum represented quite a new approach in American policy towards Japan in Manchuria. It demonstrated American frustration over the French objection to their terms of entry into the International Financial Consortium consisting of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation of Britain, the Deutsche-Chinesische Eisenbahn Gesellschaft of Germany and the French Banque de l'Indo-Chine for joint participation in future railway and other business loans in China.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that the memorandum was silent on the question of either including or excluding Germany and France in or from the scheme.

The memorandum excited a lot of comment in London. This was particularly the case with the idea of floating a new loan for railway construction in China. Britain had a number of fundamental reasons for not favouring the idea presently. Firstly, the consortium Powers

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the Consortium see Charles Vivier, The United States and China 1906-1913: A study of Finance and Diplomacy (New Brunswick, 1955); also Chapter 5 below.



had recently issued their respective stocks for a number of railways in Hukuang. For this reason, London found the idea of issuing another loan at that moment as 'extremely dubious'. Apart from this, there were strong fears that 'the U.S. will not find any of this money, but ... will unload on to Europe as quickly as possible any share which she may take of any Chinese loans'. Even if it was considered desirable to float another loan for railway construction, Alston pointed out, Britain 'would never be able to consider such an extensive scheme ... without the inclusion of the French and Germans'. Furthermore, it was noted that even if the scheme would 'meet with favourable consideration from Russia, it would certainly not suit Japan'. On the other hand, the Foreign Office decided to use the alternative scheme as a 'peg on which to hang a proposal for joint representations to China in favour of Japanese participation in the Chinchow Aigun Ry'.<sup>1</sup> In its reply, however, the Foreign Office noted that:

'The general principle involved in the first of your Excellency's two suggestions entirely commends itself to His Majesty's Government so far as the preservation of the open door policy and equal commercial opportunity are concerned, and would in their opinion be well adapted to securing to China full control in Manchuria. I am, however, of opinion that, until the pending negotiations for the Hukuang loan have been completed, it would seem undesirable to consider the question of another international loan for China's railway undertakings, and I would suggest therefore that, for the present at any rate, it would be wiser to postpone considerations of the first scheme.

As regards the alternative proposal contained in your Excellency's note, I observe with satisfaction that the co-operation of interested Powers forms part of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Minutes by Alston and Langley on Memorandum by Mr. Whitelaw Reid /41251/ 9 November 1909.



scheme, and I have the honour to suggest, for your Excellency's consideration, that, as a preliminary step towards attaining this desirable end, the two Governments should unite in endeavouring to persuade the Chinese Government to admit the Japanese to participation in the Chichow-Aigun line as being the parties most interested.

The question of supplying funds for the purchase by China of existing lines to be connected with the Chenchow-Aigun line be considered subsequently.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of this reply lies in the fact that it differed from the minutes which met the American note. It did not reject the idea of possible future internationalization of the Manchurian railways. It merely sought to postpone discussions on the subject until impending issues, which might affect the scheme, had been resolved. When, therefore, the United States urged that any delay would greatly prejudice, if not entirely defeat, the success of the project, she was informed that as Japan and Russia were the Powers whose interests would chiefly be affected by the scheme, America should first sound their opinions on it before proceeding further with discussions with Britain. London's position was one of caution designed to prevent the Japanese from thinking that 'we are entering into a conspiracy to undermine their position in Manchuria...'<sup>2</sup> Its basic principle regarding railway construction in Manchuria also remained unchanged. If for any reason Japan felt that the making of a new line would be contrary to her treaty engagements with China or would be prejudicial to the financial viability of her own lines, Britain would not press the issue.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to Reid /412517, 25 November 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/636, Memorandum communicated by Mr. Whitelaw Reid /457817, 16 December 1909 and Minutes thereon; Grey to Reid /457817, 29 December 1909.



The formulation of the internationalization scheme at a time when the Chinchow-Aigun controversy was still raging was most unfortunate for it hardened diametrically opposed principles on railway construction and management in Manchuria. It made China more determined to check Japan and Russia in Manchuria and assert her sovereignty in the region as she felt she had a strong backing from the United States regarding this policy. The net result of this was to harden Japan's determination to hold on to the rights she had acquired 'at the cost of much treasure and many lives' through all possible means at her disposal. While Britain felt that the Japanese could 'make reserves about their South Manchurian Railway, while accepting the proposal in principle for future railway development...' in Manchuria, she was not prepared to urge them to change their attitudes.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, Kato<sup>2</sup> informed Grey on 23 December that his government was strongly opposed to the neutralization programme, the latter made no efforts to urge a change of attitude.<sup>3</sup> The eventual rejection of the scheme by both Russia and Japan left the British Government with no other alternative but to steer out of the controversy. It also brought home to London that the Chinchow-Aigun project was doomed to failure as a result of Russia's entry into the controversy, and China's continued opposition to Japanese participation. It was this that influenced the British Government in maintaining a low-key attitude towards the rest of the discussions on the Chinchow-Aigun

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/636, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 74 very confidential), 20 December 1909 and minute by Grey thereon.

<sup>2</sup>Kato Takaaki, now Japanese Ambassador in London.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/636, Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 46 confidential), 23 December, 1909



railway line, which went on throughout 1910 and 1911.

Thus the attitudes of the British Government towards the Japanese in South Manchuria continued to be one of sympathy towards their aspirations. The 'open door' policy, as Britain saw it, could be an effective instrument for undermining the Japanese position in the region. She was, however, convinced that the maintenance of Japan's position was in the best interest of Britain as it kept Russia under constant surveillance. Any moves by British nationals or another Power which Japan felt might weaken her position, therefore, would not have the support or the co-operation of the British Government. In addition, there was a strong feeling that China's attempt to undermine the Japanese position in South Manchuria could be the first step towards her desire to get rid of all other 'legitimate' foreign rights and interests in the Empire. Any action on the part of the Chinese Government which was seen in Tokyo as aimed politically at Japan in South Manchuria, therefore, would not be supported by Britain. These factors explain London's attitude of insistence on prior consultation with and consent of Japan on any railway concession granted by Peking to British subjects or citizens in South Manchuria before the backing of the Foreign Office could be secured. The Foreign Office adopted this attitude purely as a matter of political expediency. It was not a treaty engagement with Japan nor was it a declaration of intent to Tokyo in the manner of the Scott-Mouravieff Convention which barred Britons from seeking railway concessions within the Russian zone of Manchuria. Grey made this point patently clear in 1910 and repeated it in 1911 when he noted that:



'There is nothing in our relations or agreements with Russia and Japan which would hamper us in engaging in any commercial matters in Manchuria other than railways. Even as regards railways I should be prepared to support the Chinese if they would take up the question of the railway development of Manchuria generally & push the question themselves, claiming their right to make railways & employ who sic they pleased to do it subject to such conditions in particular cases as would safeguard the S. Manchurian railway from unfair competition'.<sup>1</sup>

But could Grey maintain this position against the Russians as much as he could do with the Japanese?

The importance of this pertinent question and the attitudes of the British Government in respect of railway construction become clearer later on. For the moment, it should be noted that the strong attack on Russian and Japanese interests in Manchuria, as envisaged by the neutralization scheme, brought home to the two governments the need to find ways to protect their respective assets in the region. After all, there was ample evidence to suggest that the current American move was not an accidental off-hand incident but that it was part of a well calculated plan to dislodge Russia and Japan from Manchuria. The American led international action against Russian plans to levy taxes on all foreign residents in the Harbin municipality was, to all intents and purposes, one of such moves to 'neutralize' Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this study to survey the whole developments surrounding the Harbin Municipal issue, it suffices here to say that it was this question, heightened pari passu by the Knox neutralization programme which made Russia more aware of the fact that unless she began to co-operate with Japan in defence of their

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/843, Minute on China Association to Foreign Office 287867, 5 August 1910; FO/371/1083, Minute on Buchanan to Grey (No. 272), 21 September 1911.

<sup>2</sup>For details of this issue see Walter Young, Japanese Jurisdiction in the South Manchuria Railway Areas (Baltimore 1931), pp. 43-57.



'legitimate rights and interests' in China, they would be scooped out of existence by current American policies.

Apart from the various attempts to undermine their position in Manchuria, Japan had a peculiar problem of her own <sup>where</sup> ~~which~~ she felt she would need the understanding of Russia before she could prescribe the considered right solution to it. This was in respect of her difficulties in Korea. What were these difficulties and did Russia see Korea as a suitable field for co-operation? How did the British Government react to these difficulties and the Japanese solution? The answer to these questions could be found by examining Japanese activities in the peninsula from the time of the signing of the protectorate agreement.



# Chapter Four

## THE RUSSO-JAPANESE CONVENTION OF 1910

### AND THE ANNEXATION OF KOREA

The crisis over the neutralization programme came at a time when Japan was faced with enormous difficulties in Korea. The mass of the population in the peninsula were in arms against her rule. Differences between the armed forces and the civilian authorities in Japan over policies in the acquired territory, however, made it difficult to suppress this revolt. The net result was a strong conviction among some of the most influential civilians that annexation was the only solution to their difficulties in the peninsula. What then were the nature of the differences between the armed forces and the civilian authorities in Tokyo and the causes of the insurrection in Korea? Could Japan annex the peninsula at a time when America had signalled that she was prepared to play a more positive role in Far Eastern affairs in a bid to check Russian and Japanese ambitions in that quarter of the world? How did Britain react to these developments? The answers to these questions ~~become clearer by taking a look at~~ <sup>require an examination of</sup> events in Korea from the time of the Japanese-Korean Treaty of November 1905 till the time of the ill-fated neutralization programme.

#### A. The Korean Residency General

Soon after the signing of the protectorate agreement, Jordan observed that:

'A deep feeling of gloom and sullen despondency pervades all classes of Corean Society and there is



little indication at present of any desire to make the best of the situation and endeavour to attain, through Japanese assistance, to a state of national regeneration which they have so signally failed to reach by their own unaided efforts.'<sup>1</sup>

~~This feeling.~~ As Henry Cockburn, the first British Consul General in Korea, later observed, <sup>Protected</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>this</sup> could not be correctly judged as to what dimension ~~it~~ would assume. It soon 'became evident that the resentment felt', he continued, 'was strong enough to lead a section at least of the people into open protest against an Agreement, full justification for which is to be found in the past history of the country, but which is necessarily unpalatable as formally depriving Korea of a portion of her independence'.<sup>2</sup> By mid-December, however, these popular demonstrations against the agreement had subsided but there was a strong feeling in many diplomatic circles that the agreement would continue to be looked upon with resentment, notably by the official classes of Korean society.

The only avenue open to Tokyo to reconcile this bitter feeling among Koreans, Jordan had earlier recommended, was for it to appoint a senior Japanese citizen, who would be highly amenable to Korean susceptibilities, to the post of Resident General in Seoul.<sup>3</sup> This position seemed to have been equally appreciated by the Japanese Government when it nominated Ito Hirobumi for the post. No better

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 160 confidential), 18 November 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/179, Cockburn to Grey (No. 165), 1 December 1905.

<sup>3</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 160 confidential), 18 November 1905.



nomination could have been made ~~other~~ than this. Ito was a man of enormous weight in Japanese political life and of considerable international repute. Not only had he a great insight into and experience of his country's development from 'feudalism' into a 'modern' state, but he was one of the principal architects of this development. A product of his constructive mind was the Japanese constitution of which he was the living authority. On the international level, Ito commanded great respect in almost every western and eastern capital not only because of his enormous contribution to his country but also because of his cautious approach to diplomacy and intricate international problems.<sup>1</sup>

Ito's nomination for the post in Seoul, however, gave rise to a conflict between his own personal influence in the political life of Japan and as a representative of his country abroad. How much freedom of action in Seoul would be commensurate with his own personal influence at the centre of political power in Tokyo? Should his personal influence be allowed to override basic tenets of Japanese political thinking and organisation? These issues were the natural sequence of Japan's own experience at home and in Formosa.

Under the 1889 Japanese constitution, both the army and the navy were left almost exclusively under the control and direction of their respective commands in almost all matters. Thus the ministers

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<sup>1</sup>See Kengi Hamada, Prince Ito (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1936), for the life history of Ito.



of the army and navy were both active high ranking officers who did not necessarily have any affiliations with the governing political party at any particular time.<sup>1</sup> This unique position of the armed forces ~~found its liberal expression~~ <sup>was reflected</sup> in the colonial administration designed for Formosa, the first real colonial possession of Japan. According to the provisional ordinance promulgated in May 1894 for Formosa and its subsequent amendments, the civil authority in the territory, represented by the Governor General, had no power of control and direction over the armed forces serving in the country. Instead the ministers of war and navy chose their own representatives to cater for their departments in the colony. This anomaly was partly rectified when a special ordinance was later promulgated defining the Governor General's powers and qualifications, thereby transferring the division between the civil and armed forces from the colony to Tokyo. Under the new system, the Governor General had to be either an Admiral or Vice-Admiral, or a General or Lieutenant-General, appointed directly by the Emperor. In view of his special qualification, the Governor General was given full command of the army and navy within the limits of his commission. It was further provided that, in all civil matters, he was subject to the control of the Minister of Home Affairs, but in all matters relating to military or naval administration and in affairs relative to the appointment and transfer

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<sup>1</sup>For a survey of the Japanese constitution see G.M. Beckmann, The making of the Meiji Constitution (Lawrence 1957, revised edition 1970); G. Akita, The foundations of constitutional government in modern Japan 1868-1900 (Harvard University Press 1967).



of military and naval officers, he was to obey the commands of the Minister of War as also those of the Minister of the Navy.<sup>1</sup>

It was along these lines of colonial arrangement that Tokyo planned to operate the new administration in Korea.<sup>2</sup> As Ito had had no military and naval experience throughout his diversified career, it was decided to adopt the separate and independent armed forces and civil administrative system in the peninsula. Ito, on the other hand, opposed this plan on the ground that the dual administrative system would not suit Korea, which was a special case. The armed forces command also refused to accept this sort of novelty into Japanese constitutional practice. For some time, therefore, the government found itself at the centre of a growing controversy and unable to take sides. Ito then made his acceptance of the post conditional upon his demands being met. Realising the grave consequences that might ensue if he carried out his threat, the armed forces withdrew their opposition and he won the day.<sup>3</sup> Thus a new element came to be introduced into Japanese constitutional and colonial experience whereby a political figure had control over the activity of the army within certain boundaries. This was, however, achieved through a bitter struggle and at a time when the

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<sup>1</sup>Yosaburo Takekoshi, Japanese Rule in Formosa (Longmans, Green and Co. London 1907), pp. 12-24.

<sup>2</sup>On 22 November 1905, The Daily Telegraph reported that according to its special correspondent in Tokyo, the new administration in Seoul could be 'semi-military' and that General Hasegawa would be appointed as the first Governor General in the peninsula.

<sup>3</sup>FO/46/595, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 283 most confidential), 15 December 1905; FO/371/179, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 294 secret), 29 December 1905.



army was not in a good position to fight back without seriously damaging the fruits of their own successes in the recent war.

It is interesting to note that throughout Ito's struggle with the armed forces over the extent of his power in the peninsula, London remained solidly behind him.<sup>1</sup> This support was not based on the Foreign Office's mistrust of the army but rather on its conception of the special nature of the problems facing the Japanese in Korea and its high opinion of Ito as one of the few people in Japan who could identify and resolve them. Cockburn, for instance, observed that

'If there is one man who can reconcile the Koreans to the new order it is Marquis Ito, on whom the Mikado's choice for the first Resident General has so happily fallen.'<sup>2</sup>

Campbell also noted that, according to Jordan:

'No better choice for the first occupant of the post of Resident General than Marquis Ito could have been made. He both understands and sympathises with the Koreans.'<sup>3</sup>

To MacDonald,

'Marquis Ito is absolutely earnest in his professions, and he is one of the few men in Japan who possesses the determination and statesmanlike qualities, also the position and prestige, to enable him to carry his policies into effect.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Minute by Campbell on MacDonald to Grey (No. 300 secret), 30 December 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/179, Cockburn to Grey (No. 174), 28 December 1905.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minute by Campbell thereon.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/179, MacDonald to Grey (No. 300 secret), 30 December 1905.



It was not only the qualities of Ito which made him more acceptable to British Officials but also his intentions towards Korea. On a number of occasions, he had indicated that

'the policy to be hereafter pursued towards Corea would be formed [sic] by the utmost sincerity of act and intention. She would be assisted and led along the paths of gradual progress, and everything savouring of precipitate pressure would be avoided.'<sup>1</sup>

This and other pronouncements led MacDonald to assure Ito, on his appointment as Resident General, that 'if he pursued the policy he had indicated ... he would have the whole of England at his back', an assurance which the Foreign Office readily endorsed.<sup>2</sup> But was the overall power given to Ito over affairs in the peninsula sufficient for him to realize his avowed objectives? After years of independence and mistrust of the intentions of Tokyo, would the Koreans now make efforts to forget their past differences and accept Ito as a man who would not necessarily put the interests of his country before the development of Korea? The answers to these questions can be found in examining the relationship between Ito and the Korean Government.

#### B. Ito and the Korean Government

The system of administration in operation at the time of the protectorate consisted of the Korean Emperor and his cabinet. At the establishment of the Residency-General, these two organs of the administration were maintained but a clear relationship was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Japan Daily Mail, 30 May 1905, enclosed in MacDonald to Lansdowne (No. 285), 18 December 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/179, MacDonald to Grey (No. 300 secret), 30 December 1905; Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 1), 1 January 1906.



established between them. The theory of the relationship was that the Resident General recommended measures to the cabinet who, after consideration and discussions, submitted them to the Emperor for his assent. In reality, however, both the cabinet and the Emperor were no more than rubber stamps of the Resident General's decisions.<sup>1</sup> Under the various arrangements between Korea and Japan since February 1904, nothing of national or international importance could be decided by the cabinet and the Emperor against the wishes of the Resident General. This loss of political initiative and freedom of action were developments which the former Korean administration could not accept without a show of open defiance. It was, therefore, not surprising that the Korean cabinet and the Emperor used their constitutional positions to launch Japan into fresh diplomatic difficulties regarding the status of the peninsula.

Barely four weeks after the signing of the Portsmouth Treaty, Jordan, in his usual style of comparing the British position in Egypt to that of the Japanese in Korea, noted that:

'Lord Milner and other writers on Egypt have laid special emphasis on the necessity of loyal co-operation on the part of the Khedive for the successful working of the Egyptian system of administration. It is this lack of co-operation which not infrequently develops into active obstruction, that adds immensely to the difficulties of the situation here, and forms the dark cloud on the horizon of the future.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For detailed discussion of the powers of the Resident General see Kim Chong-ik Eugene, Japan in Korea (1905-1910): The Techniques of Political Power (Stanford University, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis 1959, Microfilm No. 59-2831).

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 136 confidential), 2 October 1905.



After fifteen months of on the spot observation, Cockburn was able to confirm his predecessor's convictions and predictions. In a highly provocative despatch, he noted that:

'The Emperor's acceptance of the Protectorate in principle was far from implying that the Resident-General's difficulties with the Korean Government were at an end. It is a common experience of negotiators in the East that pressure applied at the proper moment will suffice to remove opposition to the principle of a proposal, but that it is less easy to find leverage for removing obstruction to the steps necessary to give effect to it, for the pressure that is justifiable for the carrying of the main point with the Korean Government and the Residency-General'.<sup>1</sup>

What then were the various obstructive tactics adopted by the Emperor to thwart the efforts of the Residency-General?

The first issue that the Emperor raised in respect of the Japanese position in the peninsula was the method they used in securing the Korean cabinet's assent to the protectorate agreement. According to Korean sources, in trying to induce the cabinet to sign the treaty, the Japanese resorted to every form of intimidation, cajolery, reasoning and even bribery. Other sources also claimed that the seal of the Korean Government was affixed to the agreement by the Japanese themselves after the Korean Foreign Ministry had refused to do so.<sup>2</sup> On account of these, it was claimed, the agreement was extorted by force; ipso facto, it was invalid.

Soon after making these claims, consultations might have begun between the Emperor and the Russian Government on ways of withholding the recognition of the other Powers to the protectorate. For St.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Cockburn to Grey (No. 11 very confidential), 7 March 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Chung, The Case of Korea (London 1921), pp. 62-65.



Petersburg did not waste time in raising the Korean claims with Washington. When the Foreign Office learnt of the Russian move, it decided against making any inquiries as to the truth or falsehood of the complaints. On 13 December 1905, however, the London Daily Mail published the text of a telegram from its New York correspondent to the effect that one Homer Hulbert, an American citizen who had been appointed by the Emperor as his 'special commissioner' in the United States, had received a cablegram from Seoul in which the Emperor had declared the agreement null and void in view of the circumstances under which it was obtained.<sup>1</sup> When Langley heard of this move, he suggested that an inquiry be made from Seoul into the Korean assertions and, if a contrary report were received, the Russian Government informed of it. Campbell, on the other hand, felt that there was no necessity for such a hasty action as Jordan might soon be reporting on the issue. 'But', he noted to Grey, 'you may possibly agree with Mr. Langley that it is worth while doing so, in order to set C<sup>t</sup>. Lamsdroff straight - always supposing that the story is without foundation.' This line of action was, however, opposed by Grey on ground that the Russians had not officially raised the issue with London. The 'Japanese', he noted, 'might think us officious if they heard of our telegraphing about a matter in which no complaint has been made to us'.<sup>2</sup>

On 20 December, however, Jordan's report on the circumstances under which the agreement was signed arrived in London. After reading

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<sup>1</sup>The London Daily Mail, 13 December 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/17/1695, Minutes attached to a Daily Mail cutting of 13 December 1905.



through the despatch, Langley came to the conclusion that, although the Russian story that the Japanese seized the seal of the Korean Foreign Office and affixed it to the agreement was untrue, the Korean assertion that 'the Treaty had been obtained by force can hardly be said to have been exaggerated'. Campbell agreed with Langley and suggested that the Councillor of the British Embassy in St. Petersburg, <sup>Cecil</sup> ~~Arthur~~ Spring-Rice, be informed of the facts. But again, Grey opposed the measure by recalling his previous ground of objection. In addition, he noted that it would not be politic to enter into communication with St. Petersburg on such a delicate issue.<sup>1</sup>

Grey's insistence on silence in the whole affair proved good tactics/as it prevented both Russia and Korea from advancing their argument further. But Russia had not resigned herself to her fate in the peninsula. The loss of prestige and influence in Korea was a great blow to her national pride. It was, therefore, not surprising that she initiated various moves to regain some of her former influence by raising the question of her annulled treaties and conventions with Korea. It is, consequently, appropriate at this stage to direct our attention to this issue and how London reacted to these moves.

#### C. Russia and the annulled Russo-Korean treaties

The antithesis of Japanese and foreign aspirations in Korea and its possible impact on the internal political situation in

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<sup>1</sup>FO/17/1693, Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 160 confidential), 18 November 1905 and minutes thereon.



the peninsula were later summed up by Cockburn in the following words:

'In examining Japan's position in Korea one is not considering a mere question of internal politics, but a problem the solution of which will not be without influence on the maintenance of peace in the Far East.

Nor is it a problem that can be put aside as having been disposed of, for the moment at all events, by the establishment of the Japanese Protectorate, for the present position has no sign of permanence. The relations between the Japanese and Korean Governments have been placed on no definite footing, and it is a matter of conjecture and uncertainty what form they will eventually assume, while as regards foreign Powers, although Japan is for the present precluded by her own declarations from proposing the formal curtailment of their rights, there is no doubt that she looks forward to their eventual modification, and maintenance of them.<sup>1</sup>

This was precisely the situation which developed between Russia and Japan after the former had given up the claim of the Korean Government that the protectorate agreement was secured by force. She took up the questions connected with the annulled Russo-Korean treaties.

On 27 December 1905, the Russian Ambassador in London, Aleksander Benckendorff, called at the Foreign Office and handed in a note from his government. According to this note, the Russian Minister in Tokyo had ascertained, semi-officially from Komura, that, as Japan had assumed the management of foreign relations of Korea, the appointment of consuls-general to Seoul by the Powers should be discussed with Tokyo. This position, the Russians contended,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/237, General Report on Korea for the year 1906, 7 March 1907.



tends 'to establish the fact that the former Treaties concluded between the Powers and Korea were thus abrogated'. In view of this, St. Petersburg would wish to know the opinion of the British Government in the matter.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the Japanese declaration regarding the maintenance of foreign rights and interests in Korea and after consultation with Tokyo, the Russians were informed,

'... in view of the terms of Article 1 of the Agreement of the 17th November, 1905, between Japan and Korea, that the latter country should be discussed with the Japanese Government. His Majesty's Government did not understand that the Japanese Government considered the Treaties concluded by Korea previously to the Agreement to have become null and void. By Article 2 of the Agreement of the 17th November the Japanese Government undertook to see to the execution of the Treaties actually existing between Korea and other Powers, and they have explicitly stated that Japan will respect the Treaties.'<sup>2</sup>

On the same day that this note was communicated to Benckendorff, MacDonald telegraphed to the effect that, according to the Japanese, paragraph two of Article 2 of the Portsmouth Treaty, which accorded ~~the same~~ <sup>equal</sup> treatment to Russian subjects as ~~to those pertaining~~ to other foreign nationals in Korea, was inserted into the agreement on Russia's insistence. This in effect meant, they argued, that the Russian Government acknowledged the fact that there was no treaty existing between Korea and Russia. Had this not been the case,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/44, Grey to Hardinge (No. 16), 18 January 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



MacDonald continued, the Japanese saw no point otherwise in having this paragraph inserted into the treaty.<sup>1</sup> If this was really so, Campbell noted, then the 'Russians in Corea thus get the benefit of the old treaties between Corea and the Powers which Japan has agreed to respect'.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it must have been noted that, unlike the subjects of some of the Powers in Korea, it would not be an easy task for <sup>the</sup> Russians to single out their own private undertakings from those of the Russian Government in the peninsula. If, therefore, the edict of 18 May 1904, which cancelled all existing Russo-Korean treaties and agreements was upheld, it would be difficult for the most legitimate private Russian enterprise to escape possible Japanese harassment.

It was most probably in anticipation of such effects of the edict that St. Petersburg decided to pursue the subject further. In a note to Grey, therefore, Benckendorff observed that under no circumstances could it be maintained that the Korean-Japanese agreement of November 1905 was binding on Russia nor could it be held that that engagement invalidated any Russo-Korean treaties. Such a situation, he maintained, could only be established by a Russo-Korean understanding registering that fact. Since there was nothing to that effect, he concluded, Korea could <sup>be</sup> and was still recognised in Russia as an independent state. Hence, the Korean Emperor was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/44, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 373), January 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., minute thereon.



the only legitimate authority to deliver exequaturs to foreign consuls to Korea.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office found these arguments quite unconvincing and illogical. Campbell, however, advised that in communicating the British position to Russia,

'stress sd Should not be laid upon the Korean agreement of November 17 1905. Indeed, I think it wd be better not to mention it at all. The Russians allege that the Japanese forcibly possessed themselves of the seals of the Korean FO & themselves affixed them to the document. We have not heard this from Seoul & it is probably an exaggeration; but however this may be, there is no doubt that the agreement was practically extorted by force.'<sup>2</sup>

In its reply, the draft of which Grey edited 'to soften as much as possible the expression of our differences with the Russian view', therefore, the Foreign Office pointed out that the independence of Korea had 'been distinctively modified by Article II of the Treaty of Portsmouth, ... which recognised the predominance of Japanese political, military and economic interests in Korea'.

In addition, it was noted that Britain 'considered that the Powers, by withdrawing their legations from Korea, have practically recognised the responsibility of Japan for the conduct of foreign relations of that country'. In view of this, the note concluded, Japan had the right to issue exequaturs to any consul commissioned to reside in Seoul. The Japanese were then notified of the sense of the British reply.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Benckendorff to Grey /IO162/, 21 March 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., minute thereon.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/179, Grey to Benckendorff /IO162/, 9 April 1906.



It was at this stage that the Japanese decided to explain their position on the subject. On May 7, *Chargé d'Affaires*, Matsu, called at the Foreign Office and noted that when Komura was in China in December 1905, he was informed of the desire of the Russian Government to appoint a consul general to Korea. On the basis of this, Komura told the Russian Minister in Peking that it would be most appropriate if his government would take up the matter officially with Tokyo. Some time later, the French Minister in Tokyo addressed a note to Komura requesting this appointment on behalf of the Russian Government. This request was granted after the Russians had agreed that such a consul must obtain his exequatur from Tokyo. At this stage, Matsu continued, everything seemed settled until the Russians communicated a memorandum to Tokyo drawing its attention to the edict of 18 May 1904. According to the Russians, 'history afforded no precedent for a similar abolition of Treaties by a unilateral declaration'. They, therefore, called on the Japanese Government to 'pronounce upon the validity or invalidity of the aforesaid Decree'. In their reply to this note, Matsu stated, the Japanese intimated that the edict was promulgated at a time when war existed between Russia, on one side, and Korea and Japan on the other. On account of this, therefore,

'the Decree in question served to confirm a state of things already in existence as a result of the war, and declared that they were, consequently, well satisfied that the Treaties, Conventions, and other engagements so denounced were null and inoperative; and moreover, that the fact that Russia was likewise convinced of the ineffectiveness of her Treaties with Korea was clearly deducible from the action of the Russian Plenipotentiaries at Portsmouth in asking the Plenipotentiaries of Japan for an assurance of the most-favoured-nation treatment in Korea.'



This, Mutsu concluded, had been the position up to date.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite clear from the above communication that the Japanese were in a tight position in justifying the rationale behind the edict. Admittedly, Japan was in a military occupation of Korea throughout the war. At the same time, she made it clear on a number of occasions that Korea was not a party to the war. Her action in the peninsula, she claimed, was conditioned by military exigencies and not by a desire to mobilize Korea to her assistance. This was the explanation she gave to Britain in 1904 when the question was raised as to whether her action in Korea would justify France in invoking her entente with Russia and come to the latter's assistance. Her assertion, therefore, that the edict was issued as a sequel of the state of war existing between Korea and Russia at the time was nothing more than a quibble to justify her action. On the basis of this untenable position, it was certain she would not be able to uphold her argument against Russia. It was a realisation of this situation that the Foreign Office immediately sent Cockburn's exequatur to the Gaimusho in order to weaken the Russian position.<sup>2</sup>

Faced with this fait accompli and lacking support from Germany and France, who, it had been widely speculated, might join with Russia in a counter-coalition against Anglo-Japanese policy in the Far East, the Russian Government decided to drop the issue.<sup>3</sup> On 11

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Verbal Communication by Count Mutsu /157277, 7 May 1906.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/179, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No.57), 8 May 1906 and minutes thereon; Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 35) 10 May 1906.

<sup>3</sup>John Espy Merrill, American Official Reactions to the Domestic Policies of Japan in Korea, 1905-1910 (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University 1954), pp. 62-63, Microfilm No. 9510.



June, therefore, the Russians applied to Tokyo for the exequatur.<sup>1</sup> From this period onwards, Russian attitudes towards the Japanese in Korea seemed to have been designed to find a better accommodation with Tokyo on all outstanding issues between them in the peninsula instead of pursuing a policy that had no international backing.<sup>2</sup> It is within this context that one should understand events that led to the Russo-Japanese Convention of 1907, which reaffirmed the Japanese position in Korea.<sup>3</sup>

The gradual improvements in Russo-Japanese relations in Korea from the second half of 1906 did not have any appreciable effects on Japan's political difficulties in the peninsula. In fact, any slight improvement in Japan's international image in the peninsula seemed to worsen the relations between the Resident General and the Korean Government. The situation can better be appreciated by looking in some detail into their relationship from the time of the establishment of the protectorate.

#### D. The deposition of the Korean Emperor

The loss of national self-determination was an event which some Koreans could not accept. Soon after the establishment of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Memorandum communicated by Japanese Charge d'Affaires [274057], 10 August 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; FO/371/179, Nicolson to Grey (No. 411), 30 June 1906; Nicolson to Grey (No. 452), 17 July 1906; Cockburn to Grey (No. 79), 23 October 1906.

<sup>3</sup>For details of these developments see for instance E.W. Edwards, 'The Far Eastern Agreements of 1907', in the Journal of Modern History, Vol. 26 (1954), pp. 340-355.



protectorate, therefore, a number of people demonstrated their open disapproval to the treaty by committing suicide. The Korean Emperor, for his side, showed his strong appreciation for these acts by bestowing high posthumous honours on these 'nationalists'. Such actions on the part of the Emperor were, however, held by the Japanese and many foreign observers alike as aimed at arousing popular sentiments against the protectorate agreement. When no mass demonstrations followed the Emperor's actions, therefore, Cockburn felt that this strategy failed mainly because the majority of the population was of the opinion that suicide by such low ranking officials and commoners 'was an impertinent meddling in affairs above their proper sphere.'<sup>1</sup> This was, however, only the beginning of the Emperor being directly identified with a systematic campaign to dislodge the Japanese from the peninsula.

On 19 May, 1906, a body of rebels calling themselves 'Gihei' (the Patriotic Army), headed by one Min Yong Sik, seized the town of Honju in the province of Chung Cheng and drove all the Japanese residents and troops from it.<sup>2</sup> It was only after a number of campaigns by a mixed force of Koreans and Japanese that the town was recaptured. At this stage, Cockburn reported, the strong suspicion of the Emperor's complicity in the rebellion

'deepened into conviction both amongst Japanese and Koreans, and was confirmed by information obtained from prisoners and documents ... but, although the fact was recognised as practically established that the Emperor

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Cockburn to Grey (No. 174), 28 December 1905.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/45, Cockburn to Grey (No. 39), 28 May 1906.



had supplied funds for the rising and that the leaders had acted with his authority, the Japanese authorities seemed reluctant to confront His Majesty with a direct charge of ill-faith; and so recently as the 21st June I was assured, on very good authority, that it had been decided to ignore his share in events, and to deal with the officials implicated as if they had acted on their own responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

This policy, Cockburn later reported, seemed to have been based on an assumption that Ito's personal influence would be sufficient to induce the Emperor to accept the inevitability of the protectorate. He, however, doubted whether this strategy could achieve any desirable effect, a position, he noted, Ito himself seemed to have realised on his return from Tokyo on a consultative mission.<sup>2</sup> It did not, therefore, come as a surprise to Cockburn when Ito established a special police force with the sole purpose of preventing 'undesirables' from having anything to do with the Emperor.<sup>3</sup>

Cockburn's comments on these measures were very interesting indeed. He noted in a rather lengthy despatch that

'the effect of these measures is to place the Emperor in some respects in a position of a prisoner of state, not free to receive visitors he chooses; but though this infringement of his liberty must be distasteful to himself and disliked in principle by those Koreans who retain their attachment to him, many welcome its results, for the opinion seems to be strongly held among them that the Emperor's mistakes and misfortunes of the country are, in a great measure, due to his fatal readiness to believe what he is told by persons

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/179, Cockburn to Grey (No. 46 confidential), 9 July 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



of no standing, judgement, or reputation, who have often personal reasons for misleading him'.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, he observed:

'/Although/ A Protecting Power cannot be expected to tolerate the fermenting of movements against itself by the protected Sovereign .... it remains to be seen whether /The measures against the Emperor/.... will prove effective. For although it is probably true that, the Emperor would have acted differently, had he not listened to bad advice, it is by no means certain either that he will cease to do it, or that he will not in any case remain under its influence. Possibly the fact that the Japanese have not shrunk from this measure of coercion may startle him into realizing that he is helpless in their hands, and that his belief in foreign intervention was delusive, but possible also he may see in the restrictions imposed on him a deliberate and long-planned step in the development of Japanese schemes.'<sup>2</sup>

He noted further that Ito himself appeared rather sceptical about the effectiveness of the measures and that:

'Some stricter system of seclusion might perhaps be tried, but it is clear that the deposition of the Emperor is an event that has been brought appreciably nearer by what has happened, and the effects of it must have been considered by the Government of Japan. Possibly they hope to be able to establish the authority of a more malleable successor, but that will not be an easy task, and there may be a dislocation of the machinery of Korean Government for the replacing of which the Japanese are at present quite inadequately equipped'.<sup>3</sup>

These reports and comments received a great deal of interest and excited sympathies for the Japanese at the Foreign Office. On the other hand, the Resident Clerk, Robert Greg, felt that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



measures were much more drastic than Britain would have adopted in an analogous situation. Grey, however, disagreed with this assumption. He noted, 'Corea is more remote and our protégé [?] is more acute'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Grey was of the opinion that the Emperor's behaviour so far could not have been contained by measures of tolerance and propitiation. It was the same view that London adopted towards the Japanese when the Emperor launched his next adventurous move during The Hague Peace Conference of 1907.

Delegates at the International Peace Conference at The Hague were startled on 27 June to find a group of Koreans, headed by Homer Hulbert, demanding on the authority of the Emperor, for a representation in the deliberations of the Conference. They were, however, refused hearing on the ground that Korea was a Japanese protectorate, ipso facto, her interests were well represented at the conference by Japan.<sup>2</sup>

This move was a great political blunder on the part of the Emperor. The conference was being held at a period of Russo-Japanese rapprochement and it was almost certain that Russia would not, under any circumstances, sacrifice the rest of her interests for the sake of Korea, where she could achieve nothing against British, American and Japanese opposition. Neither could he have counted on the support of any of the Powers attending the Conference and there is no evidence to the effect that he attempted this move before despatching

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/383, Cockburn to Grey (No. 34), 1 August 1907.



the delegation. Moreover, the political atmosphere in Seoul itself was not conducive for this sort of overt manoeuvre. In May 1907, the old Korean Cabinet, which had shown to be in sympathy with the Emperor, resigned and Ito used the occasion to secure the appointment of the pro-Japanese Yi Wan-yong, the then Minister of Education, as Prime Minister. The rest of the cabinet was made up of men of Yi Wan-yong type. They were either prominent members of the Il Chin Hoi, a pro-Japanese Korean society which was organised at the inspiration of the Japanese in 1904 to enlist Korean support and secret assistance during the war; or men who, in one way or the other, supported the professed aims of the Japanese in Korea. The new Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Song Phyong-chun, for instance, was the founder of the Il Chin Hoi. Cho Cyong-hyop, the Minister of Justice, was, until the Japanese began their de facto political control over Korea in 1904, a political refugee staying in Japan, where he became a professor of the Foreign Languages School in Tokyo, and subsequently was in the service of the Residency General. Yi Wan-yong himself 'was the first among the Ministers of the time to consent to the signing of the Protectorate treaty of 1905'.<sup>1</sup> With such men at the helm of affairs, the despatch of the Hague Mission was bound to have disastrous consequences for the Emperor.

Indeed, the cabinet did not waste time. Soon after the abortive move, it informed Ito that it had decided to hold the Emperor directly responsible for sending the delegation. The Japanese cabinet also discussed the issue on 21 July and decided that the

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<sup>1</sup>The North China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette, 7 June 1907.



best way to prevent a repetition of such an incident was for the Resident General to exercise greater control over the administration. Hayashi Tadasu was, therefore, despatched to Seoul with a view to confer with Ito on the subject and to endeavour to arrive at an agreement with the Korean Government on any such measure.<sup>1</sup> In informing MacDonald of this mission, the Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs said that he personally felt that a deposition or deportation of the Emperor would be too drastic a measure. On the other hand, he continued, an 'apology and a promise to amend his ways ... would not be sufficient.'<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Japanese Government appeared to have had no concrete programme for dealing with the Emperor at the time.

In the meantime, however, the Korean cabinet, on hearing of Hayashi's visit, persuaded the Emperor that the best way to prevent the country from being annexed by Japan was his abdication in favour of the ailing Crown Prince.<sup>3</sup> But the announcement of the abdication was made an occasion of riots in Seoul by the Emperor's supporters. The situation was considerably eased only after the Japanese authorities had made a hasty arrangement for the foreign representatives to have audiences with the new Emperor. This proved to be a good strategy as it clearly demonstrated to the mass of the population that the Powers were all in favour of the change, hence it would be

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, op.cit., pp. 144-5.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/383, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 29), 18 July 1907.

<sup>3</sup>Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, op.cit., p.146.



futile to expect any support from them.<sup>1</sup>

It was within this political situation that Ito and Hayashi began negotiations with the cabinet for a new arrangement regarding the role of the Resident General in the Korean administration. An agreement in seven articles was eventually signed on 24 July. Under these arrangements, the Resident General replaced the Emperor in giving assent to every ordinance and regulation before they could have the force of law. In addition, the Resident General was given the final say in the appointment and dismissal of all foreign advisers and high officials of state. It was further provided that the judiciary should be separated from the ordinary administrative machinery. Furthermore, the first article of the agreement of 22 August 1904, which provided for the appointment of a financial adviser to the Department of Finance, was abrogated and his duties transferred to an agency of the Residency General.<sup>2</sup>

The agreement, as it stood, did not make any attempt to interfere with foreign rights in the peninsula. For this reason, and for the provisions of the second alliance, therefore, London saw no objection to its terms. As Langley noted:

'We have recognised the right of Japan to take such measures of control and protection in Korea as she may deem proper to safeguard her interests. So if we had reason to object we could not do so'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/383, MacDonald to Grey (No. 34), 1 August 1907.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/383, Komura to Grey [24973], 26 July 1907.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., minute thereon.



To this, one official at the Foreign Office later added that:

'British Treaty rights under the Treaty of 1883 with Korea remain unaffected by the recent Japanese Korean Agreement: that under it we are still entitled to most favoured nation treatment, ie treatment as good as that accorded to Japan: that there seems no reason to anticipate discrimination; and that in these circumstances HM Govt see no reason for objecting to the agreement.'<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, recognised in London that the effects of the arrangement would be to place the Korean administration both under the de jure and de facto control of Japan. In this respect it was noted that:

'The change might be summed up thus that Korea passes from the position of Egypt towards England to that of Tunis [1a] towards France.'<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the agreement was seen in London as having placed Korea in a sort of 'association with Japan by which one could refer to the peninsula as an extension of Japan. To this sort of relationship, the Foreign Office again had no objection. As Langley noted,

'as annexation is the only thing that would affect us injuriously our game, I imagine, is to make Japan's task of governing without annexation as easy as possible'.<sup>3</sup>

As regards the issue whether the deposition of the Emperor and the new agreement were commensurate with the Emperor's inept and blundering diplomacy, the Foreign Office was rather silent. From its previous reactions to the Emperor's activities, however,

<sup>1</sup>FO/371/383, Minute on [2494].

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/383, Minute on Komura to Grey [2497], 26 July 1907.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



there can be no doubt that it saw the changes as a natural sequel of events. This was the argument clearly put forward by The Times when it referred to the despatch of the Hague Mission as a violation of the treaty stipulations between Japan and Korea and the abdication of the Emperor as a natural outcome of such an action.<sup>1</sup>

Another major development which appeared to have escaped the notice of British diplomats at the time was the reorganisation of the Korean Cabinet. Japanese assistants were now attached to every government department.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the day-to-day administration of the country was placed in the hands of Japanese. But could these measures enable Tokyo to govern the peninsula more effectively? It is doubtful. The net result of these actions can be seen by looking at events in the territory from this period onwards.

#### E. The Korean Insurrection of 1907-10

In spite of the measures adopted by the Japanese to strengthen their hands in the peninsula, they were still sceptical about the future. There were fears that the deposed Emperor might continue his intrigues to undermine the new arrangements and that his efforts might be greatly enhanced by the continued existence of an army which had shown that its sympathies lay with him.<sup>3</sup> On 1 August 1907, therefore, a decree was promulgated disbanding the entire Korean

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 27 September 1907.

<sup>2</sup>The London and China Telegraph, 12 August 1907.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/383, Cockburn to Grey (No. 34), 1 August 1907.



army except a battalion, which was maintained for the purposes of guarding the Palace.<sup>1</sup>

The decree of 1 August was made an occasion for mutiny started by one detachment after its commander had committed suicide while issuing the order to his regiment. As similar orders went around the country disbanding the provincial troops, many of them escaped and joined the ranks of their disenchanted colleagues. Within a few days after the promulgation of the decree, therefore, Japan had a massive rebellion on her hands in Korea.<sup>2</sup> In their endeavour to suppress this uprising, however, the Japanese made numerous tactical mistakes. The net result was that they drove the civilian population into the support of these trained and disenchanted soldiers, leading to protracted skirmishes between 1907 and 1910. What were these tactical errors and what were London's attitudes towards them?

In reporting the rebellion to London, Cockburn observed:

'As to the causes of the outbreak the immediate impulse was given by the feared abdication of the Emperor on the 19th July, the signing on the 25th of the new Convention placing the Korean Government directly under the control of Japan, and the disbandment on the 1st August of the Korean troops in Seoul, which was soon followed by a similar disbandment throughout the country.'

But these factors, he continued,

'could not have produced so sudden a rising if the popular feeling against Japan had been less strong or had less justification.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/383, Cockburn to Grey (No. 42), 26 September 1907.



Having come to this conclusion, Cockburn sought to find out the underlying causes of the revolt. By 22 November, he had discovered two distinct groups 'both in revolt against Japanese domination' but bound together in an association called the 'Eui Pyeng' [The Righteous or Patriotic Army].<sup>1</sup> The first group which he identified as 'the real popular movement against Japan' consisted of intellectuals and men of 'good' character who appeared

'to be moved by genuine patriotism, though not guided by much wisdom, and it is primarily their conviction that Japan has obtained predominance in Korea by treachery and violence, and is strengthening her position with complete disregard of Korean rights and feelings, that brings them into the field, and with them, of course, many who could give but vague reasons for their resentment'.

The second group, he noted, consisted of the disbanded troops and

'men of their own type who have joined from motives that may be partly patriotic, but are believed to have a strong alloy of propensity to brigandage. This section of the insurgents is recruited from the hardier and more adventurous class than the other, and have little hesitation in dealing severely with any of their fellow-countrymen not willing to contribute to their maintenance in the field'.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the cause for the rise of the first group, Cockburn traced it down principally to the heavy reliance by the Japanese army on the Il Chin Hoi in quelling the uprising. From the ranks of the Il Chin Hoi, he wrote,

'the Japanese officers draw the Korean interpreters who are their only medium of communication with the people, and it is on them the Japanese authorities rely for their information. They are, for instance, trusted to detect the villagers who are in secret communication with the insurgents, and it does not

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/383, Cockburn to Grey (No. 53), 22 November 1907. This analysis agrees in main with those who later on made attempts to identify the composition of the 'Righteous Army', see for instance Eugene Kim and Hyo-kyo Kim, op.cit., pp. 200-1.



seem to occur to a Japanese officer that the men he had had shot on such a denunciation may owe their deaths, not to any connection with the insurgents, but to a private feud with the Il Chin Hoi informer; or more probably, the Japanese officer made up his mind that some inhabitants of a particular village must be shot as a warning to the rest, and, having nothing to guide him, in his selection, is content to let it be made for him, on no matter what grounds. He fails to realise that he would do better to choose the victims at random rather than strengthen the popular conviction that the Japanese are the tools of their native partisans, who utilize this belief, in districts where as yet there is no armed resistance, and terrorize their fellow countrymen to their own profit'.<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of the insurrection had, for some time, been given prominence and criticized in some of the Western press.<sup>2</sup> In Britain, on the other hand, the press seemed not to have noticed this aspect of Japanese policy in Korea. In October 1907, however, the Foreign Editor of the London Daily Mail, Charles Watney, received a cable from their Far East correspondent, Frederick McKenzie, accusing the Japanese troops of rape, indiscriminate shooting and the depopulation of the Korean country-side. On receipt of this cable, it was decided that its publication would ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~harmful~~ <sup>harmful</sup> ~~a lot of harm~~ to the cordial relations existing between Britain and Japan. Watney, therefore, sent it to the Resident Clerk at the Foreign Office, Montgomery, for his information and with an intimation that he need not return it to him.<sup>3</sup>

When Montgomery read through the telegram, he dismissed it on the ground that McKenzie was a notorious anti-Japanese journalist.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/383, Conroy Roger to Grey [387507], 13 August 1907, gives a clear exposition of this state of affairs.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/383, Watney to Montgomery and its enclosure [343777], 11 October 1907.



In a note to Campbell on 14 October, however, Alston requested that the matter should not be merely brushed aside on that account, but it would be advisable if Cockburn could be asked to investigate into the authenticity of the issues raised in the report. Campbell agreed with Alston on the question of investigation but he felt that the report must surely be 'grossly exaggerated' as such acts would not be condoned by Ito.<sup>1</sup> A copy of McKenzie's report was, therefore, sent to Cockburn for his comments.

In his reply, Cockburn agreed with McKenzie on most of the accusations against the Japanese troops. He then went on:

'The picture ... is not a pretty one, but what is one to do? The Japanese Civilian of the better type dislikes his army's ways almost as much as the foreigner does, but everywhere in the World the same holds: the Civilian can put the military machine in motion, or keep it at rest, but once he sets it going he cannot control its detailed working. "Put down these armed bands of insurgents" - the machine is set going. "But don't molest the peaceful inhabitants" - you may give that order too, but it will be quite beyond your power to see that it is obeyed or punish disobedience, if the military authorities are not in sympathy with you and do not, for their own military reasons, think the cultivation of good feeling important. And the Japanese military man being what he is, the Japanese Civilian is almost helpless.

Personally, I hold that what is needed is publicity. The telegram you sent me would probably have done little good, because it is over-coloured and too violent in tone, but if all could have the facts (or what were found to be facts) set forth dispassionately by a not-so-biased reporter (eg by Morrison of the Times) and if English feeling showed signs of restiveness the Japanese military would, or might, be forced to mend their ways, and the real effect would be good. But you can judge better than I whether there not be a risk of too great a revulsion of English feeling with rather inconvenient political results'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/383, Cockburn to Alston 343727, 20 November 1907.



Surely, the Foreign Office was the better judge. When Alston read through this despatch, his only comment was that the so-called atrocities were no more than could 'generally be expected from a victorious army stamping out rebellion in a conquered territory'.<sup>1</sup> No attempt was, therefore, made in London to speak to the Japanese Ambassador about the issue.

By this time, however, MacDonald had received a despatch from Cockburn in which the latter opined that it was the general belief that peace could be restored if only the Japanese withdrew their support from the Il Chin Hoi, but from all indications, the authorities were unwilling to do this. MacDonald, therefore, took the opportunity offered by Ito's visit to Japan in April 1908 in reminding him that:

'Japan's policy towards Corea was being watched with the greatest interest by the nations of the World, and by none with more earnestness, and if I might say so anxiety than by Japan's ally, Great Britain ... that his public declarations were fresh in the minds of all; his private utterances made to myself and reported by me to my Government had given the greatest satisfaction, but I was sure that a knowledge that his declared policy of conciliation was about to be departed from, would create the keenest disappointment.'<sup>2</sup>

Ito informed MacDonald, however, that he was aware of the character and conduct of some of the members of the society. 'It must also be remembered that', he went on, 'the nucleus of the society consisted of a number of devoted Coreans who, at the commencement of the war, had rendered inestimable service to the Japanese armies.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minute thereon.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/440, MacDonald to Grey (No. 78 confidential), 11 April 1908.



The society had grown very much larger than was ever intended, and efforts were being made to reduce its numbers and possibly eventually to do away with it altogether'.<sup>1</sup>

On his return from Tokyo, Ito elaborated on what he had told MacDonald. He informed Cockburn that he was giving serious consideration to what action he could take against the society. He was, however, of two minds on this issue because

'he did not feel satisfied that its conduct had been such as to outweigh its strong claims to Japanese gratitude for the assistance it had given during the late war with Russia. The Society's ideas of progress were in many respects crude and absurd, but it nevertheless represented a liberal element in Korea, as opposed to the conservatism of the majority of the Koreans, a readiness to adopt new ideas as well as modes of dress, and this was, in the eyes of many Koreans, its chief crime. Considering therefore that the Society had in the past earned Japanese gratitude, and that it was now unpopular, partly because it supported the extension of Japanese influence and partly because it favoured change and reform, he could not hastily condemn it on its enemies' testimony, and dissolve the only organised body of Korean supporters of the present regime'.<sup>2</sup>

It may seem rather strange to the casual observer why the Foreign Office made no attempt to put in a word in London in support of MacDonald and Cockburn for the disbandment of the Il Chin Hoi. More strange, perhaps, was its silence over reports that the insurrection was being kept alive by the refusal of the Japanese authorities to accord any sense of fair play in their dealings with Koreans and the large influx of Japanese into the peninsula whose principal preoccupation was dispossessing Korean peasants of their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/440, Cockburn to Grey (No. 43), 4 June 1908.



lands.<sup>1</sup> It must, however, be remembered that this policy was consistent with Britain's intention of not interfering in any Japanese moves in their recently acquired territories in so far as such moves did not directly prejudice British vested interests. In addition, Grey was quoted to have once observed that 'Korea was not a favourable field for the observation of Japanese manners and customs.... There are plenty of good Japanese but they won't go there'.<sup>2</sup> This was not, however, true of Ito. Faced with an 'unruly' army and a mass rebellion which showed no signs of subsiding, Ito decided, in the spring of 1909, to resign from his post.<sup>3</sup>

The news of Ito's decision to resign as Resident General in Korea came as a surprise in London. All sorts of speculation about possible change of policy in the peninsula dominated the Foreign Office. Francis Lindley, a clerk at the Foreign Office, for instance, opined that Ito's departure from Korea would leave 'no civilian authority in that country of sufficient weight to resist successfully the military element'. There was, therefore, bound to be a change of policy in the peninsula. Langley, now Assistant Under-Secretary of State, on the other hand, observed that, although Ito might be out of the scene in Korea, he would

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/237, Enclosure in Lowther to Grey (No. 1 confidential), 2 January 1907; FO/371/383, Cockburn to Grey (No. 53), 22 November 1907; FO/371/440 Cockburn to Grey (No. 51), 7 July 1908; FO/371/645, Keijo Shimbun, 12 December 1908, enclosure in Lay to Grey (No. 90), 23 December 1908; FO/371/877, Keijo Nippo, 3 December 1909, enclosure in Lay to Grey (No. 90), 6 December 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/433, Minute by Campbell on Kidson to Campbell [714297, 5 September 1908.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/646, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 29 confidential), 14 May 1909.



'probably take an interest in Korean affairs and use his influence to prevent a change of policy in Korea.'<sup>1</sup> On 25 May, however, Arthur Hyde Lay, Acting British Consul General in Seoul, was informed that:

'The organization of the Residency General would undergo some changes and the power at present vested in the Resident General of issuing orders direct to the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in Korea which was apt to lead to friction between the civil and military authorities might be curtailed'.<sup>2</sup>

This statement did little to clarify the situation in London. As far as Lindley was concerned, this reorganization would lead to the military element having more than a fair say in the administration of the peninsula as Ito's successor, Sone Arasuke, did not have the necessary prestige and influence to restrain the army. Campbell, on the other hand, advised that there could be no cause for alarm on this score as Ito had said he would be directing Korean affairs from Tokyo.<sup>3</sup> On the occasion of Ito's installation in his new post as President of the Privy Council, the Japanese Emperor addressed him in the following words: 'We bid you remember that We shall have occasion to rely in a large measure upon your counsel and advice.' Horace George Rumbold, Acting Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo, observed that these words might well be read as an indirect assurance of the continuity of Japan's general policy in Korea under the new regime'.<sup>4</sup> Reading through this

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/646, Lay to Grey (No. 37), 26 May 1909.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/646, Rumbold to Grey (No. 170), 16 June 1909.



despatch and the various résumés of press opinions in Japan on the subject, Lindley had second thoughts on the outcome of the change. He minuted, 'it would appear probable that the appointment of Viscount Sone, a man of little weight, is due to the intention of Prince Ito to direct Korean policy from Tokyo'. The danger, even if Sone wished to pursue the dictates of Ito, Campbell pointed out, was that 'the military party will be more successful than they were with Prince Ito in securing the last word' in Korean affairs.<sup>1</sup> This shift in position between Campbell and Lindley clearly emphasizes the confusion at the Foreign Office on the results of the changes contemplated by Japan in Korea. Events in the peninsula were to add to this atmosphere of uncertainty, hence the lack of any definite British attitude towards these and other developments.

In spite of strong measures taken against the insurgents, there were no signs that a section of them would lay down their arms. Operations against organized rebellion in one form or the other had, however, become so common a feature that it no longer attracted much attention abroad. Matters, however, came to a head when on 26 October 1909 Ito was assassinated by a Korean, An Chung-gun. This event brought the question of the future status of the peninsula to the fore. Many began to speculate that the anticipated changes in Korea would now be in the direction of outright annexation.

Indeed, there was already enough evidence to justify this conclusion. In a speech to a party of Koreans visiting Japan in

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon; FO/371/879, Bonar to Grey (No. 12), 2 February 1910; FO/371/877, Bonar to Grey (No. 21), 21 March 1910.



April 1909, Ito was quoted to have said that,

'the relations of the Far East and the Powers are guaranteed by the principles of the open door and equal opportunity; this is the state of things in China. These principles have their place in the relations with outside countries; but between Japan and Korea there is no necessity of talking about the equality of opportunities in that regard. There were times when the two existed as separate countries; but they are now advancing toward the goal of becoming one family. I often regret that there are parties who, ignorant of this trend of affairs, would provoke troubles between them. I know opinions are divided in Japan itself on this point, but the fact troubles me little, as it is only natural that men's minds should differ as their faces'.<sup>1</sup>

He then went on to call on Korea to unite with Japan for strength and the preservation of peace in the Far East:

'Korea must unite with Japan. Union is strength, separation weakness. Look at the trend of affairs in the World. Do not even the great Powers feel the need of alliance? Alliance means union. Union and co-operation is one thing which Japan and Korea need most between them; on it the fate of the two to rise or fall depends'.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone conversant with Japanese activities in Korea could not fail to conclude as Alston did, that the speech was an allusion to an eventual annexation of the peninsula. Owing, however, to the tense political situation in the peninsula and the general international atmosphere in the Far East, Campbell felt that no such action could be contemplated by Japan for at least some time to come.<sup>3</sup> The actions of both Ito and later Sone, on the other hand, did not seem to justify Campbell's optimism. This is particularly the case if it is noted that as early as October 1908,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/646, The Seoul Press, 24 April 1909, enclosed in Lay to Grey (No. 30), 1 May 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.



Ito had started taking measures to weaken the ranks of the Il Chin Hoi.<sup>1</sup> Considering the fact that he had told Cockburn on 5 May 1908 that,

'if any proposals were made for the annexation of Korea by Japan the Society of Progress [The Il Chin Hoi] would join their fellow-countrymen in determined resistance, for they were only prepared to support Japan in assisting Korea to rise to the higher level of good government and civilization - not in putting an end to her separate political existence',<sup>2</sup>

Ito's measure against the society seemed to have been aimed at cleansing the organization of those who would oppose any definite decision on annexation. His speech of April 1909 could, therefore, be taken as an allusion to the coming event although he might personally have opposed it taking place as early as it did.<sup>3</sup>

If the actions and statements of Ito were not sufficient indicators of the coming event, those of his successor were clear pointers to that fact. On 12 July 1909, an agreement was signed between Korea and Japan delegating the former's judicial and prison administration to Tokyo until such an unspecified time as 'the reorganization of the Korean systems were completed'.<sup>4</sup> London's

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene Kim and Hyo-kyo Kim, op.cit., pp. 207-8; FO/371/440, Chosen Nichi Nichi Shimbun, 22 October 1908, enclosure in Lay to Grey (No. 75), 10 November 1908; FO/371/646, Lay to Grey (No. 12), 11 February 1909 and Lay to Grey (No. 15), 1 March 1909.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/440, Cockburn to Grey (No. 43), 4 June 1908.

<sup>3</sup>There are two hypotheses as regards Ito's connection with the annexation movement before his resignation as Resident General. Chon Dong takes the view that Ito agreed to the annexation of Korea before he resigned in June 1909. This view is, however, opposed by Hilary Conroy, who maintains that although Ito might outwardly have agreed with this, he was unfavourable to the policy for about seven or eight years after he had resigned from his post as Resident General possibly as a means of 'avoiding annexation' altogether. See Hilary Conroy, op.cit., pp. 369-380.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/646, Enclosure in Rumbold to Grey (No. 124), 20 July 1909.



only response to this was that it would have to have an experience of the working of the new administration before deciding on the question of Britain's extra-territorial rights in Korea.<sup>1</sup> During the same month, <sup>a branch of</sup> the private joint stock Japanese bank, the Dai Ichi Ginko was reorganized as the Central Bank of Korea with Japanese as its Governor and Directors.<sup>2</sup> Commenting on this latest development, the English edition of the Kokumin observed that the transformation of the Dai Ichi Ginko into the Central Bank of Korea was 'a step forward to the idea of a Japano-Korean Empire'.<sup>3</sup> Surely, Tokyo had, by this time, taken some definite decisions on a number of issues including the eventual annexation of Korea, and the extension of the lease of Kwantung as well as the term of the operation of the South Manchurian Railway lines.<sup>4</sup>

The implementation of these decisions would, however, require the support and co-operation of Britain and Russia. As regards the Kwantung lease, it might have been realized that its extension could depend on whether Britain decided to retain Wei-hai Wei or not and in spite of the understanding between London and Tokyo, Ito sought a confirmation of the British position. It is in this sense that one must understand his interview with MacDonald in May 1909. Reporting this conversation MacDonald noted that:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Bank of Chosen, Economic History of Chosen (Seoul 1920), gives a good account of the activities of this bank.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/646, Résumé in Rumbold to Grey (No. 227), 31 July 1909.

<sup>4</sup> G.P.Gooch and H.W.V.Temperley (eds.), British Documents on the origins of the War, 1898-1914, vol. VIII, (London, 1932), pp. 467-8.



'His Excellency said "I may not be alive then /1927/ but I do not see how we can possibly return to China the Liao-tung Peninsula". Later the Prince somewhat qualified this statement and said: "Of course if we find that the South Manchurian Railway does not pay and the Japanese Treasury has to support the upkeep of the Railway and the Port, then we may give it up; also much will depend upon what the Russians are doing in the North; so long as they remain in Harbin, we must remain in the South". His Excellency then spoke on the subject of the various "leased" territories in China and hoped that we would retain Wei-hai Wei as long as we could. He was quite certain the Germans had no intention of leaving Kiao-chow ...'<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the Anglo-Japanese tête-à-têtes on the subject since 1905 the Foreign Office never uttered a word of either opposition to or in favour of Ito's wishes.

The annexation of Korea was, however, a more complicated issue. Such an action would most probably be opposed by Russia, and Britain might as well consider it as a breach of the terms of the second alliance. A more cautious approach was, therefore, needed to bring these two Powers to realize its necessity. It is in this sense that one should understand Ito's action against some members of the Il Chin Hoi in a bid to strengthen the hands of the more pro-Japanese elements of the society. It was, therefore, not surprising that the latter element came up on 4 December 1909 with a strong demand for immediate 'amalgamation of Korea and Japan'.<sup>2</sup> Sone, on the other hand, began a systematic campaign to discredit the originators of this demand as 'agitators' and 'trouble-makers'. He noted in a lengthy speech that:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.468.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/877, Lay to Grey (No. 71), 7 December 1909.



'Japan's Korean policy has long since been formulated and fixed and no need is seen for any change. My hope and desire is to guide and develop Korea, and to make her become so thoroughly convinced of Japan's beneficence, that she will be the trusted right hand of Japan in the preservation of peace in the Far East... That Japan is guided by this principle will be seen, for instance in the establishment of the Bank of Korea which has opened the way for the common employment of both Japanese and Korean funds, and, thus lay the foundation of a safe and sound economic system .... If it is Japan's intention to gobble up Korea, why should she go into the trouble of establishing these institutions?'<sup>1</sup>

He ended his speech by sounding a warning to both Japan and Korea against any rush attempts towards establishing a political union between them:

'If Koreans themselves were to bring trouble on themselves or if the surrounding international conditions were developing dangerous tendencies, the question might be otherwise, but it is not for this country to force the amalgamation. I hope that our countrymen would all think twice before they commit themselves and try not to mistake the policy of their country.'<sup>2</sup>

At best, Sone was either ignorant of what had transpired in Tokyo about the contemplated changes or was merely trying to cover up the facts.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that apart from Hayashi Tadasu, none of the leading Japanese politicians came forward to give an open support to the demand. Komura, on the other hand, assured MacDonald that 'Hayashi is not in office now, besides in ~~he~~ is not the least in touch with the present Government', hence Britain should not regard his views as those of the Japanese Government.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Enclosure in MacDonald to Grey (No. 362), 17 December 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>According to Conroy, Sone was opposed to the annexation and 'made an effort to hold out, ~~but~~ he broke literally and physically as the annexation bandwagon began to roll', Conroy, op.cit., pp. 380-381.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/877, MacDonald to Grey (No. 362), 17 December 1909.



Komura's assurance was received with a lot of satisfaction in London. The Foreign Office brushed off all suggestions that the Il Chin Hoi might have been put up by the Japanese authorities to advocate the annexation of the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The society, therefore, aptly suited Sone's description of being a bunch of 'agitators' and 'troublemakers', whose activities if unchecked might create a lot of difficulties. In such an event, as Ito had earlier warned, Japan would have no other alternative but to make 'alteration in the policy of conciliation which had marked His Excellency's administration'.<sup>2</sup> It was this warning, which Henry Bonar, the newly appointed British Consul-General in Seoul, had in mind, and which prompted him in calling on the Japanese to proscribe the society.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Sone's relations with the Il Chin Hoi seemed to have been pointed in that direction. His efforts were, however, brought to nought by the interference of the army.<sup>4</sup>

Unaware of the actual state of affairs, Bonar was convinced that for a variety of reasons, Japan would not contemplate annexing the peninsula. Firstly, in an interview with Komiya, the vice-Minister of the Korean Imperial Household, Bonar was told that, although the Japanese Prime Minister, Katsura Taro, favoured annexation, there was no way he could implement it as the Japanese Emperor was strongly against such an action. Quite apart from this, Bonar was of the opinion that annexation would bring strong strains

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Minutes on Lay to Grey (No.91), 7 December 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Gooch and Temperley, op.cit., p.468.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/877, Bonar to Grey (No. 97), 20 December 1909.

<sup>4</sup>Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, op.cit., p.212.



on the weak Japanese economy owing to a possible desire to bring Korea to the same economic, social and political levels as Japan.<sup>1</sup> By this time, however, the Foreign Office was not prepared to depend on pure speculative analysis in assessing the situation in Korea. Speeches by various Japanese officials clearly indicated that annexation was just around the corner. For instance, as if to refute a statement by Komatsu, Director of the Korean Foreign Affairs Department, that no one with a knowledge of economics could advocate a customs union between Japan and Korea, Komura had this to tell members of the Japanese Customs Tariff Committee on 15 February 1910:

'Although no opportunity would be taken of the intended revision of Japan's Commercial Treaties with the Powers so that Japanese imports might receive special favour in the Korean Peninsula in respect of customs duties, the Customs Tariff of Japan would be revised with a view to extending special treatment to the imports from our Protectorate ... The Imperial Government would manage to give this privilege exclusively to Korea and no Foreign countries would be allowed to share in it'.<sup>2</sup>

This statement was, by all accounts, a contradiction of earlier official pronouncements on the subject.<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that Robert Greg, Assistant Head of the Far Eastern Department, began to question from this time onwards whether Britain could, if she wanted, prevent Japan from annexing Korea.<sup>4</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Bonar to Campbell 73067 10 February 1910; Bonar to Campbell I47927, 1 March 1910; Bonar to Grey (No. 27), 26 April 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/440, Cockburn to Grey (No. 13), 22 February 1910.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/440m Cockburn to Grey (No. 56), 18 December 1907; Cockburn to Grey (No. 23), 8 April 1908; FO/371/646, Lay to Grey (No. 74), 12 October 1909.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/877, Minute on Bonar to Campbell 73067, 10 February 1910.



international opposition to her intended action in Korea was one of Japan's fears. It appeared, however, that she did not expect stronger opposition from Britain than from Russia, and she was ready to give concessions to the latter to soften her possible objections. There was no need for these concessions, for Russia had her own difficulties in Harbin and both Powers were faced with the American scheme to deprive them of their assets in Manchuria - the neutralization scheme. With these common and individual difficulties both Powers began to move closer to offering mutual diplomatic support for the protection of their respective rights and interests in the Far East. These were some of the major factors for the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese Convention of June 1910.

F. The Russo-Japanese Convention of 1910

Russian and Japanese opposition to Knox's neutralization programme, their respective difficulties in Harbin and Korea and a war scare between these two Powers in 1909, provided the platform for readjusting their relations in the Far East.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the war scare, set off by the Russian press, that provided St. Petersburg with an opportunity for suggesting negotiations for the purpose of removing any misunderstanding between them.<sup>2</sup> This was immediately accepted by Tokyo. On 19 April 1910, therefore, Kato informed the Foreign Office of the issue. He added

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<sup>1</sup>Gooch and Temperley, op.cit., pp. 472-6.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/920, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 18 secret), 21 April 1910.



that the Japanese Government had 'no knowledge of the lines upon which the agreement is to be based', but they had instructed their Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Motono Ichiro, to open negotiations. Hardinge, in turn, assured Kato that Britain 'would welcome the consolidation of friendly relations between Russia and Japan as tending to the peaceful development of the Far East'.<sup>1</sup>

It was ironic that Japan and Russia could begin negotiations without any knowledge of the lines on which agreement would be based. This was, however, the situation. Each, therefore, began probing, in a rather unofficial manner, into what the other wanted to achieve. It was through one of such moves that Japan's intention in Korea was revealed to the Russian Foreign Minister, Aleksandr Isvolskii and then to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Arthur Nicolson, on 12 May.<sup>2</sup> On hearing of this, MacDonald approached Komura, now Foreign Minister in Tokyo, on the subject. The latter then informed him that 'no date had as yet been fixed upon for such annexation, which was, however, the only possible sequel of the system of protection now in force in Korea'. MacDonald, on the other hand, told him that, personally, he was of the opinion that the step would be ill-timed in view of Japan's desire to come to an understanding with Russia in a bid to oppose the American neutralization programme. 'Moreover', he continued, 'annexation at the present time would ... cause some embarrassment to His Majesty's Government, and in addition lend colour to the statements made in

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<sup>1</sup>Gooch and Temperley, op.cit., pp. 479-81.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/877, Nicolson to Grey (No. 229), 12 May 1910.



America and elsewhere in regard to the internationalization of certain Manchurian railways and the refusal of the Japanese Government to consider that question'. These arguments failed to convince Komura. He informed MacDonald that the question of eventual annexation of Korea was definitely agreed upon by Russia at the time of the negotiation of the Russo-Japanese convention of 1907. On account of this, Russia could not object to such an action if Japan decided to implement it. In addition, he opined that none of the Powers could possibly object to the absorption of Korea. As regards Britain, Komura noted that London would be informed of the date of the annexation so that the two governments could arrange matters in such a way as not to cause any embarrassment to the British Government.<sup>1</sup> It would appear rather strange to the casual observer that Britain did not start contesting the issue at this moment. The question, therefore, is: could Britain oppose annexation? Even if she could, was it politic for her to do so?

The shortest answer to these questions is simply no. The only ground upon which Britain could contest the issue was a contention that annexation would be contrary to the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1905. This argument, as Greg pointed out, would, however, not hold good because the terms of the alliance as regards Korea 'merely lays down that Japan has the right to take such measures of guidance, control and protection in Corea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance her

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 20 confidential), 19 May 1910.



interests, provided such measures are not contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations'. The 1905 agreement could, therefore, not be said to have precluded annexation, provided that such a move did not injure British commerce and industry in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> On the international side, it was made clear that the Russo-Japanese Conventions of 1905 and 1907 accepted the same position as Britain in regard to Korea. Russia could not, therefore, properly argue against annexation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the forward policy of America had brought both Russia and Japan so close together that the former would not dare jeopardise an understanding over mutual protection of their interests in Manchuria by opposing annexation. As regards the United States, it was pointed out that the recent blow to her neutralization programmes would be a strong deterrent for her pursuing another forward policy by opposing the issue. So strongly did Greg feel about the impact of American policy in relation to recent developments in the Far East that he later minuted 'we gain by Japan's haste rather than not as in event of any Power making difficulties viz the U.S. We shall still be a free agent and not as at first sight seemed probable inevitably committed to Japan and ~~her~~ annexation policy'.<sup>3</sup> It was also noted that German interests in Korea were not so substantial as to make her abandon

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Minute on Bonar to Campbell ~~73067~~, 10 February 1910.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/877, Minute on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 35 confidential), 21 August 1910.



the European front to seek adventure in the peninsula; while the French, it was noted, had since 1905 been losing interest in Korean affairs and they were unlikely to oppose the annexation.<sup>1</sup>

The above factors seemed to have been well appreciated in St. Petersburg as well. The Russian Government, therefore, gave its assent to the annexation and on 4 July 1910, the two Powers signed two separate agreements for the mutual protection of their interests in Manchuria. The first of these agreements merely asserted their belief in the maintenance of the status quo in Manchuria as laid down in 'treaties, conventions, and other arrangements concluded up to this day between Japan and Russia, or between either of these two Powers and China' and that, in case of any menace to 'the status quo above mentioned, the two high contracting parties shall in each case enter into communication with each other in order to arrive at an understanding as to the measures they may judge it [sic] necessary to take for the maintenance of the said status quo'. The second agreement which was to be kept 'strictly confidential between the two high contracting parties' was the most important. It reaffirmed the existing demarcation of their respective spheres in Manchuria and recognised the right of each 'in its sphere freely to take all measures necessary to safeguard and defend such interests'. Furthermore, it was provided that each should not 'obstruct in any manner the consolidation and development of the special interests of the other party in the limits of the sphere' of interest. In addition, the agreement provided that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/878, See a review of the international situation on 2988 and 302817.



'Each of the two high contracting parties engages to abstain from all political activities in the sphere of special interests of the other in Manchuria. It is, moreover, understood that Japan shall not seek for in the Russian sphere and Russia shall not seek for in the Japanese sphere any privilege or concession of a nature to bring prejudice to the special interests of each other, and that the two Governments of Japan and Russia shall each respect all rights acquired by the other in its sphere by virtue of the treaties, conventions, or other arrangements ....

In case those special interests are menaced, the two high contracting parties shall concert with each other upon the measures to be taken in view of common action or support to lend to each other to safeguard and defend those interests'.<sup>1</sup>

Draft copies of these agreements were communicated by Benckendorff and Kato to Grey on 28 June.<sup>2</sup> After reading the text of the agreements, Grey told Kato that

'we had seen with satisfaction the increasingly good relations between Japan and Russia, and we should welcome anything which strengthened these good relations and made for peace, so long as it did not impair the "open door" in Manchuria for our commerce, which was our main interest. I should like to study carefully the provisions of the new agreements, but as far as I could judge from a first reading there was nothing in them to impair the "open door"'.<sup>3</sup>

Privately, however, the Foreign Office felt the agreements amounted practically to 'the partition of Manchuria between Japan and Russia'. Furthermore, it felt that:

'These two Powers who alone can bring to the spot any considerable armed force have defined their respective interests in the most precise manner and are prepared to support one another in vindicating them. No doubt before long these measures will be followed by the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/920, Enclosures in Grey to MacDonald (No. 107 secret), 28 June 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/920, Benckendorff to Grey 234077, 28 June 1910; Grey to MacDonald (No. 107 secret), 28 June 1910.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/920, Grey to MacDonald (No. 107 secret), 28 June 1910.



formal annexation of the territories and protection to the goods<sup>1</sup> and manufacturers of the countries who annex them'.

As this situation had not yet come to the fore, there appeared to be nothing London could do. Its attention was, therefore, directed towards Korea, where annexation was now only a matter of time, to seek a way of securing the protection of British commerce and industry against any future Japanese exclusive policies in the territory.

#### G. British interests and the annexation

The support and sympathy which the British Government showed to Japan in her difficulties in South Manchuria were made with London mindful of the fact that British commerce and industry were being placed at a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis those of Japanese nationals in the region. In addition, London was quite aware of the detrimental effects its unwillingness to support Peking against Japan would have on British concessions throughout China. At least the Chinese reaction towards continued British financing of the Hankow-Canton railway after their failure to secure London's support against Japan in the Hsinmintun-Fakumen dispute was a clear indicator of Peking's future policies if Britain did not change her attitude.<sup>2</sup> But in so far as Tokyo scrupulously adhered to the open door policy in those concerns that would not prejudicially affect its rights and interests in the South Manchurian railways and in so far as it continued to be frank with London regarding its

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/920, Minute by Lord Monkswell on Benckendorff to Grey [234077], 28 June 1910.

<sup>2</sup>The Economist of 9 June 1909, 'In a leading article on this aspect of British policy the paper supported the government's stance on the issue.'



intentions in those territories under its control, the British Government appeared prepared to sacrifice Chinese favours and some British interests to help maintain their ally's position. The manner in which London got the news of the intended annexation and the terms of the secret Russo-Japanese convention, however, ~~irritated the Foreign Office~~ ~~left little to be desired.~~ There were fears in many quarters that Japan might have more in mind than merely seeking to maintain her position against American threats. For this reason, there developed a growing demand at the Foreign Office that Japan should be told that whatever her intentions might be in Korea, South Manchuria and Kwantung, Britain was not prepared to sacrifice those British rights and interests whose existence did not tend to undermine Japanese position in those territories. Indeed, as Grey was reported to have said, had it not been for British commerce and industry in Korea, Britain would not have been bothered about the annexation.<sup>1</sup>

In a lengthy memorandum on 6 July 1910, Gaston de Bernhardt of the Library section of the Foreign Office noted the various instances where similar moves had militated against British commercial and industrial interests. He called special attention to the French action over Madagascar, where they constantly rejected British entreaties for an understanding that would protect British trade and industry against annexation. The net result, he noted, was the complete loss of all British investments in the territory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Minute on MacDonald to Grey (No. 120 very confidential), 22 May 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/877, Memorandum respecting British Treaty rights in Korea in the event of its annexation by Japan /241417, 6 July 1910.



On 14 July, therefore, Grey told Kato that:

'If Japan now annexed Korea, France was no doubt debarred from appealing to us to join in a protest on economic grounds by the fact that she had rejected our view of the case in Madagascar. But the United States and European countries other than France might appeal to us to join them in a protest, having regard to the action we had taken respecting Madagascar. This would place me in a very difficult position; for not only was I anxious not to join other Powers in opposing any action taken by Japan, but I wished to be able to support her action. In this way, I hoped that the Japanese Government, whenever they annexed Korea, would, by stating that they would maintain for a long term of years the present tariff of Korea as guaranteed by treaties, prevent the British Government from being placed in the difficult position which I had explained'.<sup>1</sup>

He was, however, assured by Kato on 20 July that although Korea would become part of Japan and that existing foreign treaties with Korea would be abrogated,

'Japan had in view the economic interests of the Powers who had treaties with Korea, and she desired to preserve the status quo in economic matters. When therefore the time came to annex Korea, Japan would be ready to make a declaration which would include the three following points:

1. The import and export duties at Korean ports and the tonnage duties on shipping would be maintained at existing rates for the present. The Customs laws of Japan would be applied to Korea. Exports from Korea to Japan, imports from Japan to Korea, and Japanese shipping would be subject to the same rates in Korean ports for the present as applied to foreign goods and shipping.

2. Existing open ports of Korea would be maintained as such except Basan which he thought we called Masampho. In addition, Wiju would be opened.

3. Coasting trade between the open ports of Korea and with Japanese ports would be allowed to foreign shipping for the present'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Grey to MacDonald (No. 122 secret), 19 July 1910; Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 23), 23 July 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/877, Kato to Grey [26942], 20 July 1910.



Much as the Foreign Office appreciated the above position, its attention was, for the moment, directed towards the actual process of annexation which had just begun after which, it was hoped, Tokyo might be in a better position to commit itself, in a formal agreement, to the protection of British interests in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> On 30 May 1910, General Terauchi Masatake, the Japanese Minister of War, replaced Sone as Resident General. This was followed by a general overhaul of the entire personnel at the Residency-General.<sup>2</sup> On 16 August, Japan opened negotiations with the Korean Government on the treaty of annexation and on 22 August reached an agreement on the subject.<sup>3</sup> On the following day, Kato communicated the full text of the treaty and the declaration to be made after its promulgation on 29 August to Grey.<sup>4</sup> In view of the way discussions between Britain and Japan had gone so far on the protection of British commercial and industrial interests, Grey informed Kato on 25 August that comments would surely be made upon the bearing of Article 3 of the second alliance which, he thought, did not anticipate annexation. In view of this, he urged, the agreement of 1905 did not entail any positive obligation upon Britain to support the intended change in the status of Korea. It would, however, be inconsistent with the spirit of that agreement

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon; FO/371/877, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 31 confidential), 21 July 1910, MacDonald to Grey (No. 172 confidential), 22 July 1910, Foreign Office to Board of Trade [26451] 26 July 1910, Board of Trade to Foreign Office [27519], 29 July 1910, Grey to Kato [27519], 3 August 1910, Board of Trade to Foreign Office [1002], 24 August 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/877, Bonar to Grey (No. 35 confidential), 20 June 1910.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/878, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 35 confidential), 21 August 1910; MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 38 very confidential), 23 August 1910.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/878, Kato to Grey [0942], 23 August 1910; Kato to Grey [0942], 24 August 1910.



for Britain to oppose the annexation. While this was the case, Grey continued, if the annexation contemplated changes in the Korean tariff system, it would be inconsistent with the last part of Article 3 of the alliance. What he would, therefore, wish to see Japan do was to continue the policy of equal opportunities for commerce in Korea for ten years, 'which was beyond the term of the agreement, and that renewal of the agreement could of course be considered on the basis of the annexation of Korea.' As regards extra-territoriality, he observed that if that right was surrendered, Japan would not treat foreign nationals in Korea on lower standards than existed in Japan. On the question of criticisms by the other Powers, Kato was informed that, if any of them approached Britain for an explanation of her changed views on the independence of Korea, he would simply inform that Power that Britain had no political objection to the annexation of that territory by Japan. In addition, he would tell the Power concerned that Japan had promised to honour all foreign commercial rights in Korea for ten years, in accordance with the American precedent in the Philippines and that she had offered to discuss all commercial, industrial and property rights, mining and land ownership, foreign settlements and perpetual leases with the interested Powers after the annexation.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, events in Korea proceeded rapidly. On 29 August an Imperial Rescript was issued announcing the annexation and the establishment of a Government General in place of the Residency

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/878, Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 26), 25 August 1910.



General. The most important feature of the new administration was that the system of military-controlled civilian administration which existed in Kwantung and Formosa was introduced in Korea. The Imperial House of Korea was abolished and its members were given titles of Princes and Princesses of the Imperial House of Japan.<sup>1</sup> The above changes did not in any way bother the British Government, especially the termination of the Imperial House of Korea. As Langley succinctly put it, 'we have no interest in the fate of Korean Emperors. They have been "rois fainéants" for some time'.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Britain's main concern from this period onwards was to secure a proper guarantee for her various economic interests in Korea.

In a lengthy despatch to MacDonald, the Foreign Office detailed various subjects which it wished to embody in a formal treaty with Japan for the protection of British interests. These included guarantees on British mining, land ownership, import and manufacture of tobacco, trademarks and various holdings within the foreign settlements. While wishing to secure an agreement on these issues, Grey was not in the least

'disposed in view of the intimate nature of our relations with Japan, and of the fact that we alone among the treaty Powers were consulted by her before the annexation took place, to co-operate with other Powers more than is absolutely necessary [to secure agreement on these subjects]...'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Government-General of Chosen, Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (Korea) 1910-11 (Keijo/Seoul December 1911), pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/878, Minute on Bonar to Grey (Telegram No. 5), 24 August 1910.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/878, Grey to MacDonald (No. 164), 23 September 1910.



After consultations with the Board of Trade and MacDonald, the Foreign Office spelt its position on these subjects to Kato on 16 December.<sup>1</sup> In its reply dated 16 February 1911, the Japanese Government reiterated its assurance that it was

'firmly decided to abide by their declaration given at the time of the annexation, assuming protection of the legally acquired rights of foreigners in Corea. They fully recognise that the British owners of land or mines in Corea shall have a right to hold and dispose of such property without being subject to the conditions and restrictions provided for in the Japanese law for alien land owners ... or in the law of mining in actual operation in Japan proper. With regard to the mining rights obtained by the British subjects by virtue of special agreements, all the terms of such agreements are confirmed, and the rights and privileges thereby granted will be duly maintained and respected'.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the tobacco monopoly issue, Tokyo noted that

'in view of the important bearing which this question may have upon the general scheme of financial reforms in Corea, now undergoing thorough examination, they prefer, out of abundant precautions, not to commit themselves at this time to the definite abandonment of the plan of tobacco monopoly. They are, however, quite ready to give the assurance suggested by you that, in the event of the establishment of such a monopoly during the ten years which the existing tariff has to run, the vested interests of the British subjects in the tobacco trade will be duly compensated for any injury caused by the monopoly'.<sup>3</sup>

The above assurances were considered satisfactory by the Foreign Office.<sup>4</sup> Discussions on the trade-marks continued well into 1911 when Britain accepted a Japanese assurance that British subjects would remain unmolested in the use of their trade-marks in Korea even if such marks were found to be at variance with those registered in Japan.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; FO/371/879, MacDonald to Grey (No. 232), 20 October 1910; Board of Trade to Foreign Office 400377, 2 November 1910; Grey to Kato 453407, 16 December 1910.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1136, Kato to Grey 58887, 16 February 1911.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon.

<sup>5</sup> FO/371/1136, Kato to Grey 190657, 18 May 1911 and minutes thereon.



Thus by 1911 Japan had through a number of agreements transformed her rights and interests in Korea into political control while those in South Manchuria and Kwantung she had placed on a more secure base against possible Russian designs and American threats. The purely political side of this development does not appear to have bothered London at that moment as it did Peking and Washington. This was the point that was echoed both in the House of Commons and in the British Press especially as regards the annexation of Korea.<sup>1</sup> The Times, for instance, noted that:

'While the exact status of Korea remained somewhat vague and indeterminate, a recurrence of international complications was always possible, even though at present unlikely. There was no possibility of conceding complete autonomy to the Koreans; for they have shown themselves quite unfitted to administer affairs of their country without aid. The experiment of a protectorate and a dual Administration had unquestionably broken down. The Korean administrators were constantly at cross purposes with the Japanese advisers who stood behind them. There was no unity of purpose, and misunderstandings were incessant. If autonomy was impossible and the dual Administration a failure, what alternative remained but annexation?'<sup>2</sup>

It was with the same breath that the government defended the action of Japan in the House of Commons on 20 June 1911 during the debate on the annexation.<sup>3</sup> It was rather the economic impact of the annexation on British investments and commerce in Korea, South Manchuria and Kwantung that every one was concerned with. The government quickly realized this and secured assurances that the changes

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<sup>1</sup>House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates: Hansard Fifth Series, Vol. XXVII (1911), pp. 153-4.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 30 August 1910, 25 August 1910.

<sup>3</sup>Hansard, op.cit., Vol. XXVII (1911), pp. 153-4.



would not prejudicially affect British rights and interests in the peninsula. The China Association and its affiliated organs were, however, of the opinion that Britain could have had a better deal had she withheld her consent to annexation and negotiated for the safety of British interests first.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, doubtful whether this would have been the case. Had Britain withheld such an assent, Japan might have gone ahead with the annexation. Britain could, in such an event, have done nothing, for it was most unlikely that she would sacrifice the alliance for the sake of Korea. This position was lost sight of by those Members of Parliament who argued that what Britain had obtained from Japan in respect of British interests was not commensurate with the assistance the former had rendered Tokyo during its difficult times in the peninsula. The most vocal of these people was the Earl of Ronaldshay. He told the House of Commons on 17 June 1911 that they should

'not forget that it is not merely the trade of Korea that is involved in this matter. The trade of Manchuria is also involved in the annexation of Korea. Japan has built railways the whole length of Korea, and through Korea into the heart of Manchuria itself. Under certain conventions which exist trade which is admitted into the Chinese Empire by the land frontier is not subject to the same duties which are imposed upon trade which is admitted to that empire by sea.

It must therefore be obvious that Japan will not only have the right to take her goods into Korea free of duty, and to maintain any duty she pleases on the trade of other countries, but she will also derive advantage by sending her own goods through Korea duty free into China, where they find imposed upon them a smaller duty than that imposed upon the goods of other countries coming into China by sea. That to my mind is a very serious matter. It is perfectly true, of course, that Japan has declared her intention of preserving for ten years the status quo ... but I would ask the Foreign

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<sup>1</sup>China Association, op.cit., vol.V, pp. 81-2, 83-5.



Secretary, does he consider that this limit of ten years for the status quo is an adequate return to us for our acquiescence in the action of Japan in annexing that country?'<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that the government never refuted the effects of the annexation on Japan's position in South Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office, quite aware of Ronaldshay's fears, had begun appraising the situation carefully. What, it felt, Britain had obtained in respect of Korea was the maximum that was open to her, but events in South Manchuria and Kwantung must be watched lest they move towards the same end as Korea.

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<sup>1</sup>Hansard, op.cit., Vol. XXVII (1911), p.157.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 166-7.



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## Chapter Five

### JAPAN'S POSITION IN SOUTH MANCHURIA AND KWANTUNG

1911-22

The controversies over Japanese railway policies in South Manchuria appeared, at their face value, to have had no appreciable effect on London as to the fate of Manchuria. This was, however, far from the truth. In spite of the fact that Britain supported Japan over her stance on the Hsinmintun-Fakumen, Chinchow-Aigun railways and the Neutralization issues, there was a growing feeling at the Foreign Office that Japan might have the intention of translating her economic rights in South Manchuria into a political hegemony. This was a natural sequel of the Foreign Office's close scrutiny of events since the Portsmouth Treaty. How did the Foreign Office come to this conclusion and how far did it affect Anglo-Japanese relations in the region?

#### A. Changing British attitudes

The close relationship which had been developing between Russia and Japan since the signing of the Portsmouth Treaty had been watched with a great deal of interest in London especially with reference to the fate of Manchuria. As early as 15 May 1908, for instance, George Kidston, Second Secretary at the Foreign Office, noted that there was a 'growing conviction that Russian & Japanese interests in the Far East are not irreconcilable. ....' Upon this conclusion, he was instructed by Hardinge to find the grounds for this 'growing conviction'. In a brief memorandum, therefore, Kidston called attention to the Russian 'perturbation at the idea of China organizing



the administration of Mongolia on the model of Chinese provincial system', her attempt to secure from Britain 'in the Tibetan negotiations recognition of her special position in Mongolia', and the article in the Russo-Japanese secret agreement of 1907 'whereby Russia secures a free hand in Outer Mongolia' as clear indications that her interests were more <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ Mongolia than <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ Manchuria. In addition to these indications, he noted that there were other factors which made this 'shift in her whole sphere of influence in the Far East' more attractive to her policy makers. Among such attractions were noted the facts that the Scott-Mouravieff Convention 'stops short at Shanhaikwan, where the Great Wall comes down to the sea, and would not affect Russian designs to the North of that place', that there 'is said to be an excellent site for a port between Shanhaikwan & Newchang' and considering the fact that the 'producing area tapped by the Manchurian Rly. now lies almost in Japanese hands ... and that there was nothing to feed the railway between Harbin & Baikal (& probably still further west) & very little between Harbin & Vladivostok', Russia was more likely now to divert all her energies to the areas of least resistance and of greater opportunities, Mongolia.<sup>1</sup> He then noted ~~that~~:

'It is said that Russia could not adopt a forward policy in the Far East for another 10 years, but the possibility now suggested is more of the nature of a retreat & it must be remembered that in certain eventualities Russia may be forced into action.'

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/473, Minutes on China Association (Shanghai) to General Committee - (Communicated by Sir C. Dudgeon, 13 May 1908 I66147, 10 April 1908.



'It is pretty generally agreed among competent observers in the Far East that on the death of the Empress Dowager serious trouble may occur in China & foreign intervention may be required for the protection of foreign lives & property. If military measures should be necessary Russia & Japan are the only Powers that are in a position to carry them out at short notice. They are therefore the two Powers that might be expected in that eventuality to regard one another's proceedings with naturally jealous eyes. It is perhaps not altogether unreasonable to consider the possibility of their contemplating some sort of previous understanding with regard to the action to be taken by each.

We know that the Japanese are much exercised on this point. Prince Ito, it will be remembered, approached H. M. Govt on the subject & proposed to concert measures with them, but his contemplated mission to China was somewhat abruptly cancelled, owing, it was said, to the strained relations existing between China & Japan. We know that Prince Ito does not always get his own way & meanwhile relations between Russia & Japan are steadily improving; they are one on the Railway Settlement question & we have just heard that Baron Goto, President of the Japanese section of the Manchurian Rly., has gone on a mysterious mission to St. Petersburg.

It is conceivable, though perhaps not probable, that this improvement in the relations between the two countries may be tending to some sort of understanding whereby, in the event of trouble in China, Japan is to have a free hand in Manchuria, while Mongolia, possibly with an outlet to the Gulf of Pe-chi-li, is to be the sphere of Russia.<sup>1</sup>

Although Kidston noted that the above conclusions were 'purely speculative' and that they were 'presented with much diffidence & are intended to suggest possibilities rather than probabilities', Grey found them 'a useful contribution' and noted that it was always 'well to think out possible developments'. More important, perhaps, was an official at the Foreign Office, who noted that he had 'always believed i.e. since the Treaty ending the war, that Russia and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



would  
Japan/put their heads together sooner or later and divide Manchuria'.<sup>1</sup>

With ~~this~~ speculation and convictions in mind, therefore, it is not surprising that after the signing of the Russo-Japanese conventions of 1910 and the annexation of Korea, the subject received a new appraisal. Writing on the issue, the secretary at the Tokyo Embassy, Hobart Hampden, noted that:

'Japan is prodigal of solemn assurances, relying for future use on the motto "circumstances alter cases", and trusting to superannuating effects of time, which seems to move quicker for her than for other Powers. Otherwise she would hardly be on the eve of the annexation of Korea only six and a half years after she had, on the 23rd February, 1904, given a treaty engagement that "the Imperial Government of Japan definitely guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire". In this connection her present assurances about maintaining Chinese integrity and the open door in Manchuria furnish food for thought not unmixed with scepticism.'<sup>2</sup>

Barely nine months after this observation had been made in Tokyo, a similar opinion was expressed in London. In an interesting memorandum, which was generally acclaimed at the Foreign Office as a correct exposition of what had then come to be termed 'The Manchurian Question', depicting Russo-Japanese relations in the region, Acting Second Secretary, Miles Lampson, noted that:

'Russia and Japan may yet be seen to stand forth boldly side by side and bid the rest of the World defiance in the prosecution of the division of Manchuria, in spite of all the high sounding protestations to the contrary with regard to the maintenance of the status quo which have been lavished so freely upon the World at large.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/920, Enclosure in MacDonald to Grey (No. 173 Confidential), 23 July 1910.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/1091, Memorandum entitled 'The Manchurian Question' [20293], 29 April 1911.



The cumulative effect of the Russo-Japanese conventions of 1910 and the annexation of Korea was, therefore, to confirm the existing suspicion at the Foreign Office on the future fate of Manchuria. This was, however, only one aspect of British official enquiries and convictions. Eyes began to be cast on Russia and Japan to determine which of them was more dangerous to the maintenance of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria and when any decision might be taken by them to divide the area among themselves.

On the question of whether Russia or Japan was more perilous to Chinese integrity in Manchuria, the acting British Consul at Harbin, Henry Sly, observed among other things that:

'In the earlier portion of this despatch, I referred to the danger which threatens the Russians from the superior energy and thoroughness and, I may now add, more united efforts of the Japanese - it follows that as a power in Manchuria the Japanese are more to be feared'.<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear whether Jordan shared this view or not as his covering despatch merely referred to this warning. It is interesting to note, however, that the Foreign Office did not dispute his observations and Lampson later asserted the same thing in his memorandum.<sup>2</sup> As regards the time when Japan and Russia might consider appropriate to embark upon the division of Manchuria, Horace Rumbold, the Counsellor at the Tokyo Embassy, predicted 1923, when the lease of Kwantung was due to lapse. He however warned: 'If Russia and other powers are fully occupied in Europe, then the Japanese will do what they like out here. In other words it is to

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1085, Enclosure in Jordan to Grey (No. 434), 29 November 1910.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon; FO/371/1091: Memorandum by Lampson [202937], 29 April 1911.



the interest of Japan for there to be trouble in Europe, whereas the reverse is true in the case of Russia'.<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, who made an inspection tour of South Manchuria and Korea in October 1911, also had much to say on the future of the region. In a highly provocative despatch on the various undertakings carried out by the Japanese in a bid to consolidate their position in those provinces, he wrote:

'The impression left by even a hurried trip along the Manchurian Railway system ... is one of admiration for the energy, efficiency, and determination of the Japanese, untrammelled by petty red-tape regulations born of feudal times, which are so evident in Japan proper. These workers away from their native land seem to let themselves go, and have given of the best that was in them. They have certainly acquired such a grip on the country that it will be hard indeed for the rightful owners to shake them off.

It is unsafe to prophesy in matters Far Eastern, but unless Chinese of 1923 are very different to the Chinese of to-day, the grip by then will be one which will never be loosened'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the period when every action taken by Japan in her relations with Russia in Manchuria was more often than not seen in London as a protective measure against inordinate Russian ambitions in that territory was coming to an end, if it had not already done so.

Japan was seen as a Power much interested in the sequestration of Manchuria from China and its eventual absorption as Russia. Worse than this was the new reputation acquired by Japan in some official circles as being the most perilous neighbour of China and the Power most likely to take the initiative towards the dismemberment of

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1091, Rumbold to Lampson [285127], 17 June 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1145, MacDonald to Grey (No. 307), 11 November 1911.



Manchuria from China.<sup>1</sup> An interesting feature of the whole situation was that these views were expressed quite independently of Japan's actions during the Chinese Revolution of 1911.

As a commercial nation, this movement towards the dismemberment of Manchuria from China was a matter of grave concern to the British Government. This was a time when British Far Eastern trade was playing a major role in offsetting their world trade deficits and a period when China had come to be regarded as one of the very few remaining free markets left for British trade by many commercial houses.<sup>2</sup> The prospects of such a huge and industrially attractive region being severed from China by the very Powers whose past commercial policies had proved to work to the disadvantage of all other Powers was, therefore, looked upon with much disenchantment. Under this circumstance how could Britain help to prevent a further development towards the absorption of Manchuria by Japan and Russia?

Almost every British official who took an interest in the subject felt that Japan's territorial ambitions in Manchuria could best be contained by the maintenance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In this connection, Lampson noted that:

'So long as Japan stands in need of her Alliance with Great Britain, as she certainly believes herself to do ... just so long will the present geographical nomenclature of Manchuria continue. But take away the need for conciliation to British susceptibilities, and there remains the hard fact that no practical obstacle exists to the annexation of South Manchuria

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1091, Memorandum by Lampson [20293]7, 29 April 1911.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Hyde, Far Eastern Trade 1868-1914 (London 1973), p.195; FO/371/841, China Association to the Foreign Office [28786]7, 5 August 1910.



tomorrow by Japan, followed by that of North Manchuria by Russia the day after'.<sup>1</sup>

Although this was felt to be the case, it was, at the same time, realised that there were no other practical steps which Britain or any of the other Powers could take to prevent the movement towards the dismemberment of Manchuria once such a decision had been taken jointly by Japan and Russia:

'It is difficult to see what practical steps - granted that a prior understanding had been arrived at between Russia and Japan - any European Power or the United States could take to present such action.'<sup>2</sup>

On the British side, this apprehension might have been founded on the grounds that not only might any attempt to restrain Japan damage Anglo-Japanese relations at a time of world tension but also a set back in any such move would tarnish the British image in the Far East and might draw Japan even closer to Russia and strengthen the idea of partitioning Manchuria.<sup>3</sup> As far as the Americans were concerned, it might have been felt that as their Far Eastern policy had been one of utter failure it was most unlikely that they would make any other strong move on the subject again. France and Germany were completely ignored in this consideration. This was not only because these two Powers had previously shown no interest in the fate of Manchuria but also because it was thought that after those reverses in American diplomacy in respect of those provinces, they would not venture any forward policy of their own. Neither was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1091, Memorandum by Lampson /20293/, 29 April 1911; also FO/371/1091, Rumbold to Lampson /28512/, 17 June 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1091, Memorandum by Lampson /20293/, 29 April 1911.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1085, Minutes on Jordan to Grey (No. 434), 29 April 1911.



any form of Anglo-American cooperation to restrain Russia and Japan considered. This was not necessarily because it was felt that such a joint action would not be sufficient to withhold the two Powers but rather because of British mistrust of American Far Eastern policies. Britain, as Grey pointed out, had had many upsets in her previous attempts to adopt a common front with the United States against Russian encroachments on Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria. These, he continued, were clearly indicated by the common stand they took on the Harbin Municipal Council issue and American later defection without consulting Britain. Similar disregard of British views was shown by America when she convened an opium conference at The Hague without prior consultations with the British Government. These past events coupled with the fact that Knox's neutralisation programme placed Britain in an invidious position drove the Foreign Office to the conclusion that there was 'an absence of purpose' in American Far Eastern policy and that there should be no attempt to seek cooperation with them on such a delicate issue as the Manchurian question.<sup>1</sup> If there were no practical steps to be taken on this issue, how could those provinces be saved?

The solution of the problem was seen simply as being in the hands of the Chinese through a process of 'regeneration of China and the rise of that country as a united and a patriotic nation'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/920, Bryce to Grey (No. 183 very confidential), 24 August 1910. In this despatch Bryce advocated an Anglo-American common stand on Manchuria but this was immediately rejected by Grey: see his reply FO/371/920, Grey to Bryce (No. 288 confidential), 22 September 1910.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1091, Memorandum by Lampson [202937], 29 April 1911; also FO/371/1145, MacDonald to Grey (No. 307), 11 November 1911.



In the endeavour towards this end, London felt that it could do much by pursuing a policy that would strengthen the hands of the central government against the centrifugal elements in the Chinese society through whom Japan and Russia might operate to achieve their aims. To this end, therefore, it was necessary for Britain to continue to be a member of the International Financial Consortium which was lending money to the Chinese Government for industrial and administrative purposes.<sup>1</sup> In pursuance of this policy, however, it was planned that Britain must desist from taking any measure either jointly with other Powers or alone that would give the impression of threatening the vested interests of Russian and Japan in Manchuria. The importance of this strategy in Anglo-Japanese relations in South Manchuria can best be studied within the context of the International Financial Consortium, usually called the China Consortium, itself.

#### B. The China Consortium

The history of the China Consortium is intricately interwoven with the international disputes surrounding the so-called Hukuang Loans and attempts by Britain, France, Germany and the United States to provide funds to reform the Chinese currency system.<sup>2</sup> In brief, the consortium could be said to have been instituted by the financial arrangements between the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation of Britain and the Deutsch<sup>e</sup>-Asiatische<sup>Bank</sup> of Germany in 1895 for

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1085, Minutes on Jordan to Grey (No. 434), 29 November 1910.

<sup>2</sup>For details of these, see Vevier, op.cit., pp. 92-110 and pp. 171-9.



joint participation in railway loans and advances arranged with the Chinese Government or with the provinces of the Chinese Empire. In its later form, it may be said to date from 6 July 1909, when representatives of the British and German banks and the Banque de l'Indo-Chine of France met in Paris and signed inter-group and inter-bank agreements for the same purpose. The American group of financiers, which the Taft's administration had organized as a vehicle of its forward policy in China, asked and was offered participation on equal terms with the others. Owing, however, to strong French opposition to the American group's demand that the other groups should undertake to obtain an official quotation for American bonds on their respective bourses, the American group could not enter the consortium until 10 November 1910, when that issue was satisfactorily resolved.<sup>1</sup>

Strictly speaking, therefore, the consortium as constituted in 1910 was a private multi-national institution aimed at putting their resources together to do business in China and with the Chinese Government in order to reduce the severe competition that had characterised their previous operations in that country. But the mere fact that each group floated its shares on its home market enlisted some form of governmental intervention to protect prospective buyers. On the banks' side, the need for security against default by the Chinese Government called for reliance on their

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5301, Memorandum on the history of the China Consortium by John W. Field [2753], 30 October 1920.



governments against such an eventuality. Moreover, the very undertakings which the consortium planned going into were the very enterprises that had in recent years sparked off international controversies based on claims and counter-claims by the Powers on the basis of their often vaguely worded treaties with the Chinese Government and concessions granted by either the provincial authorities or the central government.<sup>1</sup> With increasing multiplicity of these issues, came an increase in government involvement. By 1911, therefore, the consortium had been transformed into an organ of government policy and an instrument of diplomacy in the Far East.

In so far as the questions detailed above were concerned, it was possible to resolve them within the context of the consortium. The problem was with those Powers outside the organisation. This was the case with Japan and Russia whose rights and interests in Manchuria had been in the centre of recent international disputes. But would it not be easier to admit these Powers into the organisation? Surely, this might be the case but there were intricate international questions which rendered their admission impossible at the time. Apart from Japan's financial weakness, which made her entry into the consortium unattractive to Britain,<sup>2</sup> any attempt to bring her into the fold of the organisation would be strongly resisted by the Chinese and the Americans. This was because 'Knox and Straight viewed the Currency Loan not only as a major project that would

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<sup>1</sup>Croly, op.cit., pp. 286-353; Vevier, op.cit., pp. 93-110.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/873, Addis to Foreign Office 418557, 16 November 1910.



enhance the grip of American finance on China, but as a means of furthering the stalled Chinchow-Aigun Railroad and Manchurian development schemes'. In addition, 'Straight still regarded the London agreement of November, 1910, as a means of directing the power of the Consortium against Russia and Japan'.<sup>1</sup> As regards the Chinese, consenting to the admission of Russia and Japan would be stultifying their avowed policy of checking the ambitions of those Powers. With Russia and Japan outside the consortium, therefore, it was natural that they would keep a close watch over its activities and do all they could to prevent any interference in their vested rights in Manchuria.

Soon after the signature of the consortium agreement of 1911, Russia accused Peking of shelving its commercial obligations to St. Petersburg and threatened a show of force if China did not implement them.<sup>2</sup> She followed this up with a note to the consortium Powers asserting her rights in North Manchuria against the organization.<sup>3</sup> These moves were the natural sequel of America's entry into the consortium, the mentioning of the Chinchow-Aigun line in the minutes of the inter-group meeting of November 1910 and the consortium's plan to devote a portion of a million pounds currency loan for the promotion of industrial enterprises in Manchuria. More important, perhaps, was Article 16 of the loan agreement, which provided that

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<sup>1</sup>Vevier, op.cit., p.184.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 185-6.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1083; Benckendorff to Grey /142387, 17 April 1911.



'should the Imperial Chinese Government decide to invite foreign capitalists with Chinese interests in Manchurian business contemplated under this loan, or to be undertaken in connection therewith, the banks shall first be invited to participate'.<sup>1</sup>

Taking into consideration the fact that the Chinese Government had up to this time refused to specify the nature of the proposed enterprises the consortium would be required to undertake with the proposed loan, Russia had every reason to be very apprehensive about the intentions behind the consortium's activities. Soon after asserting her rights in the region against the organization, therefore, Russia began consultations with Japan with a view to taking a common stand on the subject.<sup>2</sup> The main cause of concern at this moment was, however, neither Russia nor Japan directly but rather France acting under pressure from St. Petersburg.

In a note to Charles Addis, the London Manager of the British group, the French noted that, in deference to the views of the Russian Government, they were withholding their portion of an advance of £40,000, part of which had been earmarked for 'Manchurian purposes', until a complete programme for which the amount would be devoted had been submitted to and approved by the Russians. In addition, they required, as a condition precedent to their future cooperation, with the other signatories of the agreement, a notification from the Russians to the effect that they had no objection to the earmarking, as security for the loan, of the various Manchurian revenues enumerated in the loan contract.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 828-32, 841-9.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1068, Buchanan to Grey (No. 136), 17 May 1911, Jordan to Grey (No. 195), 5 May 1911.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1068, Enclosure in Addis to Foreign Office [188347], 17 May 1911.



Whilst the British Government was sympathetic to the French stand, it was not prepared to go so far in according such rights to Russia in Manchuria. It appeared from the British point of view that acceding to the French request would mean an unconditional surrender of North Manchuria to the whims of Russia, a position ~~they were certain~~ Japan might <sup>well</sup> ~~also~~ claim in the south. The end result would, therefore, be the formal endorsement by the Powers of Russian and Japanese designs on those provinces. In view of this, Grey urged the solicitation of the French reasons for imposing these conditions. A few days later, and before those reasons could be extracted, the French withdrew their objection to making the preliminary advance but maintained their position as to any future loans. In spite of this, it was decided to demand those explanations so as to make the British view on the subject clear to the French.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after spelling out the British position to the French and after an interview with Benckendorff, Grey realized that, sooner or later, pressure would be mounting on the organization unless immediate steps were taken to prevent Japan from adopting a common stand with the two Powers. He, therefore, sought to soothe Japanese susceptibilities by reiterating his views on undertakings in Manchuria in relation to the security of Japanese interests in the region.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he held periodic interviews with Benckendorff and the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1068, Grey to Cambon [I88347], 20 May 1911, minutes on Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 130 confidential), 20 May 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1068, Grey to Rumbold (No. 119), 26 May 1911.



French Ambassador, Cambon, with the aim of persuading the French to waive the rest of their objections.<sup>1</sup> The Americans, who had in recent years been noted for their strong and yet sometimes wavering views on Manchuria, needed containment and to this end also Grey directed his energies. On 30 May, he impressed on Reid the need for a common stand by all the consortium Powers on the issue. He then suggested that the best way to overcome the Russian opposition and the French reservations as well as prevent Japan from adopting a common course with those Powers would be for the groups to arrange matters in such a way that no railway projects were included in the proposed undertakings in Manchuria.<sup>2</sup>

Before Grey's suggestion could be discussed in the four capitals, his attempts to persuade Japan/<sup>from</sup>taking a common course with Russia became apparent. In two identical notes to the French and British Governments on 26 June, both Japan and Russia protested against Article 16 of the loan agreement as creating a monopoly in Manchuria for the consortium. In view of this, they called for either a substantial revision of the article or, preferably, its suppression from the agreement.<sup>3</sup> It did not take Grey much time to come to appreciate the logic behind the Russian and Japanese contention.<sup>4</sup> For the moment, therefore, the chances of his suggestion proving acceptable to Russia and Japan appeared very remote indeed.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1068, Grey to Buchanan (No. 114), 29 May 1911; Grey to Bertie (No. 195), 30 May 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1068, Grey to Bryce (No. 241), 30 May 1911.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1069, Enclosure in Grey to <sup>O'Beirne</sup> ~~G. B. B. B.~~ (No. 173), 26 June 1911; Kato to Grey [25595], 26 June 1911. The Japanese lodged their protest with the French and the Russians with the British Government but Kato was instructed to keep London informed of their action.

<sup>4</sup>Peter Lowe, Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915: A study in British Far Eastern Policy (London, 1969), p.124.



Out of this confused situation came a fresh formula from the United States. In a note to Grey, the Americans suggested that a formal declaration should be embodied in the loan agreement to the effect that Article 16, as interpreted by the governments concerned, referred only to certain specific enterprises to be mentioned in the loan agreement. In addition, the declaration should make it clear that the consortium Powers had no intention of creating a monopoly for their bankers in Manchuria and that <sup>if</sup> it should come to the notice of the governments concerned that the groups were claiming such rights, they would receive no support from their respective governments.<sup>1</sup> This formula was accepted by all the Powers except France.<sup>2</sup>

In a memorandum to the British Government, the French expressed grave doubts as to the proposed declaration proving acceptable to Russia. Their argument was that, under article 8 of the agreement, the Chinese Government proposed to spend quite a substantial sum of money on pastoral development in Heilungchian province as well as mineral development and monetary reforms throughout the region. In the agreement and the proposed declaration, however, it was still provided that these projects should continue to be financed by the consortium until their completion, hence the monopolistic aspects which the Russians protested against still characterised the agreement. On account of this, therefore, the French opined, there was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1069, Whitelaw Reid to Grey [27554], 13 July 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1069, Grey to Whitelaw Reid [27554], 19 July 1911, Whitelaw Reid to Grey [29078], 22 July 1911, Addis to Foreign Office [29891], 29 July 1911, Memorandum communicated by Count Metternich [30591], 1 August 1911 and Enclosure No. 2 to Addis to the Foreign Office [29582], 27 July 1911.



no way France could see herself able to exert pressure on St. Petersburg to accept a statement which did not remove these objectionable features. They concluded by urging that in their opinion 'It would therefore be preferable to suppress purely and simply Article 16 of the loan contract.....'. On the other hand, the memorandum went on, the French would accept the proposed declaration if London could first ascertain that it was acceptable to St. Petersburg.<sup>1</sup>

This latest move by the French embarrassed London a great deal. This was because, for the first time, the British Government would have to submit a declaration of this nature to Russia not primarily to confirm the Scott-Mouravieff Convention but mainly for Russia to scrutinize the details of proposed British undertakings in Manchuria which were not purely in the field of railways. On the other hand, it was realised that the only way of saving the consortium from destruction would be to accede to the French request. In doing so, however, it was realized that it would hardly be politic not to send the declaration to the Japanese as they had been known to be in constant communication with the Russians on the subject. To treat Japan on the same footing as Russia was, on the other hand, anathema to contemporary British diplomatic practice. In addition, such a declaration might well be misconstrued in Tokyo as conceding to Japan the same rights that Russia possessed under the convention without any reciprocal obligation on Japan in respect

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1069, Memorandum communicated by Daeschmer 314197, 8 August 1911. This memorandum gives the impression that in signalling their consent the French group did not consult their government. On the other hand, the government's later action might have been the result of pressure from Russia: see FO/371/1069, Enclosure No. 2 in Addis to Foreign Office 295827, 27 July 1911.



of the British position in the Yangtze. In the end, however, Grey took the inevitable decision: 'We must treat Russians & Japanese alike in any further steps we take' and he ordered the necessary enquiries.<sup>1</sup> Did this mean, in effect, that Grey gave Japan the right to veto any British railway concession within the purview of the Anglo-Russian convention? Decidedly not. It is inconceivable that Grey would concede this right to Japan without enlisting a similar obligation from her in respect of the Yangtze. Moreover, if one considers the fact that the Foreign Office was, at this time, even considering a way of honourably doing away with this convention, it is questionable that Grey would concede such a privilege to Japan in the same region. He made this position clear when he noted late in September 1911 to the effect that:

'We cannot quarrel with Russia & Japan over this question. If they claimed to veto all railways in Manchuria we should have to contest their claim, but we cannot contest their claim to oppose railways that compete with their own. It seems of course to come to this that if China wishes to make railways in Manchuria she must come to agreement with Russia & Japan & as long as these countries are prepared to discuss railway projects with her we cannot intervene effectively.'<sup>2</sup>

This clearly indicated the continuity of Grey's policy in respect of British railway concessionaries in South Manchuria. As far as the Russian position was concerned, Grey seemed to be throwing over-board the British obligation under the Scott-Mouravieff Convention. The communication to Tokyo was, as he later observed, therefore merely 'to say something at the same time to Japan who

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; FO/371/1069, Grey to Buchanan (No. 234), 28 August 1911; Grey to Kato /332807, 28 August 1911.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1083, Minute by Grey on Buchanan to Grey (No. 272), 21 September 1911.



is our ally & will be sensitive if we approach Russia without saying anything to her'.<sup>1</sup>

On 3 October, however, both Russia and Japan, in two identical notes, rejected the proposed declaration on the ground that it fell short of their objections and reiterated their desire for a complete suppression of the article in question. On this occasion, Grey came to the conclusion that if the funds provided under the loan agreement were not limited solely to a number of specified enterprises, there would be endless disputes as to what other undertakings came within the purview of the consortium.<sup>2</sup> In communicating the Russian and Japanese rejection of the proposed declaration to the Americans, therefore, he noted that:

'As long as the programme is so indefinite, it would, in my opinion, be useless again to approach the Russian and Japanese Governments in regard to this question, and I am inclined to think that the best chance of arriving at a solution is to secure the immediate publication by the Chinese Government of a specific programme of undertakings to which the loan is to be allocated, stating definitely in each case the actual work to be accomplished and the amount of money to be devoted to it. In this manner the preference granted to the four groups would be limited to supplying additional funds required to complete the specified undertakings, and we should thus avoid the endless disputes that would arise under the terms of the present indefinite programme, as to what enterprises should or should not be regarded as arising directly out of the original undertakings'.<sup>3</sup>

This formula was accepted by the United States and Germany. In an informal communication on 6 November, the French also acquiesced

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1314, Minute by Grey on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 32), 5 March 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1069, Yamaza to Grey and Minutes [388337], 3 October 1911 and Enclosure in O'Brian to Grey (No. 286), 4 October 1911.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1091, Grey to Whitelaw Reid [394697], 13 October 1911.



but advised that the shortest way out of the current difficulties would be the suppression of the article in dispute.<sup>1</sup> Owing, however, to ~~a~~<sup>the</sup> revolution which had just broken out in China and the decision by all the Powers to suspend all financial dealings with the country until the situation had become clear, discussion on this thorny question was shelved.<sup>2</sup>

The revolution created a number of issues which compelled the British Government to reappraise Russian and Japanese attitudes towards the consortium. These issues were set out in a memorandum drawn up by the representatives of the four-power group in Peking. In this memorandum, they drew attention to Article 17 of the agreement which stipulated that if, owing to a political or financial crisis, it was found impossible to issue the loan within six months from the 'date of notification', that is by 14 April 1912, the banks should, in case the markets were still unfavourable, be entitled to request an extension of time within which to perform their contract; but that, should Peking refuse to grant such extension, the contract should become null and void subject to the repayment of all advances. From this point, the representatives submitted that it was reasonably certain that it would be impossible to issue the loan on or before the stipulated date unless the terms of the loan contract were revised. They then set out to enumerate their reasons for this contention. They argued that it would seem

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1069, Whitelaw Reid to Grey /411197, 18 October 1911, Metternich to Grey /442477, 4 November 1911. Note communicated by Daeschner /444047, 6 November 1911.

<sup>2</sup>For details of this Revolution and the attitudes of the Powers towards it see Lowe, op.cit., pp. 58-88.



probable that the groups might find it unprofitable, if not inadvisable, to issue the loan under current conditions in the country unless fresh and better terms could be arranged. If this were so, it would be necessary to hold the Chinese to their obligations under the old contract until a fresh instrument could be negotiated. This could only be done if, by 14 April, there would be a Chinese Government competent enough and willing to grant such extension of time as the groups might request.<sup>1</sup>

The representatives then called attention to the Russian and Japanese opposition to Article 16. They argued that it was not inconceivable that, unless those two Powers were satisfied by the revision of the agreement as they had demanded, they might take advantage of Article 17 to insist that China refuse any extension requested by the banks, or even enable her to secure money to repay the advance already made and thus nullify the loan agreement. Even if the two Powers did not act in the manner suggested, the representatives maintained, they would steadfastly and assuredly maintain their hostility to Article 16 in its current form. Furthermore, in case the groups, in revising the loan agreement, insisted upon a system of audit or control of Chinese finance, both Russia and Japan would undoubtedly demand a share in such control and admission to any loan based on its establishment. Moreover in view of the hearing already accorded to Russian and Japanese objections to Article 16, they observed, it was to be

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1313, Enclosure in Addis to Langley /7602/, 19 February 1912.



doubted whether the admittedly necessary joint action by the four Powers with regard to the preservation or alteration of the contract could be obtained unless steps were taken to conciliate Russia and Japan. It might be possible in revising the loan agreement, the memorandum went on, that the question regarding pledging Manchurian revenues as security would still remain as well as the question of financial supervision or control, should that be contemplated. On account of these considerations, the representatives reckoned that a mere amendment or deletion of Article 16 would now not satisfy Russia and Japan.<sup>1</sup>

On the political side of the issue, the representatives noted that Manchuria had remained part of China solely by the bonds of Manchu sovereignty. The abdication of the Manchus seemed inevitable and the quasi-popular administration which was likely to grow out of the current revolution would be preoccupied with domestic problems and would find considerable difficulty in establishing its authority throughout China. Under these conditions, the representatives argued, it was not inconceivable that Russia and Japan would take advantage of the situation and, in the readjustments that would follow the current upheavals, demand recognition of their predominant interest in the region. If such a demand was made, the four Powers would have of three alternatives. Firstly, support a Chinese republic in asserting its authority over the entire heritage of the Manchus. Secondly, frankly accept the Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



and Japanese claims. Finally, they could tacitly acquiescence therein, without accepting or protesting. On the other hand, they argued, it was also conceivable that those Powers would not put forward any definite demands as such but they might 'be content to insist upon the deletion of Article 16, or its radical amendment, either of which propositions, if accepted by the four governments and the groups, would constitute a de facto if not a de jure acquiesce in the Russian and Japanese contention as to their dominant influence in Manchuria'.<sup>1</sup>

These arguments did not fail to convince Addis that the time had come to invite Russia and Japan into the consortium. He noted, however, that:

'We should not ..... be willing to agree to an agreement which was intended to be retrospective in its terms, or which might be held to involve the recognition of a preferential position for either Russia or Japan [in Manchuria]'.<sup>2</sup>

The British Government also acknowledged the logic in the arguments of the representatives. The main concern at this time, however, was to secure an understanding among all the Powers not to take advantage of Yuan Shih-kai's financial predicament by lending money to him on an uncompetitive basis or to any other organisation inimical to the republican cause and to secure an All-Power financial loan for Yuan outside the activities of the consortium. By 13 March 1912, these objectives had been achieved and attention was once more turned to Russian and Japanese attitudes towards the consortium.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1313, Addis to Langley [7264], 17 February 1912.

<sup>3</sup>Lowe, op.cit., pp. 126-7.



On the question of Russian and Japanese admission into the organisation the road appeared very rough. The French had indicated their willingness to cooperate in any scheme towards Russian admission and had suggested that Britain should approach Japan while they and the British approach the Russians on the subject. They, however, noted that Russia would demand a preferential position in Manchuria and that the French Government would strongly support any such claim.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Germans were totally opposed to the two Powers in either the current or future activities of the consortium on grounds that

'arrangement existing between four money-giving groups should not be extended to money-taking nations, whose interests in China may be quite different from those of the four groups and who might consequently endanger the future development of any financial transactions considered by the four groups.'<sup>2</sup>

The Americans, however, favoured the broadest possible internationalisation of all future Chinese national and provincial loans and urged that full membership should be offered to Russia and Japan. Thus opinion varied more than ever on the issue of Japan and Russia in Manchuria in their relationship with the consortium. But the most important question at the juncture was to bring Germany in line with the main stream of thought before the French claims on behalf of Russia could be tackled. The apparent German opposition to the entry of the two Powers into the organisation was, however, discovered to be a political gambit aimed at stealing a march on

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1313, Enclosure and minutes on Addis to the Foreign Office [7264], 17 February 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1313, Enclosure No. 8 in Addis to the Foreign Office [8394], 23 February 1912.



the unofficial leadership being provided by Britain in the consortium's relations with the two. For on 9 March, Berlin went behind the other Powers and invited Japan to participate in the future activities of the consortium.<sup>1</sup> No matter what the intentions of the Germans were, their action suited Britain as it provided a solution to the principle of admission of the two Powers into the group and Grey used the opportunity to invite Japan on behalf of the others to join the organisation.<sup>2</sup> The next step was to wait for the final word from France for the proposed joint approach to Russia. This was secured on 14 March and instructions were immediately sent to George Buchanan, British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, to cooperate with his French colleague in extending the invitation to Russia.<sup>3</sup>

Six days after this invitation had been extended to the two Powers, Japan signalled her acceptance. She intimated, however, that in all matters connected with the loan, there should 'be nothing of a nature to conflict with the special rights and interests possessed by Japan in South Manchuria'.<sup>4</sup> A few days later, the Russians also accepted the invitation on condition that their interests in the north were not prejudicially affected by their admission.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1315, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 35), 11 March 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1315, Grey to MacDonald (Telegram No. 16), 12 March 1912.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1315, Memorandum communicated by Cambon /110327/, 14 March 1912; Grey to Buchanan (Telegram No. 239), 15 March 1912.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/1315, MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 38), 18 March 1912.

<sup>5</sup>FO/371/1315, Buchanan to Grey (Telegram No. 112), 24 March 1912.



The Japanese assertion of their 'special rights and interests' in South Manchuria, though indefinite in its nature, raised a number of pertinent questions. It was true that Britain had admitted that Japan and Russia had some privileged position in Manchuria; but was it politic to admit such privileges in a document such as the consortium agreement? To admit such privileges as a condition for an agreement would be a departure in Anglo-Japanese relations and for the Americans it would seem to stultify their whole Manchurian policy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, was it politic to tell Japan that, as far as Britain was concerned, her 'special rights and interests' in the region were limited to competing lines with the South Manchurian railway whilst those of Russia were more extensive and were based upon the Scott-Mouravieff Convention? It is doubtful. In addition, was it financially expedient to acknowledge this right whilst allowing the Russians the freedom to operate in the Yangtze through the consortium? Obviously not. The overall British reaction was that Britain should not 'make the first move in objecting to the condition put by the Japanese Government to Japanese participation'.<sup>2</sup>

A partial solution to this British dilemma was, however, found in American diplomacy. In the first place when the United States took note of Russian reservations to take such action as might be necessary to safeguard their special interests in North Manchuria, Mongolia and Turkestan arising out of conventions and treaties at

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1315, Minutes on Buchanan to Grey (Telegram No. 100), 9 March 1912; FO /371/1316, Enclosure in Buchanan to Grey (No. 113), 14 April 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1315, Minutes by Max Müller and Langley on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 38), 13 March 1912.



the time ~~when~~ a common platform was being sought by the Powers to obtain guarantees from the Chinese Government to protect their interests in the country. By this action, Washington, at least, recognised the fact that Russia had some special interests in Manchuria without specifying what these interests were nor the treaties and conventions on which they were based.<sup>1</sup> This admission by America was a good enough base for the four Powers to work together to determine what rights Japan and Russia had actually got and generally recognised in Manchuria and try to limit them to their current size. Secondly, the utterances of Huntington Wilson, the American Assistant Secretary of State, clearly indicated that there was no

'wish on the part of the United States Government to induce His Majesty's Government to take up and maintain a general lead in these Chinese negotiations, but merely that, so far as the United States Government is concerned, it preferred to follow any lead given by Great Britain in the matter rather than itself to lead'.<sup>2</sup>

This also provided Britain with a fair chance of enforcing her view that the only special privilege Russia and Japan possessed in Manchuria was in regard to railway construction subject to the condition formulated by Grey in 1910. This was the case because America and Japan would then be left in a position to prove that this was not the situation.

Having already secured the Russian commitment to participation,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1315, Bryce to Grey (Telegram No. 36), 18 March 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1316, Minutes on Bryce to Grey (No. 86), 25 March 1912.



Britain, therefore, began to find a framework within which a recognition of the Russian and Japanese rights would be limited to what she was herself prepared to concede. This took the form of a vaguely worded assurance to Russia to the effect that the consortium would not impinge on those rights she possessed in Manchuria which were derived from her treaty. The note went on to urge that only by participating in the loan would Russia be sure that it was not applied to projects she objected to and thus save herself from being placed in a disagreeable position of protesting against a loan approved by so many countries when the necessity arose. The note, however, made no mention of the specific treaties from which Britain recognized Russia as deriving her special position in the region.<sup>1</sup> Was it the Scott-Mouravieff Convention or the Sino-Russian treaties of 1896 and 1898 or the Russo-Japanese treaties of 1907 and 1910?

This was the question Russia brought forward on 22 April. In a note to the British Government, the Russians pointed out that their reservations had two aspects. The first was in regard to the confirmation by the Powers of all Russian rights and interests throughout China which she could derive from her treaties and conventions with the former regime. This condition, the note stressed, must be fulfilled before Russia could consider recognizing the present republican government. The second reservation was in regard to her

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1316, Memorandum communicated to Benckendorff [12900], 12 April 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1317, Sazonoff to Benckendorff, communicated to Foreign Office [12900], 22 April 1912.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1317, Grey to Benckendorff [12900], 6 May 1912.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/1318, Minutes and Extracts communicated by Sazonoff [12900], 13 May 1912.



participation in the consortium and this went beyond the first. This involved a recognition by the consortium Powers of all those rights and interests resulting from her political and economic position in North Manchuria and from her secret conventions with Japan.<sup>1</sup> In its reply, however, the Foreign Office merely reiterated its former position and noted:

'Seeing that it is one of the conditions put forward by His Majesty's Government that "the terms and conditions of the loan must form the subject of careful consideration at the hands of the Governments concerned and that until an agreement on this question has been arrived at, the loan cannot be sanctioned", Russia, as a party to the loan, is in a position herself to prevent the proceeds from being applied to the purposes to which she objects'.<sup>2</sup>

The question was whether the financial groups which were soon to meet to discuss the details of the Russian and Japanese entry into the organization would find it financially expedient to endorse the British view.

This was the precise problem the bankers faced as a result of explicit and identical instructions given to the Russo-Asiatic and the Yokohama Specie Banks representing Russia and Japan respectively. Tokyo, for instance, urged its group not to accept any arrangement that 'might prove to be prejudicial to the special rights and interests of Japan in South Manchuria'. In addition, they noted that:

'The eastern portion of Inner Mongolia, being closely related to South Manchuria, is also the region where Japan has special interests, and therefore matters relating to that region shall be dealt with in the same way as those concerning South Manchuria'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1317, Sazonoff to Benckendorff, communicated to Foreign Office I70867, 22 April 1912.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1317, Grey to Benckendorff I70867, 6 May 1912.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1318, Minutes and Extracts communicated by Koike Z08907, 13 May 1912.



In essence, what Japan was seeking in these regions was no different from what Russia had earlier indicated she would strive for in Manchuria. Owing to the unwillingness of London to be drawn into an unpleasant situation of appearing to be in opposition to its ally, it was felt that the simplest answer to the problem would be to expunge any mention of either Manchuria or Mongolia from any arrangements the bankers might find expedient to make. Addis was, therefore, given the task of convincing the other members of the group to accept this suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

Through adroit initiative and behind-the-scene meetings with the Russian and Japanese delegates as well as consultations with other members of the consortium, Addis got Article 16 expunged from the loan agreement of 1911. This had the desired effect of removing Manchuria from the scope of the consortium's activities. On 8 June, however, the Russian and Japanese tendered a memorandum to the other delegates to the effect that:

'The Russian group declared that it takes part in the loan on the understanding that nothing connected with the projected loan should operate to the prejudice of the special rights and interests of Russia in the regions of Northern Manchuria, Mongolia, and Western China' and

'The Japanese Bank declared that it takes part in the loan on the understanding that nothing connected with the projected loan should operate to the prejudice of the special rights and interests of Japan in the regions of South Manchuria, and of the eastern portion of Inner Mongolia, adjacent to South Manchuria.'

The other delegates replied to this statement in a joint declaration

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Minute by Langley thereon.



observing that 'they were unable to accept or consider either of these declarations upon the ground that they were not competent to deal with political questions'. With both sides unable to shift ground on this issue, the conference was adjourned to enable the Russian and Japanese delegates to communicate with their governments on the deadlock and to receive fresh instructions on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

In the intervening period, however, Addis continued his search for a compromise. In this endeavour, he was told by Kato on 11 June that the main objection of Japan was the wording of the reply by the four groups to the declaration. He, therefore, suggested to Addis that the words 'unable to accept or consider' should be replaced with the words 'were not in a position to express their views upon' and they would find Japan amenable.<sup>2</sup> Addis, then, put this compromise formula before the others and it was readily accepted prior to the recommencement of the conference.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, when the delegates reassembled on 18 June to hear the new instructions from Tokyo and St. Petersburg, the only remaining problem appeared to be securing Russian assent to the proposed compromise. Russian intentions, however, proved to be more pronounced than those of the Japanese. In a statement to the conference, she demanded a virtual right of veto over the activities of the consortium not only in Manchuria but also in any area where she might feel it necessary to exert her influence. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed among the Japanese, French, British, American

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<sup>1</sup> FO/371/1319, Addis to Foreign Office [24991] 11 June 1912.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1319, Addis to the Foreign Office [25116], 12 June 1912.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/1319, Enclosure I in papers communicated by Addis [26044], 15 June 1912.



and the German delegations to insert another minute into the agreement to the effect that:

'In view of the extraordinary conditions now prevailing in China, the six Groups agree that before concluding any business under Article 2 of the Agreement, the Groups will obtain from the Chinese Government exact information as to the nature of the objects for which the loan funds or advances are intended, and will communicate such information forthwith to each of the six Groups so that they may be able to consult their respective Governments before any loan or advance is concluded, each of the six Groups undertaking that it will not entertain business to which its Government may object...'<sup>1</sup>

After much consideration of this declaration, the Russians accepted it upon its confirmation by their government. This confirmation was received on the following day. Everything, therefore, seemed settled at this stage when Russia and Japan dropped in another demand. They claimed the right to withdraw from the consortium any time its activities proved prejudicial to their interests. The other four accepted this claim upon the condition that they were offered similar rights. Russia and Japan acquiesced. Upon this understanding a complete understanding was achieved and Russia and Japan were formally admitted into the consortium.<sup>2</sup>

Under the consortium agreement, therefore, Britain gave nothing away in the recognition of Russian and Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria apart from those she had already conceded to those Powers. Hence, as far as Britain was concerned, the only matters in which Japan could claim to have a special position in South

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1318, Inter-Group Conference minutes [21076], 18, 19, and 20 June 1912.

<sup>2</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1021-5; ibid.



Manchuria were <sup>those</sup> based upon the transfer agreements and the Sino-Japanese Secret Conventions of 1905 and not the Scott-Mouravieff Convention. Even the latter convention seemed to have lost much of its essence by the mere fact that Russian capital was not precluded from being applied, through the consortium, for railway enterprises in the Yangtze Valley. By tacitly accepting this position, therefore, Russia seemed to have relieved Britain from her obligation under the convention. A test case, therefore, could have been made out of British application for the extension of the Peking-Mukden railway line on 24 January 1913, which went well beyond the Great Wall, had the Russians turned down this application.<sup>1</sup> By approving this contract by the British and Chinese Corporation, Russia seemed to have realized the new situation which had been created by the consortium in an effort to maintain the territorial integrity of China. Neither can it be argued that by removing Manchuria from the scope of the consortium's activities, the British Government accorded, even tacitly, a greater recognition to Japan's special position in South Manchuria. Firstly there was no firm commitment by the bankers that they would not commit the organization to industrial activities in Manchuria should the opportunity arise and should such schemes not prove detrimental to Russian and Japanese interests in the region. Secondly, it should be noted that the British recommendation that the mention of Manchuria should be expunged from the consortium agreement was mooted by their desire to avoid being driven into a situation where

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1607, Grey to Buchanan (No. 36 confidential), 24 January 1913; Minutes on Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 39 confidential), 7 February 1913.



they might be forced to concede any more ground to the Japanese in respect of their claimed special position in South Manchuria. Finally, it must be realized that the overall impact of the consortium agreement on Russian and Japanese activities in Manchuria was that, as members of this organization, they bound themselves not to consolidate their positions in the region through additional concessions from the Chinese Government to the exclusion of the other Powers. This was the case because the agreement bound each country from seeking any concessions from and making any loans to the Chinese Government outside the normal activity of the consortium.<sup>1</sup> Even when industrial loans were separated from purely administrative loans in 1913 under pressure from Japan and certain British financiers to enable each nation <sup>to secure</sup> some manoeuvrability in respect of the former, there was no engagement by any of the consortium Powers not to seek 'normal industrial' concessions in Manchuria.

Hence, the consortium, as it operated until the outbreak of the war in 1914, gave Russia and Japan no additional advantages in Manchuria other than what they already possessed in the region prior to their entry into the organization. It was another issue altogether that was to modify British recognition in respect of Japan's special position in South Manchuria. This issue was nothing else but the results of British Yangtze policy.

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2., pp. 1021-2, Article 2.



C. British Yangtze policy

British policy in the Yangtze Valley during the first decade of this century has been the subject of much scholarly analysis.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese activities in South Manchuria, however, it is necessary to focus a brief attention on British policy in this region. It must be stated in this respect, however, that Britain came to formulate a clearer policy in the Yangtze on account of her fears that some of the Powers aimed at dominating the most economically viable regions of China and it was her duty also to reassert her rights in the Yangtze to protect her vested interests. The incident which brought the question to the fore was a proposal by the Chinese Government to exchange the construction of the Shanghai-Hangchow-Ningpo railway line, which it had granted to the British and Chinese Corporation, for another line running from Nanchang to Pinghsiang in Kiangsi province. Our attention must, therefore, be focused on this issue.

Whilst discussions were in progress between the corporation and the Chinese Government on the proposed exchange of the contract, Mayers, representing the former, learnt that the Japanese were also negotiating with the Chinese for the same concession to link up with their existing Kiukiang-Nanchang Railway line. After a careful consideration of the situation, Mayers decided that the best way out would be a joint Anglo-Japanese financing of the project. He, therefore, entered into an informal understanding with the agent of the

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<sup>1</sup>Lowe, op.cit., pp. 147-76.



Japanese and informed the Foreign Office of his action.<sup>1</sup>

When Jordan heard of this development, he took very strong objection to it. In the first place, he contended that British capitalists could afford to finance the whole project, hence there was no need to invite outside assistance.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, he held that as the bulk of the proposed line would pass through the Yangtze Valley and as the Japanese were most unlikely to give a similar concession to any British firm in South Manchuria for strategic reasons, it was unwise encouraging what constituted an interference in British sphere of influence.<sup>3</sup>

There was, however, no reason why Jordan should hold such a view on the Japanese in South Manchuria at this time. After all that had been said about Japanese ambitions in South Manchuria, they had shown their willingness to admit British capital into the region. A typical case in point was their intimation that they would authorise the construction of the Chinchow-Aigun line provided they were allowed a share in its finance and had it not been but for Chinese opposition, the line would not have been held up. A recent gesture in the same direction was their permission to the British and Chinese Corporation for the extension of the Peking-Mukden line from Chinchow to Chaoyang soon after the British Government had applied for their consent on behalf of that firm.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1621, Memorandum by Mayers respecting Anglo-Japanese Railway Finance in China I63347, n.d. Received at the Foreign Office 9 April 1913.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1621, Minute by Langley on Jordan to Grey (No. 223), 31 May 1913.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1621, Minute by Gregory on Alston to Grey (Telegram No. 193), 15 August 1913.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/1607, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 56), 24 February 1913.



addition, a rejection of the Japanese cooperation at this juncture would stultify the whole basis of the much talked about Anglo-Japanese cooperation in China. Apart from these, there were other practical considerations which Mayers put forward regarding the whole question of railway finance in China.

In a memorandum to the Foreign Office, Mayers pointed out that the Japanese were not going to be left out of railway loans to China if they could help it. British industrialists 'must therefore work with them, or compete with them'. For general projects, he continued, there could be no fears from the Japanese on account of their financial weakness but for specific projects such as the proposed Nanchang-Pinghsiang line, traversing Kiangsi province, they occupied a very favourable position. Firstly, the Japanese held the Kiukiang-Nanchang line. Secondly, their interest in the Hanyehping Company gave them a special claim to a line traversing the coal-mining regions in which that company was situated. In addition, Japanese influence in Kiangsi province was very formidable owing to the large number of Kiangsi students who had been educated in Japan. Furthermore, the Japanese claimed they had a concession for another line from Wuchang to Foochow, which, if constructed, would traverse Kiangsi province. In view of these considerations, he inferred, the British and Chinese Corporation would have to cooperate with the Japanese or ask the Chinese for quite a different concession. Considering the legal difficulties that might arise if the latter course of action was adopted, he concluded, the best alternative would be that of Anglo-Japanese cooperation in



financing the line.<sup>1</sup>

Upon these considerations, it was decided to inform Japan that Britain was quite willing that her 'concessionaries should co-operate with theirs [in the Yangtze] but that each case must be considered on its merits and that it must depend upon the willingness of the particular British concessionaire to take a Japanese partner and to an agreement being arrived at as to respective shares of the two parties'.<sup>2</sup> Just at this moment, however, came two major developments which worked hand in hand to modify the British view. The first of these was the constant pressure being exerted on the British Government by certain financiers in Britain for the separation of industrial loans from the purview of the consortium to enable each member to allow her nationals the freedom to seek industrial concessions in China. With the withdrawal of the United States from the consortium in March 1913 and the intensity of the pressure from this period onwards came the decision of the other remaining parties to terminate the triple agreement which imposed a ban on any country encouraging her national to seek concessions in China. The effect of this decision, though with a strong backing from London, was to have a considerable impact on its views as to the efficacy of international cooperation for industrial purposes in a country like China.<sup>3</sup> While this thought was raging, came in the second development, the so-called 'Nanking

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1621, Memorandum by Mayers [16334], n.d. Received on 9 April 1913.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1621, Minute by Langley on Jordan to Grey (No. 223), 31 May 1913.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/1621, Memorandum communicated to the Japanese Ambassador [38598], 5 September 1913.



Incident'.<sup>1</sup> This incident, coming so soon after Japan's request for a further cooperation in the construction of another line from Nanking to Hsiangtan had been turned down by the British Government,<sup>2</sup> created such a stir in Alson<sup>+</sup> as to draw him to the conclusion that the Japanese reaction over the 'incident' was another way they had found expedient in establishing their political and economic hegemony in the Yangtze Valley instead of the more subtle approach of having to depend on British goodwill. He wrote:

'Their action with regard to Nanking-Singtan Railway, to which they have no claim, strengthens the impression that they will spare no effort to improve their position in British sphere. The situation at Nanking, where they show a desire to cause trouble, may well give them the opportunity they desire.'<sup>3</sup>

The resentment felt by Britain over Japanese action during the 'incident' and the parallel drawn from it and the Japanese desire to infiltrate into the Yangtze at all cost found expression of grave concern at the Foreign Office. John Duncan Gregory, Acting Assistant Head of the Far Eastern Department, for instance, observed that the only way international frictions such as the 'Nanking Incident' could be avoided in China was the preservation of the existing spheres of influence which each of the Powers enjoyed in the country by a well-defined stance as to the limitations of a Power in another's sphere. He, therefore, advocated an

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<sup>1</sup>See Lowe, op.cit., pp. 100-13, for an account of this 'Incident'.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1621, Memorandum communicated by the Japanese Ambassador [385987], 20 August 1913, and Memorandum communicated to the Japanese Ambassador [385987], 5 September 1913.

<sup>3</sup>Cited from Lowe, op.cit., p.111. Alson was at this time acting as a Counsellor in the absence of Jordan from Peking.



immediate reassertion of the British position in the Yangtze. In addition, he urged that Britain should demand from Japan the right of reciprocity in all industrial undertakings in each other's sphere, if she desired to operate in the Yangtze. This position was unanimously accepted at the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup> On 11 October, therefore, a memorandum was communicated to Inoue calling his government's attention to the 'traditional and acknowledged' fields claimed by British and Japanese industrial enterprises in the Yangtze and South Manchuria regions respectively. The memorandum then went on:

'The Japanese Government will therefore readily understand that His Majesty's Government would desire to see the concession in question [The Nanking-Hsiangtan Railway Loan] fall to a British group and that they will be impelled in their own interests to accord such a group their full support in any endeavour to obtain it. It is only natural that His Majesty's Government should be anxious that the control of a line which not merely runs exclusively in the region where British influence and interests are predominant, but which also connects two existing enterprises financed by British capital, shall be vested in British hands.

In corresponding circumstances in South Manchuria, the Japanese Government would no doubt desire that the control of a line should be vested in Japanese hands.

His Majesty's Government would be glad to consider in what manner and to what extent it would be practicable to arrange for subsequent Japanese participation in the scheme, but if the Japanese Government desire to obtain benefits or privileges in the Yangtze Valley, it would be only equitable that they should be prepared to concede corresponding advantages to British enterprise in South Manchuria.

Provided that the Japanese Government agree to this principle, His Majesty's Government would then be prepared to consider any proposal which they may put forward regarding

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<sup>1</sup> FO/371/1621, Minute by Gregory on Alston to Grey (Telegram No. 213), 21 September 1913.



the extent of the cooperation with which they would be satisfied. But the extent of such cooperation must naturally be commensurate with the amount of capital that the Japanese Group would be prepared to subscribe to the scheme, and the apportionment of the benefits accruing therefrom to the two countries must be calculated on this basis'.<sup>1</sup>

In their reply to this note, the Japanese observed that their main interest in the Nanking-Hsiangtan railway was from Nanchang to Pinghsiang and even with this section of the line which formed the terminus of their line from Kiukiang to Nanchang and the site of the Hanyehping coal mines respectively, they were willing to admit British participation. They, therefore, appealed to the British Government, in view of their vested interest, to raise no objection to Japan proceeding with the project. On the question of reciprocity in industrial undertakings in each other's sphere, the note was opaquely vague and extremely non-committal. It asserted that Japan's

'relation with Manchuria is not only that of economic interests, but of the important special relation accruing from political consideration and its geographical proximity to her frontiers. In view of the above-mentioned various special relations of Japan with Manchuria, the Imperial Government sincerely hopes that the British Government will for its careful consideration keep in view Japan's special relations in regard to that district.'<sup>2</sup>

It was at least gratifying to Britain that Japan had implicitly subscribed to the idea of first seeking permission from her before engaging in any railway construction in the Yangtze region, as this opened the way for the question of the line in question to be assessed

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<sup>1</sup> FO/371/1621, Memorandum communicated to the Japanese Ambassador /431647, 11 October 1913.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1621, Purport of Telegram received from Tokyo: communicated by the Japanese Ambassador /538287, 26 November 1913.



independently of the principle.<sup>1</sup> In spite of strong opposition from Jordan on the question of Japan's participation in industrial undertakings in the Yangtze, therefore, London would most probably not have had any cause for a further exposition of the principle beyond this point. But there was another menace at work and this was connected with French activities in the region.

For some time past, the French had been very active in the Yangtze through their newly established Banque Industrielle de Chine. This bank had been known to have concluded a loan which contemplated among its objectives the construction of harbour works at Pukow and a bridge at Hankow. Jordan, for instance, considered the French activities at Pukow as a 'commercial point d'appui' through which they might seek to entrench themselves in the Yangtze which other Powers, as Japan had recently shown, would use as a pretext to invade the region commercially and industrially to the irritation of the British commercial community in China.<sup>2</sup> In a very lengthy minute, therefore, Langley reviewed all the activities of the French in the region. It was this clear exposition of the French position that finally convinced Grey that a more comprehensive and definite statement ought to be made on the British stand in the Yangtze to all Powers it might concern, which Gregory had admirably expounded in another lengthy minute.<sup>3</sup> The importance

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., see Langley's minute.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1621, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 262), 13 December 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Minutes thereon.



of this minute and the repercussions it was to have on British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese political and economic activities in South Manchuria necessitates its extensive repetition here. He wrote:

'The whole question of spheres of influence, past or present, is involved in the decisions that we must now take as to the specific points at issue, and it would seem that the time has arrived for some comprehensive statement - to all whom it may concern- containing a definite assertion of principle with regard to future concession. China has entered on a new phase, probably a period of violent development - and a policy is required to meet it. The continued discussion of isolated points, such as the Nanking-Hsiangtan Railway, the Pukow-Sinyang Railway, the Pukow Harbour works and the corresponding effort to obtain adequate but individual quid pro quos gives us little scope for arriving at a permanent solution, even should it settle the point of dispute. Other questions of similar nature will crop up unless we go to the root of the matter now and we have not consolidated our position at all so long as we confine the controversy within the narrow limits of specific concessions. Moreover - in the particular controversy with the French - we are particularly insecure in contesting their claim to a concession at Pukow on the ground that it is the terminus of a British railway and the prospective terminus of another ie the Pukow - Sinyang, inasmuch as we are at present watching a dubious move on the part of the British and Chinese Corporation to oust the French from participation in a concession to which they have a perfectly valid right.'<sup>1</sup>

He then noted that there could be no precise definition of the principle of 'sphere of influence' but there were other ways of declaring an analogous position just along the lines made to the Japanese and that there seemed no reason why Britain should not definitely claim 'traditional and acknowledged fields' for her own industrial enterprise in the Yangtze and concede the same rights

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Minutes thereon.



to the French or any other Power that might contemplate entering that region industrially in their own sphere of influence.<sup>1</sup>

Based on these observations, two separate but almost identical memoranda were drawn up and communicated to the French and Japanese Ambassadors. The one to the Japanese recounted the stand taken by Britain during the Chinchow-Aigun dispute by declaring that:

'The Japanese Government will remember that in the past His Majesty's Government refused to give their assent to a British firm proceeding with the Chinchow-Aigun Railway scheme until it could come to terms with the Japanese Government, and they are determined to pursue the same policy of scrupulous, non-interference in South Manchuria in the future. This is the policy which they would prefer to see maintained throughout in the relations between the Powers in China, and though they have no desire to lend themselves to the dangerous policy of defining spheres of influence, yet at the same time it is clear to them that, in the scramble for concessions which is peculiar to the new phase of Chinese development, friction between the Powers can only be averted by each Power discouraging their nationals from embarking on enterprises in any area where another Power has by long association acquired special interests.'

The memorandum then reasserted the British quid pro quo for allowing Japanese railway participation in the Yangtze as communicated to them in September.<sup>2</sup>

After communicating this memorandum to the Japanese, Grey seemed to be still under the impression that the British declared policy concerned only railway construction.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, the first part of the declaration is clear on that point. The other part of the memorandum, however, seems to lend itself to a wider interpretation involving any form of industrial projects. It is, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1621, Memorandum communicated to the Japanese Ambassador 563017, 31 December 1913; Memorandum communicated to the French Embassy 563017, 1 January 1914.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/1941, Grey to Greene (No. 22), 2 February 1914.



not surprising that Conyngham Greene, the British Ambassador in Tokyo, put the latter interpretation on the declaration when he communicated it to the Japanese Government. He wrote:

'Baron Makino ..... asked me what was exactly meant by the term "industrial" in regard to interests in the Yangtze Valley. There were, he said, many Japanese, both companies and individuals, who held old-established interests there, such as railway interests, shipping on the river, mines, ironworks, mills, and so forth, and similar enterprises were no doubt multiplying continually. I said that, in the absence of official information, I took it that "industrial" was a generic term not easy of definition with regard to all interests, but that, in any case, it primarily included those interests for which concessions or permits from the central or local authorities were necessary, and for which the support of the Government of the applicant was necessary or desirable. I did not suppose that any interference with vested rights of individuals was under contemplation'.<sup>1</sup>

The discussions that went on between the Foreign Office and Jordan to find a precise definition of this generic term 'industrial' clearly indicated a new trend in British policy in relation to Japanese activities in South Manchuria. Jordan, for instance, observed:

'I understand that by fresh foreign interests is meant industrial interests of a political complexion only, such as railway, territorial, and perhaps mining concessions or loans involving control of important undertakings like China Merchants' Company, ironworks, docks, new ports etc, and not such industrial interests as bona fide participation in shipping, mining, or mills .....'

But then he noted that it was 'only from railway construction' that Britain was 'rigidly excluded in Manchuria but railway policy of Japan and Russia there operates to our commercial disadvantage in

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1941, Greene to Grey (No. 54), 23 February 1914.



various ways, and warns us against treating railway concessions elsewhere as on the same footing as other industries'.<sup>1</sup> While this last statement could be accepted as a correct exposition of the de facto situation, it must be noted that Britain had never conceded that Japan was the de jure authority in railway construction in South Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> The whole issue was, however, resolved by a further instruction to Greene in an attempt to give a precise definition to 'industrial' undertakings. It amounted to conceding the Russian right under the Scott-Mouravieff agreement to Japan in a modified form based upon the principle of reciprocity enunciated in September 1913. More than this, it covered a wider range of subjects - anything involving control of important Government undertakings'.<sup>3</sup>

When, therefore, Japan did not fully 'agree to check or obstruct any Japanese enterprises that may be set out in those parts of the Yangtze region where British interests have not yet been actually established' without a word about a corresponding advantage to British nationals, she was taken by London as having chosen <sup>the policy</sup> that of abstention from each other's sphere of influence.<sup>4</sup> Though discussions on the principle as applied to the Hanking-Hsiangtan railway went on well into the outbreak of the First World War, the fact that Japan withdrew her application to cooperate with Britain

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<sup>1</sup> FO/371/1941, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 42), 27 February 1914.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/1938, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 41), 27 February 1914.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/1941, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 10), 28 February 1914.

<sup>4</sup> FO/371/1942, Enclosure in Greene to Grey (No. 185), 12 June 1914; Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 111), 25 June 1914.



in this project was to be a landmark in British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese political and economic activities in South Manchuria.<sup>1</sup> Would Britain after such numerous exchanges with Japan be able to support her nationals seeking other industrial concessions in South Manchuria? It is doubtful. Neither could Britain restrain Japan from seeking further concessions in that region that would have the effect of muzzling Chinese sovereignty in South Manchuria. This explains the British ambivalence over the Manchurian terms of the Twenty-One Demands. Surely, there was very little under the terms which Britain had already not conceded to Japan dating conservatively from the time of declaring her Yangtze policy. While it is beyond the scope of our discussions to go into the genesis of the whole 'Demands' and the diplomatic manoeuvres that met it, we can briefly have a glance at the Manchurian terms.<sup>2</sup>

#### D. The Manchurian demands

Under the original Manchurian terms, the Japanese asked briefly for:

1. An extension of the lease of Port Arthur and Dairen and the South Manchurian and Autung-Mukden Railway for a further period of 99 years.
2. The right to lease or own land required either for erecting buildings for various commercial and industrial uses or for farming.

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<sup>1</sup>Lowe, op.cit., pp. 163-75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 220-266, for a complete discussion of the 'Demands'.



3. The right to enter, reside and travel in South Manchuria and to carry on business of various kinds - commercial, industrial and otherwise.

4. The right of mining in South Manchuria.

5. The right to give prior approval before the Chinese Government gave contracts to other nationals for the construction of railways in South Manchuria and whenever a loan was to be made with any other Power, under the security of the taxes of South Manchuria.

6. Prior consultation with Japan before the Chinese Government engaged the services of political, financial or military advisers or instructors in South Manchuria, and

7. Handing over to Japan for a term of 99 years the control and management of the Kirin-Chanchun railway.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from item 6 stated above, there was very little London could take exception to as giving Japan an additional advantage in South Manchuria. One or two issues however, require some elucidation before the whole situation can be well appreciated.

Before Kato left London to become Foreign Minister under Katsura Taro's Ministry in 1913, he had an interview with Grey in which he reviewed the situation in Kwantung in relation to Japan's position in the region. Recording this conversation to Tokyo, Grey noted that:

'Before he /Kato/ left this country, however, he wished to say to me that though when the lease expired neither he nor I would probably be in our respective Foreign Offices, yet no Government in Japan would be strong enough to give back the territory to China. He himself did not set great store to its possession or think it valuable to Japan, so long as no other Great Power possessed it; but, after the great war which the Japanese had fought with Russia, and the amount of

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 1231-2.



blood and treasure that had been spent, Japan could not cede Port Arthur and the leased territory'.<sup>1</sup>

Grey's answer to this intimation is interesting and requires full repetition here. He noted to Rumbold that:

'I said that I recognised the force of this last argument, and I quite saw the difficulty which there could be for Japan in evacuating the territory. We had experienced the same sort of difficulty in connection with Egypt. As the matter did not arise now, it was not necessary for me to discuss it; but I would put on record what he had said to me, that when the time came, though neither he nor I might have to deal with the matter, there should be a record here that he had prepared us for what the view of Japan would be'.<sup>2</sup>

To all intents and purposes, this reply was consistent with the discussions which had been going on between the two countries in respect of the tenure of the leases of Wei-hai Wei and Kwantung in relation to the German lease of Kiaochow since 1905. Grey was, however, soon to change his mind on this subject.

Soon after taking office in Tokyo, Kato instructed his successor in London, Inoue Katsunosuke, to inform Grey that what he had told him regarding Kwantung had the full support and approval of Sanoji Kimmochi, leader of the opposition Seiyukai party and the current Katsura Doshikai administration. On this occasion, however, Grey told Inoue that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6684, Records of some of Grey's statements on Manchuria and on Shantung at this period were not kept in the Foreign Office files. This one was a typical case in point. A copy of this statement was most probably found in the Tokyo Archives as Grey to Rumbold (No. 1), 3 January 1913, and embodied as an appendix of a memorandum by J.O.P. Bland F.42177, 6 May 1920.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/6684, Appendix, Memorandum by Bland F.42177, 6 May 1920.



'as no decision was required now, I could not of course bind my successor or whoever might be here some years hence when a decision had to be come to, but I had put on record what Baron Kato had said'.<sup>1</sup>

It is not quite clear why Grey should not return a committed answer to Inoue as he did to Kato four months previously. The Yangtze question had not become a major issue between the two countries to warrant such a modified opinion about Japan. If anything at all, Grey might have been personally convinced of what almost all his subordinates had been saying about Japan's territorial ambitions in China and had come to the conclusion that the best way to decelerate the process was by toning down his remarks about Japan's special position in those regions. But then, war was to break out in Europe in August 1914 when Japan's assistance was required to track down German naval vessels. Grey immediately realized that Japan might require some compensation in China for her efforts. In an endeavour to circumscribe the feared Japanese ambitions, therefore, Grey decided to revert to his former position in respect of Kwantung. On 21 August 1914 he instructed Greene to the effect that he should inform Kato that:

'I have not forgotten our conversation on the eve of his departure ... in regard to Liaotung Peninsula, and that I fully realise that Japan may find it necessary to make conditions for her expenditure of blood and money'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, whatever reservations Grey might have had about Japanese

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1614, Minutes by Langley on 21 April 1913 and Grey on 23 April and 2 May 1913 [210067].

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 82 confidential), 21 August 1914.



ambitions in China, the circumstances of the war forced him to revert to the previous tête-à-têtes between the two countries in respect of the tenure of the lease of Kwantung. It is, therefore, not surprising that when on 17 August 1914, the Foreign Office learnt on good authority that Japan had demanded an extension of the lease from China, it found the action not incredible and expressed no opposition to it.<sup>1</sup>

Another point which needs mentioning is the stipulation about non-alienation of Manchurian taxes as security for loans contracted with other foreign institutions. This demand was originally put forward by Russia in 7 July 1913 to the consortium Powers and was accepted by the British Government as the natural outcome of eliminating all reference to Manchuria from the currency loan agreement.<sup>2</sup> This did not mean, at the time, that either Japan or Russia was recognised as exercising control over the entire taxes in the region. With the declaration of the sphere of influence on 31 December 1913, however, it became apparent that no British firm obtaining concessions in other parts of China could ask for the alienation of any taxes in Manchuria as a security. It must be noted that this idea did not include the maritime customs in the region, which were under the central government.

Thus when Japan demanded the above detailed concessions, she knew there was nothing in them that Britain would and could have objected to. This might explain her action in not hesitating

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2019, Barclay to Grey (Telegram No. 299), 16 August 1914, and minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/1602, Note communicated by Benckendorff [31427], 7 July 1913 and minutes thereon; FO/371/1595, Minute by Langley on Addis to Foreign Office [50473], 6 November 1913.



at all in communicating all the Manchurian terms to the British Government four days after they had been presented to Yuan Shih-kai.<sup>1</sup> On the British side, the comments were by no means different. Jordan, who had an ample knowledge of the Manchurian terms at this time, regarded them as an 'inevitable outcome of recent events'. Alston's observation was much more interesting as it indicated how far Britain had conceded these concessions to Japan prior to the actual submission of the terms to China. He minuted that:

'Those in regard to Manchuria & Mongolia are inevitable and some of them, unobjectionable so far as British interests are concerned, subject to more exact definitions of boundary'.<sup>2</sup>

It is perhaps interesting to note that even in the proposed exposition of British views based on the terms communicated to them on 22 January, though containing all the clauses about South Manchuria, no exception was taken to any of them. The only comment about them was that the proposal about foreign advisers would not affect the Chinese Maritime Customs.<sup>3</sup>

These comments did not mean that Britain approved of all the terms of the Twenty-One Demands nor saw it as the appropriate time for Japan, as an ally engaged in a "war of survival", to seek to regularise her peculiar and inevitable position in South Manchuria. This was because of the fear that any move in that direction might tend to disturb the stability of Yuan's government and turn the Chinese against the war efforts. This was particularly so in

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Grey to Green (No. 10 confidential), 22 January 1915 and Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 32), 25 January 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2322, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 19), 29 January 1915 and minute by Alston thereon.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2322, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 30 confidential), 9 February 1915.



regard to the stipulation that China should consult Japan before engaging other foreigners as political, economic or military advisers and the right of Japanese to reside and acquire land in South Manchuria, demands which the Chinese might interpret as foreshadowing a policy of colonisation. This had, however, been the British view since 1911 about the aim of Japanese activities in Southern Manchuria. What seemed to bother the British Government at this moment was the turbulent turn this process had taken and the fact that this ambition seemed ~~not~~ limited to that region alone but covered the whole of China. With such a development, Britain had to devise a new policy to meet the current changes.

Japan having already made great inroads in her colonial adventure in South Manchuria and Britain having already conceded enough grounds to her in that region, it was felt that the best plan for arresting this form of unlimited desire to expand was to encircle it in Manchuria. This was to be achieved by allowing Japan complete freedom of action in the region which, Britain realised, would make it a virtual protectorate and by the fact of its contiguity with Korea might tend to broaden into annexation.<sup>1</sup> This policy seemed to conform to the policy by which Britain planned to bide her time in China till the war had been won in Europe and then try to repair any damage done in China.<sup>2</sup> For one thing, however, it went beyond it. If this policy was to be carried out to its logical conclusion, South Manchuria would cease totally to be part of China by the end of the war. On the other hand, Britain did not at this

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 27), 8 February 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2323, Memorandum by Alston 318197, 14 March 1915.



stage anticipate a long drawn-out war. Thus, it might have been felt that Japan could be checked before any final action was taken by her towards annexing the region. Even the Americans whose Manchurian policy had been one of continual opposition to Russian and Japanese activities in that territory seemed to be in agreement with Britain on this score when the counsellor of the State Department and the Chief Adviser to Wilson told Spring-Rice that:

'His impression is that Japan is contemplating action /in China/ which comes very /near to the/ violation of /their/ agreement with the United States but so long as said action is limited to Manchuria and Mongolia, United States Government were inclined to think this would be useful as outlet of Japanese energies, thus diverting them from this continent.'<sup>1</sup>

More interesting was the Chinese view of this strategy and in this respect Greene learnt that according to the Chinese Foreign Minister, the Chinese Government 'was prepared to make sacrifices in South Manchuria, and even to expand them to Eastern Inner Mongolia' in a bid to exclude Japanese influence in China Proper'.<sup>2</sup>

With such an agreement in principle on this issue, it was not surprising that when Arthur Balfour became Foreign Minister in 1916, he pursued this policy of containment after receiving a confirmation of the American view. This confirmation was obtained during his mission to Washington in April 1917 when he was told by his American counterpart, Robert Lansing, that 'he thought the interest of Great Britain and United States in China was to allow Japan to expand in Manchuria but not in South of China. He was influenced

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2323, Spring-Rice to Grey (Telegram No. 271 confidential), 2 April 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2322, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 93 secret), 1 March 1915.



in this course by the idea that Russia and Japan would clash in Manchuria and that danger of permanent Russo-Japanese Agreement in Far Eastern matters would be avoided'. Commenting on this statement Thomas Lyons, second secretary at the Foreign Office, noted that:

'With regard to Manchuria Mr. Lansing's view coincides with our own. We should be quite willing to give the Japanese plenty of rope there and in Eastern Inner Mongolia and some in Shantung as long as they keep their hands off the Yangtse Valley and South China. Moreover Russia, unless she becomes ultra-pacific as a result of the revolution, is bound to set some limit to Japanese ambitions even in the North'.<sup>1</sup>

It was precisely the same view the British Government took when Japan began to consolidate her position in South Manchuria.

#### E. Unification of the Manchurian administration

Under the provisions of the Imperial Ordinance organising the South Manchurian administration in 1906 as already recounted, the administrative machinery consisted of the Kwantung Government General, the South Manchurian Railway Company and the various consuls attached to the Gaimusho. After signing the Sino-Japanese agreement arising out of the Twenty-One Demands, the Terauchi government began to think of changes in this tripartite control. In a series of Imperial Ordinances on 31 July 1917, therefore, a number of sweeping changes in the old administration were effected. The principal features of these changes were the establishment of

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2918, Spring-Rice to the Foreign Office (Telegram No. 1241 Secret), 7 May 1917. For the purpose of Balfour's Mission to the United States see Ian Nish, Alliance in Decline: A study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23 (London, 1972), pp. 213-21.



a Colonial Bureau, a rearrangement of financial organs, the reform of the police system and the appointment of special Consuls.

The Colonial Bureau had at its head a director with the Japanese Prime Minister acting as its supervisory authority. The bureau was charged with all administrative business in Korea, Formosa, Japanese Saghalien, Kwantung and the regions controlled by the South Manchuria Railway Company except their foreign relations. A Colonial Investigation Committee was also set up under the Prime Minister to advise the Colonial Bureau on various colonial issues. Consequently, the function of the Gaimusho with respect to Kwantung was limited to that of direction and supervision of the Government-General of the province in matters relating to foreign affairs<sup>and</sup> other matters in Korea, Formosa, Saghalien and the South Manchurian region passed from the hands of the Minister of Interior to the Prime Minister. It was further provided that the President and vice-President of the South Manchurian Railway Company were to be replaced by one Chief Director, who was to be under the presiding control of the Government General of Kwantung. Furthermore, the Government General of Korea was to delegate to the South Manchurian Company the construction, transportation, and other incidental business of Korean railways. The activities of the Oriental Colonization Company, a joint stock company in Korea, were also to be extended to Manchuria, for which purpose a branch office was to be established at Mukden to act as the pivot for expending money in real estate in that region. In conjunction with the Oriental Company, the Bank of Korea was to establish agencies in Manchuria and station a permanent director at Dairen whose duty would solely be financing



business. In addition, it was provided that the Officer commanding the gendarmerie in South Manchuria and his officers should be appointed as the Superintendent-General and superintendents respectively of the Kwantung police and that the non-commissioned officers in the former should also be appointed as sergeants of the latter's police force. Furthermore, a new ordinance sanctioned the appointment of not less than two years' serving consuls and vice-consuls in South Manchuria or any Japanese engaged in business in the region as high executive officials in the Kwantung administration.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the process which was started in 1906 to do away with the differences between the lease of Kwantung and the South Manchurian concessions was eventually accomplished. To place the affairs of the South Manchurian Railway Company under the purview of the Colonial Bureau, an institution designed purely for colonial matters, was to treat that concession as a political hold instead of as an economic grant. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the system provided under the ordinance saw the South Manchurian railway region as a Japanese colony. This was precisely the impression some of the semi-official press in Kwantung and in Korea had of the system. The Keijo Nippo, a paper of which Terauchi himself was one of the sponsors, for example, saw the changes in a series of leading articles under the caption: 'Amalgamation of Japan, Korea and Manchuria' months before the scheme was officially made public.<sup>2</sup> There was no official statement saying that this

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2949, Enclosure No. 1 in Greene to Balfour (No. 509),  
17 August 1917.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2949, Enclosure in Greene to Balfour (No. 426 confidential),  
3 July 1917.



was not the intention of the contemplated changes. It was, therefore, not surprising that, after the ordinance had been promulgated, the Seoul Press also referred to them as 'the unification of internal administration in Chosen and Manchuria' in an article purporting to indicate that the two were now a unified entity.<sup>1</sup> These facts were not lost on London and it seemed to have suited its strategy perfectly well. In this respect Lyons observed that:

'On the whole, if there is to be a "drang" in any direction - and that seems inevitable - "drang nach norden" will suit us much better than in any direction. Our commercial interests in Manchuria and Mongolia are almost extinct already and Japanese control of those regions could not be said to menace any of our Eastern possessions.'<sup>2</sup>

This was the policy pursued by London in respect of the Japanese position in South Manchuria until the end of the war in 1918, when they supported an American scheme aimed at arresting the supposed Japanese territorial ambitions in China generally. What was this scheme and did it succeed in its objective? The answers to these questions can be discerned from the post war adjustments in China.

#### F. Post war readjustments

The preponderance of Japanese ~~position~~ in China at the close of the war was by no means confined to South Manchuria. Through a series of agreements with China and Britain she had been able to supplant the Germans in Shantung.<sup>3</sup> In addition, she had been able

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2949, Enclosure in Greene in Balfour (No. 563), 29 August 1917.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2949, Minutes on Greene to Balfour (No. 426 confidential), 3 July 1917.

<sup>3</sup>See Chapter VI below.



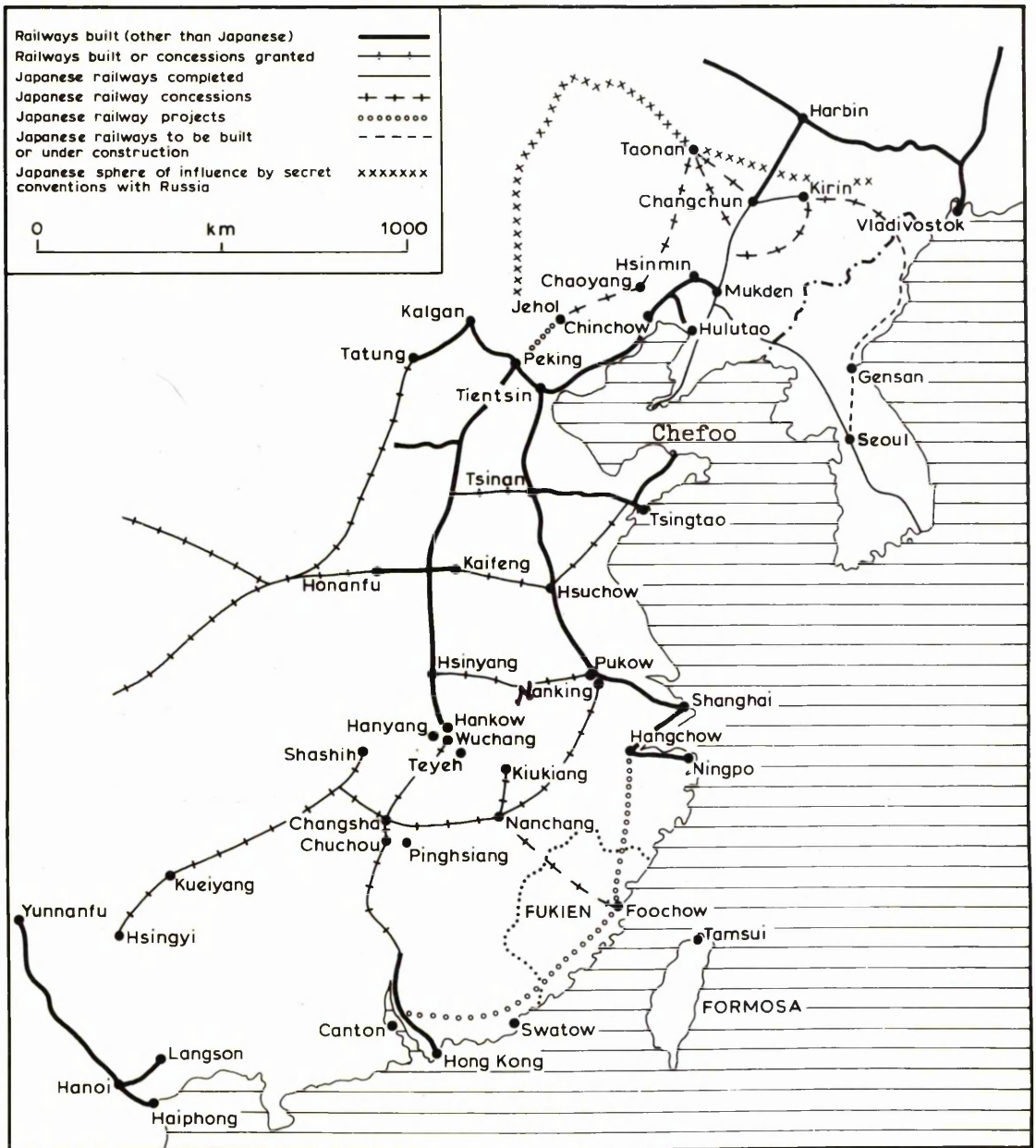
to secure a number of political and economic concessions throughout China through the famous Nishihara loans.<sup>1</sup> Quite apart from these, her policy seemed to have been directed at furthering the deep gulf between the two factions in the country without any strong desire to help one party over the other. The natural outcome of this policy, if it were allowed to continue to its logical end, would be a weak and divided China with a strong Japanese presence, which many feared would operate to the disadvantage of all other foreign interests in the country. In spite of these developments, there appeared very little either Britain or any of the Powers could do either to arrest or reverse the process.

Out of this situation came a suggestion from the United States for the organisation of a new International-Financial Consortium supposedly to salvage China from oblivion but clandestinely to ease the Japanese hold over the country. This was because, apart from undertaking new projects, the consortium was to take charge of all existing and optional railways in China. In its essence, the new programme was a revival of the ill-fated neutralization scheme of 1910. Britain immediately accepted the principle behind the scheme and hoped it could help arrest the trend in Japanese policy and loosen their hold on South Manchuria. This hope was based on the fact that with Russia in chaos and Germany as a defeated country, the American scheme now had a fair chance of success as Japan could not afford to ignore the rest of the Powers'

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 1382-94, 1397-1404, 1416-20, 1424-28, 1430-32, 1434-40.





## MAIN JAPANESE RAILWAY PROJECTS IN CHINA AND KOREA



entreaties without being isolated. This new trend in British policy was quite evident during the negotiations towards the establishment of the consortium when Japan demanded the exclusion of Manchuria and Mongolia from the purview of the organisation. Curzon's reply to this request was that he would not 'yield a moment' on that point.<sup>1</sup>

Three major factors, however, rendered the retention of the British position highly impolitic. Firstly, there was the fear of 'driving America and Japan together' over a compromise formula suggested by the Americans to meet the Japanese half-way, if Britain continued her opposition to the exclusion of Manchuria or any other Japanese interests in the region from the consortium. This formula called for the exclusion of the South Manchurian line and all its branches, together with their subsidiary mines as well as the Kirin-Huining, the Chengchiatung-Toananfu, the Kaiyun-Kirin, the Kirin-Changchun, the Sinminfu-Mukden and the Ssupingkai-Chengchiatung railways from the activities of the consortium but that the projected Toananfu-Jehol line and any other projected lines connecting points on the latter railway line with a sea port be included in it.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, it was felt that by accepting this proposed compromise, Britain would be 'in a stronger position to argue, when the time comes, for the internationalising of the even more important Shantung railways'.<sup>3</sup> This strategy, as will be

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<sup>1</sup> Documents on British Foreign Policy hereafter referred to as D.B.F.P., Vol. VI, No. 425, pp. 608-9.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/5298, Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 106 very urgent), 28 March 1920 and minutes thereon.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/5298, Minutes on Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 107 very urgent, confidential), 28 March 1920.



seen later, never got off the ground because of the stiff opposition put forward by Japan to the above formula until the patience of the other Powers was almost too exhausted to raise the Shantung question at that stage. Finally, the refusal of the American Congress to sanction the United States' entry into the League of Nations seemed to have made Britain more cautious in all her moves in China that might antagonize Japan. It was the inter-play of these factors that forced Britain to endorse the American formula after Japan had indicated that it was acceptable to her.

In the final agreement, therefore, Japan was able to maintain most of her acquired rights and interests in South Manchuria.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, she secured an assurance from Britain that;

'The Japanese Government need have no reason to apprehend that the Consortium would direct any activities affecting the security of the economic life and national defence of Japan [In South Manchuria], and they can refuse to countenance any operations inimical to such interests'.<sup>2</sup>

The Japanese position in South Manchuria was, however, fundamentally changed when at the Washington Conference they renounced the preferential rights conferred on them under the 1915 Sino-Japanese Treaty for the appointment of Japanese political, financial and military or police advisers or instructors. In addition, they declared that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7984, Memorandum by E.H.Carr [F.1363], 4 April 1922.  
1913.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5298, Curzon to Chinda [F.1797], 19 March 1920.



'Japan is ready to throw open for the joint activity of the international financial consortium recently organised the right of option granted exclusively in favour of Japanese capital with regard, first, to loans for the construction of railways in South Manchuria and East Inner Mongolia and, second, to loans to be secured on taxes in that region; it being understood that nothing in the present declaration shall be held to imply any modification or annulment of the understanding recorded in the officially announced notes and memoranda which were exchanged among the Governments of the countries represented in the Consortium, and also among the national financial groups composing the Consortium, in relation to the scope of the joint activity of that organisation'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by a policy of intentional self-abnegation, Japan reverted to almost the same position she had under the original Portsmouth Treaty in South Manchuria, except for the prolongation of the leases of the railways, Kwantung and Port Arthur as well as the mines subsidiary to the railways. In addition, she relieved Britain from her declaration of 31 December 1913, regarding industrial projects in the region. It must be noted, however, that, by this time, Japanese nationals had set themselves in such a commanding position in the region to the extent that it was difficult for any foreign nationals to compete with them both commercially and industrially. It was for this reason and the fact the Japanese nationals in the territory were still covered by extraterritorial rights that Britain continued to regard Japan's position there as posing a real danger to Chinese sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7984, Memorandum by Carr /F.13637, 4 April 1922. See Chapter Seven below for the reasons for the change in heart towards China at this period.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/8038, Enclosure in Alston to Curzon (No. 540), 9 August 1922.







## Chapter Six

### THE SHANTUNG QUESTION 1914-1919

London's irritation over developments in South Manchuria prior to the Washington Conference was, by no means, an isolated incident in Anglo-Japanese relations in China. The events which led to the occupation of Kiaochow by Japan in place of Germany during the first world war also had considerable impact on British diplomatic attitudes towards the conduct of Japan in China. Much as the British irritation over the later conduct of Japan in the territory has been emphasized by many writers on the subject, the initial British reaction towards the Japanese occupation of Kiaochow has either been completely ignored or has been scantily surveyed.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to resurvey events in the region from the outset of the war in a bid to explain the later British attitudes towards the question. In order to appreciate the situation better, it is necessary to relate the German position in the territory prior to the outbreak of the war.

#### A. The German position in Shantung

Under the agreement of 6 March 1898 between China and Germany, the former ceded, provisionally for a period of ninety-nine years, 50 kilometres on both sides of Kiaochow Bay to Germany for the purposes of constructing fortifications, repairing and equipping her

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<sup>1</sup>For a recent detailed study of the subject see Peter Richards, British Policy towards China with Special Reference to the Shantung Question: 1919-1922 (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London 1970).



ships, storing materials and provisions for the same and 'for other arrangements connected therewith'. In addition, the Germans were given the right to build two railroads in the province and to manage them as Sino-German enterprises. The first was to run from Kiaochow through Weihsien, Tsingtao, Poshan, Tzechwan and Tsowping to Tsinan. The second was to be from Kiaochow to Ichowfu and from there to Tsinan. Furthermore, the Germans secured the right to develop all mining property within a distance of thirty li (10 miles) from each side of the lines and along the whole length of the railroads. It was further provided that:

'in all cases where foreign assistance, in persons, capital or material, may be needed for any purpose whatever within the Province of Shantung, the Chinese Government would... offer the said work or supplying of materials in the first instance to German manufacturers or merchants engaged in undertaking of this kind in question. In case German manufacturers or merchants are not inclined to undertake the performance of such works, or the furnishing of materials, China shall be at liberty to act as she pleases'.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of these provisions, the Chinese reserved their sovereign rights over the leased territory. At the same time, however, they engaged to 'abstain from taking any measure, or issuing any Ordinances therein, without the previous consent of the German Government, and especially to place no obstacle in the way of any regulation of watercourses which may prove to be necessary'. In consonance with these, therefore, they agreed to 'abstain from exercising rights of sovereignty in the ceded territory during the

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 113-6.



term of the lease, and leaves the exercise of the same to Germany'. In view of this, the agreement further provided, all Chinese living within the leased territory should 'at all times enjoy the protection of the German Government'.<sup>1</sup>

By an exchange of notes on 31 December 1913, China granted Germany an option to finance, construct and supply materials for two other lines in the province. The first was to be from Kaomi to a point on the Tientsin-Pukow line, tentatively fixed at Hanchuang. The second was to run from Tsinan to a point on the Peking-Hankow line between Shunteh and Hsinhsiangsien. The construction of these lines was to be in the hands of a German firm, selected by Peking from amongst a number of firms recommended by Berlin. In addition, it was provided that the Chinese Government should engage German nationals to the posts of Traffic Manager, Engineer-in-Chief, Chief Accountant and Auditor of the firm building the lines. These officials, it was noted, should remain in their respective posts as long as the loan remained unremitted. To emphasize the point that the lines were Chinese property, however, the above officials were required to send their reports on all matters to the Chinese Ministry of Communications through a Chinese official.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, according to a convention between the two countries on 28 November 1905 that the supervision

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 114-5.

<sup>2</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, p.1095.



and protection of these lines as well as the other German financed railroads in the province were placed under the Chinese local authorities and police officers.<sup>1</sup> On her part, Germany relinquished her options in respect of the Chengting-Haichow and the Kaifengfu-Yenchowfu lines. At the same time, she undertook to ratify the Mining Areas Delimitation Agreement of 24 July 1911, which aimed at redefining the areas of her operation. Under this agreement, the German mining rights, which according to <sup>the</sup> 1898 concession extended 10 miles in width and along the whole length of the railroads, were confined to the Szechuan and Fangtze collieries and the Chinglinchen iron mine.<sup>2</sup>

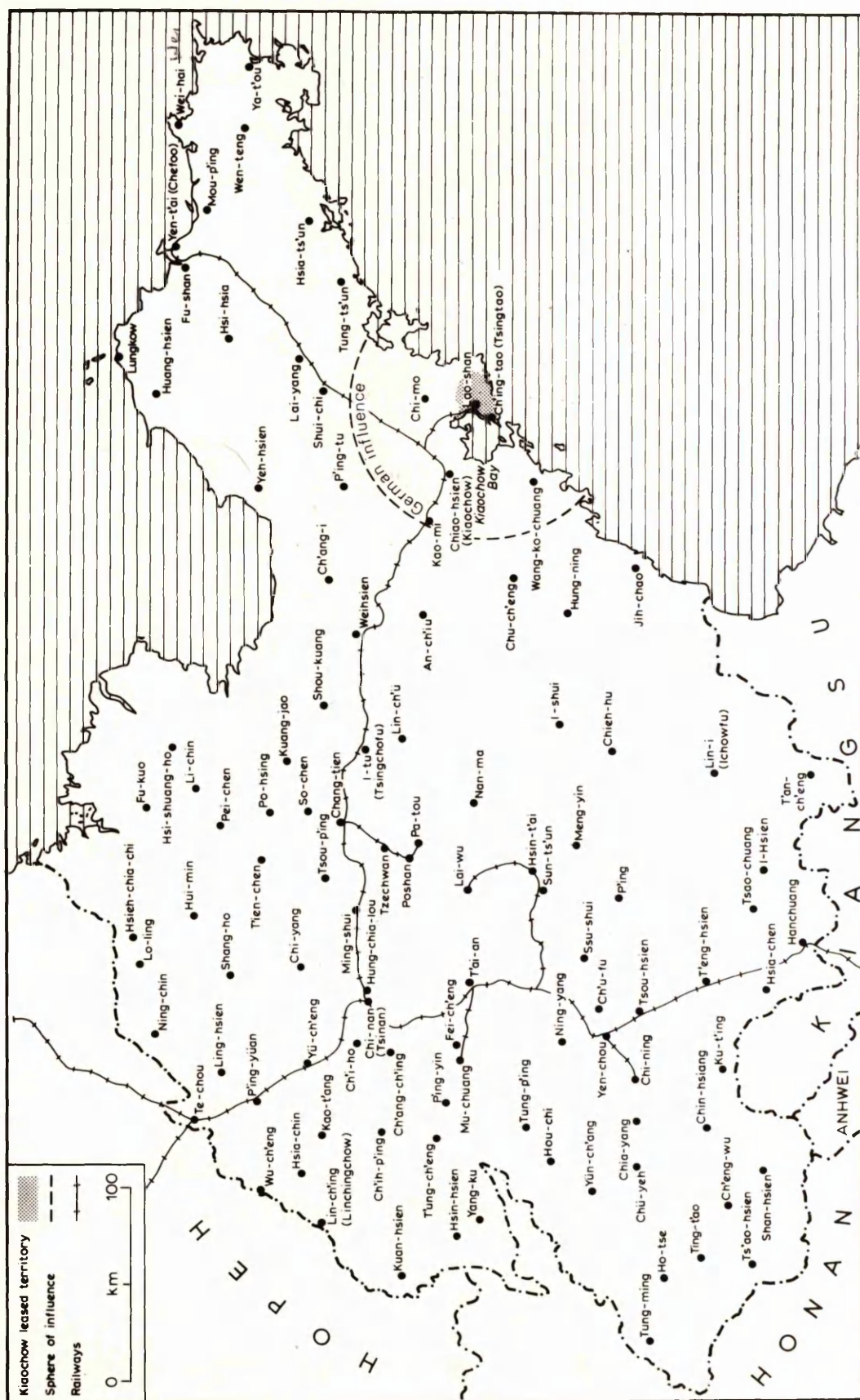
An agreement concerning the establishment of a maritime customs administration at Tsingtao was also signed in Peking on 17 April 1899 by the German Minister, Baron Heyking, on behalf of his government, and the Inspector General of the Chinese Maritime Customs Administration, Robert Hart, on behalf of China. Under this agreement, the Chief or Commissioner of the Tsingtao customs was to be of German nationality, appointed by the Inspector General after consultation with the German Minister in Peking. It was also provided that members of the European staff of the administration should, as a rule, be of German nationality, although other nationals might be temporarily employed to fill any vacancies whenever there were no Germans available for such vacant posts. The Inspector General

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.118.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 261-3.





SHANTUNG PROVINCE



was, however, required to notify the German Minister of these and other changes he intended to make in the customs administration at Tsingtao. Furthermore, it was laid down that merchandise brought by sea to Tsingtao was to be duty free, but all goods passing through the German frontier of Kiaochow into the interior of China were to attract a duty of five per cent. Finally, the customs administration at Tsingtao was charged with the collection of duties, taxes or likin on all Chinese built vessels (junks) and their cargoes within the leased territory.<sup>1</sup>

Operating under these provisions, the German Government organized the Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft on 14 June 1899 and entrusted it with the financing and construction of the Tsingtao-Tsinan line. By June 1904, this line had been completed and opened to traffic. The Germans, however, transferred their rights in the Tsinanfu-Ichowfu to an Anglo-German syndicate. By a special arrangement, therefore, the British built the portion of this line south of Tsinanfu, and the Germans built the northern section between Tsinanfu and Tientsin.<sup>2</sup> Owing, however, to the outbreak of the first world war in 1914, the construction of the Kaomi-Hanchuang and the Tsinanfu-Shuntenfu lines never went beyond the initial surveys.<sup>3</sup> The concession for the development of the mines was taken up by the Schantung Bergbau Gesellschaft, a German public company

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<sup>1</sup> MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 189-91; also note amendments to this agreement, pp. 191-203.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson L. Godshall, Tsingtau Under Three Flags (Shanghai 1929), p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 115.



which was organised for that purpose on 10 October 1899. By an arrangement dated 5 February 1913, however, the mining company transferred all its rights, assets and liabilities to the railway company, which thereupon became the owner of the mines and the Tsingtao-Tsinan railroad.<sup>1</sup> Three harbours were also built at Tsingtao and the entire village was rebuilt as a symbol of western civilization and a sign of German ingenuity.<sup>2</sup> Behind all these schemes, however, lay the main purpose of the Germans in Kiaochow. This was to develop the region as a military and naval base capable of providing 'a temporary opposition to an attacking fleet or land force until reinforcements [*sic*] and relief could be brought by a German squadron' in course of their avowed objective of out-rivalling the British Empire.<sup>3</sup>

On the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, and especially when Britain joined the hostilities, therefore, attention was called to the use to which Germany could put her position in Kiaochow in an endeavour to threaten Allied shipping in the Far East. This fear and the history of the attempts to nip this potential threat in the bud is the history of Japan's special position in Shantung usually known as the 'Shantung Question'. The complex nature of this issue and the British attitudes towards Japan on the subject requires a systematic analysis of events from the outset of the war till its conclusion by the Treaty of Versailles.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.120.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.128.



B. The Siege of Kiaochow

Britain's entry into the war on the side of Russia and France in an effort to combat German 'world ambitions' in August 1914 did not automatically necessitate Japan's declaring war on Germany. This was because there was no immediate threat to either Britain's or Japan's 'special interests' in East Asia or India as provided under the third alliance. This position was spelt out to Tokyo by Grey. At the same time, however, he made it plain that Britain might expect some assistance from Japan 'if hostilities spread to the Far East and an attack on Hong Kong or Wei Hai Wei were to take place'.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, the Germans launched the offensive in the Far East against allied shipping, 'the British government came round to admitting that German naval activities could not be combated single-handed'.<sup>2</sup> The Admiralty, which had for so long placed so much emphasis on the defence of British interests in the Far East on Japan, on the other hand, strongly deprecated Japan taking any action against the Germans at Tsingtao on the ground that she might use it as an occasion to enhance her influence in China.<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office saw the situation in no different light and for that matter it had been considering ways of limiting any assistance Britain might request from Japan.

While these discussions were going on in London, Russia and France submitted two different schemes for the reduction and the capture of Kiaochow. The Russian scheme was mentioned to Buchanan in course of an interview with the Foreign Minister, Sergei Sazanov.

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<sup>1</sup> Nish, Alliance in Decline, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-8.

<sup>3</sup> Lowe, op.cit., pp. 180-1.



According to Sazanov,  
/as Japan might expect some compensation for her services in the war, Britain might as well make an arrangement with her under which, after the capture of the territory, Japan would exchange it with Wei-hai wei.<sup>1</sup> This suggestion received practically no attention at the Foreign Office, most probably because of its calculation that Japan would hardly consider such an offer and the arrival in London on the same day of a French alternative suggestion.

The French scheme involved giving an international character to any force that would be given the task of capturing Kiaochow. They saw in this international force a strong element that would neutralize any claims Japan might make for occupying the territory after the expulsion of the Germans. On account of this, therefore, they suggested a combined French, British and Japanese assault on Tsingtao.<sup>2</sup> There was much to be said in favour of the French suggestion for, as Kato pointed out, in deference to enormous pressure from home, Japan would sooner or later be forced to take action against the Germans in Kiaochow single-handed.<sup>2</sup> In such an eventuality, the French pointed out, a strong blow would be struck against British prestige in the Far East which would also stultify the British policy of checking further growth of Japanese influence in China.<sup>3</sup> In addition to these considerations, Jordan pointed out that:

'Isolated action by Japan led me to expect disturbances in China, which joint co-operation will certainly tend to avert. If China is given beforehand a formal assurance that the Kiaochow territory and all that appertains

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2016, Buchanan to Grey (Telegram No. 240), 8 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2016, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 67), 8 August 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/317/2016, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 72), 10 August 1914.



to it, will eventually be restored to her, this will still more be the case. To ensure maintenance of a settled administration, so essential to the interest of foreign trade, a public declaration to this effect seems to be absolutely essential.'

He noted further that American public opinion would not welcome a single-handed operation in China by Japan but a joint action under the condition stated above would be less objectionable and that it would also help in reconciling the British public in the East to the idea of Anglo-Japanese co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

If there was any department which needed no persuasion on the advisability of a joint action against Kiaochow in a bid to prevent it coming under Japanese control, it was the Foreign Office which had spent the previous year checking what it considered as inordinate Japanese ambitions in China.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office, however, saw in the current situation the existence of a fertile field which Japan might exploit to satisfy her ambitions at the cost of British interests and Chinese sovereignty. As part of the antidote to this development, Britain might have to find an agreeable compensation for Japan somewhere for her part in the war and then work to limit her within that area. It was with this idea in mind that Grey sounded the Japanese as to the possibility of their taking over the German possessions in Shantung after the fall of Tsingtao. He told Inoue three days after the formal invitation to Japan to join the war that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2016, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 153 secret), 11 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter Five above.



'We ourselves had no designs upon Kiao-Chou, and I had pointed out to the Japanese Ambassador the other day that, when I deprecated the taking of action by Japan, it was not because we wished to preserve Kiao-Chou for Germany, or to acquire it ourselves, or to prevent Germany's lease of it from being acquired by Japan'.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from Grey's own minutes from this period onwards as well as how he made his later assurances to Japan on this subject, it can be concluded that the Foreign Secretary had decided from the outset that the German possessions in Shantung should be transferred to Japan after their capture, as compensation for her participation in the war. This initial circuitous suggestion was, however, turned down when he was informed two days later that Japan would restore the territory to China after the war.<sup>2</sup> It appears from the Japanese statement that their main concern at that moment was arranging the terms of their participation in the war rather than stating the price for their contribution. Grey, therefore, had to accept the situation as it was for the moment and to consider the incidental issues connected with the proposed attack.

An important question which would arise if any decision was taken to attack Kiaochow was the crossing of Chinese territory into the region. Any attempt by British or Japanese forces to cross Chinese soil without the approval of Peking would be highly resented as a breach of Chinese neutrality. In addition, it would surely

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to most of Grey's statements on this subject, a copy of this telegram was neither left in the Foreign Office files nor was a copy sent to Jordan. This copy was embodied as an annex to a memorandum by C.H. Bentick on 22 October 1920 on the subject of British recognition of 'Japan's special position in China'. See FO/371/5354 as Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 124), 11 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/2016, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 136), 11 August 1914; Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 72), 10 August 1914.



lead to accusing fingers being pointed at Britain as a nation without scruples for it was, as she claimed, the violation of Belgian neutrality that drove her into the conflict.<sup>1</sup> A move, on the other hand, to secure Chinese consent would bring German wrath on them, if they so agreed. Faced with this dilemma, it was decided to choose the lesser of the two evil courses. Peking was to be asked at the appropriate time to allow or, at any rate, not to protest against the passing of allied troops through its territory and it was to be assured that any allied operations would be 'intended to effect eventual restoration of Kiaochow to China and restoral of complete Chinese sovereignty over Shantung'.<sup>2</sup> The above suggestion, however, did not satisfy Japan. According to Kato, Japan hoped to succeed in securing a benevolent neutrality from China for crossing her territory or, at any rate, only a tacit protest. For this reason, Japan had no intentions of approaching China as suggested. He added that:

'The terms on which they will restore Kiaochow to China must depend on whether ~~The~~ place is surrendered to the Japanese without bloodshed, or whether they have to take it after heavy expenditure of life and money'.

Based upon this unestimated expenditure, therefore, Japan was not prepared to mention in the proposed declaration the question of the final disposal of Kiaochow.<sup>3</sup>

Jordan was completely dismayed by the above move. He saw it as an attempt by Japan to exclude Britain from having any say in

<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2016, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 61), 15 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2017, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 90), 18 August 1914; Jordanto Grey (Telegram No. 169), 18 August 1914.



the ultimate disposal of Kiaochow.<sup>1</sup> Even more so was Grey whose earlier overture to Japan to retain the territory after its capture was turned down. Unable to determine Japan's aims in respect of Kiaochow, therefore, he noted:

'There are many things going on in many places that I do not at all like: it is an inevitable consequence of being engaged in a huge war - everyone outside it will try to take advantage of the situation'.<sup>2</sup>

This did not mean that Grey had resigned from his earlier belief that the German assets in Shantung would be a valuable price for Japan's contribution to the war, for a day after writing this comment he observed further that:

'It cannot be expected that Japan will spend blood & treasure in capturing Kiaochow and get nothing for it: not even the remains of the German lease'.<sup>3</sup>

What seemed to be bothering Grey at this stage was his suspicion that Japan might be tempted to take advantage of the British total involvement in the war and claim more rights in Shantung than the Germans possessed after the territory had been captured. The best that could be done under the circumstances, he reasoned, was to maintain a closer look on Japanese activities in the province rather than to question their motives at the moment. For this reason, he accepted the Japanese contention that since their ultimatum to Germany included handing over Kiaochow to Japan for its restoration to China, it was not necessary to include a similar declaration in

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 169), 18 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Minute on Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 90), 18 August 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2019, Minute on Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 171), 19 August 1914.



any public statement to Peking. His attention was, therefore, directed towards securing Japanese approval to the French scheme of a combined assault on the base.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of naval and military co-operation in reducing Tsingtao had at least been welcomed by Japan in principle.<sup>2</sup> In a conversation with Kato on 18 August, however, Greene learnt that Japan would prefer to see Russia and France excluded from the operations. The reasons were that these two Powers might put forward claims for compensation for the loss of life and expenditure they might incur in any final settlement regarding the disposal of the territory. In addition, it was claimed that the military authorities in Japan feared that the Russian troops might commit excesses after the base had fallen. Furthermore, Kato pointed to the difficulties that might be faced in trying to enforce discipline among troops of four nations.<sup>3</sup>

Much as London sympathised with the above views, it did not take kindly to the idea of excluding Russia and Japan from the proposed operation. Firstly, France had already been informed that as soon as Britain had settled the details of Japan's entry into the war, she would be told when to move in her troops towards Kiaochow. The Foreign Office, therefore, felt that France would be very irritated if she were to be informed, at this stage, that her services were no longer required. Secondly, it was known that Tsingtao was a well fortified base and that German reinforcements could easily be

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 71), 18 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 169), 18 August 1914; Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 93), 18 August 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2017, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 94 very confidential), 18 August 1914.



rushed for its defence from Tientsin and Peking. It would, however, be impossible for Britain to spare all her 2,100 troops in China for an operation which would involve an initial German garrison of 3,500 regulars and 2,500 reservists. In the end, therefore, the bulk of the work would have to be done by the Japanese who knew that it meant a great sacrifice of men and money and that the more men they lost the greater their preponderance in the counsels of peace. What price Japan might demand over and above the German rights in Shantung was a matter of speculation to British officials. With Russia incapable of offering ground assistance, it was decided to neutralise the suspected Japanese motives by urging Japan to agree to full participation for France and naval co-operation for Russia.<sup>1</sup>

This appeal for Russian and French cooperation was again rejected by Japan. In the end, Grey wrote to Greene to the effect that his sole reason for urging participation of the two Powers was 'to avoid giving offence and I have explained to Japanese ambassador that I think it most unfair for any of us to put formal claims in China region that would prejudice Japan in terms of peace. In deference to wishes of M.F.A. I will drop question of French and Russian participation'.<sup>2</sup> While this statement is consistent with Grey's views as to the fate of the German possessions in Shantung,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Minutes on Green to Grey (Telegram No. 94 very confidential), 18 August 1914; Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 78 secret), 20 August 1914. The Foreign Office's estimates of the total number of German forces in Tsingtao was below the above quoted figures. This did not, however, affect its judgment of the situation detailed above. See Lowe, op.cit., pp. 196-7.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 91), 24 August 1914.



it must be noted here that, at this point in time, he had every reason to believe that any claims made by Japan over and above those German rights in the region would be made in South Manchuria where Britain had already conceded much ground to Japan.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the French and Russians were advised to direct their energies elsewhere, a situation they amicably understood.<sup>2</sup>

With the details of Japan's entry into the war settled and the question of which nations were to attack Tsingtao resolved, the next important question was <sup>that of</sup> ~~for~~ an initiative in securing Peking's assent for the passage of the Anglo-Japanese force through its territory to Kiaochow. On this issue, Yuan Shih-kai showed a clear disposition towards the allied cause, most probably because of his fear that any opposition on his part might lead Japan to take unilateral action against Tsingtao and in the inevitable defeat of the Germans she might gain another strong foothold on Chinese soil. Yuan, therefore, gave Jordan 'a definite and positive assurance that in no circumstances would any opposition be offered to British troops passing through Chinese territory to ~~an~~ an attack on Kiachow'. He went on to say that as soon as the point of disembarkation of the attacking forces was known, all Chinese troops would be withdrawn from the neighbourhood and a special officer would be sent to Tsinanfu to act in concert with the British consul there in seeing that the Chinese Commander-in-Chief in the area gave due respect to this arrangement. He, however, requested that

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter Five above; FO/371/2017, Grey to Greene (Telegram No. 82 confidential), 21 August 1914 - this was the essence of the telegram.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Minute on Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 110 secret), 24 August 1914.



the arrangement should be regarded as a private understanding between Britain and China and that Britain should make it clear to Japan that China had no objection to a breach of her neutrality so long as such a breach had as one of its objects the restoration of Kiaochow to Chinese sovereignty. He added that should Berlin protest to Peking in respect of its declared neutrality, its substance would be sent, as a matter of form, to the representatives of the belligerent Powers but no answer would be demanded or expected. Yuan observed further that since issuing the proclamation declaring China neutral in the hostilities, he had received formal and definite assurances from Japan that Kiaochow would be restored to China and that Japan associated Britain with her in the attainment of this objective.<sup>1</sup>

Assurances such as these were exactly what Britain needed. As a further illustration of the Foreign Office's thinking on the future of the German rights in Shantung, however, a minute written by Aston may be cited. He noted that:

'This formal assurance of Japan to China makes it unnecessary to suggest that Japan should keep Kiaochow, and is most satisfactory at this juncture.'<sup>2</sup>

With this question settled, therefore, Britain informed Japan of her preparations towards the assault. Japanese troops were the first in landing at Lungkow on 2 September and they were followed later by a battalion of British troops, reinforced by half a battalion of Indian soldiers.<sup>3</sup> In consonance with his promise, Yuan issued

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 173), 21 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lowe, op.cit., p.196.



a circular on 3 September declaring the area within Lungkow, Laichow and the neighbourhood of Kiaochow Bay outside the region where the Chinese Government could maintain its declared neutrality and assert its authority.<sup>1</sup> The actual assault on Tsingtao began on 22 October and ended with the capitulation of the Germans on 7 November 1914 not of course unmarked by some misunderstandings between the British and Japanese forces.<sup>2</sup> Important as these misunderstandings might be in Anglo-Japanese relations, they were incidental to the actual events that led to the Japanese control of Shantung from this period till 1922. In order to understand British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese activities in the province and in particular Grey's views on the fate of the German rights in that territory, therefore, it is important to relate some of the events, among which was the Shantung Railway question.

### C. The Shantung Railway question

From the outset of the attack on Kiaochow, it had been known to the allied command that the Germans were making extensive use of the Tsingtao-Tsinan line in transporting both war materials and troops to reinforce their garrison at Tsingtao. In spite of this, no direct military action was taken against the railway company until a number of Austro-Hungarian sailors were found to have been transported to and from <sup>on Austro-</sup> a Hungarian cruiser, "Kaiserin Elisabeth", for action in Kiaochow against the Japanese. The immediate reaction

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, p.1367.

<sup>2</sup>Lowe, op.cit., pp. 197-8.



of the Japanese command was to order the seizure of Weih sien, the junction station where the branch line to Tsingtao joined the main Tsinanfu-Chefoo railroad, about half-way between the two latter places and about 50 miles from the boundary of the natural territory around Kiaochow Bay.

Weih sien being outside the area prescribed by the Chinese Government as a theatre of war, the Wai-chiao Pu addressed a note to Jordan drawing his attention to the action of the Japanese and pointed out to him that it constituted an infraction of Chinese neutrality. It, therefore, charged him to use his good offices to induce the withdrawal of the troops from the town. The Wai-chiao Pu then wrote to Tokyo spelling out the same facts and demanding the withdrawal of the troops on grounds that the railroad was a Sino-German concern and not purely a German enterprise.<sup>1</sup> The anxiety of the Chinese over the whole affair was demonstrated by their blowing up of a bridge on the line and in a series of condemnations of Yuan's government for its weakness in the Chinese State Council by Liang Chi-chao and a number of prominent counsellors.<sup>2</sup> These developments did not deter the Japanese from making preparations towards taking over the whole Shantung railway against the advice of their Minister in Peking, Hioki.<sup>3</sup>

When these developments were reported to London, the Foreign Office understood the military necessity for the Japanese action. On the other hand, the Foreign Office became rather sceptical about

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2018, Enclosure No. 1 in Jordan to Grey (Despatch No. 349 confidential), 30 September 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2018, Extracts from the Peking Daily News, 3 October 1914, enclosed in Jordan to Grey (No. 349 confidential), 30 September 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2017, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 205), 29 September 1914.



the motives behind the planned seizure of the entire line as the control of Weih sien alone could effectively check further German reinforcements reaching Tsingtao. On account of this, Grey saw Inoue on 30 September over the issue but he was informed that, as the railway was, to all intents and purposes, a German property, it could not be allowed to remain so, but that Japan would take all necessary precautions to avoid a violation of any Chinese territorial rights.<sup>1</sup> As far as the Japanese could keep their promise and limit their activities to the railway line and its assets, they were unlikely to encounter any British opposition. This point was made clear when Langley noted that:

'As we do not care how much Japan supplants Germany in Shantung the only consideration that concerns us is the effect of this step upon the Chinese Govt. I doubt whether any of the ill-will which it may cause will fall upon us'.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude is also evident from the manner in which the Foreign Office received Jordan's suggestion for the solution of the problem. He proposed that:

'Japan should enter into formal possession of the railway as part of her lawful conquest of the leased territory, but that she should do so on the understanding that she will eventually come to an arrangement with the Chinese Government on the lines of the railway agreements which Great Britain and other Powers, including Japan herself, have made in recent years with the Chinese Government. No money will pass hands, but the value of the railway would be assessed at a sum which would, for the purposes of the agreement, be considered as a loan from Japan to China. The line would become Chinese property but would be under the control of Japanese engineer-in-chief, Japanese traffic manager, and other Japanese employees, the interest on the loan and other benefits usually associated with such undertaking going to Japan'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., minute by Grey thereon.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., minute thereon.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2018, Jordan to Grey (No. 349 confidential), 30 September 1914.



This proposal was warmly welcomed at the Foreign Office and Jordan was instructed to communicate it to Hioki. The Japanese Minister agreed with every aspect of the suggestion but he informed Jordan that his government had already decided to assume full control of the line.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese view on the question was later elaborated by Kato. He told Greene that upon complete capture of the railway, the line would be managed by Japanese officials drawn from the South Manchurian Railway Company with permanent Chinese employees of the Shantung Railway Company until the end of the war when Japan would enter into negotiations with China for the line and its assets transferred to the Japanese Government.<sup>2</sup>

The Japanese intentions, as expounded by Kato, were strictly in line with British diplomatic views on the whole subject of the fate of the German assets in Shantung. When, therefore, the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires sent in a protest note to the British Government on 5 October about the Japanese action, the question was regarded as an issue solely in the hands of Tokyo. He was, therefore, informed of the circumstances leading to the seizure of the line with an intimation that Britain could not, at that stage, interfere in a matter of purely military importance.<sup>3</sup> Considering the British position in respect of the German assets in Shantung from the outset of the war, this answer was merely intended to soothe Chinese susceptibilities so as to prevent them taking any overt action on the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 225), 2 October 1914; Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 210), 3 October 1914. Incidentally, Jordan approached Hioki with the suggestion before he received instructions from London to do so.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2017, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 168), 5 October 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2017, Translation of a telegram received from the Wai-chiao Pu (communicated by Chinese Minister, 5 October 1914) /563067 dated 1 October 1914 and minutes thereon; Grey to Chinese Minister /563067, 9 October 1914.



subject. Grey made this point clear to Inoue on the same day he received the Chinese protest. Reporting this conversation to Jordan, he noted that:

'I said I had authorised Sir John Jordan to make a suggestion to the Japanese Minister at Peking that some assurance should be given to the Chinese to soothe their apprehension.

'I did not discuss the merits of the question for the time being but it seemed desirable not to offend the Chinese, and if they were assured that eventually the railways were dealt with in the same <sup>terms</sup> as British railways in China it might satisfy them'.<sup>1</sup>

Taking this instruction and Jordan's recommendations for the solution of the problem into consideration, one clearly sees the British views on the future of the German railroads in Shantung. These assets were not to be included in any eventual settlement with the Chinese if the Japanese so desired. This, as Jordan had pointed out, could not be considered inconsistent with both the British and Japanese assurances that the territory would be restored to China.<sup>2</sup> This position seemed to have been based on the fact that a large portion of Chinese land and other assets outside the leased territory had come under Japanese control as a result of the military and naval operations within and without the perimeter assigned by Peking for the war. Since nothing specific was mentioned in those assurances as being the subjects of that eventual retrocession, it could be argued that the bona fide German rights in the province were outside such a transfer. This policy was designed purely to meet the feared Japanese territorial ambitions

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Grey to Jordan (No. 141), 5 October 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2018, Jordan to Grey (No. 349 confidential), 30 September 1914.



elsewhere in China that might have the effect of muzzling Peking's independence and injuring British interests in the Far East generally. In addition, it was to ensure continued Japanese participation in the war and save Britain from future accusations from either side of duplicity. It is, however, strange that both Jordan and the Foreign Office should recommend and endorse such a scheme after being witnesses to the effects of similar arrangements on Manchuria. How could they ensure that China received an equitable share in such a programme if Tokyo so agreed to the suggestion? What guarantees did they have that Peking would accept Japan supplanting Germany in Kiaochow after all those years of Chinese moves to weaken Tokyo's influence in the country?

The pace of events did not allow the British Government to brood carefully over these issues until later on in the day. Neither did Britain consider it politic to explain her position directly to the Chinese. This was most probably based upon the fear that such an explanation might make Peking over-sanguine to the point of accidentally ~~unleashing~~<sup>exposing</sup> the British strategy to Tokyo. On the other hand, this disregard of Peking might have been based on the assumption that China was too weak to defend herself against any Japanese aggrandisements; ipso facto, it was the duty of those Powers interested in her independence to use their influence to maintain it. Unaware, therefore, of London's true position on the issue, Peking continued to protest against the Japanese moves in respect of the railway. These protests were, however, ignored by the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup> With the Chinese unresigned to the fate

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2017, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 220), 11 October 1914; Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 175), 10 October 1914; Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 243), 19 October 1914. FO/371/2018, Jordan to Grey (No. 359), 15 October 1914.



of the railway, it was not surprising that the Japanese had to resolve the issue under the Twenty One Demands. While this subject will be examined later, it suffices here to say that the Shantung railway question was not the only issue in which London displayed a clear disposition towards Japan supplanting Germany in Kiaochow. Perhaps the most visible signs in the same direction were in connection with the various arrangements made after the capitulation of the Germans on 7 November 1914 regarding the Tsingtao Maritime Customs Administration.

#### D. The Tsingtao Customs Administration

Soon after Kiaochow had fallen to the allied forces, the Japanese informed Peking that they intended to replace all the German staff of the customs administration at Tsingtao with Japanese officials and warned that the matter could only be arranged between the two governments. Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese, however, took any steps to inform Aglen, the Inspector General of the Chinese Customs Administration, about the proposed changes. Then, just about the same time, there appeared notices in the Japanese press that Tokyo intended despatching a number of its customs officials at Osaka to Tsingtao to man the customs administration at Tsingtao. It was at this stage that the Chinese Government, by way of counteracting this action, suggested the appointment of a Briton as commissioner at Tsingtao and upon this suggestion being turned down, it made an alternative proposal for the appointment of a Japanese commissioner with a Briton as his deputy. The Chinese Government then informed Aglen of the situation. The latter,



on his part, appointed the Japanese customs commissioner at Dairen, Tachibana, to the post without consulting the Japanese Legation. Tokyo immediately protested against the procedure and the appointment was promptly cancelled. The Japanese then submitted what amounted to an ultimatum to Peking for the appointment of an official from the Japanese Finance Ministry as Commissioner and designated six other officials outside the Chinese customs service administration to be appointed to the various posts in the customs.<sup>1</sup>

London remained uninformed of these developments until 10 December 1914 when Inoue called on Langley and informed him of events to date.<sup>2</sup> Then, on 17 December, Jordan reported on negotiations between Japan and China on the issue and Aglen's embarrassment over the subject that had led him to talk of resigning from his post. In spite of this threat, London upheld the Japanese decision as clearly justifiable, and strongly censored the role of Aglen in the whole affair.<sup>3</sup> Alston went as far as to describe the way Aglen had acted in the following terms:

'His horizon is naturally limited, and he is extremely touchy in regard to his independent position & so failed to see that the Japanese (for once perhaps) were within their rights - and that it was a political matter between the Chinese & Japanese Govt's and not an administrative one for his own personal treatment. He only emphasizes his short-sightedness by making matters more difficult in threatening to resign. He is always in a state of alarm at efforts being made to oust us from our predominant position in the customs - as to which we have a definite understanding with the Chinese - last year it was the French bogey - now it is the Jap Japanese'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2319, Jordan to Grey (No. 20 confidential), 13 January 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2021, Grey to Jordan (No. 324), 15 December 1914.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2021, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 262), 17 December 1914.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/2021, Minute on Maclean to Langley [Private, confidential 843237, 18 December 1914.



It must be said that the Foreign Office was rather unfair in its criticism of Aglen for it did not have the details of the Japanese proposals nor did it have any information about Aglen's attempts to resolve the issue. On the other hand, this attitude was indicative of how the Foreign Office saw the future of the German rights in respect of the customs administration in Shantung.

Details of the developments, however, began reaching London soon after Tokyo demanded either an acquiescence to its request or the withdrawal of the Chinese administration from the territory. The Chinese, on their part, chose the latter alternative. Events seemed to have moved so far and so fast that London felt its intervention at that stage would serve no useful purpose. On the other hand, it was felt that the Japanese move was bound to make the Chinese more suspicious of Japan than Germany, a development which might affect the war efforts in the Far East. At the same time, it was very much doubted whether Japan might accept a Japanese from the Chinese customs service as a commissioner at that point. If, on the other hand, Britain allowed Japan the freedom of action, the latter might institute her own system in the region which might operate against fair competition. With these considerations, therefore, it was decided to suggest to the Japanese that upon the end of the existing martial law in Kiaochow, they should reintroduce the system which existed under the Germans. In other words, Japan should select her own officials from among her nationals in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service to man the administration.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2021, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 263), 19 December 1914, and minutes thereon.



When Grey informed Inoue of this suggestion, the latter told him that as soon as the military situation in the province had improved, the customs service would be handed over to China and that Japan would not claim any more right in its administration than the Germans previously had.<sup>1</sup> Three days after this interview, Inoue called on Grey again and informed him that the customs service would be handed over to China while the martial law was still in existence. As regards the appointment of a commissioner, however, Grey was informed that Tokyo considered those Japanese in the Chinese customs service too young and inexperienced. On account of this, therefore, Britain should ask Aglen to agree to the appointment of another Japanese official from outside the Chinese service who would afterwards be incorporated into the customs administration.<sup>2</sup> This request showed Japanese reliance on Britain's goodwill to secure the right to supplant the Germans in Shantung in the face of Chinese opposition. As it turned out to be, however, the request was based upon false claims.

On the question of the youth and inexperience of Japanese in the Chinese customs service, the claim was rather far-fetched. There were at least two senior long-serving Japanese in the service. Firstly, Tachibana, the Japanese Commissioner at Dairen, was 49 years old at the time and was 'known as an excellent and capable officer' who had completed nearly fifteen years in the service. Apart from him, there was Kurosawa, the commissioner at Soochow, who was 40 years old and was regarded as equally capable and had

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2021, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 247), 21 December 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2021, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 279), 24 December 1914.



fifteen years' service behind him. In addition to these two, there were thirteen other Japanese first and second class assistants whose ages ranged between 33 and 45 and whose service varied from about eight to fifteen years. All these men were considered fitted to take over the posts vacated by the Germans. With these considerations, Aglen did not bother to explain the situation to London before explaining the untenable nature of the Japanese argument to Hioki- a decision which London upheld.<sup>1</sup>

With the failure of this move, the Japanese came out with a new formula. It involved the appointment of Tachibana to the post by the Chinese provided his name was officially submitted to Tokyo beforehand for its approval. Apart from this, they proposed to nominate six Japanese, who would subsequently be appointed as second and third class assistants at Tsingtao. As another official would be necessary to replace the deputy commissioner and as the new staff would require some officers with a knowledge of Chinese and some experience of the country to help them in their work, the Japanese proposals stipulated that these additional members of the administration should be drawn from the existing Japanese personnel of the customs service. Furthermore, they proposed that all Japanese assistants transferred from other posts to Tsingtao were to be replaced by other Japanese assistants of the same rank or by Japanese assistants of lower rank specially promoted to that rank.<sup>2</sup> The reason for these stipulations, as Kato explained to

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2319, Jordan to Grey (No. 20 confidential), 13 January 1915 and Enclosure No. 3 therein.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Enclosure No. 2.



Greene, was that Japan regarded herself as being inadequately represented on the personnel of the Chinese Customs service.<sup>1</sup> It was at this stage that Britain realised that the Japanese were trying to take advantage of the confused situation by mixing up their taking over of the Kiaochow customs with their general demand for increased representation in the Chinese customs service. London, therefore, advised Tokyo to settle the taking over of the Kiaochow administration first before endeavouring to settle the general demand regarding increased representation in the whole service.<sup>2</sup>

Satisfactory as the British suggestion might seem to the Japanese, the latter were now working in a greater sphere of demands - the Twenty-One Demands - which if accepted would regularise their position in Shantung. Kato, therefore, informed Greene that he wanted to get Chinese assent to the Twenty-One Demands first before accepting the British position, as a clamp down on the customs issue might be interpreted by China as a sign of weakness and harden their attitude towards the far more important demands.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Britain's attention was as much concentrated on the Twenty-One Demands as Japan's, rather than on the customs issue, which was regarded as a point of detail. What then were the Shantung terms of the Twenty-One Demands and how far did it fit into the British views regarding the fate of the German possessions in the province?

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2021, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 277), 28 December 1914.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2319, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 10), 20 January 1915; and minute thereon; Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 19), 26 January 1915.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2319, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 38), 31 January 1915.



E. Shantung and the Twenty One Demands

Briefly stated, the following terms were demanded by Japan in regard to Shantung, that:

1. China should agree to consent to all arrangements which Japan might arrive at with Germany regarding the disposition of all rights, advantages, and concessions possessed by Germany in virtue of Treaty, or agreement, or otherwise vis-a-vis China in the province of Shantung.
2. China to engage not to cede or lease to any other Power, under whatever title, any portion of the province of Shantung or any part of its sea coast or any island appertaining thereon.
3. China to grant to Japan a concession to construct a railway line connecting the Tsingtao-Tsinan railway with Chefoo or Lungkow.
4. China to increase the number of trade marts in Shantung.<sup>1</sup>

Explaining the reasons behind this set of demands, Kato informed Green~~er~~ that, as there had been no word on the fate of the German rights in Shantung, he felt the time had come for Japan to arrive at an understanding of a preliminary nature with China before the end of the war on that subject when negotiation would have to be carried on with Germany for Japan to acquire those rights. He added that, in his opinion, he felt China might concede some of the points raised above without hesitation, while on the other, if she preferred, they might form the basis of a secret convention between China and Japan. Kato went on to say that Japan 'did not set any store in retaining possession of Shantung, since she already had a strong footing in another part of China. This was not, however, known to the Chinese and could therefore be used as a lever

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Grey to Greene (No. 10 confidential), 22 January 1915.



in the negotiations, by means of which an understanding might be secured'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, and as far as British officials understood it, Japan wanted to use these stipulations as a lever to secure China's assent to her other demands particularly in regard to South Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> Unobjectionable though this might be to Britain, the Foreign Office was rather sceptical whether that was Japan's ultimate aim.

It was this scepticism that provoked London into not accepting Kato's statement at its face value. The Foreign Office, therefore, began scrutinizing the demands to ascertain whether they exceeded the former German rights and privileges in the province. As the analysis of the Shantung railway and the Tsingtao customs service questions have shown, the first item noted above was in line with British official thinking on the subject. Alston made this point clear when he noted that:

'It was inevitable, and has been admitted that Japan should claim to succeed to all the rights, &c of Germany in Shantung'.<sup>3</sup>

The same comment could, however, not be made in respect of the other demands. It was quite apparent that Germany did not have exclusive right over lease or cession of lands in Shantung. It was, however, not clear whether this provision was meant to be applied solely in Kiaochow Bay or throughout Shantung or whether it was designed to be retrospective or not. If the stipulation was meant to be applied throughout the province and was designed

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 32), 25 January 1915.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter Five above.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2322, Minute on memorandum communicated by the Japanese Ambassador on 22 January 1915 /IO4647, 29 January 1915.



to be retrospective, it would naturally affect the British position in Wei-hai Wei. As regards the construction of a line to connect the Tsingtao-Tsinan railway, it was clear that whichever line was chosen, Japan would have access to the centre of the richest parts of Shantung and be linked with the north coast of the province. The effect of this would be to diminish the commercial importance of Kiaochow in favour of Lungkow or Chefoo and more especially South Manchuria. In addition, if more trade marts were opened in Shantung it would naturally increase the commercial importance of the province. It was, however, reckoned that this would benefit Japan more than the other Powers as the non-alienation clause would prevent other foreigners leasing land for commercial purposes in the region.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all these objectionable features of the demands, there was nothing Britain could do to limit Japan to what she was considered entitled to in Shantung. This was principally because of Britain's total involvement in the war and the speculation that any overt action on her part in opposition to Japan in the province might intensify Tokyo's territorial ambitions elsewhere more vulnerable to Chinese and British interests. For these reasons, London decided not to question Tokyo on any of the objectionable items detailed above apart from ascertaining whether the non-alienation clause would affect Britain's position in Wei-hai Wei.<sup>2</sup> Before such an inquiry could be made, however, came in news of the imperfect

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/2322, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 30 confidential), 9 February 1915.



nature of the demands. As it turned out, they covered rights in the Yangtze and Japanese political, economic and military control of China.<sup>1</sup> Worse than this, perhaps, was a statement made by Kato to the effect that by communicating the demands to Britain he was merely informing her of his government's action but not inviting her views on them.<sup>2</sup> These developments affected British diplomatic thinking on the whole issue. In the current state of the war, Britain had two alternative courses of action. She had either got to attempt to restrict Japan to the original German rights in Shantung or to concentrate her energies to ward off Japan from the Yangtze. As was the case in 1913-14, and more so with a war on her hands, the latter course of action seemed appropriate and handier. Further consideration of the implications of the demands on Shantung was, therefore, shelved among the catalogue of those damages which she hoped to repair after the war.<sup>3</sup> Hence, negotiations were left solely in the hands of China and Japan with Britain saying nothing to Japan regarding Shantung even when Kato later agreed to consider any British objection in regard to her interests affected by the demands.<sup>4</sup>

In their counter-proposals on 2 March, the Chinese agreed to recognise any settlement between Japan and Germany on the disposal of the latter's interests in Shantung but they demanded not only a representation on any conference called for that purpose but also the restoration of Kiaochow to China. They made no mention of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 28), 9 February 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2322, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 64 secret), 10 February 1915.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2323, Memorandum by Alston /318197, 14 March 1915.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/2322, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 78), 22 February 1915.



non-alienation clause but dealt with Japanese indemnification for losses caused by the military operation, status of the customs, posts, et cetera, pending the restoration of the territory, the removal of military railway and telegraph as well as the withdrawal of Japanese troops from the province. In addition they stated that if ever China decided on building a railway line from Chefoo or Lungkow to join the main Shantung line, preference would be given to Japanese financiers. Furthermore, Peking agreed to the opening of more trade marts in Shantung but it was stated that such places must be selected and opened by China herself.<sup>1</sup> In effect, these counter-proposals were designed to affirm Chinese sovereignty over all matters affecting Shantung province. On their part, the Japanese refused to accept this situation. Kato, however, assured Britain again that his government was merely using the Shantung terms as a trump card which would eventually be played to secure Chinese acceptance of the other demands in respect of South Manchuria and East Inner Mongolia.<sup>2</sup>

This trump card was played on 26 April 1915, when the Japanese submitted modified demands to the Chinese. According to a note accompanying these modified demands, subject to the acceptance of the amended demands, Japan would declare her willingness to restore Kiaochow to China on the following conditions:

1. that the port of Tsingtao was to remain a treaty port and no longer a fortress;

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2322, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 45), 5 March 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2323, Greene to Grey (Telegram No. 110), 17 March 1915. See MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1231-4, for details of the Twenty-One Demands.



2. the establishment of a separate Japanese settlement in the territory;
3. the establishment of a separate international settlement; and
4. that the question of the disposal of the existing German military establishments be decided solely between Japan and China.<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted here, however, that the restoration of Kiaochow to China on the above conditions did not affect the original Shantung demands as the Japanese revised terms reasserted each of the issues dealt with in their note of 18 January.<sup>2</sup> Under this circumstance, it was not surprising that the Chinese counter-proposals on the modified demands also reasserted their earlier stance.<sup>3</sup> With negotiations in a stalemate and Japan threatening to use force if need be to secure Chinese assent, Jordan appealed to Yuan to accept the revised terms absolutely and unconditionally.<sup>4</sup> Yuan accepted this advice and in a final settlement, Japan obtained virtually all that she set out for in Shantung and in an exchange of notes, Japan agreed to restore Kiaochow to China along the terms she had promised on 26 April.<sup>5</sup>

Having resolved this major issue it did not involve much diplomatic effort to sort out the customs questions which were shelved pending the settlement of the Twenty-One Demands. Under

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2323, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 101), 27 April 1915.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2325, Enclosure No. 3 in Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 104), 3 May 1915.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Enclosure No. 4.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/2324, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 119 confidential), 8 May 1915.

<sup>5</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1216-21.



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<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2325, Enclosure No. 3 in Jordan to Grey (No. 104), 3 May 1915.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, Enclosure No. 4.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/2324, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 119 confidential), 8 May 1915.

<sup>5</sup>MacMurray, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 1216-21.



an agreement signed on 6 August 1915, Japan acquired all the rights and privileges granted to Germany under the 1899 Agreement in respect of the customs in Kiaochow. In a separate memorandum, however, it was provided that within a period of one year from the date of the agreement, ten Japanese should be appointed as 'indoor staff' of the Tsingtao customs administration apart from thirty-six others 'recommended by the Japanese Government' and 'appointed by the Inspector-General for immediate outdoor duties of the Tsingtao customs service'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by September 1915, Japan had by herself secured Chinese assent for her replacement of the Germans in Shantung. The question facing Britain at this moment, therefore, was would Japan accept her current position in the province as compensation for her war efforts or would she look to other regions for this inevitable claim. It is in the light of this pertinent question that one should understand the so-called British 'War Assurances' of 1916 and 1917.

#### F. The British War Assurances

The crisis over the Twenty-One Demands gave world-wide publicity to Japanese ambitions in China and the divergence between British and Japanese policies regarding Chinese sovereignty. These developments had quite an appreciable effect on German morale which had been crumbling on all sides in the Far East. Germany, therefore, began making approaches to Japan for a German-Japanese understanding

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2319, Jordan to Grey (No. 198 Confidential), 12 August 1915.



involving peace and a common policy towards China.

The first of these approaches was made to the Japanese Minister in Stockholm, Uchida Sadazuchi, in a rather circuitous way by one Herr Warburg, a Hamburg banker in November 1915. Warburg, after enquiring from Uchida what the intentions of his government were in regard to Kiaochow and being told that Japan intended to restore it to China, asked whether it would not be possible to come to some arrangement whereby Germany, upon giving adequate compensation to Japan and coming to some understanding with the Chinese would have the territory restored to her. Such an offer was rather tempting but it was doubtful whether Japan wished to see another Power in Shantung again. Apart from this, Britain had since August 1914 made it clear to Japan that she had no objection to her occupying the position which Germany had in the province. It was most probably upon these calculations that Tokyo immediately turned down the offer.<sup>1</sup>

The rejection of this approach did not deter the Germans. In January 1916, Paul von Hintze, the German Minister in Peking, reopened the subject with the Japanese Consul General at Tientsin but he was turned down and the matter was once more reported to London.<sup>2</sup> It was at this stage that Grey decided to spell out the British view on the German rights in Shantung once more to the Japanese. He told Inoue on 31 January 1916 that:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2386, Howard to Grey (Telegram No. 1727 confidential), 26 November 1915.

<sup>2</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, pp. 179-80.



'we had not yet formulated demands of our own respecting German possessions. It was obvious that, in case of any colony such as German South-West Africa, the Government of South Africa were certain to put forward a strong claim for retaining the colony. But I should like to repeat that we had no intention of putting claims to German concessions in China, and that, therefore, if the future of these concessions came to be discussed with the Chinese Government, the discussion could not be a source of difficulty between Japan and ourselves'.<sup>1</sup>

To all intents and purposes this statement was not different from the one he made to Inoue on 9 August 1914. On this occasion, however, the Japanese demanded a fuller exposition of the British view on the subject and Grey reaffirmed his earlier statement. He added that:

'We had not said anything about the concessions to any other Allies; but we were of course entitled to renounce claims on our behalf, on our own responsibility'.<sup>2</sup>

Grey recorded his justification for this assurance later. He minuted:

'I do not wish to make offers to Japan at the expense of China, but in my opinion if we had not made it clear that we should not bar Japan's expansion of interests in the Far East it would have been clearly to Japan's advantage to throw in her lot with Germany. Japan is barred from every other part of the World except the Far East & the Anglo Japanese alliance cannot be maintained if she is to be barred there also & if we are to claim the German concessions in China as well as taking German colonies in Africa & elsewhere'.<sup>3</sup>

If this was the only justification for giving this assurance, then Grey was not exhibiting any deep sense of circumspection on the issue. After all, Japan had proved faithful enough by communicating

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2653, Grey to Greene (No. 37), 31 January 1916.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2653, Grey to Greene (No. 39), 4 February 1916.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2647, Minute on Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 68), 15 February 1916.



each of the German overtures to Britain, quite apart from the 'endearingly frank and indiscreet' interviews to the press by Okuma Shigenobu, the Japanese Prime Minister, early in January 1916, revealing these secret overtures to the public. Whether these revelations could, therefore, be regarded as 'canons of the old diplomacy' which 'were intended to draw some sort of counterbid from the Entente powers' or not, Grey clearly over-reacted to the dictates of the game.<sup>1</sup> Such an action from a man of Grey's calibre and experience cannot, however, be accepted with any sense of equanimity. One is, therefore, forced to read deeper into his conversation with Inoue on 31 January and compare it with his various pronouncements and minutes on the subject since 9 August 1914 to look for other reasons apart from the apparent 'German scare'.

The most obvious reason for Grey's assurance was the alleged Japanese ambitions. The controversy over Japanese activities in the Yangtze and especially over the Twenty-One Demands steered the Foreign Office into giving greater consideration to the proportions such ambitions might assume at any time during the war that might prove highly inimical to British interests and Chinese sovereignty. Not only might Japan claim at any time that her current position in Shantung was obtained through her own efforts by the Twenty-One Demands, hence she was entitled to a fresh compensation somewhere in China for dislodging the Germans from Kiaochow, but she might

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, pp. 179-80.



also claim compensation in the other German territories in the Pacific for her general war efforts. Considering the fact that such a demand might be made at a time when Britain might be in no position to reject such claims and the effects such a demand might have on British commercial interests, and Australia and New Zealand's future security as well as on Chinese sovereignty, a way must be found to tell Japan what the British views on the subject were. Grey's reference to the new relationship that might develop between the South African Government and German South-West Africa after the war was, therefore, an indirect way of informing Tokyo of the criterion for sharing the spoils of the war. The principle for such sharing would be based on propinquity of ally to any German possession and assets. Thus while Australia and New Zealand might legitimately lay claims to those German territories in the Pacific as South Africa might claim South-West Africa, Japan must look to those German possessions in China.

The strategy of the British Government in regard to the whole idea of compensation for Japan becomes clearer if one takes a look at ~~its~~ tactics in requesting the expulsion of Germans from China. Linking up the expulsion scheme with the idea of compensation for Japan's war efforts, Thomas Humphrey Lyons observed on 2 February 1916 that:

'The whole project entails, of course, the disposal of property which belongs not to the Allies but to China herself and great care would have to be exercised in order to ~~ensure~~ the support of the Chinese Government. I do not however believe that this would be an insuperable obstacle to success. The assets which would be set free by the expulsion scheme ~~me~~ are sufficiently numerous to enable us to hand back to China ample



compensation for her acquiescence - and, if this were not sufficient, there would always be the promise of a loan to fall back on'.<sup>1</sup>

Based upon this calculation, Grey spelt out the details of the strategy in a very lengthy telegram to Jordan. He noted that:

'China to be asked to break with Germany in the sense not only of expelling all Germans including the Minister and Consular Officers from German concessions and elsewhere but also of repudiating all financial and industrial agreement/s made prior to the war. This would have the effect of depriving Germans of all loan and indemnity payments and would be a severe blow to her. The mere prospect of it would do much to bring home to Germany how much she has to lose by continuing the war. It would also set free the German concessions at Tientsin and Hankow, the northern section of the Tientsin-Pukow Railway and the Hankow-Ichang section of Hukuang Railways. His Majesty's Government would make no claim to any of the above assets and it is hoped that a similar disclaimer would be made by the Russian and French Governments. The assets, to which we might possibly be prepared to add the retrocession of Wei Hai Wei to China, would be the inducement to obtain acquiescence of the Chinese in the general expulsion scheme and the co-operation of the Japanese both in that scheme and the general conduct of the war. Neither China nor Japan can be expected to co-operate heartily in a European quarrel unless their own interests are assured. I fully realise, above proposal cannot but be disappointing to you since it entails renunciation of much for which you have fought so successfully during recent years. Compensation to Japan however will, in any case, have to be found for the part which she had played so far and under this proposal we shall merely be helping her, in return for her co-operation which is solely needed to obtain now certain advantages which she will certainly claim at the end of the war when I should not feel justified in opposing her acquisition of them'.<sup>2</sup>

If it is remembered that Japan had not at any point indicated that the continued existence of German representation in China was

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2647, Memorandum by Lyons /201527, 2 February 1916. This memorandum was reproduced in February 1917 while the expulsion scheme and Japanese request for British support in regard to the Shantung question were being discussed. See below and also FO/371/2910, Minutes on Aston to Balfour (Telegram No. 50 secret), 4 February 1917.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2647, Grey to Jordan (Telegram No. 30 secret), 11 February 1916.



inimical to her interests and that there were, in fact, more military disadvantages in expelling Germans from China than allowing them to stay, then one realises the ambivalence of the British Government at this stage.<sup>1</sup> Britain appeared to be living under the fear that with the Japanese position secured in Shantung as a result of the Twenty-One Demands, Japan might soon be looking towards somewhere else to claim compensation for her past and future 'war efforts'. Unless the Germans were, therefore, quickly expelled throughout China and their assets set free to enable the allies to offer them to Japan, the latter might look for more vulnerable regions to claim compensation. It was Jordan's strong opposition to every aspect of the suggestion that held Grey back from making these additional promises to Japan.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that the scheme fell through, the Foreign Office continued to entertain the idea that 'compensation for the Japanese must be found somewhere & the German assets in China seem destined to provide it'.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the evidence so far provided, it is difficult to accept Roger Louis' contention that in 'the months following the war the British looked with alarm on the prospect of the greater part of China being sealed off and lost forever to British trade because of the consequences of Japan's occupation of Shantung'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2647, Jordan to Grey (Telegram No. 68), 15 February 1916.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/2656, Minutes by Lyons and Langley on Gersham Steward to Robert Cecil /988957, 22 May 1916.

<sup>4</sup>Roger Louis, British Strategy in the Far East 1919-1939 (Clarendon Press, 1971), p.22.



Up to this point in our discussion, there is no clue to the effect that this thought had occupied Grey's mind. Admittedly, had the above suggestion, on which he neither consulted his cabinet colleagues, the Board of Trade nor the War Office, been approved by Jordan and then conveyed to Tokyo, the Japanese position in China after the war would have posed greater strategic, economic and political problems for Britain, the rest of the allies and China than ~~it~~ did during and after the Versailles Treaty. Louis' contention, as he later seemed to imply, belonged to another age of British diplomatic thinking on the subject, that of Curzon.<sup>1</sup>

While Curzon's position on the Shantung question shall be looked into in detail later in our discussion, it is worth while noting that the failure of the Foreign Office to persuade Jordan to endorse its scheme for promising all the German assets to Japan was not seen as affecting the earlier promise regarding the fate of those rights and assets in Shantung. In view of this, plans were laid out to solve any international complications that might arise out of this assurance. As we have already noted above, Britain anticipated no difficulty with France and Russia in the massive scheme, much less the modest one which could be said to have been regularised by the Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1915 arising out of the Twenty-One Demands. There was, however, the United States Government who might be least pleased to see Japan supplant Germany in Shantung. Grey, therefore, sought to sound as well as prepare America with regard to his assurance and any additional one Britain might find expedient

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.23.



to give in the course of the war involving the German assets in China. The opportunity offered itself when the American Ambassador called on Grey in March 1916 and informed him of the United States' views on alleged Japanese designs on China involving fresh demands. Grey told him at this interview that:

'Japan had never claimed this as far as we were concerned. The only claims she had put forward to us were the demands and wishes urged upon China some time ago of which the United States and other Powers were cognisant. Some of these had been conceded by China, others had been postponed, but I had not heard that those which were postponed have since been revived. That was how matters stood as far as we were concerned. Personally, I felt that some day Japan might put forward demands which it would be very difficult to answer. Supposing, for instance, Japan said to the other Powers, "Either give me equal opportunities in the World generally, and then I will be content with equal opportunities and no more in China; or else, if I agree to be excluded, as in practice you do exclude me from Europe, and even from a great part of Asia, then do not oppose at any rate my commercial expansion in China."

Japan had never said this to us. The British Government had never discussed what answer they should make if it was said. I was speaking of my own personal apprehension that some day it might be said, and of the difficulty there would be in answering it.'<sup>1</sup>

Allowing for the discreet nature of an astute diplomat, Grey had nothing else in mind when he made these observations other than to hint to the Americans of his assurance of 31 January 1916, and the possibility of other assurances along similar lines and to observe American reaction to it. When this reaction proved almost inextractable, he did not hesitate to make a second attempt.<sup>2</sup> Washington,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2653, Grey to Spring-Rice (No. 81 very confidential), 16 March 1916.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2653, Grey to Spring-Rice (No. 89 confidential), 23 March 1916.



however, proved quite impregnable to such probings and Grey made no further attempts in that direction, most probably because of the attention which was turned to the rebellion that was to topple Yuan Shih-kai and his monarchical movement from power.<sup>1</sup>

From the above, therefore, Grey's reason for giving the assurance of 31 January 1916 regarding the German assets in Shantung was only a quirk if not an attempt at finding some excuse for a doctrine he had held since 9 August 1914 and which he had carefully planned and reappraised in the light of the changed conditions brought about by the Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1915 only to be strongly disapproved and resented by Jordan. Grey's era of dominance over British foreign policy, however, ended in December 1916 with the fall of Asquith's government and the institution of Lloyd George's coalition government. From this period until the end of the war, British foreign policy fell into the hands of Arthur Balfour as Foreign Secretary. He was assisted in this position by Robert Cecil between 1917 and 1918 and then by George Curzon during Balfour's absence in <sup>Paris</sup> ~~London~~. Similar changes had also taken place in Japan in October 1916 by the fall of the Okuma cabinet. The Governor General of Korea, Terauchi Masatake, became Prime Minister on 9 October and appointed as his Foreign Minister Motono Ichiro, the Japanese ambassador to Russia.

With these changes in both Japan and Britain, therefore, came a reappraisal of policies in each country. In Britain, attention

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<sup>1</sup>For an account of this movement see Edmund Clubb, Twentieth Century China (Columbia University Press), 1964, pp. 51-80.



was directed towards methods of reducing severe casualties being inflicted on allied shipping by German U-boats. At the request of Jellicoe, the First Sea Lord, therefore, the Foreign Office asked Japan on 11 January 1917 to provide Britain with additional naval assistance by way of increased patrol of the South Pacific by the Japanese navy and lending Britain destroyers and light cruisers for use in the Mediterranean and in the South Atlantic. At the same point in time, and quite independent of the British request, however, discussions which had for some time been going on in Japan at both inter-departmental and cabinet levels as to the final claims Tokyo should put forward as a price for participating in the war were almost at completion.<sup>1</sup> When Motono, therefore, saw Greene on 26 January to convey to him his government's reply to the British request, he handed him a note to the effect that:

'Having regard to possibility of peace conference some future date, the Japanese Government consider the time has come to approach His Majesty's Government with a view of obtaining an assurance from them of their willingness to support Japan's claims in regard to disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and possessions in islands north of the Equator on the occasion of such a conference'.<sup>2</sup>

In a verbal statement later, Motono added that it would be easier for him to overcome objections in the cabinet and from the Naval Staff to the British proposals for an extension of Japanese assistance if he could quote Britain's willingness to support Japan on the issues stated above. Furthermore, he told Greene that such an

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, pp. 197-204.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2950, Greene to Balfour (Telegram No. 59), 27 January 1917.



assurance would help to enhance his own image within the cabinet which, he felt, would be to the advantage of the Entente Powers.<sup>1</sup>

Anyone without a clear insight into the genesis of the latest Japanese move would conclude, as Greene did, that the 'Japanese Government wish to take advantage of our request for enlarged co-operation in order to deal with us in political arena'. This attitude was, however, not seen in London as affecting the merits of the request. As Langley noted:

'It has always been certain that Japan would claim the Islands north of the Equator and Germany's rights in Shantung and if we are going to give them to her eventually we may as well do so now and get some quid pro quo'.<sup>2</sup>

None of the Foreign Office staff, however, took note of any of Grey's previous pronouncements on the fate of the German rights in Shantung when reviewing the situation.<sup>3</sup> While the British Government was still deliberating over the Japanese request, however, the latter agreed to the extension of their naval assistance.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Inoue was instructed to set out the basis of the Japanese request to the British Government. In a memorandum to the Foreign Office on 2 February, therefore, he traced chronologically Grey's various pronouncements on the German possessions in Shantung. The most important of them was that made on 9 August 1914. Although

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2950, Greene to Balfour (Telegram No. 59), 27 January 1917.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2950, Greene to Balfour (Telegram No. 60), 27 January 1917.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., minute thereon.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



the Japanese version appeared categorical in nature, the Foreign Office could trace no records of this assurance. It stated that:

'At the very outset of the war, when negotiations were proceeding between the two cabinets preliminary to Japan's participation in the struggle, Lord Grey told Marquis Inoue on 9th August, 1914, that in the event of Japan's declaring war against Germany and capturing Kiaochow, Great Britain had no objection to Japan's continuing in possession of the said territory after the war, and that he desired the Imperial Government to have no misgiving on that point'.<sup>1</sup>

Whichever version of the record of this conversation was nearer to what Grey said on that day, looking at his minutes since August 1914, one cannot help <sup>not</sup> but conclude that he could have been as explicit as the Japanese version claimed. It is unfortunate that Grey was out of office at this time. It is within reason to speculate that he would readily have agreed to this request without even referring it to the cabinet. Things had, however, changed, for within the new cabinet were men who were less tolerant to Japanese methods.<sup>2</sup> For Japan to make such a request when her ally was in grave difficulties and at a time when American susceptibilities about Japanese activities in China were at their height and needed, therefore, to be toned down to bring her into the fold of the allied Powers, appeared very abhorrent to Curzon. He, therefore, strongly argued against Britain giving any such an assurance when the cabinet met to discuss the request. Balfour, on the other hand, coming from an eighteen months' service at the Admiralty and probably envisaging the possibility

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/2950, Memorandum communicated by the Japanese Ambassador [26707], 2 February 1917; also see footnote 1, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.7.



of future requests from Britain for more naval assistance opposed Curzon's view. In the end, Balfour won the day.<sup>1</sup>

On 14 February 1917, therefore, London acceded to the Japanese request on the proviso that they also agreed to treat in the same spirit Britain's claim to the German islands south of the equator in the eventual peace settlement. As was the case with the Japanese request, copies of the British reply were also sent to the French and Russian Governments in addition to a copy being transmitted to the Italians.<sup>2</sup> No sooner had the three governments also agreed to this request<sup>3</sup> than Japan began on a process of consolidating her position in Shantung.

#### G. Period of Consolidation

The first act of the Japanese in a bid to consolidate their position in Shantung was to establish a new civil administration for Kiaochow. Briefly stated, a civil administrative department was formed under a civilian administrator with power over all non-military and judicial matters. At the head of the whole administration, however, was the commandant of the Tsingtao garrison, a post filled by a general or lieutenant-general. He was directly responsible to the Emperor of Japan and was subject to the supervision of the Ministry of War and, except for military operation and mobilisation, he had to receive instructions from the Chief of General Staff in Japan. Military affairs within the commandant's jurisdiction were

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<sup>1</sup>CABINET PAPERS, hereafter referred to as CAB, 23/1, February 1917 contains all the discussions on this issue at the time. FO/371/5321, minute by Curzon on Clive to Curzon (Telegram No. 467), 2 November 1920.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2950, Memorandum communicated to Japanese Ambassador (36133), 14 February 1917.

<sup>3</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, pp. 209-10.



to be managed by a military section, subdivided into staff, adjutants, judicial, intendance and army medical sections.<sup>1</sup>

In an explanatory communiqué following the publication of these regulations, the Japanese Government stated that its aim was to end the military regime established in the territory soon after its capture from the Germans and to 'set up civil government with the object of thus perfecting the administration of the occupied territory, and protecting the industry of the native and foreign population'. In addition, it was stated that these new regulations should not be seen as indicating that Japan had any 'design to alter the character and the actual status of the occupied territory'. The communiqué was, on the other hand, silent on the issue of restoring the territory to China after the war. This was the matter taken up by the Jiji Shimpō. The paper intimated that the territory would be returned to China but that the German railways and mines were to be regarded as permanent Japanese assets.<sup>2</sup>

The Jiji Shimpō's intimation was exactly what the Japanese set out to achieve in 1918. In a note to the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chang Tsung-hsiang, dated 27 September 1918, Goto Shimpei, his Japanese counterpart, requested Chinese consent to the following arrangement in regard to the Shantung railways: Except for the stationing of a detachment of Japanese troops at Tsinan and the organisation of a new police force for guarding the Shantung railway, all other Japanese forces would be withdrawn from the Kiaochow-Tsinan line and

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1162-66.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/2955, Greene to Balfour (No. 674), 2 October 1917, and its enclosures. For details of the administration set up at Tsingtao in 1914 see MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, p.1159.



and concentrated at Tsingtao. The cost of organising and maintaining the new police force, the note went on, was to be defrayed by the railway company. In addition, Goto requested Peking to agree that after the exact status of the railway had been established, it would be worked as a joint Sino-Japanese enterprise. The note then called for the abolition of the civil administration established in 1917 but without a word about how the territory was to be governed. These requests were all acceded to by the Chinese.<sup>1</sup> Four days later, Tokyo issued an official statement announcing that an agreement had been reached between Tokyo and Peking for the construction of the railways from Tsinanfu to Shuntehfu, and from Kaomi to Hsuchowfu, at an estimated cost of Yen 70,000,000 of which Yen 20,000,000 would be provided by a Japanese syndicate.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone conversant with the importance of foreign controlled railways in the piecemeal erosion of Chinese rights could not fail to see the intentions behind this note and the effect its acceptance would have on any peace settlement in connection with the German rights in Shantung. However, London was not informed of the notes neither were their contents made public. It was not until December 1918 that Jordan heard rumours of their existence but he did not come to possess a copy of the details until after the fate of the German rights had been settled in Paris. Reflecting on the notes, however, Jordan observed that:

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<sup>1</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1445-46.

<sup>2</sup>See the full statement in Japan Advertiser, 2 October 1918.



'It is this agreement that will be regarded by history as having settled the fate of Shantung. The 1915 agreement was admittedly extorted from China by Japan, under circumstances of particularly damaging character to the latter's good name and might therefore have been recognised as having been obtained under duress. But with the signature of the endorsed agreement with Japan on 28 September 1918, at a moment when the Allies were already on the crest of the wave and the war all but won, China signed her own death warrant and for the paltry sum of 20,000,000 yen, say, £2,000,000'.<sup>1</sup>

In as much

<sup>^</sup> ~~much~~ as this statement represented what happened in Paris during  
<sup>^</sup> ~~^~~

the peace conference, it is appropriate to attempt to analyse

British diplomatic attitudes towards the Shantung issue just before and during the conference.

#### H. The Shantung Problem at the Peace Conference

The end of the war in 1918 brought in its trail a number of issues for discussion at various departmental, cabinet and colonial levels in Britain in preparation towards the peace conference scheduled to take place in Paris. The question of British assurances to Japan regarding the former German rights in Shantung was, however, not exhaustively discussed at any level. This was not because it was felt that the issues involved by this promise were less controversial than the other questions that would come before the peace conference. On the contrary, as soon as the matter was raised, it was realised that it was one of those vital and fundamental issues which could not be treated in isolation nor could London afford to adopt any dogmatic approach towards it until the conference had had the chance

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3695, Jordan to Curzon (No. 235 confidential), 27 May 1919.



to consider it.<sup>1</sup> What then were these vital and fundamental questions involved by Japan inheriting the German rights in Shantung?

Firstly there was the fear of the effects of Japan occupying South Manchuria and Shantung at the same time on British industrial and commercial revival in China. By the very nature of Japanese colonial policy, British trade and enterprise were almost extinct in Korea, muzzled in South Manchuria and under attack in Kiaochow at the end of the war. This fact prompted an immediate fear that if Japan were allowed to occupy the same position as Germany had on the basis of the British assurance of February 1917 and without any other conditions, she might, by controlling the Shantung and the South Manchurian railways, use her position to kill all existing foreign commercial and industrial enterprise within the whole of the north-eastern flank of China and there were signs that this situation was not far from being realised. As Jordan observed:

'Process which has been going on in Manchuria is now being extended to Shantung and British trade there is being threatened with the same blight. Crux of the whole situation lies in disposal of Tsingtao Tai-Nan-Fu Railway and its extensions. Give that to Japan and you thrust a Japanese Protectorate into vitals of China which will wither up British trade and leave heritage of British troubles. Internationalise it and you make Tsingtao and rich provinces which feed it one of the greatest trading centres in Asia'.<sup>2</sup>

The serious nature of the situation was recognised by the Foreign Office and additional conditions were called for before Britain

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd George Papers (Beaverbrook Library collections at the Record Office, House of Lords), F/Box 23/Folder 3/32. Memorandum entitled United States and the Occupied Enemy Territories, by Colonel L.S. Amery, 20 December 1918.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3184, Enclosure in Jordan to Balfour (No. 413), 3 September 1918.



honoured her pledge to Japan regarding the German rights in Shantung. In this connection, Ronald Macleay, the Foreign Office adviser to the Peace Delegation, pointed out that if it became necessary to support Japan on the issue in Paris, it should be made clear to her that such

'support is given on the understanding that British trade interest in Shantung will receive the same treatment from the Japanese as they did from the Germans who admitted British trade on equal footing with German trade in the Province and never attempted to discriminate against the trade of other foreign countries or to put forward a claim to exclusive rights'.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the commercial and industrial consideration, there was another factor which was working towards Britain adopting an open-mind attitude towards the Shantung problem. This was British and especially American attitudes towards the question of Chinese sovereignty. Soon after giving the assurance of February 1917, fears began to be expressed as to the adverse effect Japan's position in Shantung and South Manchuria would have on the security of Peking.<sup>2</sup> Although it was realised that the position was potentially dangerous for the security of Peking nothing was done about it until the end of the war when a new factor set into the whole affair. This was in regard to how the British assurance of February 1917 was consistent with a number of institutions being advocated by the United States.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., minute thereon.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/2976, Minutes on Alston to Balfour (Telegram No. 101 Confidential), 4 March 1917.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/3191, Jordan to Balfour (Telegram No. 928 confidential), 10 November 1918.



The first of these American sponsored institutions was the proposed League of Nations under whose auspices it was certain both the United States and China would call for an end of leased territories and spheres of influence in China. Owing to the heavy reliance Britain might have to place on the United States in any post-war revival, American entreaties could not be easily ignored especially with regard to policies which did not seem to be too disadvantageous to British interests in China.<sup>1</sup> On account of this, Macleay observed that Britain might be prepared to abandon her

'claim to a special sphere of interest in the Yangtze Valley and to accept the American theory that "a China free of all claims by other Governments to special geographical areas for investment purposes would lend itself to the legitimate and unselfish financial enterprises of a friendly world"';

provided the Americans were able to persuade Japan to adopt 'a similar policy in the spheres of influence which she claims in Manchuria, Fukien and Shantung'.<sup>2</sup> On the issue of leased territories in China, Macleay noted that:

'The question of our retention of Wei-hai-wei must depend on the decisions reached at the Peace Conference and on the attitude of other Powers possessing leased territories in China and especially Japan'.<sup>3</sup>

With Britain willing to make such sacrifices herself on the conditions stated above it would be unwise for her to adopt an insular attitude towards an issue that would stultify her own aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup>Louis, op.cit., p.27.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3191, Jordan to Balfour confidential), 10 November 1918, minute by Macleay on 2 December 1918.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3191, Minute by Macleay on Colonial Office to Foreign Office /2102597, 21 December 1918; and Jordan to Macleay /Private Telegram: 2035067, 4 December 1918.



In fact the best indication that the British Government was not prepared to adopt an insular approach to the Shantung question at the coming conference was its acceptance of another American sponsored institution designed in its essence to arrest 'militarism by taking away its economic motives' in the Far East, the new International Financial Consortium for internationalising existing options and future industrial enterprises in China.<sup>1</sup>

This was an institution which Curzon later described as being

'an attempt to get rid of the old theory by which China was parcelled out into a number of spheres of interests allocated to the various Great Powers who had interests or ambitions there'.<sup>2</sup>

On this subject, Macleay minuted on 12 December that:

'Japan, I think, is conscious of having abused her special position in China and the opportunities afforded by the war during the last four and half years, and probably realises not only that she has over-reached herself, but that she will not be able to pursue a policy of dismemberment and disintegration in the face of the growing hostility of a United China which will be assured of the economic as well as the moral support of the United States and Great Britain. Thus it may well be that we shall find the Japanese Delegates at the Peace Conference while determined to resist any attempt to force Japan to relinquish her special position in China and the advantages which she has secured in Manchuria and Shantung, will not be averse to co-operating in a self-denying policy directed towards the internationalization of all future industrial and economic enterprise in China which although it will, as Sir J Jordan says "be a blow to Japan's imperialist ambitions" will not impair her prestige as the Power principally interested in the Far East.'<sup>3</sup>

With all these considerations to be taken into account, it is not surprising that in its memorandum to the Imperial War Cabinet

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/317, Enclosures in Reading to Balfour (No. 621), 15 July 1918; Balfour to Page /I356167, 16 August 1918; Barclay to Balfour (No. 891), 11 October 1918.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 593, p.840.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3191, Minute on Jordan to Macleay /Private Telegram 2035067, 4 December 1918.



on the Shantung question, the Foreign Office not only laid emphasis on the British pledge of 1917 but also called attention to the new role the United States had indicated she was going to play in Far Eastern affairs and her desire that all the Powers renounce their claims to leased territories and spheres of influence in China in favour of internationalising all financial concessions in that country. The memorandum also called attention to Britain's moral obligation to see to it that Kiaochow ~~was~~ restored to China in consonance with her declared aim <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ attacking the Germans in the territory. On the other hand, the memorandum implied, if the Americans, on whom Britain would have to depend in pressing for the restoration of Kiaochow, failed to bring enough pressure to bear on Japan, Britain might perhaps be taken to have been released from her obligation to China as no written guarantee was given to China on the subject and as the Chinese made no protest against the arrangements subsequently forced upon them by Japan. The memorandum, it must be reiterated, laid emphasis on the need for a closer co-operation between Britain and America on the issue.<sup>1</sup> With the general outline of American attitudes on the subject already known, and with the realization that Britain might have to depend on her for much of the post-war reconstruction, therefore, Maurice Hankey, who was to be the secretary to the British delegation in Paris, advised the War Cabinet, when it met on 20 December to discuss the issue and others, to avoid the Shantung question altogether. Upon this advice, the Shantung issue was not discussed by the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CAE 24/22, The Far East and Non-African colonies, Foreign Office Memorandum, 13 December 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd George Papers, F/Box 23/Folder 3/30, Hankey to Lloyd George (secret), 19 December 1918; CAB 23/23, minutes of the Imperial War Cabinet.



The decision by the War Cabinet not to discuss the Shantung issue after seeing the way in which the matter had been presented by the Foreign Office is a good pointer to the strategy the British Government had planned to adopt on the question in Paris. It amounted simply to this: support the Americans on the question of renunciation of all foreign spheres of interests and leased territories in China. In doing so, however, Britain should not take the initiative in making any renunciation of her rights until it was certain the Americans would be able to persuade other Powers, especially Japan, to adopt similar measures. Should Washington, on the other hand, fail in pressing for a general acceptance of this plan, Britain could urge the acceptance of the fait accompli without incurring the odium of Chinese hostility by merely pointing out that her understanding of 1917 with Japan was based upon the Sino-Japanese treaty of 1915. At the same time, Britain could calm American wrath by pointing out to her that her plan for internationalising all existing options and future industrial and commercial concessions in China, if successfully organised, could counteract any possible Japanese designs on China and render their continued occupation of Kiaochow one of an economic liability rather than an asset - a position Japan was most unlikely to tolerate for a long time. Even if the Japanese refused to endorse the American plan, Britain and France would do so and with Germany defeated and Russia in chaos, they would sooner or later be forced to compromise. It must, however, be pointed out to the United States that the success of this plan rested entirely on her pledge not to leave the consortium



once it had been established and her willingness to pump more money into the organisation's activities if the need arose. At the same time, Britain should try and obtain a quid pro quo from Japan regarding the security of British commercial and industrial enterprises in Shantung before coming to her support.

This is the strategy made apparent in most of the minutes written by the Foreign Office's expert on the issue.<sup>1</sup> It had many

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3191, see his minutes on Jordan to Balfour (Telegram No. 928 confidential), 10 November 1918 and on Jordan to Macleay [Private Telegram 2035067, 4 December 1918. Peter Richards contends that a firm decision was taken in London to support the Japanese claims in Paris. In coming to this conclusion, Richards relied on a statement made by Balfour in May and June of 1918 that Britain, by virtue of her assurance of February 1917, was committed to support Japan at the peace conference. In addition, he recalled the difference between Jordan and Macleay on the ideas of internationalising all Chinese administrative and financial systems. What Richards failed to take into consideration was that, although Balfour's statement was true, it was made prior to American intimation that she was going to play more than a positive role in checking Japanese advances in China. This American statement did not mean checking Japanese advances in Manchuria and Siberia alone but a check on Japanese activities in Shantung was very high on the programme. It was most improbable that Balfour would advocate a policy which he was sure would create a rift between Britain and the United States at this time. In addition, Richards failed to realise that Balfour's statement was merely an argument and not a statement of policy. The essence of the statement was to oppose Curzon's position that Britain should not assume control over the other German colonies by pointing out that such a position could hardly be maintained as London had already committed itself to adopt a contrary policy and instanced the 1917 assurance as a typical case in point. As regards the difference between Jordan and Macleay, Richards over-estimated its degree. The point of difference was not internationalising certain aspects of the Chinese financial system but rather internationalising the Chinese administration. Macleay opposed the latter policy because he felt such an action would be opposed by Chinese nationalists and resented by the United States. For Richards' position see Richards, op.cit., pp.62-80.



advantages and among them was the fact that whichever course was adopted, the feared Japanese expansionist policies could be arrested without impairing Japanese prestige as the Power most interested in the Far East. In addition, London would be able to minimise the risk of collision with Washington over the issue apart from reducing the existing tension between the United States and Japan over the latter's policies in China. Hence the British approach to the Shantung problem was a flexible one designed to steer a middle course, without, as they believed, hurting either the Americans or the Japanese.

In any case, the Shantung issue came up at the Council of Ten meeting on 27 January 1919, just at the time when the Peace Conference was taking up discussions on the problems connected with the former German colonies. It was precisely at this meeting that Balfour tried to unfold the British strategy by arguing that the Kiaochow question should be separated from the Pacific issues. Precisely what Balfour wanted to achieve by this separation he did not make clear to the conference, neither did he state it in any of his despatches to London, apart from enumerating the difficulties to be encountered if problems connected with China and the Pacific Islands were treated on the same plane. The most obvious reason appears to be that if he succeeded in achieving this separation and the issue connected with the Pacific Islands settled first, Japan might realise the enormous weight of American influence in current world affairs and might readily compromise her position in Shantung under the American programme for the end of leased territories and



the spheres of influence in China. Alternatively, by trying to mix up the Shantung question with the overall Chinese problems, Balfour might have felt that the fate of the German rights would be dealt with along the American plan detailed above. Whichever line he was thinking along, the success of this appeal would have saved Britain from any direct approach from Japan for support on Shantung.<sup>1</sup> It was perhaps in realisation of this strategy that Makino Nobuaki, the Japanese delegate, strongly argued against Balfour's proposal. In view of lack of compromise from the British and Japanese delegates on this issue, the conference decided to place the whole issue of Shantung in the hands of the Japanese and Chinese delegates to argue their respective case before the Council.<sup>2</sup>

This was a resounding victory for Japanese persistence for although the Shantung issue was separated from the problem connected with the Pacific Islands they at least avoided the nasty consequences of mixing up the former issue with the general question connected with China.

When the Council met on the following day, the Japanese case was argued by Makino while Wellington Koo took up the Chinese side. The latter argued that as the Japanese position in the province was obtained by threats and intimidation exemplified by their ultimatum of 1915, they had no legal basis for acquiring the

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 422, pp. 602-5. This memorandum sheds some light on this point.

<sup>2</sup>Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference (hereafter referred to as FRUS PPC), Vol. III, 1919, pp. 735-7.



German rights in the territory and they must therefore be restored to China unconditionally. Makino's performance at this meeting was an anti-climax for he had nothing to offer in defence of his country's actions other than appealing to the conference to transfer the territory to Japan for its eventual restitution to China.<sup>1</sup>

The outstanding performance of Koo in presenting the Chinese case at this first encounter seemed to have surprised the Japanese. To moderate their approach, therefore, Japan began bringing pressure on Peking through the pro-Japanese Military Party to yield to the Japanese demands. This new approach to the whole issue by Japan was highly resented by the Foreign Office and it tried to counter-act it by urging Macleay to keep in close touch with the American representatives in Paris in affording all the necessary moral support to the Chinese delegates to remain very firm on their claims.<sup>2</sup> To illustrate further the uneasiness of Britain in leaving Japan intact in Kiaochow, Macleay told Alfred Sze, the Chinese Minister in London and a member of their delegation in Paris, that:

'speaking entirely for myself and as my private opinion I thought if the report were true the British Delegates would certainly not approve of any attempt by one Government to put pressure on another in respect of a matter which was under discussion by the Conference and still "sub judice"'.<sup>3</sup>

Had the British Government decided on the outset to honour its pledge this would have been the occasion for the Foreign Office to advise

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<sup>1</sup>FRUS PPC, Vol. III, pp. 754-7.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3682, Jordan to Curzon (Telegram No. 63), 1 February 1919; Max Müller to Macleay /I89767, 13 February 1919.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3682, Enclosure in Macleay to Max Müller /307787, 21 February 1919.



Macleay to appeal to the Chinese delegation, to yield on the issue and then to urge the Japanese that the British support was limited only to what Germany formerly possessed in Shantung and not their extension - a compromise Japan would have accepted by judging the mood of the conference. As it happened, however, neither the Foreign Office nor the British Delegation adopted this course of action. The most probable reason was that, the British Government still hoped that some form of accommodation could be found by the conference to make the Japanese yield on their stand.

The atmosphere at the conference, however, changed in the interval between February and the beginning of April when proceedings were suspended to enable delegates to turn their attention to the various problems affecting their respective countries as well as to appraise the situation caused by the declaration of a Soviet Hungary and the apparent starvation which was threatening Germany. Behind the common accord with which the conference approached these issues was soon to emerge a decision that was to hurt Japanese pride. This was in connection with the rejection of their amendment to the proposed League of Nation's Covenant on racial equality. The immediate response of Japan was to intimate that she might not join the League.<sup>1</sup> This threat was to have quite an impact when the conference reverted to the Shantung question within the Council of Four consisting of Britain, Italy, France and the United States.

Among the Powers gathered in Paris, the one who took more than

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<sup>1</sup>R.H.Fifield, Woodrow Wilson and the Far East: The Diplomacy of Shantung Question (Hampden, Connecticut 1965), pp. 158-69.



a closer look at the impact of the racial discrimination issue on the domestic and foreign outlook of Japan was Britain. It seemed to have been realised by the British delegation that a second blow to Japan within such a short period of time would pose serious political complications to the government in Tokyo. Balfour, therefore, saw the American President, Woodrow Wilson, three days before the council was supposed to revert to the Shantung question and disclosed to him, for the first time, the British pledge to Japan. Balfour pointed out to him that it might be difficult for Japan to yield on such an issue which public opinion in the country had come to regard as the pivot on which the nation's pride hung and in such an eventuality of appeal from Japan, Britain would have no option but to honour her pledge of 1917. It is not clear whether Balfour tried to mollify Wilson by pointing out to him the use to which the consortium could be put to render continued Japanese retention of Kiaochow economically unprofitable or not. It is quite <sup>possible</sup> ~~plausible~~ that Balfour evaded this point at this stage in <sup>the</sup> bid to soften/American attitude which was becoming more anti-Japanese in course of discussions and to warn Wilson that Britain was still in alliance with Japan and she could, therefore, not accept a situation in which all the hopes and aspirations of her ally would be dashed. On the other hand, Balfour made a little headway in persuading the Americans from their stance.<sup>1</sup>

When the Council met formally on 18 April to discuss the question, therefore, Lloyd George tried to accommodate both America and Japan by suggesting to Wilson that a form of Japanese mandatory

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<sup>1</sup>Lothian Papers (Scottish Records Office), GD 40/17/ 55, Drummond to Kerr, 15 April 1919.



control over Shantung as envisaged by the League's Covenant could be another way of satisfying both China and Japan. This solution was welcomed by Wilson but when he suggested it to the Japanese on 21 April they rejected it with an intimation that nothing short of a complete transfer of the German rights to Japan would satisfy them. The Japanese reply on this occasion was very interesting indeed for they showed a shift in position from their earlier stand when they seemed to suggest that their claims would not be limited to the 1898 German assets and rights in Shantung but a full recognition by the Powers of the other rights they secured under both the 1915 and 1918 Sino-Japanese agreements. A ray of hope, therefore, penetrated the conference leading Lloyd George and Wilson to conclude that if Britain could, at least, show herself to be in a form of an understanding with America, the Japanese might be forced to make further shift of grounds.<sup>1</sup> When the Council met on 22 April in the absence of Orlando of Italy, therefore, Lloyd George made it plain to the Japanese delegation that in spite of the British commitment to Japan, it was in accord with the Americans that the best solution of the problem lay in submitting the territory to Japanese mandatory control. It was at this moment that the Japanese questioned the suitability of Kiaochow as a mandate under the various articles of the League's covenant and rejected the whole idea.<sup>1</sup>

The seriousness with which the Japanese approached the whole question on 22 April eventually brought home to the Americans, as it

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<sup>1</sup>P. Mantoux, *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre*, Vol. I (Paris, 1955), pp. 273-74; FRUS PPC, Vol. V, pp. 109-111.



had already occurred to the British, that the Japanese oft-repeated threat of not seeking membership of the proposed League of Nations might not be a mere bluff if their present demands were not met to some extent. In the afternoon of the same day and upon an understanding with Wilson, Lloyd George suggested to the Chinese that they must agree to either Japanese succession to all the former German rights in the region or accept their commitments under the Sino-Japanese agreements of 1915 and 1918 in respect of Shantung. Both alternatives were, however, turned down by the Chinese. Upon this refusal, Lloyd George suggested the appointment of a committee consisting of the British, French and American experts to look into each of the alternatives and to recommend one, whose implementation would involve the least interference with Chinese sovereignty. This suggestion was approved by the conference in spite of strong Chinese objections.<sup>1</sup>

The committee's report, which was made available on 24 April, saw both alternatives as presenting very serious disadvantages for China. On the other hand, it noted that the agreements of 1915 and 1918 posed greater interference with Chinese sovereignty than was anticipated by any of the Sino-German agreements regarding the region. In view of this, it recommended the latter as the lesser of the two evils.<sup>2</sup> On the same day, the Chinese also submitted a

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<sup>1</sup>FRUS PPC, Vol. V, pp. 141-2; Wunsz King, Woodrow Wilson, Wellington Koo and the China question at the Peace Conference (London 1959), Mantoux, op.cit., pp. 329-36.

<sup>2</sup>FRUS PPC, Vol. V, pp. 227-8; Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/74.



four-point compromise to the Powers which called on Japan to restore all the rights and privileges in their possession to China within a year. China would then make 'a pecuniary compensation to Japan for the military expenses incurred in the capture of Tsingtao, the amount of the said compensation to be determined by the Council of Four'. Upon these conditions being fulfilled, China agreed to open 'the whole of Kiaochow Bay as a commercial port, and to provide a special quarter, if desired, for the residence of the citizens and subjects of the treaty powers'.<sup>1</sup>

After a lengthy debate among the three Powers now involved in the discussion, the committee's report was accepted by Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Woodrow Wilson, on the other hand, intimated that he could not approve such a position without a further quid pro quo. In view of this, they agreed to appoint Balfour to discuss the issue again with the Japanese delegation to see whether he could obtain this from them.<sup>2</sup> The British Foreign Secretary met them and

'had a very full discussion with them, in course of which they vehemently denied that their policy had been rightly understood. They expressed in clear and unmistakable terms the intention of Japan to surrender every privilege in the peninsula which involved an interference with Chinese sovereignty; and they maintained the view that this surrender was consistent with, and, indeed, was contemplated by their treaties with China of 1915 and 1918.'<sup>3</sup>

Balfour reported this back to the council adding that:

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<sup>1</sup>Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/74, Enclosure in Alfred Sze to Lloyd George, 30 April 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 245-50; Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/74, Lloyd George to Balfour, 26 April 1919. By this time Italy was preparing to leave the conference, see below.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 564.



'The Japanese Plenipotentiaries, for reasons of national dignity which are easy to understand, are unwilling to modify the letter of the treaties which they have made with China, but they are ready (if I understood them rightly) to give explicit and binding assurances:-

(a) That any concession which China gives them at Tsingtau will not exclude other foreign enterprise from the Port.

(b) That the economic control of the railway, which the possession of the majority of the shares gives them will not be used in any way to discriminate between the trade facilities of different nations'.<sup>1</sup>

When he met the council again on 27 April to expound on his findings, Balfour strongly urged for the acceptance of the Committee of Three's report on the basis of the Japanese assurances. This strong appeal coupled with the fact that Italy had withdrawn from the proceedings four days previously, utterly dissatisfied with the way the rest of the allies had behaved towards her own claims, forced Wilson to agree to the committee's recommendations on the proviso that Japan did not fortify the region. This condition was accepted by Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Balfour was, therefore, chosen again to convey the decision to the Japanese delegation.<sup>2</sup>

Upon the settlement of other minor issues with Japan and in the absence of the Chinese delegation, an agreement was reached between Japan and the three Powers as being the most satisfactory solution of the problem. The agreement stated that:

'The policy of Japan is to hand back the Shantung Peninsula in full sovereignty to China, retaining only

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<sup>1</sup>Balfour Papers, Add. MSS 4975 (British Museum), Memorandum 27 April 1919; Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/74, Memorandum, 27 April 1919.

<sup>2</sup>FRUS PPC, Vol. V, pp. 316-18.



the economic privileges granted to Germany and the right to establish a settlement under the usual conditions at Tsingtao.

The owners of the railway will use special police to ensure security for traffic. They will be used for no other purpose.

The police force will be composed of Chinese, and such Japanese instructors as the directors of the railway select and will be appointed by the Chinese Government'.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on the outcome of this long and arduous negotiation and the bitterness of the Chinese who were informed of the decision of the Powers on 1 May, Arthur Balfour noted that:

'I fear that they [The Chinese] are much disappointed by the result. They never could be got to understand that whatever might be said of the Treaty of 1915, the Treaty of 1918 between China and Japan was a voluntary transaction between sovereign States, and a transaction which gave important pecuniary benefits to China; nor did they ever adequately realise that, by the efforts of Japan and her Allies, China, without the expenditure of a single shilling or the loss of a single life, had restored to her rights which she could never have recovered for herself'.<sup>2</sup>

True as this observation is in part, it completely ignored the fact that Britain's obligation to support Japan in claiming the German rights in Shantung was not based upon the Sino-Japanese agreement of 1918 but rather on her assurance of 1916 and more especially on that of 1917. Even had China not agreed to the Japanese note of 1918, *it would have been difficult for* ~~there was no way in which Britain could have~~ <sup>to</sup> escaped from her obligation of 1917 had Japan found it expedient.

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<sup>1</sup>H.W.V. Tempeley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris (London 1920), Vol. VI, p.386; DBFP, Vol. VI, p.565; FRUS PPC, Vol. V, pp. 363-65.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 565-66.



as she did, to appeal for Britain's support at the conference, a position which Balfour admitted just after the declaration of armistice.<sup>1</sup> In fact, if the Sino-Japanese agreement of 1918 had any impact on Britain's attitude at the conference, it was a negative one. This was because its disclosure made the British delegation more aware of the much discussed Japanese ambitions in China, a situation which Balfour did emphasize in the same despatch.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Balfour failed to realize that the agreement of 1918 did nothing else but regularize the de facto situation in Shantung and that, apart from the railway guards provided therein, Japan obtained nothing new under the agreement. The loan of Yen 70,000,000 for railway extensions in the province was intended for the Koami-Hanchuang and Tsinan-Shunteh lines as provided under the ~~Sino-German~~ agreement of 31 December 1913.<sup>3</sup> If it is noted that the British assurance of February 1917 did not preclude Japan from assuming control over those rights, then the Sino-Japanese agreement of 1918 should have made no difference to London's commitment to Tokyo on the subject. By placing the whole blame of the genesis of the Shantung question and the settlement reached in Paris solely and squarely at the door steps of Peking, therefore, Balfour could be said to be justifying his disregard of the Board of Trade's timely warning that by transferring the German rights in Shantung to Japan, the Powers would be sanctioning Tokyo's domination of the 'country

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<sup>1</sup>Balfour Papers, Add MSS 49699, Thoughts on German Colonies, 2 May 1918.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, p.564.

<sup>3</sup>MacMurray, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1094-96.



between the Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers as far inland as the Peking-Hankow line', when he strongly urged Wilson to endorse the British commitment.<sup>1</sup>

In view of these facts, it was not surprising that Curzon strongly disagreed with Balfour's analysis of the whole situation.<sup>2</sup> This second disagreement between these astute diplomats on the subject was to have a considerable impact on their respective attitudes as to how the question should finally be settled when it became a major issue again soon after the Peace Conference.

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<sup>1</sup>Board of Trade Journal, 24 April 1919.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3694, Minute on Balfour to Curzon (No. 703), 8 May 1919. For an analysis of the differences between Curzon and Balfour at this time, see Balfour Papers, Add Mss 49699, Thoughts on German Colonies, 2 May 1918.



## Chapter Seven

### ERA OF DISASSOCIATION

The years between 1919 and 1922 were years of decision in Anglo-Japanese relations. The Alliance was due for renewal but its continuation under its current features was found to be inconsistent with the covenant of the League of Nations, an institution which both parties wanted to maintain in its existing form. This meant in effect that the Alliance would have to be modified to bring it in line with the League's covenant.<sup>1</sup> At the same time and quite independent of the above factor came strong pressure from Washington on London to end its treaty with Tokyo <sup>in return</sup> for concessions towards naval disarmament which Britain was demanding from the Powers at this time.<sup>2</sup>

While the above factors gave the British Government enough to think about as regards the future of the Alliance, the Foreign Office also came out with the idea of renouncing the treaty in favour of an Anglo-American-Japanese Entente. Failing this, it called for a radical modification of the Alliance. Its main argument centred around certain aspects of Japanese policies which, it felt, were typical of Japan throughout East Asia and which it considered reflected badly on Britain's external image, constituted a threat to her economic interests in the Far East and posed a great danger to Chinese sovereignty. In coming to this conclusion, the Foreign Office drew on a lot of instances from Korea and Shantung, where

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<sup>1</sup>Nish, Alliance in Decline, pp. 288-304.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 305-18.



some of these policies had led to the winding up of a number of British business interests and the outbreak of widely publicised uprisings in the peninsula and throughout China. It is, therefore, appropriate to take a look at these developments and how the Foreign Office drew its conclusions from them.

#### A. The Korean Uprising of 1919

While delegates of the Powers were still in Paris trying to settle the fate of Germany and her allies and 'create a better new world', reports came in of a massive uprising in many Korean towns against continued Japanese rule of the peninsula. The immediate cause of this insurrection was the hope engendered among Koreans, as was the case with many colonial subjects, for national independence under Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Point Programme' in which the principle of self-determination for all peoples featured prominently.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately the Korean National Association<sup>2</sup> got news of Wilson's intention to raise the question of colonial people at the Peace Conference, it called a special meeting in San Francisco in the United States. At this meeting, it was decided to send a petition to the Peace Conference and to appeal directly to the American President to recognise Korea as an independent state. In addition, the Association appointed Syngman Rhee and Chong Han-gyong, two of their prominent members, to go to Paris to lobby and present the Korean case

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<sup>1</sup>Chong-sik Lee, The Politics of Korean Nationalism (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1965), pp. 89-126, gives analysis of the causes of the uprising.

<sup>2</sup>This Association was formed in 1905 and was based principally in Hawaii and the United States with the aim of undermining Japanese rule in Korea.



for self-determination to the Powers. The outcome of these resolutions was utter failure for neither would Wilson give any definite support to this demand nor was the State Department prepared to facilitate the travelling arrangements for Rhee and Chong. In Shanghai, however, another nationalist movement, the New Korean Youth Association, acting independently of the National Association, was able to present a similar demand to the Shanghai Diplomatic Corps and despatched one Kim Kyu-sik to the Peace Conference. Spurred on by the activities of these two organizations, a number of Korean students in Japan, who had fallen under the liberal influence of Yoshino Sakuzo of Tokyo University and another liberal, Fakuda Tokuzo, met on 6 January 1919 and resolved that since their compatriots abroad were committed to achieve independence for Korea, it was time they also took an active part. They then decided to open their campaign by sending a petition in the form of a declaration of independence to the Japanese Government, members of the Diet and to the Diplomatic Corps. Two days later, they organized themselves into an association known as the Korean Independence Corps as the sole vehicle for achieving their objective.<sup>1</sup> It was this later organization which spear-headed the uprising in Korea.

No sooner had these Korean students organized themselves into the Independence Corps than they began making contacts with politically conscious and influential people in the peninsula. Their most active recruits were Choe Rin, a former principal of the Chondogyo controlled Posong Middle School and one Hyon Sang-yun of Chungang

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, op.cit., pp. 103-4.



High School. They then sent one of their members, Song Ke-back, to Korea with a message to their agents to the effect that the Independence Corps had decided to declare the country independent on 8 February 1919, and that similar action should simultaneously be taken in the peninsula. On his arrival in Korea, Song managed to enlist the active support of a publisher and an historian, Choe Nam-son and the supreme leader of the Chondogyo, Son Pyong-lu for the cause of the organization.<sup>1</sup> Through Son's initiative, Song was able to bring into the ranks of the movement a number of Christian pastors who, in turn, influenced a number of Christian educated Koreans to rally behind the programme of the Corps.<sup>2</sup>

While Song and his associates were busy preparing to launch their campaign, came in news of the death of the former Emperor of Korea, who was deposed in 1907. The Independence Corps then made hasty alterations in its programme so that the date fixed for the funeral would coincide with its date for declaring the country independent. Various agents were, therefore, despatched throughout the country armed with copies of a 'declaration of independence statement' to be read at 2 p.m. on 1 March at mass rallies.<sup>3</sup> On the stipulated date and time, and for three continuous days, almost every principal town and village in the peninsula witnessed demonstrations by huge crowds.

The most important features of these three eventful days were the alleged high-handedness of the Japanese authorities in dealing

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<sup>1</sup>The Chondogyo was a religious institution with strong political inclination dating from the 19th century.

<sup>2</sup>Lee, op.cit., pp. 105-7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 109-10.



with the demonstrators, the persistence of the organizers in resisting any form of force and the resilient spirit of the mass of the population in responding to further calls to show their desire for national self-determination through demonstrations. Immediately these reports were received abroad, the various Korean nationalist organizations seized on them with a view of publicising what they saw as the worst<sup>t</sup> aspects of Japanese colonial policy to back their demands for independence.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the most important advertisers of the lot of Koreans under Japanese rule were the various Christian missionaries in the peninsula. X

Relations between the various Christian organizations in Korea and the Government-General had never been amicable since the trials of a number of Christians in 1911 and 1912 accused of attempting to assassinate General Terauchi.<sup>2</sup> From this period onwards, any action by the Government-General which touched the missionaries were seen by the latter as a further attempt to stultify their activities in the peninsula. When, therefore, the police began taking stern measures against the organisers of the demonstrations the missionaries saw the Japanese action as another onslaught on their work. On account of this, they sent reports abroad and to the various consuls on the methods being employed to suppress the uprising in their respective regions.<sup>3</sup>

The most interesting report in the stream of despatches from

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3817, Korean National Association to Lloyd George /549047, no date. Received on 14 April 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Allen D. Clark, History of the Korean Church (Seoul 1916), pp. 158-61.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3817, See for instance an account of the situation as described by the wife of E. Engel in Pyongyang captioned 'Conditions in Pyengyang during the first days of March 1919', enclosure no. 2 in Royds to Greene (No. 13), 13 March 1919 as enclosed in Greene to Curzon (No. 120 confidential), 20 March 1919.



these missionaries was a comprehensive exposition of the situation by Reverend Gale, the Canadian missionary whom Jordan commissioned in January 1904 to compile a report on the Korean administration and its shortcomings at the time and which Jordan used to back his argument for Korea to be placed under Japanese tutelage.<sup>1</sup> Gale, still being regarded in 1919 as 'a leading Authority on things Corean' in British Official circles, and writing under the caption 'The Case of Corea' noted in a very lengthy report:

'If it were required that a nation be in every way efficient from a modern point of view up to such a degree before her claim could be heard, Corea might fall short, though we still remember that she is a child of the Far East's most famous civilisation. She is not equal to Japan in organisation, or in neatness and diligence, but I learn that even though Germany made Alsace-Lorraine clean, and far surpassed France in neatness and order, the heart of the people was never hers. So it is here. Corea calls for a hearing and her case is a pitiful one. In religion, in language, in customs, in ideals Corea differs wholly from Japan. She is a Confucian nation, a scholar at heart, while Japan is a fighting Buddhist with Bushido, or the Warrior, as her divinity. She has an engrained love for the old German system and it is just as hateful to live under for Corea as for Belgium.

Will the Continuation Committee of the League of Nations not be free to consider just such cases as hers? If nations like Turkey, Bulgaria, and Mexico are to be free to rule over their own kind, how much more Corea, who surely is far superior to these as the Chinese Scholar was superior to the wild Tartar of the desert.'<sup>2</sup>

These early accounts of the uprising and the appeals on behalf of Korea did not seem to have had any appreciable impact on the British Government. Indeed, some officials at the Foreign Office even took the view that Japan's difficulties in Korea could 'provide a complete answer to all the accusations of Japanese societies against

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter One above.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3817, Enclosed in Royds to Greene (No. 15), 14 March 1919 and an enclosure in Green to Curzon (No. 120) Confidential), 20 March 1919.



British rule in India and Egypt'.<sup>1</sup>

The situation was, however, far from settled. Reports, both official and unofficial, continued to be received in London of further demonstrations and the severity of the police in curbing them. Forwarding accounts of these developments Royds,<sup>2</sup> for instance, noted that:

'From the Corean side they still continue as "peaceful" demonstrations but violence often results from the rough action of the military or police, and to a greater extent from the attacks of armed Japanese, who, under the guise of being reserve police, appear to let loose on the un-armed Coreans while the regular police look on.'<sup>3</sup>

By mid-April, however, the Government-General had been able to break the back-bone of these regular demonstrations. In spite of this, there were occasional out-bursts, principally in towns where missionary organisations were most active. Added to this was the partisan attitude adopted by the major Japanese political parties as to the best solution of the situation. These attitudes ranged from the mailed fist policy advocated by some members of the largest opposition party, the Kenseikai, and the self-government policy advocated by Kato and the notorious 'China Ronin', Uchida Ryohei.<sup>4</sup> Apart from this division of opinion in the Diet, the other major issue confronting Tokyo was how to track down the leaders of the demonstration

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3817, Minutes on the Censor (Colombo) to the War Office (No. 4 Confidential), 25 February 1919. This despatch was sent to the Foreign Office some time in March 1919.

<sup>2</sup>William Royds, Acting Consul-General in Seoul.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3817, Enclosure in Greene to Curzon (No. 140 confidential), 3 April 1919.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/3817, Alston to Curzon (No. 174 confidential), 23 April 1919 and enclosure therein.



without risking serious confrontation with the missionary bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the relationship between the Government-General and the Christian missionaries became the most crucial single factor in influencing British diplomatic attitudes towards events in the peninsula. This became a problem after the arrest and detention of some missionaries and their converts and the burning of a number of Christian villages on suspicion of harbouring rioters.<sup>2</sup> Following these incidents, the missionaries lodged a joint protest against what they saw as 'inhumane and as subversive of our religious work as Christian missionaries' at a meeting with the Governor General on 24 April.<sup>2</sup> In addition, they intensified their campaign against what they regarded as the objectionable aspects of Japanese colonial rule in foreign newspapers and journals and, somewhat unexpectedly, they were supported by some newspapers both in Korea and Japan.<sup>3</sup> Worse than these, they issued what amounted to an ultimatum to the effect that unless the Government-General started in earnest to improve the lot of the Koreans and removed other obstacles in the way of Christian activities, they would all leave Korea.<sup>4</sup>

Developments such as these were bound to affect the international image of Japan and there were fears that by the mere fact that Britain was in alliance with her, she would have to take a share

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/3818, Enclosures 1 and 2 in Alston to Curzon (No. 208 confidential), 21 May 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Enclosures: Japan Advertiser, 11 May 1919, 'Campaign Against Korean Government'; Hanto Jiron, April 1919, 'Appeal to the Government and the People with the Discussion of real condition of the Chosen problem'.

<sup>4</sup> FO/371/3818, Alston to Curzon (No. 190 confidential), 5 May 1919.



in the blame. In view of this, Alston urged the British Government to bring the issue to the attention of the Japanese delegates in Paris. The Foreign Office, therefore, forwarded Alston's report to Balfour in Paris.<sup>1</sup> Owing perhaps to the recent exasperation of the Japanese over the racial equality and the Kiaochow issues, Balfour felt that it would be undesirable to raise the matter in Paris and that any remonstrances on the subject should be made to the Japanese Embassy in London and to the government in Tokyo. Following this advice, Max Müller set himself the task of preparing a memorandum on the whole subject and the sort of advice Britain might give Japan as to what she could do to alleviate the situation.<sup>2</sup>

By 5 July, Max Müller had completed his memorandum in which he traced events in the peninsula since 1905, the causes of the recent riots and the attitude Britain should adopt to the Japanese rule in the country.

On the question of missionary connection with the recent disturbances, Max Müller noted that:

'There is probably some foundation for the Japanese statements that the missionaries in some cases have contributed unconsciously, perhaps, towards fostering a spirit of discontent among their pupils and that might account for special measures of repression against the Christians, but this would probably be more on account of their advanced political views than of their religious tenets.'

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3817, Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 235 very urgent, confidential), 30 May 1919 and minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3817, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 998 very confidential), 17 June 1919 and minutes thereon.



On the other hand, he saw some underlying causes which had made the Koreans more susceptible to these ideas resulting from missionary teachings. The first and foremost cause, he noted, was the system of colonial administration instituted in the country :

'The real source of the present trouble is to be found in the Japanese policy of 'Japanising' Korea completely. Instead of trying to administer the country in the interest of the natives with a view to educating them up to take a larger share in the Government, as we do in India and Egypt, the Japanese do exactly the reverse. The share allowed to the Koreans in the administration of the country is consistently diminished and the number of Japanese officials increased, while the military element are kept always in the foreground, and invariably called upon at the slightest provocation to show their strength.'

Allied to this problem was what Max Müller saw as the deliberate policy by which 'Japanese are in many cases paid much higher salaries than Koreans occupying similar positions, although Korea is now being made financially independent of Japan'. Apart from these, he listed the teaching of language in the education of Koreans, immigration of Japanese into Korea and dispossessing the Koreans of their lands as well as the judicial procedure in the trial of Koreans as the other major contributing factors for the riots.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the issues connected with language, Max Müller noted that:

'The Japanese language is being forced on the Koreans and, unlike our civil servants in India, it is quite an exception for a Japanese official in Korea to know the language. This however has done nothing to generate fondness for Japan among the rising generation - as the Japanese assumed it would - rather the contrary, as some of the most disaffected Korean leaders in the present movement for independence are found among those who speak Japanese best.'

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 419, pp. 594-6.



As a result of the insistence on the Japanese language, English and other foreign languages are hardly, if at all, taught in the higher schools of Korea. There is no university in Korea and as knowledge of English or German is necessary to secure entrance into a Japanese University, the young Korean student is practically debarred from a University education.'

On the issue of land, he quoted a source indicating that Korean farmers were being turned out of their farms to make way for thousands of Japanese immigrants through a variety of pressures. He also noted that in case of a dispute between a Japanese and at Korea, the existing legal procedures always tended to give the former an advantage.<sup>1</sup>

After this critical analysis of the situation, Max Müller turned his attention to the best remedies Britain could recommend to Japan as a solution to her current difficulties in the peninsula:

'All idea of the re-establishment of Korean independence may at once be dismissed as being outside the sphere of practical politics, but it is possible to suggest certain remedial measures which would mitigate the extreme harshness of the military regime in Korea and thus tend to improve the lot of the Koreans and remove causes of disaffection without in any way weakening the hold of Japan on the country.'

Among such remedial measures, he recommended the substitution of a civilian for a military person to the post of Governor General in the colony. While the above would be a step in the right direction, he continued, the best policy for the Japanese 'would be to gain the confidence of the Koreans by granting them some form of self-government in due course'. On the other hand, he cautioned,

'progress in this direction must be gradual, and the Koreans must be educated up for the purpose. As a first step, however, the system of replacing Korean officials by Japanese should be put a stop to and wherever possible Koreans should be employed.'

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 596-7.



If the Japanese Government really intend to substitute civil for military rule and realise... that a change in the present system is imperative, might it not be possible as a beginning for the Japanese to allow a Korean Ministry to be formed with Japanese advisors [sic] somewhat on the system that we have in Egypt. It might anyhow be worth while putting such suggestion before Viscount Chinda, as it would be interesting to hear what he has to say to it'.

Regarding the other issues connected with education and the alleged judicial injustices against Korea, Max Müller called for government encouragement of the study of the Korean language and the abolition of compulsory teaching of Japanese in schools. In addition, he suggested that the 'Corean language should be placed at least in a position of equality with Japanese in law courts, in order to restore confidence in the ... impartial administration of justice as between Koreans and Japanese'. He also called for a 'certain knowledge of Corean' by all Japanese officials 'whose duties bring them in contact with the natives' and 'a certain measure of freedom of speech, of public meeting, and of the press'.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, the memorandum was a complete indictment of the Japanese colonial system in Korea and represented an expression of almost impassioned disappointment of the Foreign Office of its earlier view that Japanese control over Korea would be to the greater advancement of the country and its people. If this were so, why did Max Müller not recommend independence for Korea instead of self-government? In the first place, it was acknowledged that Japan had done a lot to improve material conditions in the country and given the chance and the right advice she might be able to create the right

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 597-8.



political atmosphere for Koreans. Apart from this, it must be noted that 1919 was also as bad a year for <sup>the</sup> British colonial system as it was for Japan. There was the great upsurge in India, a country on which Japan had been noted to be entertaining some designs. There was also the renewed nationalist agitation in Ireland. If the British Government were, therefore, to suggest complete independence for Korea, the Japanese, who were noted for their attitudes in these matters, would not only point to Britain's own position in Egypt and Ireland, but might also intensify their propaganda against British rule in India.

It was against this background that the memorandum seemed to have been written and it was surely along the same principle that Curzon planned to approach the whole question of Korean agitation for independence and Japanese methods of quelling them. In spite of various papers on the subject as to what he should say to Chinda being ready by 7 July, Curzon avoided the topic in all his earlier conversations with him until 22 July when they met to discuss Japanese policy towards China. At this meeting, Curzon, despite his reputation for being outspoken, was rather conciliatory. He limited himself to the reports he had received on alleged atrocities against Koreans and some foreigners, including British subjects in the colony. He quoted Kato's own pronouncements on the issue which, he said, indicated an admission of guilt by a responsible Japanese politician on behalf of his country. He, therefore, asked Chinda to convey to his government Britain's desire for a moderation in the treatment of Koreans and foreigners in the colony. As regards the issue of remedial measures, Curzon avoided the subject until Chinda asked



whether he had any suggestions to make towards rectifying the situation. It was at this juncture that he recommended Max Müller's solution, not, of course, anticipating Japan's own views on British colonial problems. In this connection, he noted to Chinda:

'Without wishing to dictate to His Excellency or his Government, I could not help suggesting that it would be well for them to adopt without delay a more liberal system: more liberal as regards freedom of speech, of public meeting, of the press, as regards education and public employment, and finally as regards self-government. We ourselves had our own difficulties, such as those in Ireland; but they arose from the fact that, instead of having conceded too little, we have given too much. The problem in Korea was a very much simpler one, and could easily be solved by the exercise of humanity, moderation and common sense.'<sup>1</sup>

After giving such cautious advice, London's strategy appeared to be merely to keep silent and to observe the effects of its suggestion on Japan in the peninsula. In the mean time, however, pressure began to build up/home on the government to define its attitude towards the Japanese handling of the situation. Firstly, a number of Members of Parliament indicated that if the situation did not improve they might be forced to <sup>raise</sup> ~~realise~~ the question in the House of Commons. This was followed by demands by the missionary organizations for a positive step by Britain to rectify the situation. This pressure was, however, contained by statements to the effect that the matter was being dealt with between the two governments.<sup>2</sup> Reports

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 436, pp. 636-8.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3818, see for instance Robert Cecil to Harmsworth 980507, 2 July 1919 and minutes thereon; British and Foreign Bible Society to Curzon 111877, 31 July 1919 and minutes thereon.



reaching London from Tokyo, on the other hand, showed no improvement in the situation. They pointed to recent cases of flogging and burning of missionary property. These incidents were now attracting wide publicity in some foreign and Japanese newspapers.<sup>1</sup> In addition, some of the most influential Japanese organizations such as the Federation of Japanese Churches began coming out into the open in their opposition to the government's policies in the peninsula.<sup>2</sup> In Britain, on the other hand, the press had chosen to ignore developments in the colony. As far as the British public was concerned, therefore, there appeared to be no animosity towards Japan in Korea. This was in a sense better for the government but these incidents, if they continued, were likely to be raised openly in Parliament. Worse than this, the silence on the part of the British press as compared to the publicity being given to the subject in other countries was bound to be interpreted in certain quarters as indicating Britain's connivance with Japanese colonial methods. It was most probably because of these considerations that Curzon, contrary to the policy adopted towards the Korean insurrection of 1907, called for some sort of publicity of the Japanese 'atrocities' in the British press.<sup>3</sup> Before the government could put this overt action into effect, however, Curzon thought it advisable to give Japan a timely warning of the new stand Britain was going to take on the issue.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3818, Alston to Curzon (No. 300), 11 July 1919 and its enclosures; enclosure in Alston to Curzon (No. 318), 19 July 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3818, Minutes on Alston to Curzon (No. 283), 27 June 1919.

<sup>4</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 464, p.668.



Developments in Korea, on the other hand, seemed to have had a considerable impact on the Hara administration, which had earlier shown a strong disposition to make changes in the entire Japanese colonial system.<sup>1</sup> The process towards this end appeared to have been accelerated by constant demands from the Governor General of the colony, Hasegawa, to be relieved from his post. On 13 August 1920, therefore, Saito Makoto, the sixty-one year old former Minister of the Navy was recalled into active service and appointed to the colony as Governor General. At the same time, Mizuno Rentaro, the former Minister of Home Affairs under the Terauchi government, was posted to the peninsula as Civil Governor in place of Yamagata Isaburo. In addition, the government announced that a revised regulation would be promulgated abolishing the restriction on candidates eligible for the post of Governor-Generalship thereby making it possible for civilians to be chosen for the post.<sup>2</sup>

On 19 August, therefore, an Imperial Rescript was issued amending the existing regulations relating to the administration of the peninsula. First and foremost was the question of the Governor-Generalship. Under the new regulations, eligibility for the post was broadened to include civilians. The control of the army and navy in the colony was removed from the Governor General's jurisdiction and entrusted to the military and naval officers on the spot. The Governor General could, however, call on the officers to use their

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3820, see the Jiji Shimpō, 16 February 1919, as cited in Greene to Curzon (No.71), 16 February 1919.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3818, Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 344), 13 August 1919.



forces to restore order whenever the situation demanded it. In the Government-Generalship itself, two new bureaux, the departments of education and police, were created in addition to the existing four. Perhaps the most important piece of ordinance was the one concerning the gendarmerie. Contrary to British expectation that the police administration would be confined entirely to the civil police, the whole gendarmerie system was maintained but with certain modifications. The chief points of interest in these modifications was the stipulation that the control of the gendarmerie would now be divided between the military and civil authorities, and that it was more or less in connection with its normal military functions that it remained under the former. As ordinary police they were to take their orders from the Governor General.<sup>1</sup>

These administrative adjustments were seen in London as a start in the right direction but there was still some scepticism in British attitudes whether the changes had gone far enough to reconcile the Koreans.<sup>2</sup> This was because no sooner had the details of the proposed reforms started reaching London than further cases of flogging and torture were reported from the colony.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it was realised that, as long as those Koreans arrested for taking part in the uprising were not brought to trial or released from the prison, the average Korean would remain impervious to the outward

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3818, Alston to Curzon (No. 364), 11 September 1919 and its enclosures; minutes on Alston to Curzon (No. 286), 30 June 1919. Incidentally similar administrative and police adjustments were made in Formosa, South Manchuria and Kwantung at the same time as the Korean reorganisation scheme.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 22 August 1919, 'Reforms for Korea. Ultimate equality with Japan'. See the Foreign Office's response to this subject in The Times in FO/371/3818, Minutes /I219697, and also Minutes on Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 363), 3 September 1919.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 515, pp. 754-5; FO/371/3818, Alston to Curzon (No. 442), 30 October 1919, and its enclosure including photographs of alleged victims of police floggings.



manifestation of changes in the peninsula. Upon Alston's own suggestion, therefore, he was instructed to approach Tokyo over the issue of general amnesty for all those who took part in the uprising. On the other hand, there was a strong feeling at the Foreign Office that the Japanese would not agree to that but it was decided to use such a suggestion as a test of Tokyo's sincerity and determination to introduce a 'better state of affairs in Korea'.<sup>1</sup> But there appeared to be a feeling that time would be the best judge as to whether Japan had experienced a change of heart towards Korea.

This feeling of optimism within British diplomatic circles was, of course, not without foundation. For in the Korean budget estimate for 1920-21, an amount of £255, 000 was earmarked for increase in prison accommodation, with a view to abolishing flogging as an alternative punishment; £1,852,000 for disbanding the gendarmerie and an increase in the number of civil police force as well as £475,000 <sup>a</sup> for new educational programme for Koreans. Regarding the other reforms suggested by Curzon to Chinda on 22 July, Arthur Lay, the British Consul General, observed that:

'the question of local self-government has so far only reached the stage of investigation and it is not likely that actual freedom of speech and meeting can exist in the present state of mutual distrust between rulers and ruled.'<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Lay noted that restrictions on the vernacular press had been lifted to the extent of allowing some newspapers in

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 559, p.180; FO/371/3822, Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 423), 28/30 October 1919 and Minutes thereon.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5351, Alston to Curzon (No. 240), 26 January 1920 and its enclosure.



Korea to appear 'but though their language will be the vernacular, the sentiment will be such as conforms to Japanese ideas'. This was largely true, for although official permission was granted on 8 January 1920 for the publication of three daily newspapers in Seoul, the men appointed as their editors were all 'well known for their pro-Japanese sympathies'. Yi Sang Hyop, former editor of the Mai-il Shimp'o was appointed as the editor of the newly found Tonga Ilpo, while Min Won Sik, formerly a magistrate of Ko-yan district of Seoul was posted to the Sin-sa Sin-mun as its editor and the pro-Japanese Yi Chang Sak got the job of the Chosen Ilpo.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, men of such pro-Japanese sentiments could not have been expected to make any appreciable impression on the ordinary Korean that a new era had begun in the peninsula. On the other hand, Tokyo continued its efforts to reform the colonial system in Korea.

The year 1920, for instance, began with a whole host of reform programmes designed to improve conditions in the peninsula.<sup>2</sup> But every effort made by the government to reconcile the Koreans was negated by further reports of police brutality. Many foreign observers and commentators, therefore, tended to lose sight of the progress in the colony and focused their attention on the alleged brutalities. It was not surprising, therefore, that the British Government soon came face to face with a hostile House of Commons to define its attitudes towards the alleged brutal treatment of Koreans by the Japanese. Faced with this invidious position, its

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> See Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1918-21), for a catalogue of these reform programmes.



only answer was that London had made representations to Tokyo 'concerning methods used during the past year in suppressing the pacific protest of the Koreans against Japanese rule'.<sup>1</sup> This did not appear to satisfy public opinion in Britain. The government, therefore, found itself under strong pressure from two groups outside the House. The first of these comprised the missionary societies and philanthropic organisations who urged the government to take a more positive step in the matter than mere representations.<sup>2</sup> The second comprised of thirty members of Parliament who formed an association with 'a considerable number of influential people outside the House of Commons' known as 'Friends of Korea' in October 1920 aimed at obtaining 'an amelioration of the conditions - social, political and religious- under which the Koreans have lived for the last ten years'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these outward manifestations of British public opinion against its policies in the peninsula, Tokyo did not appear to be taking any positive steps to dispel foreign apprehensions. On 23 October 1920, therefore, the New Statesman pointed out to the Japanese Government that its past record in East Asia had left Japan with a mere handful of doubtful admirers in Britain and the current reports of torture as being a practice in its colonial policy was doing irreparable damage to its remaining prestige within influential circles

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5352, Minute by C.H.Bentick [6547], 27 April 1919; Hansard [I287] (1920), p.1008; [I327] (1920), p.644; [I367] (1920), p.274.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5352, See for instance Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Foreign Office [F 17537], 6 August 1920; FO/371/5353, National Council of Evangelical Free Churches to Curzon [F 22507], 27 September 1920.

<sup>3</sup>The Manchester Guardian, 3 November 1920.



in Britain. This, the paper went on, might be used by the opponents of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as a good case against its renewal.<sup>1</sup> This warning summarised the whole of British diplomatic thinking on the subject. For instance, Arthur Eastes of the Far Eastern Department felt that the article represented a 'very fair statement of the actual state of affairs' while B.C. Newton of the same department noted that it 'would be worth while, I almost thought, to include such a good statement of the position on our own ... and circulate It to the Committee' reviewing the alliance.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, after the various exchanges between the two governments on the subject without any signs of genuine changes in Korea, the best that London could do, it was felt, was to review the whole question of Japanese treatment of their colonial subjects and to formulate new policies to meet any situation in which the subject might have to be taken into consideration in Anglo-Japanese relations, particularly in respect of the renewal of the Alliance. It was with this aim that Victor Wellesley, Superintending Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs instructed Ashton-Gwatkin of the Far Eastern Department to compile a 'Memorandum aimed at marshalling in a convenient compass a sufficient volume of concrete cases to prove that Japanese authorities and Japanese individuals had behaved on numerous occasions with signal brutality, truculence and arrogance both in their dealings with subject peoples, and their

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<sup>1</sup>The New Statesman, 23 October 1920.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5353, Minutes on F2608.



relations with the subjects of Allied Powers, during the time when they seemed to have the upper hand over their Allies.<sup>1</sup>

By 8 December 1920, Ashton-Gwatkin had completed his assignment. Entitled 'Memorandum respecting Japanese Atrocities in Korea and Elsewhere', he noted in the introductory paragraph:

'The many admirable qualities of the Japanese, their ingenious and misleading propaganda, and the exigencies of the Alliance are apt to blind us to the fact that Japan is separated from us not only by the distance which separates an essentially Oriental from an essentially Occidental nation, but also by the gulf which separates the middle ages from the present time. In many respects, Japan is still in the sixteenth century. The "Bushido" propaganda has done much to convince us that every Japanese is a warrior at heart, and that the warrior's ideal is courtesy, gentleness and consideration; therefore, we are inclined to imagine that the Japanese, both soldier and civilian, is courteous, gentle and considerate. This impression has been supported by certain aspects of the Russo-Japanese war, especially by the good treatment of war prisoners; but it is contradicted by all expert experience of the ways of Japanese bureaucracy at home, and still more by the Japanese military government abroad.'<sup>2</sup>

Turning his attention specifically to the question of torture as practised in Korea, he noted before instancing a number of reported cases as indicative of the general trend of affairs in the peninsula, that:

'If justice is the corner-stone of government, then there is something serious amiss with the Japanese system, for the Japanese system admits torture as a matter of course, and terrorisation as an emergency measure for the carrying out of government. Japanese critics are fond of comparing Japan's difficulties in Korea with Great Britain's difficulties in Egypt and India. The resemblance is only correct in so far as both nations have failed to endear themselves to their subject peoples; the essential difference lies in the fact that Great Britain has imposed government and justice, while Japan has imposed government and injustice.'

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6699, Minute by Ashton-Gwatkin on Eliot to Crowe [Private F18237, 10 March 1921. He defined the scope of his assignment after he had been criticised by Eliot for showing anti-Japanese feelings in his memorandum. Note the letter on which this minute is written.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5354, Foreign Office Memorandum [F31997, 8 December 1920.



From this assertion, Ashton-Gwatkin recalled such incidents of torture and injustice in Japan itself and then concluded that 'If such things can take place in Japan itself, non-Japanese subjects of the Mikado have a very scant hope for consideration'.<sup>1</sup>

On the question of reform introduced in the colony since August 1919, Ashton-Gwatkin noted that under the guidance of Saito, flogging had been abolished, the gendarmerie turned into a police force, a measure of educational reforms had been introduced and a scheme for local self-government had been outlined. He acknowledged also that a measure of free speech and press had been permitted and an amnesty proclaimed for all those arrested during the uprising. Despite these changes, he noted that

'the Koreans remain quite incredulous of any change of heart on the part of their rulers; and, although Baron Saito himself is a sincere and humane man, it is clearly indicated by criticisms in the Japanese press that a very strong section of the administration is still convinced that the old regime was the right one. So the new policeman in Korea is very often the old gendarme in a different uniform'.

Regarding Britain's responsibility for this state of affairs, he observed that 'Japan is an ally, and an alliance is partnership; and one partner must necessarily carry responsibility for the acts of the other partner'. He then recalled the various stages that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had to be modified so as to enable Japan to assume control over Korea. 'It is therefore difficult to escape from the conclusion that', he continued, 'not only is Great Britain

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



as Japan's ally, indirectly responsible for the misfortunes of Koreans, but that the annexation of that country and its subsequent government has been the principal visible achievement of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance'. It was for these reasons, Ashton-Gwatkin noted further that:

'the Chinese regard the Alliance with dismay. As it now stands, it guarantees "the independence of the Chinese Empire", just as the 1902 agreement guaranteed the independence of Korea. Does this mean that China will follow in Korea's footsteps? And the Japanese gendarme will carry the rule of the bamboo-rod as far south as the Yang-tsze? Already, there are alarming omens. Thanks to the diplomatic support of the Alliance, Japan has established herself firmly in South Manchuria ... and by virtue of the Alliance also, Japan got her own way at Versailles and secured a predominant position in Shantung....'

From this position, Ashton-Gwatkin went on to marshal evidence to show that the Japanese colonial system, as it existed in Korea, was no different from the state of affairs in the other territories under Japanese control. In conclusion, he noted that:

'Already, history regards Great Britain and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as largely responsible for the handing over of Korea to Japan. Is our support, consciously or unconsciously, going to permit Japanese rule and its stern consequences to encroach further upon China and Siberia?'<sup>1</sup>

This memorandum, as was the case with Max Müller's of July 1919, was a complete and unqualified indictment of the whole basis of Japanese colonial policy. Unlike Max Muller, however, Ashton-Gwatkin left no impression that Japan was capable of modifying her colonial system, and with some justification as a whole year had passed without London receiving a single hopeful sign that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



Japanese were genuine in their reform programmes. On the other hand, one must question the objectivity of some of Ashton-Gwatkin's sources in preparing this all-important memorandum. Using extensive quotations from missionary sources to support his assertions was bound to over-colour some of his conclusions. Even more questionable was his use of McKenzie's book Korea's Fight for Freedom to substantiate some of his conclusions. The sole purpose of this book was to condemn the whole basis of Japanese rule in the peninsula in an effort to secure international support for Korean nationalists. With such a weakness, it was not surprising that Charles Eliot, the British Ambassador in Tokyo, and his assistant, Parlett, saw Ashton-Gwatkin's conclusions as being partial and unfriendly towards Japan, an accusation for which Eliot was heavily censured by the Far Eastern Department.<sup>1</sup>

The decision of the Far Eastern Department to sustain Ashton-Gwatkin's criticisms was by no means solely due to its assembling of the facts as were available in London at the time. There seemed to be another crucial factor which had made the Foreign Office highly dissatisfied with Japanese colonial policy. Anglo-Japanese commercial and industrial relations in Korea between 1911 and 1920 had been far from cordial. Through a series of regulations, some of which Britain interpreted as contrary to the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese understanding to maintain the principle of equal opportunities in Korea at the time of the annexation, Japan established free trade between herself and the colony and introduced a tobacco monopoly

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6699, Eliot to Crowe [Private F 1823], 10 March 1921 and minutes thereon. FO/371/6673, Parlett to Wellesley [Private F 1772], 5 April 1921 and minutes thereon. Note the title of Parlett's letter: Japanese atrocities in Korea and elsewhere as bearing on the Renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.



system in the country.<sup>1</sup> By 1920, almost all British investors were winding up their long established business in the country partly as a result of these policies. The effect of this on British diplomatic attitudes was rather dramatic, especially when the giant ~~Anglo~~<sup>British</sup>-American Tobacco Company began closing down its business in the peninsula. The conclusion of the Foreign Office as summarised by Ashton-Gwatkin was that what had happened to that company in Korea was 'typical of what happens to a British industry in a country which comes under Japanese control'.<sup>2</sup> With such a development it was unlikely that the Foreign Office would take a kind look at Japanese colonial policy.

It was precisely this position that Wellesley laid before the Foreign Office Committee appointed in October 1920 to review the question of the renewal of the Alliance and the future of British policy in the Far East.<sup>3</sup> In a rather lengthy memorandum, Wellesley noted how, in his opinion, Japan had manipulated the Alliance to acquire Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung. He then went on to describe Korea as a country 'governed by police and soldiers' in which taxation was 'oppressive' and whose inhabitants had been 'reduced to a state of serfdom'. In addition, he called attention to the fact that:

'in 1904 Great Britain controlled 36 per cent of Korea's direct trade while Japanese interests were most potential, and of Japanese imports at least 40 per cent originated in the United Kingdom. To-day more than 80 per cent of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/1387; FO/371/1667; FO/371/1137; ~~FO/1388~~<sup>FO/371/1388</sup>; FO/371/2388; FO/371/2692; FO/371/2954; FO/371/2693; FO/371/2387; FO/371/3822, FO/371/5356; FO/371/6697 contain numerous exchanges between Britain and Japan on these issues.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5356, Minute on Eliot to Curzon (No. 372), 19 August 1920; see Appendix 2.

<sup>3</sup>The committee consisted of John Jordan, Conyngham Greene, Victor Wellesley and William Tyrrell.



trade is in the hands of Japanese, who have practically exclusive control. This market was therefore handed over to Japan under the mistaken security of the "open door" formula with this unfortunate result. This picture throws a lucid light on the real meaning of the words "guidance, control, and protection of Japan".<sup>1</sup>

If, therefore, 'in full knowledge and experience of the past we renew the Alliance without adequate guarantees against the perpetuation of Japanese policy of spoliation....', he continued, 'our action will be nothing short of a political crime. It will be a heavy responsibility towards civilisation. Any attempt to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds will inevitably recoil on our heads, and we shall reap the odium and contempt of the East as well as the West ... and our relations with the United States are not likely to be improved by our political association with a nation of buccaneers'.<sup>2</sup> This fear, he noted, was based upon his strong conviction that given the current state of affairs, Japan would not hesitate to adopt similar tactics in China and at the cost of British commerce and prestige, Chinese sovereignty and peace in the orient. For these reasons, Wellesley urged that the renewal of the alliance must 'lie almost entirely outside the professed scope of the treaty itself. In fact the renewal must be regarded essentially as a political mariage de convenance' if such an action was considered so essential. For his part, the naval and political advantages of the alliance could well be maintained and with added advantages of restoring British prestige and enhancing

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5361, Memorandum respecting the Anglo-Japanese Alliance /F22007, 1 September 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



their economic interests in the Far East if London would sound Washington as to the idea of unwavering cooperation in naval, economic and political action in the Pacific and in China. If such a promise could be enlisted from the Americans, Britain should endeavour to replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with an Anglo-American-Japanese Entente and with any other Power or Powers adhering to its ideals.<sup>1</sup>

Wellesley's memorandum like those of Max Müller and Ashton-Gwatkin showed a massive swing in British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese economic and political activities in Korea from their almost complacent pre-war moves and opinions in support of Tokyo in the colony. It must be noted, however, that the Korean question was only one of the issues from which the Far Eastern Department drew its conclusions and advocated a change of policy towards Japan. Perhaps the most itching single factor in the process towards this change was the Shantung question. At this stage in our discussion, therefore, it seems appropriate to direct attention to this issue as well in order to determine how far it was affecting British diplomatic attitudes.

#### B. The Shantung Question

The anxiety of the British Government over developments in Korea was far less than the storm caused in China as a result of the decision of the Powers in respect of the Shantung question. This

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



was because, unlike the Korean question, Britain was partly held responsible for the cause of Chinese indignation. In addition, Japanese policies in the province made Britain more apprehensive about the safety of British interests not only in Shantung but also in Tientsin and in the Yangtze regions. The period after the Peace Treaty, therefore, saw London more determined than ever to force full restitution of Shantung to Chinese sovereignty even if it came to an open parting of ways on the subject. This position can be best appreciated by taking up the discussion from the time when the Council of Three and Japan agreed on a formula as being the best solution of the issue.

As was noted earlier, there was no Chinese delegate present at the final meeting when Japan accepted the council's decision and made a declaration as to her future policy in the territory. In accordance with instructions from the Powers, Balfour made a verbal communication to the Chinese delegation in the afternoon of 1 May 1919 regarding the formula. The Chinese, on their part, expressed their disappointment over the outline of the settlement. On the same day, they requested Balfour to send them a copy of the draft agreement as well as records of the proceedings of the Council bearing on the question.<sup>1</sup> They then despatched a telegram to Peking on the outcome of the negotiations and entered a 'formal protest in  
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the name/justice' with the Council against the decision.<sup>2</sup> On receipt of this news from Paris, the Chinese Government, in turn,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3694, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 878 secret), 14 May 1919.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/3694, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 704), 9 May 1919.



published the text of the Anglo-Japanese understanding of February 1917 on the subject and the Paris decision without a word about the Japanese undertakings to the Powers.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate impact of the publication of these documents was an outbreak of riots and demonstrations throughout China.<sup>2</sup> These disturbances known as the 'May Fourth Movement' soon developed into a general strike as expression of anxiety over the Paris decision, Japanese activities in China and dissatisfaction over what was regarded as inept and corrupt government. While an analytical history of this Movement is beyond the scope of our present discussion, it must be remarked here that Britain took an early view that the Shantung issue was only <sup>the</sup> immediate cause of this sudden outburst and that its under~~lying~~ factors were more internal in nature.<sup>3</sup>

With this conclusion, Britain saw herself incapable of doing anything in helping to restore order. On the other hand, it was realised that if things were allowed to smoulder on their current course, the whole administrative base of the country might collapse and the anti-Japanese boycott, which the movement assumed from the outset, might develop into a general anti-foreign ill-feeling. It was against this background that Jordan's opinion was sought as to the stand Britain must take in the matter. In his reply, Jordan advocated Britain's support for the current regime and international financial assistance to help alleviate the acute money shortage brought about by the suspension of Japanese loans to the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3695, Jordan to Curzon (No. 205), 10 May 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/3695, Jordan to Curzon (No. 280 very confidential), 15 June 1919. For a detailed study of the Movement see for instance Chow Tse-tung, The May Fourth Movement (Harvard University Press 1960).



Chinese Government. He then called for a more realistic approach to the Shantung question in a way that would satisfy Chinese aspirations:

'I do not see how Paris decision as reported in The Press can be enforced in practice without laying foundation of future trouble for all concerned. British and American public opinion when better instructed will not ... tolerate such a settlement and China weak and negligible as she is at present has already shown that in strikes and boycotts she has dangerous weapons for resisting what she considers a great wrong.

'If Japan is well advised she will in her own interests forgo full measures of Paris award and it appears to me that it is through consortium and a scheme of railway internationalisation in China (? if not) only chance of a readjustment of Shantung settlement (? now) lies. Any such settlement to be satisfactory to Foreign and Chinese public opinion must postulate two things: (1) Tsingtao-Tsinanfu Railway must be a Chinese Government railway on the same footing as Peking-Mukden, Tientsin-Pukou, Peking-Hankow and other railways in China and Japanese connection with its management must be same as foreign connection with above railways. (2) Tsingtao must be opened as an ordinary treaty port with an international settlement on model of Shanghai one'.<sup>1</sup>

To all intents and purposes, these recommendations were no different from how the Foreign Office planned to approach the question in Paris. Despite its failure to impress ~~upon~~ <sup>upon</sup> this point ~~to~~ Japan at the Peace Conference, London was still under the impression that internationalisation of the railways in China was the only solution to the problem. John Davidson of the Consular Service clearly spelt out this point when he noted that:

'Sir John Jordan has come to the same conclusion as we have done: that the best way of solving the Shantung question is to take up the internationalisation of railways in China: that when the Japanese are offered

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3695, Jordan to Curzon (Telegram No. 347 very urgent) 23 June 1919.



participation in railway construction all over China if they agree to pool the Shantung railways, they will accept.<sup>1</sup>

While the British Government was determined to pursue this strategy, however, its main concern at the moment was to secure a reduction in the acute tension in China and to this end, therefore, did it direct all its energies from July 1919.

On the Paris front, Balfour was busily engaged in a desperate yet unsuccessful attempt to secure Chinese signature to the Peace Treaty, which they were refusing to sign unless they were allowed to make certain reservations with regard to its clauses on Shantung.<sup>2</sup> It was felt that by obtaining Chinese signature to this treaty, there would be some hope of achieving a suitable platform for meaningful negotiations to begin between Japan and China on the subject after which Britain might urge for the internationalisation of the Shantung railways. Following Balfour's failure in Paris, however, the Chinese Minister in London told the Foreign Office that despite Chinese refusal to sign the treaty, they could begin negotiations with the Japanese provided the latter made a declaration to the Powers embodying their intention to return the territory to China at a fixed date.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he later urged the Under-Secretary of State responsible for the Far Eastern Department, John Tilly<sup>e</sup>, that in approaching Tokyo regarding the declaration, London should make it appear as if the suggestion originated from the British Government. This intimation was welcomed by the Foreign Office.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Minute thereon.

<sup>2</sup> DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 417, pp. 592-3; FO/371/3695, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 13887), 11 July 1919.

<sup>3</sup> FO/371/3695, Minutes on Jordan to Curzon (Telegram No. 364), 6 July 1919.

<sup>4</sup> DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 424, p.607.



When Curzon met Chinda on 18 July, therefore, he made no secret of his government's feelings towards past Japanese policies in China and especially their current stance on the Shantung question. He noted that the 'object of Japan for many years, and especially during the war, had been, if not to reduce China to complete dependence, at any rate to acquire a hold over her which would make Japan her practical master in the future'. The net results of this policy, Curzon continued, were China's refusal to sign the Peace Treaty, boycott of Japanese in China, criticisms in America, 'general suspicion in other quarters, and in our own minds, apprehension lest, in spite of the alliance between our two countries - to which both parties had so faithfully adhered, and which had been so fruitful in results - the future might be jeopardised. Indeed, Japan, if she practised too selfish or inconsiderate a policy, might find herself in isolation in the Far East.' He then reminded Chinda of China's right to invoke the co-operation of the proposed League of Nations 'to secure her from the unwelcome advances' of Japan. In addition, Curzon observed that:

'The day had passed ... when China could be cut up and divided into spheres of influence by Foreign Powers... That day had passed, and the future of China did not lie in this sort of subdivision. Neither did it lie in the assumption by Japan of the overlordship of the Far East .... The future of China, in view of her inability to advance, or even to stand, by herself, surely lay in international assistance and co-operation, rather than in the rivalry of groups of interests or the ascendancy of individual Powers.'

Without referring directly to the Anglo-Japanese understanding of February 1917, Curzon went on to say that Britain had come to realise that her war-time secret understandings were 'stupid and shortsighted'



arrangements for which reasons they 'were being practically swept out of existence by the force of events'. He then went on to ask Chinda: if Japan 'was prepared to make a "bona fide" restitution of whatever she had acquired from Germany to China, why should she not come out into the open and say so? Why allow the atmosphere to be further poisoned by long concealment and delay?'<sup>1</sup>

At this stage of the interview Chinda intervened with an almost impassioned defence of his country's action and asked why the sincerity of Japan should be doubted after only a few months of her undertakings in respect of Kiaochow. He also called into question why the other Powers were so determined to deprive Japan of the German territory in China while, at the same time, they themselves were taking control over some of these possessions in other parts of the world. Chinda then reiterated his government's intention to surrender all political rights in Kiaochow to Chinese sovereignty but retain the economic rights formerly possessed by Germany in the region. In reply to these arguments, Curzon told him that in his government's view, it would be better for Japan to make a satisfactory restitution now than to be forced by later events to do so:

'Experience, I said, had taught me that, when great national feelings were excited and short-sighted efforts were made to either honour national pride or to save national prestige, mistakes were always made; while, on the other hand, if a long-sighted policy was followed, the dire consequences which were predicted from such a course of action very seldom occur.'

At this point, Chinda asked for Curzon's view as to how best Japan could act in the circumstances. Curzon then recommended the publication

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 429, pp. 613-5.



of his government's undertakings in Paris and another declaration to the Powers outlining his government's firm intentions to withdraw from the territory at a fixed date.<sup>1</sup>

Much as this interview represented a bold approach on the part of Curzon to secure an acceptable accommodation for both China and Japan to open up negotiations leading to a final settlement of the issue, it also represented the salient features of the Foreign Office's view as how it would like to see the economic rights transferred to Japan in the territory dealt with. One should, however, question whether in laying so much emphasis on the excited national feelings in China, Curzon took into account similar feelings in Japan which could also explode if the government were to initiate all the proposals he outlined to China. In addition, one should also question whether there was any necessity for Japan <sup>to make</sup> ~~making~~ another formal declaration regarding her intentions to the Powers barely three months after she had issued a similar statement to them on the subject. It was in view of these factors that Balfour strongly opposed the suggestion that a second declaration should be made to the Powers. While, therefore, he wanted Japan to publish her undertakings as given in Paris, he also wanted China to publish all the arrangements communicated to her on 1 May as a means of cooling tension in the country.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, however, Balfour was making no head-way in this field. This was most

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 615-8.

<sup>2</sup> DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 427, pp. 609-10 and No. 439, pp. 541-3.



probably because of American attitudes towards the eventual settlement of the issue.

The American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, just before leaving Paris for home, communicated a memorandum to the Japanese outlining his government's views on how the question should finally be settled. The principal points in the proposal were that Japan should repeat in writing her verbal assurances to return the territory to Chinese sovereignty and her intention to withdraw all her troops from the province within two years. In addition, the memorandum requested Tokyo to renounce all preferential rights formerly enjoyed by the Germans in the region and to issue a statement announcing its intention not to create an exclusive Japanese settlement at Tsingtao.<sup>1</sup> The overall impact of this statement was to make the Chinese delegation almost impervious to any other suggestions than this American formula which would have undermined the Paris award to Japan. While this would have suited the Foreign Office, it was felt that the two years' period recommended for the withdrawal of the Japanese troops was unnecessarily long. On the other hand, London still maintained that the best chance of reaching a satisfactory agreement on the subject lay in the Japanese issuing another statement 'to the allies embodying their assurances and stating the period within which they will carry them out'.<sup>2</sup>

Under this sort of pressure from London and Washington, Uchida Yasuya, the Japanese Foreign Minister, was forced on 2 August to

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 442, p.646.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



issue a formal statement explaining his government's stand on the question. But this statement only reiterated the decision of the Council of Three without a word about the Japanese undertakings to the Powers. It then asserted that Japan's position in Shantung was based upon her ultimatum to Germany in 1914 and the Twenty-One Demands which, it opined, 'never elicited any protest on the part of China, or any Allied or Associated Powers'. On the other hand, the note promised that Tokyo had 'in contemplation, proposals for the establishment at Tsingtao of a general foreign settlement instead of the exclusive Japanese settlement which, by the Agreement of 1915 with China, it ~~also~~ is entitled to claim'.<sup>1</sup> Asked later by Alston to elucidate on the privileges Japan intended to retain in the province, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hanihara Masanao, informed him that she would maintain intact the provision in the Sino-German treaty of 1898 which gave Germany exclusive control over personal and industrial goods needed for development throughout the province. In addition, Alston was informed that all existing options for railway construction in the province would be retained by Japan in addition to taking control over all the former German mines in the territory. On the subject of foreign settlement, Alston learnt that the area to be chosen for this purpose would not be limited to the Tsingtao region but the administration would be on the Shanghai style. Regarding customs and trade, he was told that Tsingtao would be made an open port but that no firm decision had

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3695, Alston to Curzon (No. 315), 23 August 1919.



yet been taken on the status of the Tsingtao maritime customs.<sup>1</sup>

American response to this declaration, even without a knowledge of the details secured by Alston, was swift and immediate. Four days after Uchida had issued his statement, Woodrow Wilson ordered the State Department to make a public reply to it embodying American stance on the question. The American statement, after taking note of the Japanese declaration, went on to take exception to the reference made therein to the Twenty-One Demands as being misleading. It then recited textually the formula arrived at in Paris and explained that the policy which the formula envisaged was in no way dependent on the execution of the 1915 agreement but rather on the 1918 Sino-Japanese understanding.<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that this statement was meant for home consumption in view of the strong ill-feeling in the United States against the 1915 Sino-Japanese agreement. On the other hand, it gave the impression that Wilson was determined to uphold the 1918 agreement and the Paris decision against Chinese opposition. It was, therefore, not surprising that Jordan was informed that the Chinese were very apprehensive about the American statement and that they had lost all hopes in their reliance on the Powers to help them out of their current difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the Americans, however, the British response to the Japanese declaration was a reflection of their anxiety over the

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 460, pp. 661-2.

<sup>2</sup>FRUS, 1919, Vol. 1, pp. 718-9.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 469, pp. 679-80.



economic and strategic effects which the Japanese controlled railways in the province would entail. In the first place, much concern was expressed over Tokyo's intention to construct the existing railway options in the province. This was because it was realised that if Japan built the Tsinan-Shunteh railway to link up with the Peking-Hankow line and the Kaomi-Hanchuang to join the Tientsin-Pukow railway, as provided under the Sino-German agreement, she would control the whole of the southern communication to Peking. Taking into consideration the fact that Japan still had an absolute control over railroad communications in South Manchuria, it was held in London that nothing could prevent her threatening the security of Peking whenever she felt it expedient. In addition, it was feared that Japan could utilize her position in Shantung as 'a taking-off point to the Yangtze', where she would surely attack British commercial and industrial interests. Secondly, there was much uneasiness about the manner in which Japan might implement the monopoly rights granted to the Germans as regards the supply of ~~personel~~ and industrial goods throughout the province but which, it was admitted, Berlin never really interpreted in its widest sense. Furthermore, there was considerable anxiety about what Tokyo intended to do with the Tsingtao customs administration. In spite of all these, the railway issue was seen as forming the base of any menacing hold Japan might be contemplating on the province. On account of this it was made clear that

'the object we must aim at is to prevent Japan controlling either in theory or in practice, the railway from Tsingtao and Tsinanfu and the two branch railways mentioned above'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3701, Minutes on Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 329), 8 August 1919.



When Curzon saw Chinda on 9 August, therefore, he briefly re-  
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 ferred to the other points detailed above as well as/lack of any  
 firm commitment by Japan as to when she would return the territory  
 to China. He then turned his attention on the railway issue. He  
 told Chinda:

'The Japanese declaration asserted that there would be no discrimination in treatment against the people of any nation. This, I said, did not give me much consolation, because I knew how easy it was in practice to institute discrimination which had been disowned on paper. I therefore told the Ambassador frankly that, by this system of joint working of this railway, extending as it did from the sea-coast into the heart of the Province, and connected, as it would be, with other railways under almost exclusively Japanese influence provided for by other concessions and running in every direction towards the capital on the one hand and the Yangtze Valley on the other hand, Japan was, in my opinion, establishing a stranglehold upon the Province which would place it eventually and for all time under her control. For this reason I felt bound to repeat to his Excellency the protest which I had before made against this railway policy, and my strong wish was that his Government would consider in a more favourable spirit the alternative, which I had already placed before him, of an internationalisation of the whole Chinese railways'.<sup>1</sup>

Hence, after months of quiet opposition to Japanese occupation of Shantung in any form, London eventually got around to telling Tokyo in categorical terms its actual thinking on the subject. More important perhaps was the unleashing of the long-drawn up British strategy of dealing with the problem to the Japanese. On the other hand, the Japanese never made any reply to this intimation as to whether they would accept it or not.

In the meantime, however, reports reaching London suggested that whatever decision Japan might eventually take on the subject,

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 464, pp. 666-8.



she was now bent on a course of muzzling all foreign investments and the promotion of her nationals' interest in the province.<sup>1</sup> So consistent were these reports that on 13 December 1919, the Foreign Office thought it advisable to call the attention of the Japanese Government to them. In a very lengthy memorandum, therefore, the Foreign Office laid emphasis on the various aspects of Japanese policies in Shantung which had formed the basis of much complaint by the British community in China. It then called on Tokyo to rectify these anomalies by creating such conditions in the territory by which Japan's promise of affording equal opportunities to all could be seen to be in operation. In addition, the Foreign Office, expressed its 'regret at the delays which have occurred in carrying out the assurance of the Japanese Government, and confidently appeals to the latter to expedite the steps by which these undertakings can be speedily and effectually fulfilled'.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the strongly worded nature of the memorandum, there appeared to be no signs of improvement in the situation and British firms in the province continued to threaten to wind up their business.<sup>3</sup> Worse than this, perhaps, was the fact that it took Tokyo over eight months to reply to the British memorandum. By this time, however, Britain had formed her opinions on the subject. These views were vividly expressed by H.H.Fox of the Department

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<sup>1</sup> British Chamber of Commerce Journal, Vol. IV, No. 5, New Series No. 2, June 1919; Vol. IV, No. 6, New Series No. 3, July 1919.

<sup>2</sup> DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 620, pp. 882-8.

<sup>3</sup> DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 621, pp. 887-8; No. 627, p.892; No. 648, pp. 909-12; No. 701, pp. 969-71.



of Overseas Trade. He noted that the Japanese, being unable to refute the specific charges of discrimination and obstruction by local Japanese authorities in the province, had been forced to have recourse to denials in general terms based on what they had declared to be their declared policy and aims in Shantung. One was, therefore, 'disposed to discount the value of these denials because we have learnt<sup>by</sup>/bitter experience in Korea and Manchuria how wide a gulf separates the professions of the Japanese Govt and the practices of its subordinates'. In conclusion, therefore, Fox suggested that no good purpose would be served by continuing the discussions with Tokyo as Britain would never succeed in bringing 'the Japanese to admit that they are in the wrong... What the British commercial community in China do feel (and I may perhaps claim to voice their opinion in this matter) is that unless steps are taken to force the Japanese to restore Tsingtao to China without delay they will have made for themselves a position in that port and the hinterland which will make it impossible for British merchants to compete on even approximately equal terms, in other words Tsingtao and Shantung will go the way of Korea and Manchuria.'<sup>1</sup> The view of the British commercial community as relayed through the Department of Overseas Trade on the Shantung issue was no different from that of the Foreign Office.

In surveying the case whether the Anglo-Japanese Alliance should be renewed or not, Wellesley had this to say about the economic policies of Japan in Shantung:

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5320, Minute by Fox /I8787, 10 September 1920; DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 93, pp. 96-103.



'The Japanese are guided by principles which far surpass anything attempted by the Germans in the way of exclusiveness and commercial monopoly; which are in conflict with every conception of fair trade and equal opportunity. In its administration of the harbour and customs of Tsingtao, in its general discrimination of foreigners in such matters as wharf charges, shipping accommodation, &c, and its operation of the railway which it has succeeded in isolating and sterilizing, and above all in the treatment of the natives, the Japanese regime is tenfold more objectionable to foreigners and Chinese alike than the German one ever was.

If we do not succeed in checking Japanese penetration, Shantung will become a second Manchuria with vastly more serious and far reaching consequences'.<sup>1</sup>

It must be remarked here that the situation appeared more ominous to the British Government at this time because all its hopes of arresting the situation by internationalising all railways in China had been dashed. It is true that the organ for translating this programme into reality was established when the consortium agreement was signed on 2 May 1920. It is also true that apart from some reservation about South Manchuria and Mongolia, Japan agreed to pool her future options in railway construction in China into the activities of the consortium. There was, however, no mention at all in the consortium agreement of the railway options secured by Japan in Shantung under the 1915 and 1918 agreements. This was partly because of the enormous difficulties which would have been unearthed if any attempt were made to pool all existing railways and other options together through negotiations with the Chinese Government. Apart from this, the ingenious way the Japanese

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5361, Memorandum by Wellesley respecting the Anglo-Japanese Alliance [F 22007, 1 September 1920.



approached the whole negotiations by raising objection to the activities of the consortium being extended to South Manchuria and Mongolia but saying nothing about Shantung prevented that province being discussed in any form. Neither could any of the Powers raise that issue owing to the fact that the Paris decision was less than a year old and the fear of arousing fresh storms in China and Japan if the matter was reopened. Hence, the persistence of the Shantung question with its haunting effects on British commercial and industrial interests in China.

Apart from the alleged detrimental effects which continued Japanese occupation of Shantung were having on British commercial and industrial interests in the province, there was also much anxiety over the question of Japanese colonial policy. As we have already noted in our discussion on Korea, the uprising in the colony sparked off attempts in London to find out the true nature of Japanese colonial administration. The same sort of 'torturous' nature of the military administration in Korea was found in Shantung. In the latter case, however, the situation was considered much more detrimental to British image abroad because of the concrete proofs that Britain had made a secret deal with Japan over the province before China signed her 'death warrant' over Shantung by the agreement of 1918 with Japan.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this conclusion, it was decided that Britain should do nothing to imply that she was exerting pressure on Tokyo to remove the root cause of the 'torturous nature' of the administration in Shantung as was the case in Korea -

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5361, Memorandum by Wellesley /F 22007, 1 September 1920; FO/371/5353, Memorandum respecting Japanese Activities in Korea and Elsewhere /F 31997, 8 December 1920.



an action which they saw would involve replacing the military administrators with civilians. This was because:

'The military administration implies in a way recognition of the provisional nature of the present status: whereas a civil administration (unless a municipal one of international character) might perhaps imply a fait accompli and the creation of a Japanese leased territory, like Dairen'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the same forces which were militating British diplomatic thinking on Japanese political and economic activities in Korea were also at work in Shantung. In the latter case, however, it was felt that Britain must do all in her power to dispossess Japan of the province before any overt action was taken on the fate of the alliance. This was not only because of the economic and political issues as analysed above but also because of the indirect effect the continued Japanese occupation of the province was having on British colonial interests in the East.

As early as 15 October 1919, China broke off negotiations they were having with Britain on the long standing Indo-Chinese boundary dispute.<sup>2</sup> Various diplomatic pressures had since failed to bring the Chinese back to the conference table principally because, they claimed, the Thibetan question was now ..... regarded in [The] country as far more important than Shantung question..... [and that] any Thibetan settlement arrived at now would be (? ed) by popular outbursts and anti-British boycotts'.<sup>3</sup> The force in this argument was realised by Jordan and he warned London that his present

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5322, Minutes on Clive to Wellesley [Private F 34117], 11 October 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Alastair Lamb, The McMahon line: A Study in the relations between India, China and Tibet 1905 to 1914 (London and Toronto 1966) gives an insight into this question.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 549, pp. 796-7.



'impression is that ~~The~~ Chinese Government do not intend doing (? anything) on the subject of Thibet until ~~The~~ Shantung question, which at present overshadows everything else has been settled; but that they do intend to arrive at a settlement eventually when (? circumstances) permit of their doing so. When that will be is impossible to tell'.<sup>1</sup>

As events were to show, neither the Chinese intimation proved to be a mere threat nor Jordan's timely warning an alarmist outcry. Up to the end of January 1920, the Chinese had made no move from their position. Early in February 1920, therefore, the Foreign Office made an exhaustive study of the situation with Curzon calling on the government to 'cold shoulder' the Chinese on the issue. This call was strongly deprecated by Tilley who pointed out that

'the problem is how to coldshoulder the Chinese without detriment to our own interests. In this particular case - Shantung - it is detrimental to our interests that the Japanese should remain in possession; if the Chinese refuse to negotiate they will remain and I cannot see how the League of Nations, if the Chinese appeal to that body, can turn them out seeing that technically they are within their Treaty rights'.<sup>2</sup>

Tilley's minute is a clear pointer to the new British approach to the Shantung as soon as it became evident that the railways in that province would not be covered by the Consortium Agreement. In addition to this it showed the new British view on direct Sino-Japanese negotiations on the issue. As we have already observed, Britain had all along favoured direct Sino-Japanese negotiation and agreement to be followed by an appeal to Japan to bring the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Minutes by Curzon and Tilley.



railways in Shantung into the purview of the Consortium. From reports received so far on Japanese economic policies in Shantung, it was realised that they would never consider the former suggestion. In addition, the Foreign Office came to the conclusion that if China were allowed to negotiate with Japan without any form of international supervision, the latter might be able to force the insertion of some clause into any agreement reached between them that would tend to maintain the existing situation in the province. When, therefore, the Chinese Government rejected two approaches in January and April 1920 to begin direct negotiations on the issue and indicated that they were prepared to raise the subject at the League of Nations, the Foreign Office was very pleased and began preparing towards the occasion.<sup>1</sup>

Serious reappraisal of the Shantung question began at the Foreign Office on 13 September 1920 with the view of arriving at a definite British stand at the League of Nations.<sup>2</sup> The result of these discussions was embodied in a memorandum drawn up by Miles Lampson which was sent to the Cabinet for its approval before being forwarded to Geneva. In this memorandum, Lampson pointed out that 'What Alsace-Lorraine was to France and Italia Irredenta to Italy, Shantung is becoming to China'. He then went on to say that:

'Whatever the merits of China's case, the British delegates will do well to keep in mind the question of expediency from the point of British interests. The Chinese people are aroused to an intensity of feeling

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 26 January 1920; DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 689, p.949: No. 713, pp. 976-7; FO/371/5320, Enclosure in Alston to Curzon (No. 393), 29 May 1920; The Japan Advertiser, 17 June 1920 enclosed in Eliot to Curzon (No. 295), 17 June 1920.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5321, Minute on Clive to Curzon (Telegram No. 387 confidential), 8 September 1920, Minutes on Clive to Curzon (Telegram no. 467 confidential), 2 November 1920.



bordering on passion over the Shantung question, and it would be most desirable if Great Britain could avoid incurring further odium in connection with it. An anti-British boycott seemed not impossible in 1919, when our assurances to Japan in February 1917 were first published to the world at Versailles, and His Majesty's Government are justifiably apprehensive of running a similar risk a second time through an incautious action at Geneva.

The attitude of America has an important bearing upon the Shantung question. Although she is not a member of the League, yet the Assembly will appreciate the fact that, with the return of the Republicans to power in the United States, a more vigorous interest in the Shantung issue on the part of America may be anticipated.

The attitude of the British delegates should be one of sympathy towards any proposals or suggestions that the Chinese delegation may bring forward with a view to a settlement of the question by a friendly arrangement between the parties most directly interested - that is China and Japan - rather than one of insistence on a clear-cut decision as to the theoretical justification of the claims advanced on either side by the parties.<sup>1</sup>

The Cabinet lost no time in approving these recommendations and it was forwarded through it for 'the general information and guidance' of the British Delegation to the League of Nations in Geneva.<sup>2</sup>

The most interesting aspect of the whole memorandum was the recommendations to the British delegation to show a pro-Chinese bias. It was on account of this that Balfour, now head of the British Mission in Geneva, strongly opposed an earlier and similar instruction sent to him by Curzon. Apart from this, he pointed out that the British move would mean an attempt to seek a modification of the Treaty of Versailles which the Assembly had so far

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5321, Memorandum on the Shantung Question /F 29607, 26 November 1920.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 167, pp. 180-2.



assumed should not be the case, at least, during that session. In addition, he pointed out that such a reversal of policy would only lead to incurring strong Japanese displeasure. On the whole, Balfour interpreted the current policy as an indication that Britain considered the Shantung issue not sufficiently discussed in Paris and therefore in need of re-examination in detail by the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office was more than critical on Balfour's opposition to its instructions. It was suggested, however, that if it were not possible to raise the issue in Geneva it would be left open to Britain 'to use all the acts of persuasion, and possibly the threat that we might not be able to renew the Anglo-Japanese alliance on as favourable terms as Japan may desire, unless Japan meets the Chinese to a reasonable extent over the Shantung question'.<sup>2</sup> A fresh attempt was, however, made to convince Balfour by drawing up a new memorandum which aimed at showing that Japan's occupation of the territory was detrimental to British interests.<sup>3</sup> It is not certain, however, whether this document was sent to Balfour or not. What is clear is that at the 30th plenary meeting of the First Assembly of the League on 18 December 1920, Wellington Koo gave notice that China had reserved her right to bring the question up in the Assembly at the appropriate time.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 172, pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/5321, Minutes on Wilson to Curzon (Telegram No. 25), 26 November 1920.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 178, pp. 192-3.

<sup>4</sup>League of Nations, Provisional Verbatim Record: 30th Plenary Meeting (Geneva), Saturday, 18 December 1920; League of Nations, Records of the First Assembly, Plenary Meetings (Geneva 1920), p.171.



Chinese sought concrete assurance from the British Government that it would support them in Geneva. They were, however, told by Curzon that, prima facie, they had the right to raise the issue in the Council of the League but the question of British support would need to be considered carefully after which a definite answer would be given to them.<sup>1</sup> Curzon's answer to this request was a reflection of the difference of opinion between him and Balfour on the issue since 1917.

Whatever line of action Balfour might find expedient to adopt later in Geneva on Shantung, both the Foreign Office and the Chinese were soon to come to independent conclusions that there was no necessity for wasting time at the League of Nations. This was because in the British-conceived but American-proposed Pacific Conference, the United States Government indicated that problems connected with China, including the Shantung question, would form one of its major preoccupations.<sup>2</sup> While London welcomed some discussions on the problems of China including the Shantung question, Tokyo was restive about the objectives of the Americans.<sup>3</sup> Hayashi Gonsuke, now Ambassador in London, did not hide this uneasiness of his government when he met Eyre Crowe, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, to discuss the proposed conference on 25 July 1921. He told Crowe that the Japanese Government

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 304, P.308.

<sup>2</sup>See Louis, op.cit., pp. 79-108, for the origins of this conference. FRUS 1921, Vol. 1, pp. 31-2; DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 337, pp. 345-51.

<sup>3</sup>See Tokyo's queries to Washington as to the scope and character of the conference, FRUS, 1921, Vol. 1, p.31.



'would be altogether opposed to bringing into the conference such questions between Japan and China on the one hand, or Japan and America on the other, as could and ought to be settled by direct negotiations between those parties. For instance, he knew the Japanese Government were anxious to come to an arrangement with China about Shantung; if his advice were followed, the Japanese Government would agree to withdraw their troops and administration altogether from Kiao-chao and let it return to Chinese authority, with certain guarantees for freedom of Japanese trade and communications, &c.'<sup>1</sup>

Barely three weeks after this conversation, the Japanese communicated a set of proposals to the Chinese for the settlement of the issue. Briefly stated, they proposed the return of the territory to China and the abandonment of plans to establish either exclusive Japanese or international settlement at Tsingtao provided Peking agreed to open that port for trade and permitted 'nationals of all foreign countries freely to reside and to carry on commerce, industry, agriculture or any other lawful pursuits with such territory and ..... undertakes to respect the vested rights of all foreigners'. In addition, they stipulated that the Kiaochow-Tsinanfu railway and all the mines associated with it would be worked as a joint Sino-Japanese enterprise. On the other hand, they noted, all the other German railway options in the province would be placed under the consortium. Furthermore, they renounced the German right to priority of providing foreign personnel and supplying capital and industrial goods throughout Shantung. As regards the customs administration at Tsingtao, they noted that its status 'as forming an integral part of the general customs system shall be made

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 338, pp. 351-2.



clearer than under the German regime', but all the former German public property which was used for purely administrative purposes would be transferred to China. They then called for the appointment of a commission from both sides to work out the details of the proposals.<sup>1</sup>

A copy of the proposals was communicated by Tokyo to the British Government on 10 September. London's immediate reaction was that Tokyo's present move was 'dictated by a strong desire to prevent the Shantung question from coming up for discussion at Washington'.<sup>2</sup> This conclusion was not far from the truth. By the way both Britain and America had behaved since Paris on the issue, it would be surprising if they did not adopt a common stand against Japan at the coming conference in a bid to force her to relinquish her control over the province. In such an event, it would be difficult for Japan to continue to defy these two Powers for various obvious reasons. Firstly, with the fate of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance still in the balance and with the restiveness of the British commercial community in China over Japanese activities in that country, it seemed to have realised that unless Japan was seen to be anxious to normalise her relations with China, Britain might have strong doubts about the expediency of continuing her relations with Japan on the same lines as had been the case for the past nineteen years. This appeared to be particularly the case because with Russia in chaos and Germany defeated, there seemed to be some genuine feeling

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6619, Appendix in aide-memoire communicated by Nagai [3399], 10 September 1921.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Minutes.



that Britain might be hesitant over the renewal of the Alliance and even more so in the face of strong American opposition.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, by the mere fact of the situation in Russia and Germany, it seemed to have been realised that if Japan decided to defy British and American pressure, she might be isolated. Apart from these, there was a growing feeling in Japan itself, at this time, for a better accommodation with China by abrogating the Twenty-One Demands and withdrawing altogether from Shantung in favour of an economic alliance with China which, it was thought, would serve the material needs of Japan better than her present policy of 'confrontation'.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, however, the Foreign Office considered the Japanese proposals as 'studiously moderate'. On the other hand, there were a number of stipulations which it viewed as tending 'to give Japan a position in Shantung analogous to her position in South Manchuria' if they were allowed to operate in the form stated. This was particularly the case with the Kiaochow-Tsinanfu railway line. As Wellesley observed:

'It is the one thing that matters because it is the main instrument of peaceful economic penetration. If only means could be found to induce the Japanese to surrender this control in favour of the general unification scheme the Shantung problem might be said to be satisfactorily solved.'

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 429, pp. 613-5.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/6655, Eliot to Curzon (No. 531), 23 June 1921; Eliot to Curzon (No. 386), 20 July 1921.



This was, however, seen as an almost impossible solution at the moment as Japan might resent any such suggestion from Britain. Moreover, China seemed obsessed with the idea that Washington offered a better prospect of a solution of the question than anything she was likely to obtain by direct negotiations with Japan. Under these circumstances, it was realised that it would be very unwise for Britain to intervene as she might end up only by reaping 'the odium of both sides', but a little pressure from America in Washington might 'do the trick'.<sup>1</sup> But before the Foreign Office could work out its own plans to sustain the likely American pressure, the Japanese issued a warning to Britain. Eliot was told on 17 September 1921 that if any attempts were made to raise the Shantung question in Washington, Japan

'saw no reason why the conference should not claim the right to settle the Tibetan question..... and that

Should Shantung be raised at conference the Japanese Government might be willing to explain their views and proposals but they were not prepared to obey decision of conference.'<sup>2</sup>

The immediate impact of this warning is clearly discernible from a conversation Wellesley had with the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires on 23 September. Wellesley told him that Britain considered:

'The Japanese proposals ..... on the whole to be very moderate and certainly offered a basis for discussion, and to throw away so favourable an opportunity for arriving at an agreement satisfactory to both sides

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6620, Minute by Wellesley on Alston to Curzon (Telegram No. 385), 13 October 1921.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 376, p. 397.



would be deplorable'.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, an attempt was made to find the opinion of Washington on the Japanese proposals and, if possible, induce America to prevent the question being raised inside the conference and settled before then. This shows a shift in <sup>the</sup> British position to the idea of direct negotiations between China and Japan without any form of international supervision. But while the United States was very sympathetic to Britain in her invidious position and was prepared to co-operate with her on the subject, the Chinese would not budge from their stance of complete retrocession of all the German assets and rights in Shantung to them.<sup>2</sup> They made this point clear when they rejected all the Japanese proposals without offering any alternative suggestions themselves.<sup>3</sup>

There was no doubt that Peking was pinning too much hope on Washington without taking into account the range and implications of the subjects outlined for the conference. Firstly, there was the Japanese threat of raising the Tibetan issue if the Shantung question was brought out for discussion and not accepting any decision imposed by the Powers in the matter at the conference. Secondly, with the failure to call a preliminary conference before Washington,<sup>4</sup> there appeared to be some excitement in London over the prospect of having some of the issues settled outside the main arena of the conference. Furthermore, London seemed to have been

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 383, pp. 406-7.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/6620, Geddes to Curzon (Telegram No. 636 confidential), 3 October 1921.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/6620, Enclosure in memorandum communicated by Nagai [3962], 24 October 1921.

<sup>4</sup>Louis, op.cit., pp. 86-8.



impressed by the sincerity and the efforts Tokyo was making towards resolving the issue. In view of these, Curzon decided to make Britain's position clear to Wellington Koo before the latter left London for the conference. He told him that

'Japan was exceedingly anxious to come to an arrangement, and was prepared to stretch a good many points in order to obtain one. China, on the other hand, had adopted rather an obstinate attitude, possibly because she thought she could get better terms at Washington than she would by separate negotiations in advance. Thus an atmosphere of some tension had been created between the two parties. I thought it was a pity that this situation should continue, and I earnestly hoped that the Washington Conference would be the occasion for the settlement of the dispute, not inside the conference but outside it, by negotiations in which I feel sure that both Great Britain and America would lend a friendly and helping hand, if the opportunity arose to do so. America was known to be a warm friend of China; Great Britain, on the other hand, had influence with Japan; and I could not help feeling sanguine that by the good offices of both parties a solution might be reached.'

Curzon then advised Koo on the line along which, he felt, China should consider approaching the subject now. He noted:

'While I hoped that the conference would do a great deal to strengthen the position of China - although I feared it could hardly give her what she most lacked at this moment, namely, a strong Government - and while I hoped that the fears of Japanese aggression might be dispelled, I yet felt that China would do well to recognise the fact that at her doors lay a powerful, highly-organised, ambitious State, whose population must inevitably overflow the territories which they at present occupy, and which would be driven to impinge upon its neighbours. Would it not be sound statesmanship to steer Japan away from the great industrial areas of China proper, and push her away - so to speak - to the north. Manchuria was not a part of China proper; it was one of the outer territories inhabited originally by a different people. Japan had been enabled, partly by conquest, partly by concessions of the Chinese Government itself, to acquire a position there which it was impossible to shake or altogether to ignore. It had, indeed, been definitely recognised in the agreement



which the American Secretary of State, Lansing - presumably a warm friend of China - had concluded with Viscount Ishii, on behalf of Japan. My own inclination, if I were a Chinaman, would be to allow the Japanese to expand, under reasonable conditions, in that direction, rather than to bring them down upon the main body of China'.<sup>1</sup>

Although Curzon might be seen to have gone into pains in spelling out the reasons for allowing Japan a free hand in Manchuria at the expense of her southern advance, he neither gave all the reasons behind this view which had for some time formed the cardinal principle of Anglo-American thinking on Japanese expansion nor were all the reasons stated above representative of British official thinking on the subject.<sup>2</sup> The idea that Japan's population was increasing on an accelerating scale at this time was an undeniable fact, but unlike Washington and Paris, London did not think that Japan's resources, if properly harnessed, were incapable of sustaining her growing population.<sup>3</sup> Apart from the reasons outlined by Curzon, the 'Drang nach Norden' policy appeared to be a natural sequel of the growing power of the Viceroy of Manchuria, Chang Tso-lin, who was suspected in London to have concluded a number of secret agreements for material and military assistance from Japan.<sup>4</sup> With the daily increase in Chang's power and the inability of the Powers, including China herself, to contain this state of affairs,

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 406, pp. 451-2.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter Five above.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/6684, Eliot to Curzon (Telegram No. 434), 7 November 1921 and minutes thereon.

<sup>4</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, No. 443, pp. 647-8; No. 543, pp. 792-3.



Britain felt that the best solution lay in the central government consolidating its position throughout the rest of the country before tackling that issue, perhaps, with the help of the other Powers. Another side of the strategy appeared to be that it was realised that Russia would not forever remain in chaos and as soon as an effective government had been established there, Japan would begin to face the might of Russian power determined to reassert its position in Northern Manchuria. Confronted by a strong and united government in Peking and a rejuvenated Russia with probable support from the other Powers, Japan might be forced to compromise her position in Manchuria. On the other hand, Curzon might be justifying, in this conversation, the reservations the consortium Powers allowed Japan to sustain regarding South Manchuria and Mongolia - a document the Chinese were still opposed to in its full implementation.

In any case, after spelling the details of how Britain would want to see the issue resolved and the procedure for achieving this, Balfour, head of the British delegation, soon after his arrival in Washington for the conference, saw the American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, for a thorough review of the situation. After a number of exchanges, Hughes and Balfour agreed that while the Shantung question was within the competence of the conference, they felt that the best chance of reaching a satisfactory solution lay outside the normal process of the conference, by direct Sino-Japanese negotiations. For this, they agreed, each would use his influence to achieve this objective. These conclusions were then



communicated to the Chinese and Japanese delegations.<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was accepted by both parties upon which it was arranged that Hughes and Balfour should be ~~at~~ present at the opening session of this meeting scheduled for 1 December and address it after which they would be represented by two delegates each throughout the rest of the discussions.<sup>2</sup>

After the opening session, the parties met, as agreed upon, on 2 December, at which the Japanese note of 7 September was accepted by the Chinese as the basis for the discussions.<sup>3</sup> Although negotiations ~~were~~ slow after this meeting, by mid-December agreements had been reached on the minor aspects of the question.<sup>4</sup> Discussions on the future of the Kiaochow-Tsinanfu railway began on 10 December with a Chinese proposal that China should reimburse Japan with one half of the interest in the railway on condition that the line was handed over to the control and management of Peking. This proposal was based upon an assumption that Japan would not be obliged to pay anything to Germany. The Japanese, on the other hand, pointed out that this could not be assumed to be the case,

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 450, p.511.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 459, p.523. Jordan and Miles Lampson represented the British group while John Van MacMurray and Edward Bell stood in for the American State Department. One curious development during the opening session of the meeting was a French demand for a representation on the discussion but this was rejected by the Japanese delegation on ground that their instructions authorised them to discuss the matter in the presence of only British and American Officials. FO/371/6620, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 87), 1 December 1921.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/6620, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 101 confidential), 4 December 1921.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/6620, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 107), 6 December 1921; Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 126), 8 December 1921; Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 136), 10 December 1921.



as such matters were still in the hands of the Reparations Commission in Paris and they might probably be called upon in the future by that Commission to pay compensation. Thereupon, the Chinese proposed to reimburse Japan with the total value of the line, less the surplus profits for the last five years for which Japan had controlled the railway, but this was again rejected by the Japanese as unacceptable. On 12 December the Chinese proposed again that China should take over from Japan the line, all its branches and their rolling-stocks as well as all other appurtenances to them and that such a transfer should be completed within six months after the date of the ratification of the agreement. China would then reimburse Japan to an amount equivalent to the amount set-off which Japan would claim against Germany for indemnity as represented by the appraised value of the line and its appurtenances, minus the Chinese capital to the amount of 300,000 marks gold, and all interim profits derived during the period of the Japanese occupation. China would issue to the agreed amount bonds which would receive interest at the rate of five per cent per annum, payable semi-annually, the redemption of which should begin on the year after taking charge of the line by annual drawing of one of the total number of the bonds issued. At the same time, they stated that China, at any time, upon giving six months' notice, might redeem all or part of the outstanding bonds. These proposals were also found unacceptable to Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Having rejected these proposals, the Japanese delegation submitted their own counter-proposals, which they opined had already

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7989, Enclosure III in Balfour to Curzon (No. 10 Secret), 22 December 1921.



received the approval of Tokyo. In it, the Japanese delegation stated that Tokyo would agree to the transfer of the railway, its branches and all the property appurtenance to it to Peking while the latter would engage to pay Japan the actual value of the items involved as represented by the Reparation Commission's figure, plus the amount which Japan had expended so far on improvement less a suitable allowance for depreciation. In addition, they called for a joint Sino-Japanese commission to value the property to be handed over to China. To cover the payment under the above, China was to contract a loan with Japanese financiers on the basis of the terms embodied in railway loan agreements of comparatively recent dates, which she had entered into with other foreign financiers. These proposals were accepted by the Chinese and discussions began with a view to working out the details. The only difference between the two parties at this stage was Chinese insistence that any payment should not be made in one instalment but divided into six bi-annual payments. Thus, full redemption would take three years. The Japanese were, however, willing to settle on nothing less than 23 years' loan within which time they would maintain the right to recommend for the posts of chief engineer, traffic manager and chief accountant in the railway company. This latter proposition was rejected in parts by the Chinese who proposed the appointment of only a Japanese district engineer for the period of their stipulated three years. This difference persisted until 20 December when the Japanese delegation unexpectedly requested a postponement of discussion to enable them to obtain



instructions from Tokyo.<sup>1</sup>

The main reason for this unexpected move was that, by their latest proposals, the Japanese delegation went far beyond their original instructions. They, therefore, found themselves in a situation where they could no longer continue discussions on its details with the Chinese.<sup>2</sup> A fortnight elapsed without Tokyo finding it expedient to accept the position of their delegation in Washington. In the interim period, however, the Japanese delegation tried, without success, to secure the support of Hughes and Balfour to induce the Chinese to accept their latest proposals.<sup>3</sup> This was probably because it was realised that by appointing Japanese as chief engineer, traffic manager and chief accountant, the railway would still be left in its present status for a long time to come. It is not, therefore, surprising that in a memorandum submitted to the Japanese delegation on 31 December, Lampson called for the acceptance of either the Chinese formula of immediate cash payment or a loan from Japan to buy the railway back and the appointment of a Japanese district manager to supervise Japanese interests resulting from the loan until the amount had been completely redeemed.<sup>4</sup>

In any case, formal negotiations resumed again on 4 January 1922 with the Japanese insisting on the loan agreement along the lines they had previously indicated but the Chinese were unwilling

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/7989, Balfour to Curzon (No. 78 /Sw 25/ secret), 30 December 1921. Matsudaira Tsuneko was replaced as head of the Japanese negotiating team when the meeting resumed by Shidehara Kijuro, the ambassador in Washington and he was assisted by Hanihara Masanao, the Vice Foreign Minister.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/6620, Minutes on Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 175), 16 December 1921.



to accept that formula.<sup>1</sup> By the following day, it had become evident that unless China made a substantial shift in position, there would soon be a complete impasse. On account of this, therefore, Wellington Koo proposed that if Japan was prepared to waive the idea of a loan, China would consider favourably her suggestion of deferred payment in general harmony with other railway agreements in existence but without any form of Japanese control and management. On the following day, however, the Japanese stated that their instructions precluded them from considering anything else other than a settlement as they had already opined. They then submitted that the loan should be of 15 years duration with the option of redemption on six months' notice after five years and the appointment of a Japanese traffic manager and a chief accountant. The Chinese, on the other hand, also stated that their instruction precluded them from their position. By the end of the day, the feared impasse was a reality but both sides appealed to Balfour and Hughes to help resolve their differences and the conversations were again adjourned sine die.<sup>2</sup>

Upon this request, the British and American observers were instructed to endeavour to find some common ground on which both sides could be brought together. Within three days they had formulated four alternative propositions, which were then laid before the two parties on 9 January. Each of these alternatives anticipated a loan from Japan to enable China to buy back the railway and the appointment of a Japanese official to cater for the interests of his government

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7989, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (Despatch No. 89 [SW secret]), 6 January 1922.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/7989, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 225), 5 January 1922.



in the line until the loan was completely redeemed.<sup>1</sup> A day after the submission of these proposals, the two delegations agreed to suspend discussions on the issue pending further developments and continued considerations on the other minor related matters.<sup>2</sup>

By this time, however, it had become clear that unless the whole question was settled in a form acceptable to China, the United States Government would find it a difficult task in persuading the Senate to ratify the various agreements arising out of the conference.<sup>3</sup> On 18 January, therefore, Hughes called on Balfour in his apartment to discuss the issue. In the presence of Maurice Hankey, he told Balfour that it was most unlikely that any of the two parties would make any further concessions to the other unless there was some form of joint intervention by Britain and the United States. On the basis of the point reached between them so far, he suggested he and Balfour should jointly propose to them that the payment for the railway should be a loan from the Japanese in the form of Treasury notes maturing in 15 years but with an option for China to redeem it after five years. This formula was agreed upon by Balfour who, in turn, suggested that regarding the question of degree of control they should put two propositions before them. Firstly, there should be a joint traffic manager and a joint accountant. Secondly, the Chinese should allow the Japanese to have their Chief Accountant and Traffic Manager

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 538, p.592.

<sup>2</sup>FRUS (1922), Vol. I, pp. 965-7.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/7989, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 256), 12 January 1922; Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 260), 13 January 1922.



on condition that they did not fill their respective departments with only Japanese subordinates. Hughes also accepted these proposals. Upon this, they agreed that Balfour should invite the Japanese to his apartment on the same day so as to present the formulae to them and that he should let them understand that Hughes would be seeing the Chinese with the same proposals on the following day.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting with the Japanese took place as scheduled and on the following day, the Chinese called on Hughes. In the presence of John MacMurray, Balfour, Hankey and Lampson, Hughes spelt out in detail the Anglo-American formula and after a lengthy discussion the Chinese appeared disposed to accept the plan, though they did not say so at the time.<sup>2</sup> On 20 January, Balfour, Hankey and Lampson met the Japanese delegation to receive their reply to the proposition. Regarding the question of Traffic Manager, they told the British delegation that as such a person would have to take some executive decisions at very short notice, in those circumstances the scheme for joint traffic management would be unworkable. A further objection was that there would be serious delays in the plan owing to the fact that documents would always have to commute from one office to the other before any decision could be made on a minute issue. These difficulties, they opined, would not necessarily be encountered with the office of the Chief Accountant. In view of this therefore

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XIV, No. 547, pp. 601-6.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/7990, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 116), 22 January 1922; Maurice Hankey took the place of Jordan when the latter suddenly left Washington to attend to some urgent business in England.



they were in favour of a joint Chief Accountant and only a Japanese Traffic Manager. After a brief consultation among the British delegation (in the absence of Lampson) Balfour came out with a modified formula. This suggested the appointment of a Japanese traffic manager for five years but that a Chinese traffic manager should also be appointed after two and a half years as his assistant so that if China was able to redeem the whole loan after the five years period, the Chinese would take over from his Japanese senior. If, on the other hand, the Chinese Government could not avail themselves of this right within the five years optional period, the Chinese assistant traffic manager would have to resign from his post. After a prolonged discussion among themselves, the Japanese delegation asked Balfour whether, if they accepted this formula, he would tell the Chinese that they had done so, and Balfour demurred. He would rather intimate that this proposal went beyond the instructions of the Japanese delegates and that he could not say if it would be acceptable to them or not. Upon this assurance, the Japanese accepted the formula.<sup>1</sup>

This break-through was reported to Hughes when he called on Balfour two hours later. Hughes then made it clear that his idea was that the Chinese should be put in a position of having to accept the proposal as the utmost which could be extracted from the Japanese, or else to take the full blame for the breakdown of the negotiations. In order to achieve this, therefore, he suggested that

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7990, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 120) [Sw 377, 24 January 1922.



Balfour should obtain a discretion from the Japanese to tell the Chinese, at the appropriate time, that they had accepted the formula.<sup>1</sup> Upon this, Balfour saw the Japanese in his apartment at 6.30 p.m. on the same day and, after a brief discussion, it was agreed that he should be at liberty to use the following words: 'I am quite certain that if they were sure that this would settle the question, the Japanese would accept'.<sup>2</sup>

After this meeting, Hughes and Balfour, accompanied by their respective officials, met the Chinese delegation on Sunday, 22 January 1922, at which Hughes strongly impressed upon them that they could not expect any further support if they refused to accept the formula which Balfour endeavoured to assure them that the Japanese might accept. The discussions ended on a high note of optimism and Hughes promised to give them every facility available for an early consultation with their government.<sup>2</sup> In the morning of 30 January, the Chinese were received by Balfour and Hughes again. They informed them that although their government considered the suggested compromise not entirely to their satisfaction, they would endeavour to reach a settlement on that basis.<sup>3</sup> With this intimation, it was merely a matter of form that when the two parties resumed formal discussions on the subject again on 30 January, they reached an agreement on the following day, by which time the other related issues had also been settled.<sup>4</sup> They then notified the Washington

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/7990, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 122) SW 397, 24 January 1922.

<sup>2</sup>FO/371/7990, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 123) SW 407, 24 January 1922.

<sup>3</sup>FO/371/7990, Enclosure in Balfour to Curzon (No. 124) SW 417, 24 January 1922.

<sup>4</sup>FO/371/7990; Balfour to Lloyd George (No. 25), 4 February 1922.



Conference of their agreement, which they signed on 4 February.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, after eight years of Japanese occupation of Shantung with British support, their own economic and political policies had forced Britain to look for a formula to dispossess them of their war gains in China.<sup>2</sup> But how far did the Shantung and Korean questions as well as the related issues in South Manchuria and Kwantung work in favour of the decision not to renew the Anglo-Japanese Alliance? This will form part of the concluding chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/799, Balfour to Curzon (Telegram No. 320), 31 January 1922.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix V in Yamato Ichihashi, The Washington Conference and After: A Historical Survey (New York, 1928), pp. 389-97, for the text of the treaty.



### CONCLUSION

There are a number of common features which have appeared throughout our discussions of British diplomatic attitudes towards Japanese economic and political activities in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung. It is the aim of this concluding chapter to recapitulate some of the features and to draw some conclusion from them.

There is no doubt that in all the regions, Britain gave Japan the necessary diplomatic support in achieving the initial foot-hold. In Korea, the support was manifested in the Lansdowne-Roosevelt understanding of January 1905, the modification of the Korean article in the second Alliance and the various moves initiated in London to restrain Russia from impairing the Japanese position in the peninsula after signing the Portsmouth Treaty. The Lansdowne-Roosevelt discussions of January 1905 and London's instructions to Satow to back Komura during the Sino-Japanese negotiations for the transfer of South Manchuria and Kwantung to Tokyo also indicated the British Government's strong support for Japan in establishing herself in those provinces. As regards Shantung, Grey's conversations with Inoue and the Foreign Office's support for the Japanese position during the Tsingtao-Tsinan railway and the Tsingtao customs disputes were clear pointers to London's willingness that Japan should supplant the Germans in the province. But were there any common motives behind this support?

The answer to this question is rather complex yet one finds a common theme running through the British position as regards Japan's



position in the four regions. In each case, the Foreign Office had in mind the check which, if Japan were able to establish herself in each of the four territories, she might be able to provide against one of Britain's continental rivals. The Japanese influence in Korea, South Manchuria and in Kwantung was seen in London as a security against the growing Russian influence in China which, if not checked, could threaten the independence of Peking and the safety of India. Germany was the sole object when London sanctioned the preponderance of Tokyo's influence in Shantung during the first World War. In a word, the Japanese position in the four regions was originally viewed in London as part of the obligations imposed on Tokyo by the Alliance. It was not intended to threaten either Chinese sovereignty or undermine the open door policy.<sup>1</sup> It was within this context that the Foreign Office sought the protection of British interests in Korea during the negotiations of the second Alliance and soon after Tokyo's intention to annex the peninsula became known. The same motive underlined London's protests to Tokyo over reports that the Japanese military authorities were barring the entry of other foreign nationals into South Manchuria for the purpose of trade and its support for Ito in his struggle with Yamagata over the question of throwing the region open to trade by all nations. It was in the same spirit that the Foreign Office strongly protested to Tokyo over reports that whatever decision it might make on the future of Shantung, it was bent on muzzling

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<sup>1</sup>E.W. Edwards, 'Great Britain and the Manchurian Railways Question, 1909-1910' in the English Historical Review, Vol. 81 (1966), pp. 740-769.



other foreign interests in the province in the interest of Japanese nationals. As regards the question of Chinese sovereignty in South Manchuria and in Kwantung, the Foreign Office made it plain that it would not entertain any move by Japan to block the right of the Chinese Government to employ any foreign firm to undertake any enterprises of its choice in those regions, provided such enterprises did not prejudicially affect Japanese interests in the South Manchurian Railway. This statement was, to all intents and purposes, a recognition of Chinese sovereignty over South Manchuria and Kwantung. But, perhaps, the most categorical statement on the subject <sup>that</sup> can be adduced is Balfour's assertion in respect of Shantung. He noted that when Britain agreed that Japan should supplant Germany in Shantung, London consented to the taking away from China of 'nothing .... which China possessed' in the province.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Japan's position in Shantung was regarded in London as limited by Chinese sovereignty as provided under the Sino-German Treaty of 1898. The same argument could be marshalled in defence of the British position in respect of South Manchuria and Kwantung. The situation was, however, different in respect of British diplomatic attitudes towards Korea. As far as the peninsula was concerned, the Foreign Office acknowledged that Japan's activities in the territory constituted an infraction of Korean sovereignty. Yet London defended its support for Japan in these moves with the argument that, given the trend of events in the peninsula, Korea was bound to fall into the orbit of either Russia or Japan. Since the territory was of great strategic importance to Japan's external security, Russia's success in firmly

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<sup>1</sup>Cited from Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.214.



establishing herself there would always create tensions in the Far East with a strong possibility of another Russo-Japanese war. It was, therefore, in the best interest of peace in the orient that Japan should be supported in obtaining the upper hand in the territory. In addition, the Foreign Office took the view that Japan's record in Formosa clearly indicated that she was prepared to carry the 'lantern of civilization' that had accounted for her own development to the 'backward races' at her borders. Since the internal situation in the peninsula could hardly assist Korea towards the path of development, Japan had to be given all the necessary encouragement, if she so desired, to move into the territory and reform the country. It is, however, doubtful whether this late nineteenth century justification of colonialism had the same weight as the strategic and military aspects of the issue. This position becomes glaring if one considers the extent to which Britain was prepared to support Japan not only in Korea but also in the other three regions.

Throughout its support for Japan in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and in Shantung, the Foreign Office saw Tokyo's position in each territory in no different light from that which Britain herself occupied in the Yangtze Valley and in Wei-hai Wei. It was for this reason that Grey sought to prevent the annexation of Korea if Britain could find sufficient grounds for it.<sup>1</sup> It was for a similar reason that Britain tried to refrain from entering into any opposition to the Japanese position in South Manchuria

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/877, Minute on MacDonald to Grey (Telegram No. 86 confidential), 4 July 1910.



that would have the effect of driving the latter into making a common cause with the Russians for the dismemberment of Manchuria from China. It was in the same spirit that Britain sought to restrain Japan from making any demands on China in Shantung that were beyond the rights and interests which the Germans possessed in the province. London's support for Japan in all the four territories was, therefore, limited to its conception of the principles of the sphere of influence and interest as well as the open door policy.

The very nature of these principles, however, did not admit the full exercise of Chinese sovereignty. While the Foreign Office was quite alive to this situation, it viewed their existence as being at the time a necessary condition for the protection of foreign investments in China and reducing severe competition and rivalry amongst the Powers. By 1906, however, the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that sufficient conditions had been established and that there were no justifications for any of the Powers seeking further spheres of influence, extraterritorial rights and foreign settlements in China. What was needed was an insistence that Peking should scrupulously observe the established traditions as had been defined by treaties and conventions and not be pressurised into granting new concessions of that nature to any of the Powers.<sup>1</sup> Even the operation of the much loved 'open door' policy had by 1920 made London rather sceptical as to its compatibility with the maintenance of Chinese sovereignty. This,

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/35, Grey to Jordan (No. 298 confidential), 31 August 1906.



as Wellesley pointed out, was primarily due to its lack of precise definition and universally acceptable code of application:

'There are many opinions as to what the exact meaning of the "open door" is. In fact, the weakness of this policy lies very largely in the latitude of interpretation to which it is liable. It may perhaps best be described as the absence of discrimination in all matters pertaining to trade and vested interests. It certainly is opposed to monopolistic idea, suppression of competition, and a policy of exclusion. At the same time the fact must not be overlooked that a virtually monopolistic situation can be, and often is, brought about by superior energy and push and by perfectly legitimate means, which makes competition unremunerative without the necessity of having to resort to a policy of exclusion.'<sup>1</sup>

This policy, the Foreign Office noted, could be manipulated and developed into a sphere of influence and then into a colony. It was, however, pointed out that Japan did not believe in this subtle approach. Her whole policy in South Manchuria, Kwantung, Korea and Shantung had been outright discrimination against other foreigners, thus enabling her to achieve exclusive position in the region:

'The exclusion of foreign competition, which inevitably follows Japanese occupation is not solely due to superior qualities, because the whole process of penetration follows on lines of settled policy, which is made up of legitimate as well as illegitimate methods, which latter are often so subtle and so intangible that they cannot be brought within treaty stipulations. In other words, the policy of peaceful penetration by a signatory to a treaty providing for the freedom of trade is nothing else but a very subtle device for arriving by legitimate means at an illegitimate end.

Speaking generally, the open door policy is first and foremost a question of railway. Japanese

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5361, Memorandum by Wellesley [F22007], 1 September 1920. See Sadao Asada, 'Japan's "Special Interests" and the Washington Conference, 1921-22' in American Historical Review, 68 (1961), pp. 62-70 for a special article on this subject.







policy in Manchuria, Shantung and Fukien is first of all a railway policy. If a single country possesses an exclusive railway enclave in a territory of a weaker neighbour the district served by such lines is bound to become "a sphere of influence", an exclusive preserve, a protectorate, a colony, and finally a possession of the beneficiary country, if that country so wills it. China shows instances of this process in all its different stages. Korea is definitely annexed, Kwantung province is a colony, South Manchuria is a protectorate, Shantung an exclusive preserve, and Fukien a sphere of influence. In each case, the stages are marked by the development of railway construction.<sup>1</sup>

The position as analyzed above was endorsed by a committee of four appointed by the Foreign Office in October 1920 to review the question of the renewal of the alliance and the future of British policy in the Far East. After defining British policy in the region as 'the maintenance of peace, the security of British possessions and interests in that part of the globe, the preservation of the independence of China and equal opportunity for all in matters of trade and commerce', the committee singled out Japan as being the principal obstacle in the realization of these objectives. In coming to this conclusion, the committee drew on a number of instances in the regions under discussion to substantiate its arguments.<sup>2</sup> But should Japan alone be blamed for the failure of British policy in the Far East? Decidedly not.

Until the definition or redefinition of British Yangtze policy in 1913, British nationals were, at least on paper, entitled to seek any concessions of their choice in South Manchuria and Kwantung.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/6672, Report of the Anglo-Japanese Committee /F 11697 1. 21 January 1921. The committee consisted of John Jordan, Conyngham Greene, Victor Wellesley and William Tyrrell.



The closing of the door to British investments in these regions was partly the fault of the British Government when circumstances forced it to reassert its position in the Yangtze and to call upon Japan to issue a statement to the effect that she was prepared to admit British investments in South Manchuria or to bar her nationals from seeking any concessions in the Yangtze region. If it is noted that Japan had on no occasion publicly declared that she was opposed to all forms of British investments in South Manchuria, then one clearly sees the blunder committed by the Foreign Office in asking for such a declaration from Tokyo. When the Japanese Government refused to commit itself to such a policy, there was no way Britain could have supported her nationals seeking investment opportunities in South Manchuria. In addition, it is worthy of note that as late as 22 November 1919, Jordan observed that he could not 'overlook the fact that the really interested parties In the Chinese and Korean trade<sup>7</sup>, the British mercantile community, have trusted too much to the efficacy of a political formula and too little to their own initiative' in their operations. This, as he further observed, was one of the causes for the failure of British trade and commerce in the regions under discussion.<sup>1</sup> This analysis is clearly borne out by Appendix 2 below, where it becomes evident that whereas American, Russian and Chinese imports into Korea kept on rising, those of Britain were almost stagnant between 1910 and 1922. It is, however, puzzling that none of the Foreign Office's memoranda on

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/3696, Jordan to Curzon (No. 525), 22 November 1919; DBFP, Vol. 1, No. 597, pp. 347-56



Japanese political and economic activities in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung recalled these facts. A more important omission in these discussions was the judgement made by the Foreign Office Committee reviewing the question of the Alliance without a clear insight of the real facts about the economic conditions both in Japan and in the areas of our subject matter.<sup>1</sup> Does it, therefore, mean that the Foreign Office views on the issue were mere propaganda aimed at distorting the facts in order to convince the government not to renew the alliance?

Admittedly, the Foreign Office appeared to have emerged from the first World War more anti-Japanese than anyone could have predicted in 1913, yet this attitude seemed to carry with it an air of unshakable conviction as to the aims and objectives of Japan in the Far East. The Foreign Office had been witness to a number of broken promises in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung. These incidents gave it the impression that Japan had a group of settled policies aimed at dominating the whole of the Far East. The most convenient method she had so far found in realising part of this ambition was to manipulate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and hide behind British goodwill and support.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the various Foreign Office memoranda was, therefore, to marshall, in the most convenient manner, these manipulations and their effects on British aims and objectives in the Far East. Hence the memoranda

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<sup>1</sup> FO/371/5361, Eliot to Curzon (No. 556), 26 November 1920 and minute by Wellesley thereon.

<sup>2</sup> FO/371/5361, Memorandum by Wellesley [F 22007], 1 September 1920. FO/371/5345, Memorandum on Japan and the Open Door by Ashton-Gwatkin [F 21427], 7 July 1920; Quarterly Review, 'Japan and the War', October 1920 - Ashton-Gwatkin admitted at a lecture organised by the Japan Society on 8 April 1975 that he had written this article.



were not intended to present a well balanced view of the situation but merely to highlight the British position vis-à-vis these developments. In spite of this, the Foreign Office came out strongly against the renewal of the Alliance in its current form mainly on the basis of its experiences in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung and its fear that if adequate safeguards were not sought, Japan would be able to manipulate the Alliance and dominate Peking. This position was made patently clear by members of the Committee reviewing the Alliance when they noted that:

'We cannot ... conceal from ourselves that, whatever justification ... [Japan] may have, her aims have revealed an increasing variance from the principles for which British policy has always stood, and upon which the Alliance is founded.

We wish to reply at once to the criticism that the absence of any Alliance will remove all restraint on Japanese expansion by saying that in the opinion of all competent observers the Alliance has never acted as an effective brake on Japanese activities; but we admit the force of the criticism to the extent of suggesting an alternative in the form of an Entente between Great Britain, Japan and the United States of America.<sup>1</sup>

The advantages of such Anglo-American-Japanese Entente, the Committee observed, would be the reduction of naval competition among the three Powers, cultivation of the closest relations between Britain and the United States and securing the wholehearted co-operation of Washington in the maintenance of peace in every corner of the world. These 'cardinal feature(s)' of post-war British foreign policy, the Committee continued, would be baulked and leave Japanese policies in China unchecked if Britain sought the renewal of the

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/6672, Report of the Anglo-Japanese Committee [F 11697, 21 January 1921.



Alliance. In conclusion, the Committee noted that:

'In the last analysis the independence and integrity of China, which is among our foremost aims, depends upon the reality or otherwise of the whole situation ... In our opinion, the best safeguard against a danger which lies as much in the weakness of China as in the aggressive tendencies of Japan, is to be found in a constructive policy for the rehabilitation of China...

We would, however, repeat that in our opinion it would be hopeless to embark upon such a policy single-handed, or without adequate naval support. Japan could thwart us at every turn. The war has left us too exhausted to cope with so great a problem. To succeed in such an effort we believe the co-operation of the United States to be indispensable. American ideals in China are identical with our own. Neither Power seeks territorial aggrandisement or privileged position. Both are actuated by a feeling of goodwill towards China and a genuine desire for peace in the Far East as elsewhere.'<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Committee cautioned, if Washington proved unfavourable to joining such an Entente at present with Britain and Japan, London should seek 'an agreement with Japan, brought up to date and in harmony with the spirit of the League of Nations, and so framed as not to exclude the eventual participation of the United States.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the net result of Japanese actions in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung was to drive the Foreign Office into seeking an agreement with Japan which aimed at checking Japanese policies and not an alliance with Japan designed to contain any of the traditional rivals of Britain as was the case with the previous Alliances between the two Powers. This was not only because

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



of the collapse of the power and influence of those traditional enemies but also because of the Foreign Office's view that Japan had copied and perfected the very acts of those which the three Alliances were originally designed to check:

'The pioneer in the development of that comparatively new phase in the field of international politics now known under the name of "peaceful penetration" was of course Germany. By the beginning of this century this new German method was already in full operation, but it had not yet developed sufficiently to attract universal attention, and its process as an organised and systematic piece of mechanism had neither been studied nor understood. In fact, it was only during the great war that its real import and significance became fully revealed. Count Hayashi was himself a student of modern economics and an admirer of German methods. With his advent to power in 1906 Japanese policy began to enter upon a new phase moulded closely on the German pattern, and it is from that date onwards that it calls for the closest scrutiny ... Hitherto the efficacy of commerce, industry, and finance as a means of political expansion had been little appreciated by the Foreign Office at Tokyo. Hayashi was the first to perceive that in an economic and commercial campaign in China, properly co-ordinated, lay an invaluable aid to, and in certain spheres a substitute for, diplomatic activity. His policy was to combine the two and to reinforce their advances by agreements with the various Powers, which should give Japan control over every other nation's affairs in China while in the background there always remained the mailed fist of a powerful army and navy. Short as Hayashi's term of office was - under two years - his policy remains to this day the guiding strings of the Tokyo Foreign Office. The political control of China by means of economic penetration and diplomatic aggression has become the obsession of Japanese statesmen, soldiers, politicians, and capitalists alike. The whole forces of national credit, intelligence and enterprise are mobilised under the Government and concentrated on the Chinese objective. By her success or failure in this effort Japan stands or falls .....

Henceforward Japan's policy consists of a combination of political and economic action which stamps her as amongst the most unprincipled and untrustworthy nations in the world...<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FO/371/5361, Memorandum by Wellesley [F 22007, 1 September 1920.



The basis of this conclusion was the Foreign Office's views on Tokyo's record in Korea, South Manchuria, Kwantung and Shantung. But the final decision as regards the renewal or non-renewal of the Alliance did not rest with the Foreign Office. When the Cabinet met on 30 May 1921 to consider the question, it did not bother to refer to the opinion of the Foreign Office before coming out in favour of renewing the Alliance.<sup>1</sup> But the same position was reiterated during the Imperial Conference of 1921 when the question of the Alliance dominated the proceedings.<sup>2</sup> Had it, therefore, not been for American pressure, the Four Power Agreement would not have replaced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance purely on the basis of Japan's political and economic activities in the areas of this study.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, these activities were responsible for alienating the Foreign Office from any strong desire for another Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This disinclination towards another defensive and offensive alliance with Tokyo was strengthened as the gulf between the United States and Japan widened and was given additional impetus by the so-called Manchurian crisis and the war in Shanghai which clouded the international scene in the thirties.<sup>4</sup> It was, therefore, not

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<sup>1</sup>CAB 23/25, Minutes of 30 May 1921.

<sup>2</sup>Louis, op.cit., pp. 50-78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-108. For other aspects of this issue see, for instance, J.B.Brebner, 'Canada, the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the Washington Conference' in Political Science Quarterly, 50 (1935), pp. 45-58; John Jordan, 'The Washington Conference and Far Eastern Questions' in Quarterly Review, 238 (1922), pp. 101-116; Merze Tate and Fidele Foy, 'More Light on the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance' in Political Science Quarterly, 74 (1959), pp. 532-554.

<sup>4</sup>For details of these incidents, see Christopher Thorne, The limits of foreign policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern crisis of 1931-1933 (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1972).



surprising that when in 1934 the British Government began tentative moves towards an Anglo-Japanese rapprochement, the Foreign Office did not come out strongly in favour of those steps.<sup>1</sup>

For, in the view of the Foreign Office, the experiences of the first three alliances ought to sour every Briton to the whole idea of another Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Trotter, 'Tentative Steps for an Anglo-Japanese Rapprochement in 1934' in Modern Asian Studies, 8, 1 (1974), pp. 59-83; R. John Pritchard, 'The Far East As An Influence On The Chamberlain Government's Pre-War European Policies' in Millennium (Journal of the International Studies of London School of Economics and Political Science, Winter 1974-3), Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 7-23.



APPENDIX 1

Table 1: FOREIGN TRADE OF KOREA  
1899-- 1903

Year	Total import and export exclusive of gold export	Export of gold	Total foreign trade	Rate of exchange		
	Yen	Yen	Yen	Pound sterling	s	d
1899	15,225,185	2,933,385	18,158,567	1,815,875	2	0
1900	20,380,327	3,633,050	24,013,377	2,401,338	2	0
1901	23,158,419	4,993,351	28,151,770	2,873,827	2	0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1902	21,858,179	5,064,106	26,922,585	2,748,346	2	0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1903	27,696	5,456,397	33,153,183	3,384,387	2	0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>

FO/17/1659, Enclosure No. 1 in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 84), 16 March 1904.

Table 2: SUMMARY OF FOREIGN (DUTY PAID) IMPORTS  
AT CHEMULPO ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY  
OF ORIGIN - SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1904

Nationality	Sept. £	Oct. £	Nov. £	Dec. £	Total £
Japanese	57,304	67,032	63,467	79,203	267,008
British	64,428	50,573	57,178	53,040	225,219
Chinese	20,464	23,389	23,000	17,803	84,656
American	8,427	10,367	13,581	14,796	47,171
German	4,405	3,406	2,938	2,759	13,508
French	393	792	898	578	2,661
Russian	147	26	378	190	741
Swedish	64	-	317	179	560
Belgian	53	152	81	134	420
Danish	7	125	93	1	226
Swiss	-	96	-	-	96
Italian	28	28	22	7	85
Australian	10	4	1	-	15
Total	155,730	115,992	161,954	168,670	642,366

FO/17/1692, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 20), 8 February 1905.



Table 3: TABLE SHOWING PROPORTION PER CENT OF  
BRITISH AND JAPANESE IMPORTS OF COTTON  
GOODS INTO CHEMULPO SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER  
1904

Month	Total Import	British Import	% of total	Japanese Import	% of total
September	94,732	61,062	64.45	31,175	32.91
October	74,212	42,402	57.13	30,738	41.42
November	75,003	50,829	67.77	23,511	31.35
December	77,034	41,190	53.46	35,682	46.31
Total	320,985	195,483	60.90	121,116	37.73

FO/17/1692, Enclosure in Jordan to Lansdowne (No. 20),  
8 February 1905.



APPENDIX 2FOREIGN TRADE OF KOREA  
1910 - 1922Table 1: EXPORTS

Year	C O U N T R I E S					
	1,000 Yen					
	Japan	China	Russia	Britain	U.S.	Others
1910	15,379	3,026	1,155	24	304	24
1911	13,341	3,009	1,511	1	953	41
1912	15,369	4,058	1,248	198	96	20
1913	25,429	4,184	1,010	235	90	47
1914	28,587	4,518	1,109	43	92	36
1915	40,901	5,599	2,905	12	32	44
1916	42,964	8,062	4,715	67	963	30
1917	64,726	11,954	6,717	10	337	33
1918	137,205	15,096	1,599	1	116	182
1919	199,849	17,038	2,303	15	336	125
1920	169,380	24,278	2,352	213	266	594
1921	197,392	19,228	1,095	3	301	255
1922	197,914	16,661	551	3	125	-

Compiled from Annual Reports of Progress and Reforms in Korea (Chosen), Economic History of Chosen and Diplomatic and Consular Reports. The British trade includes that of India and Hong Kong.



Table 2: IMPORTS

Year	C O U N T R I E S					
	1,000 Yen					
Year	Japan	China	Russia	Britain	U.S.	Others
1910	25,348	3,845	18	6,227	3,205	1,140
1911	34,058	5,442	49	7,924	4,261	2,353
1912	40,756	7,027	73	9,802	6,460	2,997
1913	40,429	9,765	64	7,545	7,850	5,928
1914	39,047	7,761	103	5,434	6,127	3,842
1915	41,535	8,022	107	4,280	3,934	1,121
1916	52,459	9,565	171	4,593	6,552	897
1917	72,696	12,669	221	4,057	11,609	1,225
1918	117,273	22,725	425	3,506	10,341	5,041
1919	184,913	60,600	720	5,576	24,182	4,795
1920	143,111	77,380	447	4,940	19,700	5,445
1921	156,482	50,188	376	7,808	14,374	3,150
1922	160,247	62,787	864	8,078	18,069	-

Compiled from Annual Reports of Progress and Reforms in Korea (Chosen), Economic History of Chosen and Diplomatic and Consular Reports. The British share of the trade includes that of India and Hong Kong.

#### BENJAMIN SIR CHARLES HENRI (1871-1952)

Nominated as 1st Attache in Korea in March 1904 and posted to Japan in February 1905. Promoted to Third Secretary in 1906 and posted to the Legation in October of the same year. Transferred to the Legation (April 1908), where he acted as Charge d'Affaires between 1908 and 1911. Promoted to the rank of Second Secretary in March 1911. Transferred to Tokyo in April 1914, promoted as First Secretary (1917) and transferred to the Foreign Office (May 1919) and then to Canada in October 1920. Promoted as Counsellor of the Legation in November 1920 and acted as Charge d'Affaires from November 1921 to January 1922, from



Appendix 3PERMANENT OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATS OF THE BRITISHFOREIGN OFFICE: SELECTIVE BIOGRAPHIESALSTON, BEILBY FRANCIS (1868-1929)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1891 and was promoted as senior clerk in 1907. Between January and July 1912, sent to Peking as Acting Counsellor, went back to Peking between May and November 1913, first as Acting Counsellor and later as Chargé d'Affaires. Occupied similar positions in Peking again between June 1916 and October 1917 and later posted to Vladivostok as Deputy High Commissioner (July 1918 to March 1919), to Tokyo first as Chargé d'Affaires with local and personal rank of Minister Plenipotentiary (April 1919 to April 1920) before being officially promoted to the latter rank in September 1919. Posted to Peking again as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in March 1920 and was transferred to Buenos Aires in September 1922. Appointed British Ambassador to Brazil (October 1925).

ASHTON-GWATKIN, FRANK TRELAWNY ( 1889- )

Entered the Foreign Service as a student interpreter in 1913 and was promoted as Second Class Assistant in April 1915. Posted to Yokohama in 1917 as Pro-Consul and promoted as First Assistant in the Diplomatic Service in 1920; appointed Second Secretary in 1921 and was attached to the British delegation to the Washington Conference (1921-2). Promoted as First Secretary in 1924 and in December 1929 posted to Moscow as Acting Counsellor to the British Embassy. Transferred to the Foreign Office as First Secretary in April 1930 and promoted to the rank of Counsellor in the Foreign Office. Seconded to the Ministry of Economic Warfare in September 1939 and promoted as Acting Principal Assistant Secretary in November 1939. Appointed Acting Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Principal Establishment and Finance Officer in 1940; promoted as Senior Inspector of H.M. Missions with the rank of Minister in H.M. Foreign Service in 1944 and reappointed as Under-Secretary of State in 1947. Retired in December 1947. He is still alive and occasionally gives lectures on Japanese history during the time of his service.

BENTINCK, SIR CHARLES HENRY (1879-1955)

Nominated as an Attaché in March 1904 and posted to Berlin in February 1905. Promoted as Third Secretary in 1906 and posted to St. Petersburg in October of the same year. Transferred to The Hague (April 1908), where he acted as Chargé d'Affaires between 1909 and 1913. Promoted to the rank of Second Secretary in March 1910. Transferred to Tokyo in April 1914, promoted as First Secretary (1917) and transferred to the Foreign Office (May 1919) and then to Athens in October 1920. Promoted as Counsellor of the Embassy in November 1920 and acted as Chargé d'Affaires from November 1921 to January 1922, from



July to September 1922, from November 1922 to February 1924 and from July to September 1924. Appointed Consul-General for Bavaria to reside in Munich in 1924. Promoted as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Addis Ababa (1925); transferred to Lima and accredited to Ecuador in January 1929, to Sofia in January 1934 and to Prague in October 1936. Promoted as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Santiago in March 1937. Retired in February 1941.

BONAR, HENRY ALFRED CONSTANT (1861-1935)

Entered the Diplomatic Service as a student interpreter in Japan in March 1880 and was promoted as Second Class Assistant in April 1882. Appointed Acting Consul at Nagasaki (1882-3) and Pro-Consul at Hiogo (1884-6). Promoted as First Class Assistant (May 1886) and as Assistant Japanese Secretary in Tokyo in September 1889; appointed Acting Consul at Hakodate (1888-9). When the post of Assistant Japanese Secretary was abolished in 1891 as a permanent appointment, he reverted to his rank as First Assistant and was appointed Pro-Consul at Hiogo (1891-3). Promoted as Consul for Hakodate (1896), Tamsui (December 1896) and then for Yokohama (1898), where he was also appointed Assistant Judge for the British consular court, and promoted as Acting Judge (February 1900). Between October 1902 and January 1904, employed on special service in connection with the preparation of the Case and Counter-Case of the British, French and German Governments in the Japanese Perpetual Leases Arbitration. Transferred to Kobe in 1908 and then to Korea in 1909 as Consul-General. Retired in June 1912 but was reemployed in 1917 in the Postal Censor Department.

BUCHANAN, SIR GEORGE WILLIAM (1854-1924)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1876. Appointed secretary of the Embassy in the Diplomatic Service in May 1899 and was posted to the Netherlands and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg in 1909 as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. Transferred to Russia in November 1910 as Ambassador and then to Rome in October 1919.

CAMPBELL, SIR FRANCIS ALEXANDER (1852-1911)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1871 and was promoted as Senior Clerk (1896) and as Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1902.

COCKBURN, HENRY ( 1859-1927)

Entered the Diplomatic Service as a student interpreter in China in March 1880 and appointed as Acting Consul at Canton in 1885. Between February 1887 and November 1890, employed on special service at Chungking. Promoted as Second Class Assistant in April 1891, First Class Assistant in January 1895 and employed as an Assistant in the Chinese Secretary's Office in Peking from May 1893 to October



1896 when he was promoted as a Chinese Secretary. Appointed an Assistant Commissioner to assist the British Special Commissioner conducting commercial negotiations with the Chinese Government (October 1901); given the rank of Secretary of the Legation in the Diplomatic Service and appointed Chargé d'Affaires in Korea from November 1905 to April 1906, when he was appointed Consul-General for the consular district of Korea. Retired in July 1909 but was employed as an Assistant Censor on the Staff of the Postal Censorship during the first World War.

ELIOT, SIR CHARLES NORTON EDGUMBE (1864-1931)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1886; appointed High Commissioner and Consul General on the commission appointed by Britain, Germany and the United States to enquire into the state of affairs in Samoa (1899); appointed as the Agent and Consul-General for the dominions of the Sultan of Zambia, Consul-General for British East Africa and for German East Africa (1900). Resigned from the Foreign Office in June 1904 but in 1918 appointed High Commissioner and Consul-General to Siberia and was posted to Tokyo in 1920 as Ambassador, a post he held for about three years.

GREENE, SIR WILLIAM CONYNGHAM (1854-1934)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1877 but was transferred to the Colonial Office (1896) where he served as the Agent at Pretoria with the rank of Chargé d'Affaires in the Diplomatic Service for about three years. In 1901, appointed Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Confederation; transferred to Bucharest in 1905 and to Copenhagen in 1911. Became the British Ambassador in Tokyo between December 1912 and 1919, when he retired.

GREG, ROBERT HYDE (1876-1953)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1900 and in 1909 was promoted as Assistant Clerk. Elevated to the rank of Second Secretary in the Diplomatic Service in 1911 and was attached to the Agency in Cairo. Promoted as Acting First Secretary in July 1913, and in August 1914 resumed work at the Foreign Office but returned to Cairo in the same month. Returned to London in January 1915 and was posted as Envoy to Bangkok (1921), Bucharest (1926) and as the British Commissioner on the Caisse de la Dette Publique of Egypt in 1929. Retired in August 1940.

HARDINGE OF PENSHURST (CHARLES HARDINGE), LORD (1858-1944)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1880; posted to Teheran as Secretary to the Legation (1896); transferred to St. Petersburg in April 1904 and was appointed as Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office in February 1906. Between November 1910 and April 1916, occupied the post of Viceroy of India. Appointed Chairman of the Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of the Irish rebellion (May 1916). Rejoined the Foreign Office as Permanent Under-Secretary in June 1916.



the  
and was appointed the Superintending Ambassador at/Paris Peace Conference (1918-19); appointed as the British Ambassador to France in 1920. Retired in January 1923.

JORDAN, SIR JOHN NEWELL (1852-1925)

Entered the Diplomatic Service as a student interpreter in China in 1876; transferred to Seoul in 1896 as Consul-general and then as Minister Resident (1901). Between 1906 and 1920, served as Special Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Peking. Retired in August 1920 but was chosen as one of the British delegates to the Washington Conference (1921-2).

LAMPSON, MILES WEDDERBURN (1886-1964)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1903; transferred to Tokyo in 1908 as Acting Second Secretary; resumed duty in London in 1910 and was promoted as Assistant Clerk in 1913. Posted to Peking as Acting First Secretary (September 1916) and to Siberia as Acting High Commissioner (1919-20); returned to the Foreign Office in 1922 as Counsellor. Appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Peking (1926); High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan (1935); Ambassador in Egypt (1936) and Special Commissioner in South-East Asia residing in Singapore (1946-8). Retired in August 1948.

LANGLEY, SIR WALTER LOUIS FREDERICK (1855-1918)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1878 and was promoted as Assistant Clerk (1898), Senior Clerk (1902) and as Assistant Under-Secretary of State in 1907.

LAY, ARTHUR HYDE (1865-1934)

Entered the Diplomatic Service in 1887; promoted Second Class Assistant (1889) and First Class Assistant (1896). Appointed Pro-Consul at Yokohama (1894-6) and took charge of the Vice-Consulate of Tokyo (1897-9); appointed Acting Japanese Secretary (1899-1902); transferred to Chemulpo as Vice-Consul (1902) and as a Consul (1907); Acting Consul-General in Seoul from September 1908 to December 1909 and from January to September 1911. Transferred to Shimonoseki in February 1913; appointed Acting Consul-General for Kobe (1913-4); promoted to the rank of Consul-General and transferred to Korea in 1914. Retired on 8 August 1927.

MACDONALD, SIR CLAUDE MAXWELL (1852-1915)

Joined the 74th Highlanders of the British army in 1872 and was attached to the War Office agency in Cairo (1883-7). Served as Commissioner for British West Africa (1888-96); appointed as Minister in Peking (1896-1900) and in Tokyo (1900-05). Promoted as Ambassador to Japan (1906) and served in that position until his retirement in December 1912.



MAX MÜLLER, WILLIAM GRENFELL (1867-1945)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1892 and in 1909 transferred to Peking, where he served as Counsellor of the British Legation (February 1909 to February 1910) and as Chargé d'Affaires (March to November 1910); returned to the Foreign Office in September 1911 but was posted to Budapest in July 1913 as Consul-general. Soon after the outbreak of the first World War he returned to London but was posted to Warsaw in 1920. Retired in December 1927.

RUMBOLD, (SIR) HORACE GEORGE MONTAGUE (1869-1941)

Entered the Foreign Office in 1890 and served in Cairo, Athens and Tehran before being promoted as First Secretary in 1904. Transferred to Madrid (1906), Munich (1908) and Tokyo as Counsellor (February 1909) and acted as Chargé d'Affaires from May to September 1909, from 1 May to 31 July 1911 and from 1 November 1912 to 5 March 1913. In November 1913, he was transferred to Berlin, where he acted as Chargé d'Affaires from 1 July to 27 July 1914. At the outbreak of the first World War, left for London, where he was employed at the Foreign Office until September 1916, when he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Berne. Transferred to Warsaw (September 1919), and in November 1920 was posted to Constantinople as Ambassador with the title of British High Commissioner. Transferred again to Madrid (February 1924) and to Berlin (August 1928). Retired in 1933.

WELLESLEY, VICTOR ALEXANDER AUGUSTUS HENRY (1876-1954)

Joined the Foreign Office in 1899 and in 1908 appointed commercial attaché in the Diplomatic Service. Promoted as Assistant Clerk in the Foreign Office (1910), Senior Clerk (1913), Assistant Secretary (1919), Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1924) and as Deputy Under-Secretary of State (1925). Retired in October 1934.

ISHII, KATSUNOSUKU (1872-1945)

The second son of Iwano Sadao, was sent to Europe for studies (1891) and upon returning had joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a secretary. Appointed Minister to Germany and Belgium and Ambassador to London (1914-15), Russian Empire (1915) and appointed President of the Bureau of Consular and a Privy Counsellor.

ISHII, KATSUNOSUKU (1872-1945)

Born in China prefecture. After graduating from Tokyo University with a degree in English and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Appendix 4JAPANESE STATESMEN, POLITICIANS AND DIPLOMATS:SELECTIVE BIOGRAPHIESHAYASHI, GONSUKE (1860-1939)

Diplomat. Son of Hayashi Gonsuke, the military commander of the artillery regiment of the Japanese army; graduated from the Law Department, Tokyo University, in 1887 and entered the Foreign Ministry; posted to Peking, where he served as the Japanese Minister. Appointed Ambassador to Rome before returning to Peking, 1916-18. Appointed as Ambassador in London in 1920, a post he held for six years. Made Grand Master of Ceremonies (1929), member of the Privy Council and raised to the baronetcy.

HAYASHI, TADASU (1850-1913)

Diplomat. Born in Chiba Prefecture, the son of Sato Taizen, a physician of the Sakura clan. In 1866, sent to England to study by order of the Shogunate. After returning to Japan, joined the rebellion of Takeaki Enomoto at the time of the Restoration (1868). Later, served the Imperial Government and followed Iwakura Tomomi on his European and American tours. Appointed governor of Kawa and Hyogo Prefecture. Appointed Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1891. His first foreign post was in China as a Minister (1895) then Minister to Russia (1897) and to Britain as a Minister (1900-5) and as ambassador (1905-6). Held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Saionji Administration (1906-8) and Minister of Communications (1911-12) and Foreign Minister again (1913).

IJUIN, HIKOKICHI (1864-1924)

Diplomat. The eldest son of Ijuin Yoshitsugu, a former retainer of the Satsuma (Kagoshima) clan. Graduated from Tokyo University in 1890 and became a diplomatic probationer. Was a consul in Britain and Italy and Minister in Peking (1909-13) and Ambassador in Italy. Made a baron in 1920. A member of the Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (1919). Later appointed Governor of the Kwantung Leased Territory (1922) and then Foreign Minister (1923).

INOUE, KATSUNOSUKE (1860-1929)

The second son of Inoue Gorosaburo. Was sent to Europe for studies (1871) and upon returning home joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a secretary. Appointed Minister to Germany and Belgium and Ambassador to London (1913-16). Created Marquis (1915) and appointed President of the Bureau of Ceremonies and a Privy Councillor.

ISHII, KIKUJIRO (1865-1945)

Born in Chiba prefecture. After graduating from Tokyo University with a degree in English Law, entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



and after acting briefly as probationary diplomat in Paris (1891), embarked upon a successful career in course of which he became secretary at the Foreign Office, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1911, Ambassador in Paris (1911-15), Foreign Minister in the Okuma cabinet (1915-16) and headed the special mission to the United States in 1917 where he negotiated the Ishii-Lansing agreement with the American Secretary of State. Created Baron in recognition of his services in finalising the treaty which annexed Korea. For his successful handling of the Franco-Japanese incident, was created Viscount; made a member of the House of Peers (1916) and then a Privy Councillor. Listed as missing after the conflagration following a bombing-raid over Tokyo in World War II.

ITO, HIROBUMI (1841-1909)

Statesman. Born at Tokamura Kumage-gun, Suo province in Yamaguchi prefecture. At the age of 9, he was taken by his father, Hayashi Juzo, a farmer of Samurai descent, to the nearby city of Hagi and in a few years began working there as wakato, young attendant, for one of the Samurai families. Had his first break in life at the age of 14 when his father was adopted by the Samurai family of Ito and succeeded to the headship of the house, thereby becoming an Ashigaru or Samurai of the lowest rank. Ito then began receiving formal education as a youth of the Samurai class. At 16, received an appointment as a guard at the port of Uraga, where four years previously Commodore Perry of the United States had made his surprise entry with his fleet of four armoured warships. While there, was taken into special confidence by Kurushima Ryoza, one of the leading clansmen of the Choshu clan, who gave Ito instructions in martial arts and literature. After some years, entered the Shokasonjuku, the famous private school at Hagi. In 1862, Ito with four fellow clansmen and with the connivance of the Lord of Choshu secretly left Japan on a British cargo ship for London, where for about a year he studied. Abruptly ended his studies and went back to Japan, where he became one of the leading figures in establishing the Meiji dynasty. In 1868, was made Governor of Hyogo prefecture and, in the following year, was appointed Minister of Finance and later Minister of Home Affairs. When the cabinet system was established in 1881, he became the first Prime Minister, a post he held until 1888 when he was made chairman of the newly formed Sumitsuin or Privy Council. Became the leading author of the constitution and when it was promulgated, Ito served as the chairman of the House of Peers. Prime Minister again (1892-5). Formed his third cabinet in 1898 and the fourth in 1900. Became the first leader of the Seiyukai, Constitutional Political Friends Party. In 1905, was appointed the first Resident General of Korea and served there until his assassination in 1909.

KATO, TAKAAKI (KOMEI) (1860-1926)

Statesman. The second son of Hattori Shigesumi, a clansman of Nagoya. After graduating from Tokyo University in 1881, had a distinguished career starting from the Foreign Office where he became



Director of the Political Affairs Bureau. Appointed Minister in London (1898) where he served for two years until his appointment as Foreign Minister, 1900-1, and again 1905-06. Returned to London as ambassador in 1906 until 1913 when he was again appointed Foreign Minister in the Katsura cabinet; served in the same post under the Okuma cabinet from April 1914 until he resigned in August 1915. Founded the Rikken Doshi-kai with Katsura Taro and after the death of the latter became the leader of the party under its new name, the Kenseikai. When the Seiyukai party came to power, Kato was leader of the opposition for ten years till he was elected Prime Minister of the coalition cabinet of three parties (1924), which in the following year, he welded into one solid group known as the Kensaikai for which he was elevated to Count from Viscount, a title he had won for his part in the diplomacy concerning Japan's participation in World War I and his handling of the China Affair (the Twenty One Demands).

KATSURA, TARO (1847-1913)

Soldier-statesman. A member of the Choshu clan of Yamaguchi prefecture. After completing his education at Meirinkan School (clan school) became a soldier and distinguished himself during the expedition to Ou in 1868. Later joined the government service and was sent to Germany for studies in 1870. Returned home in 1873 and two years later was posted to the Berlin legation as Military Attaché. Accompanied General Oyama Iwao during his European tour in 1882; became Vice-Minister of the Army in 1886 and commander-in-chief of the 3rd Division during the Sino-Japanese war (1894-5) and for his distinction created Viscount. Appointed Minister of the Army in 1898, Prime Minister (1901-6) and was created Count in recognition of his conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Became Prime Minister for the second time (1908-11) and again between December 1912 and February 1913. Laid the foundation of the Rikken Doshi-kai but died before its creation.

KOMURA, JUTARO (1855-1911)

Diplomat. A retainer of the Obi clan at Miyazaki prefecture. Began his education at Daigaku Nanko (predecessor of Tokyo University) and then went to America to study law at Harvard University in 1875. Returning home in 1880, he worked for the Ministry of Justice and was later transferred to the Foreign Ministry, and later appointed secretary to the legation in China in 1893, and subsequently Director of the Political Affairs Bureau. Appointed Minister to Korea (1895), then to China and then to America (1898) and Ambassador in London (1906-9). Became Foreign Minister under Katsura (1901-5 and 1908-11). Created Marquis in 1911.

MOTONO, ICHIRO (1862-1918)

Diplomat. Born in Saga prefecture. Studied at the University of Lyons in France after which he joined the Foreign Ministry. Became Resident Minister in Belgium and France and then Ambassador to Russia (1906-16). Appointed Foreign Minister in the Terauchi cabinet (1916-18).



OKUMA, SHIGENOBU (1838-1922)

Statesman. A retainer of the Saga clan, Okuma studied Chinese classics and Dutch at the clan school in his youth. Later went to Nagasaki and learnt English under Guido Fridolin Verbeek, a Dutch missionary. At the Meiji Restoration (1868), was appointed a judge in Nagasaki and handled affairs involving foreigners. Appointed Finance Minister (1869) and subsequently Home Minister, and concurrently Finance Minister (1873). Resigned in 1881 due to disagreement with other government leaders on disposal of government properties. Organized the Rikken Kaishinto, the Progressive Party, and became its president. Founded the Tokyo Semmon Gakko, predecessor of Waseda University. Made a Count (1887) and appointed Foreign Minister (1888-9) and then became a Privy Councillor. Appointed Foreign Minister in 1896. Organised a cabinet with Itagaki Taisuke and became Prime Minister and concurrently Foreign Minister (1898). Appointed Prime Minister again (August to October 1915). For his services in World War I, was promoted to Marquis and decorated with the Grand Order of the Chrysanthemum.

SAIONJI, KIMMOCHI (1849-1940)

Statesman. Second son of Tokudaiji Kinzumi and was adopted by Saionji Morosue. Born in Kyoto, he was appointed a Court Councillor (1867) and participated in the Imperial campaigns against pro-Shogunate forces (1868). Went to France for studies (1879-80). On returning, founded the Meiji Law School, predecessor of Meiji University, and started the Toyo Jiyu Shimbun (newspaper) for the purpose of popularising Western democratic ideas. Accompanied Ito Hirobumi on his European tours of 1882 to make preparations for drafting a constitution for Japan. Appointed Minister to Austria and Germany; President of the Decoration Bureau; Vice-President of the House of Peers and President of the Privy Council. With the help of Ito Hirobumi, founded the Seiyukai and became its President (1909-13). Became Prime Minister (1906-8 and from August 1911 to December 1912). Head of the Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (1919) and was created a Prince in 1920. Because of his past experience and merits, was accorded the treatment of a Genro, Elder Statesman, and his opinions were almost always heeded at cabinet changes.

TERAUCHI, MASATAKE (1852-1919)

Soldier and politician. Born in Yamaguchi prefecture as the third son of Tada Masasuke but was later adopted by the Terauchi family. During the Boshin Affair (the civil war just before the Restoration), followed the government army to Aomori and then to Hokkaido. Sent to France for military training and after his return, posted to Paris as Military Attaché; secretary of the Minister of the Army and the Director of the Staff Officers' College. Became Minister of the Army in 1906; appointed Governor General of Korea (1910-16) and Prime Minister (1916-18).



YAMAGATA, ARITOMO (1838-1922)

Military man and Statesman. Born in Yamaguchi prefecture and was originally named Kyosuke. After completing his education at Shoka-Sonjuku (private school) became a staff officer of the Kiheitai (commando) and distinguished himself in service battles against the Shogunate army. At the early stages of the Meiji administration, helped in laying the basis of clan government by effecting a union between Satsuma (Kagoshima) and Choshu (Yamaguchi) clans. After returning from a tour of Europe with Saigo Tsugumichi, worked for the establishment of the military system that resulted in the promulgation of the Conscription Law in 1872. Appointed Home Minister in 1885 but resigned in 1890. Was twice Prime Minister (1890 and 1898). Served as a member of the Council of War during the Russo-Japanese war (1905-4) and later as a Privy Councillor. After the death of Ito Hirobumi in 1909, Yamagata wielded great power as Genro. Was responsible for the stipulation that the portfolios of army and navy ministers should be held by men in active service, thus giving rise to the Gumbatsu or military clique. Was a strong supporter of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as the basis of Japan's foreign policy although he disbelieved in pursuing this policy regardless of close relations with other Powers.



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B. Private collections

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House of Lords Record Office, London.

Lloyd George papers. The collection has a wide range of materials dealing with Far Eastern matters. One often



comes across Lloyd George's own views about matters which had been or were to be discussed by his cabinet colleagues. It is a well indexed collection for the purposes of quick reference.

Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

Philip Kerr, Lord Lothian, papers. As secretary to Lloyd George between 1916 and 1921, Kerr kept a wide range of revealing documents, including those relating to the Far East, especially on the issue of Shantung at the peace conference. It is a well indexed and properly kept collection.

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