1937: [illegible]

By

Peter William Bunce, B.A.

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CHAPTER I

THE MARCO POLO BRIDGE INCIDENT: PRELUDE AND AFTERMATH

Background

"JAPANESE BATTLE CHINESE AT PEIPING; TROOPS USE MACHINE GUNS AND ARTILLERY BEFORE 5-HOUR CONFLICT IS HALTED."[1] So blared the headlines of the New York Times on July 8, 1937. This incident was the first in a series of crises in 1937 which jeopardized the relations between the United States and Japan, setting them on a collision course climaxed at Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

The clash between the Japanese and the Chinese 29th Army at Marco Polo Bridge ten miles west of Peiping occurred shortly before midnight on July 7. Japanese troops had been maneuvering in the general area for two weeks. Chinese troops resisted at the bridge then retreated to the small walled town of Wanpinghsien. According to Chinese guards, Japanese troops started firing on Wanpinghsien at 3:30 A.M., July 8, destroying homes and killing ten or more civilians and some Chinese soldiers. Random fighting was reported at the bridge

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[1] New York Times, July 8, 1937, p. 1.

as late as 8:30 A.M. but the countryside and Peiping were reported to be quiet.[2]

The local Japanese Assistant Military Attaché told the press that the incident was regrettable. He reported that while Japanese troops were maneuvering near the bridge Chinese troops opened fire. Japanese troops stopped maneuvering and waited. The Chinese opened fire again at 5 A.M. and the Japanese had to take self-defensive action. Japan did not want the issue to blow up but that depended on China's attitude. Representatives from both sides went to Wanpinghsien that morning to negotiate a settlement. The Japanese Foreign Office told the American Embassy in Tokyo that reports from Peiping indicated favorable prospects for a settlement.[3]

What were some of the developments in China prior to the outbreak of hostilities on July 7? How did Ambassador Joseph C. Grew in Tokyo view Japan's relations with the United States and other countries in early 1937? What were the significant political developments in Japan at this time? What were some of the characteristics of the Japanese people in light of Japan's expansion in the Far East? Answers and thoughts to these queries clarify, to a degree, Japan's interest in North China and help to explain why the Marco Polo Bridge incident occurred and the series of crises afterwards.

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[2]U.S., Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941, I (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 313.

[3]Ibid., p. 314.

With the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Japan embarked on a new Asian policy which was in conflict with the Nine Power Treaty, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Covenant of the League of Nations. In February 1933 Japan announced that she would be the policeman in the Far East. The Foreign Office, in 1934, explained what this statement meant:

> (1) Japan is solely responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in East Asia, and Japan has the mission and determination to assume this responsibility; (2) Japan would not permit China to play one foreign power off against another . . . (3) Japan could not tolerate any joint action taken by foreign powers, even of a financial and technical nature, since such action might lead to spheres of interest, international control or even the partitioning of China.[4]

These principles quickly developed into a type of Japanese Monroe Doctrine for East Asia. It was based on the concept of Asia for Asians under Japanese leadership. These aims proved to be no bluff.[5]

Hanson W. Baldwin, writing for The New York Times on July 18, 1937, explained Japanese interest in China:

> The Japanese policy since the assimilation of Manchuria and Jehol has been one of economic and political penetration in the five northern provinces of China (Hopei, Chahar, Shantung, Shansi and Suiyan) backed up by military force. Precisely the same situation as that which now has led to the threat of war occurred in North China in 1935, when Japan had finished the pacification and consolidation of her gains to the north and commenced to seek new worlds to conquer. Then war was threatened in Peiping but the Nanking Government at that time yielded to all Japanese demands, and as a result the Hopei-Chahar Political

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[4]Lawrence H. Battistini, The United States and Asia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1955), pp. 155-56.

[5]Ibid., p. 156.

> Council was set up to rule the two provinces as a semi-autonomous government.[6]

In 1937, Baldwin reported, the eastern counties of Hopei were pro-Japanese while the rest of Hopei and the provinces of Chahar leaned towards Nanking.[7]

On January 1, 1937 Ambassador Grew expressed his views on Japan's relations with Britain, Russia, and China. Only with the United States had the status quo been maintained, but he added,

> . . . with the expiration of the Washington Naval Treaty, due to Japan's intransigeance, and the risk of a race in sea power and fortifications, the long future as contrasted with the immediate present holds out no evident grounds for optimism.
>
> For this unhappy situation Japan herself is primarily to blame, for she has played her cards unwisely and is not reaping the logical results. It is the old story of the defects arising out of a dual control of foreign policy wherein the civil authorities of the Government, including the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office, are overridden by the military and are subjected to the behests of the Army and Navy, which know or care little about developing good relations with foreign countries but without whose support the cabinet could not long survive. We saw very much the same thing working out of Germany in 1914.[8]

In a conversation with General Sadao Araki, Grew revealed that the General indicated that were it not for the exclusion clause of the American Immigration Act of 1924, whereby Japanese immigration to the United States was prohibited, the relations between the United States and Japan would be quite satisfactory. While Grew agreed that this may have been

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[6] New York Times, July 18, 1937, IV, p. 4.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Joseph C. Grew, Ten Years in Japan (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), p. 192.

true at the time, several issues could become "potentially hazardous." One issue was the already-mentioned naval building program and the construction of fortifications. Another issue which could become acute was Japan's aggressive policy in China whereby it might interfere with American interests and flood U.S. markets with inexpensive Japanese goods. This could make it necessary for the United States to protect itself, perhaps causing friction and irritation. Grew saw the Philippines as a "potential" though not an "immediate" source of danger. The oil problem and fisheries could be settled by negotiations and were not serious enough to affect the general tendency of U.S.-Japanese relations. He had no reason to believe

> that these general relations may not maintain their present satisfactory status for some time to come. On the contrary there is very good reason to feel that the Japanese Government values American friendship, especially in view of Japan's increasing difficulties with other nations, and will not purposely alienate the United States unless situations arise where Japan considers her own national interests to be acutely involved. The outlook for 1937, so far as Japanese-American relations are concerned, therefore, would not at present appear to justify pessimism.[9]

Concerning Japan's relations with China, Japanese Prime Minister Kiko Hirota mentioned three points necessary to smooth their relationship. One was for the Chinese Government to check anti-Japanese activity and propaganda, another was Sino-Japanese cooperation to combat communism, and the third point was to stabilize China's factual re-

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[9] Ibid.; U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1937, The Far East (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), III, 1-2.

lations with Manchukuo. As anti-Japanese incidents occurred, the Japanese issued a series of demands publicly and in an aggressive tone. The failure of Japanese diplomacy resulted from the fact that few, if any, of these demands were met. The American Embassy in Tokyo saw that Sino-Japanese negotiations led nowhere and that "astuteness rather than the insincerity of the Chinese Government has succeeded in playing the Japanese negotiators along without surrendering Chinese sovereign rights." The Japanese did not cooperate well with Nanking in controlling anti-Japanese sentiment in China, but instead intensified that sentiment by their aggressive attitudes and tactics. This was revealed in the Chengtu incident when Japan attempted to force the opening of her consulate there which had been closed for five years. The Chinese opposed this move and some Japanese were killed. Similar incidents followed in Pakhoi, Hankow, Shanghai, Changsha, and Tsingtao.

Japan's program at the beginning of 1937 was one of slowing their aggressiveness toward China. Japan had lost face because she had failed in her negotiations with Nanking, and was rather surprised by China's determination not to yield to Japanese pressure. Grew concluded his views on Sino-Japanese relations by saying,

> It is strange but true that Japan appears to have been the last to appreciate the changed conditions in China. Now that Japan realizes that its bluff of military pressure no longer works, some other aggessive method of dominating North China may be tried.[10]

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[10] Ibid., pp. 3-5.

Politically, Japan underwent several changes in government in the first half of 1937. On January 22, Grew said that the conflict between the Cabinet and the Diet (assembly) resulted from the opposition of political parties to the army and its policies. The army stood for: parliamentary reform, clarification of national policy, national defense, stabilization of the peoples' livelihood, and emphasized the present international crisis. The very next day the Hirota Cabinet collectively resigned because the War Minister refused to accept any compromise with the political parties. General Kazushige Ugaki, former Japanese Governor General of Korea, was prominently mentioned as Hirota's successor. But in less than a week Ugaki reported to the Emperor that he could not form a cabinet. Ugaki's note of resignation criticized army interference in politics. Baron Hiranuma, President of the Privy Council, and Admiral Osumi were the two thought most likely to succeed Ugaki. Hiranuma declined the invitation to form a cabinet. General Senjuro Hayashi was then chosen on January 30.[11]

Hayashi, a former Minister of War who was generally believed to have much army support, easily formed a Cabinet. He was a soldier and not a politician. He was a moderate; therefore, it was thought, he would be able to control the army and the Government. The Hayashi Cabinet was regarded

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[11]U.S., Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1937, The Far East (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), IV, 703-705.

as a transitional one, meant to tide over the political crisis, and perhaps form a small movement toward a type of Japanese fascism. Its general weakness and the absence of support from the political parties (no Cabinet member belonged to any of the parties) predicted its short life.[12]

In mid February the Diet met for the first time since the fall of Hirota. Hayashi's address called for an adjustment in the relations with China and Russia. Non-menance and non-aggression were emphasized. Hayashi said it was necessary for China to understand Japan's attitude toward China, the development of mutual appreciation.[13]

Ten days later Hayashi stated that the three-point policy of Hirota toward China was proper but he held different views as to application. Hayashi said China should not make the mistake of thinking that Japan was committed to a policy of aggression. Grew mentioned that there were indications that Hayashi was considering a total abandonment of Hirota's three-point policy. The new policy would be more economic in character such as a reduction of the Chinese tariff. Yet Hayashi saw no useful purpose in resuming diplomatic negotiations. Grew added, "It may be of interest to note that the Japan Times of February 22 compared Japan's reported decision to alter its China policy with President Roosevelt's alleged decision to abandon the Stimson policy of sending nagging notes to Tokyo."[14]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 705-709.

[13] New York Times, February 15, 1937, p. 1; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 25.

[14] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 30-31.

Early in March Naotake Sato, the new Foreign Minister, told Grew that American-Japanese relations would largely be influenced by Japan's relations with China. Shortly after, Sato conceded before the House of Peers China's claim to equality. This was fresh evidence of Hayashi's plan to change Japanese diplomacy. Japan wanted peace and not conquest. The high costs of the Manchuria and China policies had broken the balance of the economic equilibrium of the Japanese. The switch to "economic diplomacy" was to encourage export trade. Hayashi realized Japan's aggressive policy of recent years had isolated her from the rest of the world.[15]

Still Ambassador Grew warned of a calm before the storm. He said it was hard to tell how long the moderate policy would last; personally, he felt it would not last long, saying,

> This in all probability is merely an interlude or one of the periodic waves of retrocession in the expansionist movement of which I have often spoken and have compared it precisely to the waves on the seashore, being firmly convinced that the tide is coming in and not going out and that recurrent waves of aggressiveness and forward movement are perfectly certain to go farther ahead than their predecessors.[16]

Grew reminded Washington that the military was firmly in control. He added, "One feels a little like living on a volcano here, never knowing when an explosion is going to occur, and I am quite sure that the day of possible explosions is by no means past."[17]

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[15] Ibid.; p. 35, New York Times, March 14, 1937, p. 37.

[16] Grew, Ten Years, pp. 206-207.

[17] Ibid., p. 207.

General elections were held in Japan on April 30 and the results were interpreted by the Japanese press as a sharp defeat for the Hayashi Government. However, the Cabinet was determined to stay in power as long as possible.[18] It lasted one more month. In the meantime, the Foreign Minister revealed his thoughts on Japanese diplomacy. He said,

> I hope that Japan and the United States, whose economic relations are complementary, will continue to collaborate in the task of preserving peace in the Pacific. . . . International trade is essential to a densely populated country like Japan. The restoration of freedom of trade and the opening of sources of raw materials which the Japanese Government has on all occasions advocated is an assertion of our right of national existence. Japanese representatives abroad must be constantly vigilant against obstruction of Japanese exports.[19]

The Hayashi Cabinet resigned on May 31. The resignation followed shortly after Prince Fumimaro Konoe, President of the House of Peers, issued a firm public statement criticizing the Hayashi Cabinet for not admitting to the Cabinet some Ministers taken from the parties after the April general elections. Prince Konoe was asked to form a Cabinet and was successful in doing so. The choice of Konoe as Prime Minister was popular. He appointed former Prime Minister Kiko Hirota as Foreign Minister.[20]

Both in late April and in June, Nelson T. Johnson, the American Ambassador in China, sent messages to the State Department concerning the situation in North China. He wrote

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[18] Foreign Relations, Far East, VI (1937), 414-15.

[19] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 101.

[20] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 715-16.

that the alleged impending increase in the size of the Japanese North China Garrison could be connected to the growing nationalistic spirit of General Sung Che-yuan's 29th Army and to its increase in numbers and equipment. Johnson warned of a possible military conflict in Hopei Province: "Such an incident might be precipitated by Japanese military discontented with the lack of progress in Sino-Japanese economic and/or political cooperation in North China or by Chinese military imbued with a growing belief in their own prowess." He said it was difficult to determine the Japanese purpose for increasing the size of its garrison, but suggested it might be a question of the generation gap. The younger men he described as "rabid." Later, Johnson reported that the Chinese were revolting against Japanese control in Chahar. If such uprisings were undirected and sporadic they would probably assume no importance, Johnson revealed; but if the uprisings were directed by central or provincial authorities, serious consequences could result because of the overconfidence of the Chinese and the impatience of the Japanese military with the stalemate in Sino-Japanese relations.[21]

Lieutenant General Kenji Doihara, who was conspicuous in the Manchurian campaign of 1931-32, interpreted the Japanese presence in China as a force to stop communism. He said:

> In Japan-Soviet rivarly, China is the vital field. Communism in China must be stopped at any cost. An obstacle to Japan is the anti-Japanese agitation; Chiang Kai-shek made use of the movement

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[21] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 72-73, 113.

> for his own particular purposes, but it got out of hand until now its demands could be met only by Japan's abandoning the fight against communism, terminating activities in North China, and returning to Manchuria. Japan's policy must be neither to support Chiang (which would be to accept his compromise with the communists) nor to overthrow him (which would inflame anti-Japanese sentiment), but to go to the Chinese people with a propoganda campaign which may have some small effect in spite of great difficulties; and more important, Japan's policy must be to strengthen national unity by internal reform, to increase Chinese respect for Japanese power by expanding the national armament of Japan. The necessary prelude to China's understanding Japan's disinterestedness is the building up of Japan's military power.[22]

Discussing Japanese character and attitudes, journalist Nathaniel Peffer wrote that Japanese instincts

> have been fired by their early education and at white heat molded and hardened into the sense of national "mission" — Japan as savior of the East, master of the East for its own salvation. For Japanese education is inflammatory stuff.
>
> Japanese will deplore the present hard feelings between the two nations and then tell you almost plaintively of the anti-Japanese bitterness now almost universal in China. There must be reconciliation they say, but how can there be, so long as the Chinese are so inflammed with passion? That China has been on the defensive since 1931, that part of its territory has been taken by Japan, that thousands of its people were slaughtered by Japanese air bombs over Shanghai in 1932 and that Japanese Army officers still lay down the law in Peiping . . . — of all these facts no cognizance is taken. There appears to be no awareness that such things bring emotional reaction in human beings.
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> Allowance must be made, of course, for the fact that on the part of many Japanese there is a good deal of disingenuousness and that few Japanese ever know what is going on. . . . But with all such allowances made, the truth remains that in all but the exceptional Japanese there is a psychological blind spot.[23]

Peffer went on to say that while the business and professional classes disliked army dominance, they were not ready to give

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[22] Ibid., p. 33.

[23] Nathaniel Peffer, "Between Two Worlds Lies Japan," New York Times Magazine (April 25, 1937), 7.

up the advantages of monopolizing markets and opportunities for investment brought about by military aggression. He concluded,

> Essentially the Japanese people as a whole want to have their cake and eat it, a desire not peculiar to the Japanese. They want the power their new place in the world gives them and they want the old security. They want preferred position in China without Chinese resistance or hostility. They want to be able to defy the world without being isolated. . . . They want a modernized, industrialized society without losing the qualities and characteristics of their old way of life, with its order and simplicity, its ceremonial and fixed relationship.[24]

Robert Karl Reischauer, a professor at Princeton who was later killed in a Chinese air attack on Shanghai in August 1937, appeared to show a better understanding of the Japanese people and a more realistic picture of the reasons for Japan's aggressive attitudes. He listed six causes for their aggressiveness. The first was that peace meant a continuance of the status quo and the Japanese were highly displeased at the political and economic set-up in the world. Japan demanded the right to buy raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods but it was those countries who had unlimited supplies of such raw materials that erected high tariff barriers against her goods. He continued,

> It is little wonder, then, that the Japanese feel it to be well-nigh impossible to obtain all the raw materials they need through peaceful channels of trade. Japan is faced with the choice . . . either of passively accepting her present economic poverty and resigning herself to a very low standard of living that will grow relatively lower and lower as the United States, Great Gritain, France, Germany and Soviet Russia forge ahead industrially, or of winning control of raw materials outside the Japanese Empire and of building

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[24] Ibid., p. 22.

> up markets that cannot be closed to Japanese goods. The Japanese feel that they have every right to choose the latter course of action, even though it necessitates the use of force, and that any other self-respecting people would act likewise under such circumstances. When, therefore, Americans and British, as they sit snugly behind their high tariff walls in the midst of wealthy continents and colonies they won in a large part by war, living in a luxury that is far beyond the reach of practically all Japanese, lift their voices sanctimoniously in praise of peace and the status quo and point the finger of recrimination and scorn at Japan for being so wicked as to resort to war, it makes the Japanese so fighting mad that they would like to cram every peace treaty and pact for the outlawry of war ever written down the throats of what they consider to be the finest crop of hypocrites this world has yet produced.[25]

Until 1937 Japan had lost no war; in fact, her wars had been good investments. The Chinese paid almost the entire cost of the Sino-Japanese War. While the Russo-Japanese War nearly bankrupted the Government, that was a small price to pay for Korea, southern Sakhalin, the Liaotung Peninsula, and the South Manchurian Railway. The World War did much for Japanese business. Should Japan be able to hang on to Manchukuo and reap economic benefits, that would repay them many times over for the cost of conquering Manchuria and defending it against Russia and China.[26]

The second reason for Japan's aggressive attitudes was her fear of several nations. Reischauer said that it was fear of the Western powers that drove Japan to adopt western civilization so quickly. Japan realized that Europe's

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[25]Robert K. Reischauer, "Japan's Road to War," Asia, XXXVII (February, 1937), 80.

[26]Ibid.

military power was based on her industrial system. Changes had to occur in Japan's political and economic structure before she could construct the factories and shipyards necessary to give her the equipment for a powerful military which could defend her political independence. Although Japan was strong and had expanded her territory, she still felt insecure. Her neighbors were the largest nations in the world and those with the greatest man power. Russia had the largest army in the world; the United States and the British Empire had the most powerful navies. China was much larger than Japan and had six times her population. Japan felt that geography, natural resources, time, and numbers were on the side of her neighbors. She realized her plans for the future conflicted with theirs and feared that one of them, or a coalition fo them, would attempt to crush her. Therefore, before that day came, Japan felt she had to entrench herself in East Asia to protect her from any possible coalition of enemies.[27]

The domestic situation was a third cause of Japan's warlike mood:

> An isolated island kingdom, with an agrarian economy and a government and society based on feudalism, cannot suddenly develop, within the short space of three generations, an industrial economy and establish a pseudo-parliamentary form of government and a semi-democratic social system without causing a great deal of friction between the old and the new, without disrupting the whole life of the people and without bringing various groups and classes into bitter conflict with one another. The surprising thing is not that there is

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[27] Ibid., p. 81.

> danger of social revolution in Japan today, but that no such bloody catastrophe has taken place already.[28]

Clashes did occur between agrarian and industrial interests, civil and military authorities, conservatives and progressive Westernists, tenant farmers and landlords, laborers and petty shopkeepers, and between the common masses striving for a more democratic form of government and the closed oligarchy of the aristocratic few.

> These groups, wrote Reischauer, are forever struggling against each other, but the minute Japan gets involved in foreign troubles they lay aside their quarrels, and work together in harmony for the glory of their country. It is a temptation of the government, therefore, to purchase domestic unity by means of pursuing a dynamic foreign policy that keeps Japan close to the verge of war.[29]

A fourth reason was Japan's acute awareness of her racial origins. Reischauer indicated that for almost two thousand years the Japanese had considered themselves as having descended from gods, or at least from supermen. It therefore came to them as a rude shock when in more recent times they were looked down upon by the conquering white race. Japan was not accepted as an equal by the West until she had defeated both China and Russia in war. Then she was recognized only as a military equal. Her pride was further wounded when the Anglo-Saxon countries restricted Japanese immigration and when western nations did not write a racial equality clause into the Treaty of Versailles. When the United States, in 1924, prohibited all Japanese immigration

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

and refused to put Japan on a quota basis, Japan felt she was publicly humiliated before the entire world. Reischauer continued,

> When the Manchurian episode started in 1931 and the western powers told Japan to let them settle the dispute, the Japanese took particular delight . . . in slapping America's face by tearing up the Nine-Power Treaty, the Four-Power Treaty and the Kellogg Peace Pact, got great satisfaction from displaying their contempt for all the European powers by marching out of the League of Nations and took pleasure in showing China . . . that, no matter what the western nations might decide about the inferiority of the Japanese race, in Eastern Asia those same nations were powerless and Japan's word was law and no one had better try to disobey it. . . . In recent years . . . Japan has gone out of her way to show that she pays no attention to what western nations have to say about her actions, and she has been retaliating for her racial humiliation at western hands by destroying the white man's prestige in Asia.[30]

The fact that the Japanese were a warlike people was the fifth reason for their aggressiveness. For two thousand years they were probably the fiercest warriors in the Far East. But Reischauer added that the Japanese were not like the murderers that rode with Attila the Hun or with the hordes of Genghis Khan. Nor were they like the soldiers one expected to find in the armies of Western Europe and the United States. Reischauer explained that the Japanese were an artistic people and possessed most the good and bad characteristics found in such a temperament. He gave this example,

> The army officer comes home from his day of military manuevers, unbuckles his sword, takes off his uniform, slips into Japanese clothing and then spends an hour or so in quiet meditation, sipping tea in a room set aside for this purpose. Or he may tend the flowers in his small garden; or . . . will try his hand at a

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[30] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

> little poetry, putting down with graceful flourishes of his brush some thought that has come to him that day. The warrior is gone and the lover of beauty, the poet, the artist is there. But let word come that the Emperor has been insulted, that Japan is in danger, and he joyfully dons his uniform and eagerly rushes off to war. It is this combination of warrior and artist that makes the Japanese people a peculiar danger to the peace of Eastern Asia, because here one has a nation of fierce warriors with the high-strung, emotional artistic temperament.[31]

The sixth and final reason for Japan's aggressive attitudes was the extreme nationalism which constituted its philosophy of life. Reischauer explained,

> It is the totalitarian state that is their idea. The lives of millions of Japanese are motivated by an all-consuming passion to serve their Emperor, the State, no matter in how humble a capacity. If a common soldier can but sacrifice his life in battle for his Emperor, if a farmer can but increase the food supply of his country by planting and harvesting a bumper crop, if a laborer can but promote the economic well-being of the State by working harder and longer than is demanded, then all three have contributed to the glory and power of their beloved Japan and have made their adored Emperor even more exalted.[32]

Reischauer, recognizing the realistic issues, suggested how the United States could help to modify the Japanese attitudes. He suggested lowering tariffs, permitting Japanese trade to develop peacefully, recognizing racial equality and the Japanese right to a higher standard of living.[33]

Such writings and ideas failed to motivate the Roosevelt Administration or the Congress into definite action.

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[31] Ibid., p. 82.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 83.

The failure to attempt to correct U.S.-Japanese relations became more evident in the latter half of 1937. As the historian, Paul W. Schroeder, wrote,

> Only after the beginning of the China Affair in July 1937 . . . did relations between the United States and Japan decisively take a turn for the worse. In many respects the story of the outbreak of war with China is that of the Manchurian Incident repeated, with, however, still less justification in this case for Japan. Manchuria had been overrun partly to create for Japan a buffer state against Russia. By 1937, the Japanese Army was determined to create a series of autonomous buffer states in Inner Mongolia and North China as a protection for Manchoukuo.[34]

North China Phase

Marco Polo Bridge and Fengtai in the surrounding area were very important for railroad communications. This region connected Peiping to the North, and also to Central and South China.[35] Thus both Japan and China realized the strategic importance of controlling the area. On July 11, four days after the outbreak of hostilities at Marco Polo Bridge, a settlement was reached between the Japanese and local Chinese authorities. There were four terms: an apology by the top officers of the Chinese 29th Army, punishment of those responsible, a guarantee of non-recurrence, and that anti-Japanese activity be stopped, including communism.[36]

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[34]Paul W. Schroeder, The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, 1941 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 7-8.

[35]"North China Incident," The Commonweal, XXVI (July 23, 1937), 314.

[36]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 137, 156.

In Washington, the Japanese Ambassador, Saito, called on Secretary of State Cordell Hull on July 12. Saito said Japanese troops were stationed in the area under the same authority that American troops, or guards, and those of three or four other nations were present in Peiping and elsewhere. He charged that Chinag Kai-shek was behind the movement to strengthen Chinese aggressive tendencies. Hull replied that a great power like Japan could afford to show self-restraint and that, in the long run, this characteristic should be a part of Japan's policy. But he emphasized his approval that the Japanese Government was trying to work out a friendly settlement. Japanese troops in North China had the right to station troops there, under treaties with China, to protect their nationals. However, on July 12, Grew informed Hull that the Japanese Cabinet had decided to send more troops. That same day, Hull told Saito that he was looking forward to the day when their two countries could join together on a constructive program similar to that proclaimed earlier at the Buenos Aires Conference. Therefore, he warned the Ambassador against any serious resort to military operations.[37]

The Japanese Embassy in Washington told the State Department on July 12 that the right of Japanese troops to maneuver in North China was stated in the Chino-Japanese Protocol of 1902 and that Japanese authorities had informed the Chinese in advance that maneuvers would be held. There-

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[37] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 316-17; Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, I (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), pp. 534-35.

fore, the Embassy contended, Japanese action was not an unlawful move. It further stated that the 29th Army fired on Japanese troops on July 10 for no apparent cause. A friendly settlement was possible if the Chinese apologized and guaranteed that such outbreaks would not occur in the future.[38]

Reports from China, sent on the twelfth, indicated that Chiang Kai-shek was ready to fight and was sending six divisions of troops to North China. It was generally viewed in China that Japanese action constituted a challenge which must be met by the Nanking Government if it was to remain as the government of a unified China. Two days later the report of the movement of six divisions to the north was confirmed.[39]

In Japan Ambassador Grew wrote that there seemed to be "complete unanimity of opinion between the cabinet, the military, the Foreign Office, the press, and the businessmen to resist any weakening of Japan's position in North China." Grew went on to say that he did not have enough evidence to assume that either the Government or the Army had deliberately planned the incident to force a showdown. On July 14 the Japanese War Office informed the American Military Attaché, Crane, that no reinforcements had left Japan proper but that a Jehol garrison detachment had reached Peiping. Preparations were being made to send more troops if necessary. The Foreign Office still expressed

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[38] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 318-19.

[39] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 138-39, 161.

optimism for settling the incident but that depended on whether further anti-Japanese activity would be incited and whether Nanking would send troops north of Paoting, capital of Hopei Province, in violation of the Ho-Umezu agreement of 1935. This indicated a specific point north of which Chinese troops were not permitted. Ambassador Johnson in China wrote that he did not believe the Marco Polo Bridge incident was planned by either the Japanese Government or the Army. Responsibility for the incident dwindled in importance, he felt, in view of what the Japanese seemed to want to make out of it. Colonel Rufus S. Bratton of the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department said that the situation showed little likelihood of a major military conflict unless Chinese troops moved north of Paoting.[40]

On July 15 the Japanese Cabinet decided to send reinforcements of an undisclosed number to North China. The Military Attaché reported that part of the Sixth Division sailed from Shimonoseki the same night, that a partial mobilization was underway, and that aviation gasoline was being accumulated. He said that there were ample indications that Japan would use force if necessary to enforce the July 11 agreement. The questions that arose from the Marco Polo Bridge incident were two: (1) settlement of that incident and (2) Nanking's adherence to the Ho-Umezu agreement. Nothing but strict observance to this agreement would satisfy the Japanese. On the first point the 29th Army was split into two groups, one favoring terms with Japan on the basis of

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[40]Grew, Ten Years, p. 211; Foreign Relations, Japan I (1931-1941), 320-23; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 170, 172.

the July 11 agreement, the other favoring resistance to Japan. The head of the American affairs division of the Japanese Foreign Office, Yoshizawa, said that should the Nanking Government cross the Ho-Umezu line Japanese troops would probably proceed against Nanking's troops while the 29th Army observed strict neutrality.[41]

Hugh Byas, correspondent for the New York Times, wrote in mid-July that he believed Japanese objectives were limited. He said the Marco Polo Bridge incident was unforeseen and unpremeditated. Neutral experts almost unanimously rejected suspicions of prearrangement. Their conclusion was confirmed by the fact that Japan had not done anything of importance in North China for the ten days since the outbreak of hostilities. A second reason for believeing Japan's objectives were limited was that Japan's terms for settlement contained nothing which would have altered the status in North China. Yet that same day foreign news correspondents reported that Japanese planes made three attacks on trains on the Peiping-Hankow Railway, killing more than twelve people.[42]

Chiang Kai-shek, on July 19, announced his conditions for a diplomatic settlement. First, any agreement must not interfere with the territorial integrity or sovereign rights of China. Second, the Hopei and Chahar Political Council was

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[41]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 324-25.

[42]New York Times, July 18, 1937, IV, 4; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 203.

fixed by the Central Government and its status should not be changed illegally. Third, local officials appointed by the Central Government could not be removed by external pressure. Fourth, China would not accept any restriction placed upon the position the 29th Army currently held. The next day in Tokyo the War Office expressed pessimism for the first time to the Military Attaché. The Ho-Umezu line had been crossed by several Chinese contingents. Concerning these recent developments Grew wrote;

> In appraising the chances of war we should bear in mind the fact that the Chinese have offered the Japanese an armistice and have proposed settlement by diplomatic negotiation. It must be evident to the Japanese Government that its case before the world would be improved if it could accept the proposal. On the other hand such acceptance would be difficult to reconcile with its previous contention that the matter is a local issue.[43]

Ambassador Grew, assessing the situation up to July 23, wrote,

> As matters stand today, it would seem fair to say that, although the incident may not have been provoked by the Japanese military, the latter lost no time in realizing that an opportunity was presented still further to weaken the influence of the Chinese Government in North China. It was made evident to us more than a week ago by the Foreign Office that Japanese diplomatic strategy called for emphasis upon settlement of the incident as a "local matter" with local officials, so that, if a local settlement were obtained, the courses open to the Chinese Government would be to approve the settlement, or to ignore it, or to prevent by force its fulfilment. To follow either of the first two courses would be failure by the Chinese Government to resist further whittling away of its influence over North China: to follow the third would involve taking the initiative for hostilities for which it is not prepared. The indications now being received primarily from Japan sources are that the situation in North China is in process of settlement and that Japan now looks to China either to resist or to acquiesce in the reduction to a shadow of its sovereignty in North China.[44]

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[43] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 218, 221-23.

[44] Ibid., p. 253.

Two days later Ambassador Johnson conveyed to Hull a conversation which he had with Chiang Kai-shek. The Generalissimo said that the Central Government

> had acceded to Japanese demands and had withdrawn its opposition to a local settlement of the Marco Polo Bridge incident . . . along the lines . . . covered by the settlement of July 11.
>
> He then asked that the American Government watch Japanese actions carefully from now on because he believes that the Japanese Government will shortly present further demands to the Chinese Government which the Chinese Government cannot accept. He stated emphatically that the local settlement now agreed to represents the absolute limit to which the Chinese Government can and is prepared to go. He stated that if the powers and especially the United States and Great Britain accepted this settlement as concluding this affair they would discover too late that war between China and Japan was inevitable. . . .
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> . . . . . .
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> He expressed belief that the only way in which war . . . could be averted would be by cooperative action by the United States and Great Britain along lines more vigorous than had hiterto been attempted.[45]

In response to Chiang Kai-shek's statement, J. L. Dodds, the British Charge d' Affaires in Japan, felt that the Generalissimo was exaggerating the Japanese menance to save face. Grew concurred with Dodds. He did not think that "cooperative action by the United States and Great Britain along lines more vigorous than had hitherto been attempted" or any foreign diplomatic representations could favorably affect the situation. Stanley K. Hornbeck, the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department said,

> The issue so far as the powers, especially the United States and Great Britain, are concerned is whether pursuit of national policy by force, in contravention of treaty obligations and with complete indifference to the question of peace, is or is not to be objected to by those powers to whom it seems objectionable, and, if the answer is in the affirmative, then by what process.

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[45] Ibid., p. 253.

> As neither Great Britain nor this country is prepared to throw in any kind of force (other than that of moral suasion), we need not expect that action on our part (use of words) is going to be in any way decisive. We have spoken on behalf of peace, and we probably should continue to do so. . . . In whatever we say, we should take great care to say only those things which may tend to pacify and to avoid saying those things which may tend to influence the parties directly in conflict.[46]

By July 26 Japanese troops had already attacked Peiping and had entered the city. Two basic demands were made for the removal of Chinese troops from specified areas around the Marco Polo Bridge and Peiping. The next day the Japanese informed the American Embassy in China that the two demands had been accepted and that Japanese residents in Peiping would withdraw to the Legation quarter. There was no confirmation from the Chinese. On July 30, a Japanese Foreign Office spokesman, Kawai, announced that Peiping had been conquered by the Japanese Army and that the military phase was over. The Japanese Army captured Marco Polo Bridge the same day.[47]

Diplomacy, Part I

Opening the diplomatic phase in Washington, Dr. H. H. Kung, the Chinese Finance Minister, in the presence of Hornbeck and his deputy, Maxwell Hamilton, said that Japanese troops had no right to be in the Peiping area under the terms of the Boxer Protocol which had allowed nations to station troops from Peiping to the sea. Since the captial and

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[46] Ibid., pp. 277-80.

[47] Ibid., pp. 265-270, 302-303; New York Times, July 31, 1937, p. 1.

diplomatic offices had been moved to Nanking, armed forces were no longer needed in the Peiping area. He hinted that all foreign governments should remove their troops which were stationed in North China under terms of the Boxer Protocol. However, Dr. Kung did not want the United States to remove its troops unless the other nations did so concurrently. Dr. C. T. Wang, the Chinese Ambassador, along with Dr. Kung, said that since Japan was imperialistic and aggressive, the United States should aid China. They said that

> some day the United States would have to face Japanese aggression, unless that aggression should be checked by China. Mr. Hornbeck said that the United States had always been in favor of a strong, unified China. He pointed out, however, that the United States did not adopt certain policies or pursue certain courses toward China just for the sake of helping China. He said that our policies and our attitude were based upon our conception of the interests of the United States. . . . He said that it was fortunate for us and for China that our policies and our attitude in regard to China coincided with China's own desire to build up a stable and a strong nation.[48]

Secretary of State Hull stepped into the spotlight on the diplomatic scene on July 16 with a formal statement of American foreign policy. He issued the statement after consultation with President Roosevelt. The principles were mainly based on the "Eight Pillars of Peace" Program which Hull presented at Buenos Aires in 1936, plus the fundamental principles of international conduct he had inserted in the 1932 Democratic platform, and especially in his address at Montevideo in 1933. The United States advocated, Hull said,

> national and international self-restraint; abstinence by all nations from use of force in pursuit of policy and from interference in the internal affairs of other

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[48] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 132-34.

> nations; adjustment of international problems by peaceful negotiation and agreement; faithful observance of international agreements; modification of treaties, when necessary, by orderly processes in a spirit of mutual helpfulness and accomodation; respect by all nations for the rights of others and performance of established obligations; revitalization and strenghening of international law; economic security and stability the world over; lowering or removing excessive opportunity and treatment; limitation and reduction of armament.[49]

The statement was sent to all governments with a note requesting a reply. Sixty nations agreed to these principles, including Japan, Germany, and Italy. Portugal was the only nation which cirticized Hull's statement. Whereas everyone desired peace, proclaimed the sanctity of treaties and compliance with them, favored reductions in the barriers to international trade, and the limitation or removal of armaments, difficulties always arose, said the Portuguese note, when countries shifted from "the field of intentions into that of action." The first step toward constructive work would be made when nations recognized the "inanity" of "entrusting the solution of grave external problems to vague formulae."[50]

Hull replied that there was nothing vague about his principles. He said, "They were solid, living, all-essential rules. If the world followed them, the world could live at peace forever. If the world ignored them, war would be eternal."[51] Hull then reiterated his principles and said why he did so.

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[49]Hull, Memoirs, pp. 535-36.

[50]Dorothy Borg, The United States and The Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 290.

[51]Hull, Memoirs, p. 536.

> One was to edge our own people gradually away from the slough of isolation into which so many had sunk. Another was to induce other nations to adopt them and make them the cornerstone of their foreign policies. Still another was to get people everywhere to believe in them so that, if aggressor governments sought war, their peoples might object or resist; and if war did come, such peoples having these principles at heart, would eventually swing back to the right international road.
>
> To me these doctrines were as vital in international relations as the Ten Commandments in personal relations. One can argue that the Ten Commandments, too, are "vague formulae." But day after day millions of ministers of God throughout the world are preaching these formulae, and I believe there is untold value in this preaching. Society would lapse into chaos if the Ten Commandments were universally broken, just as international society lapses into chaos when the principles of right conduct among nations are widely disregarded.[52]

Critics charged that the President and the Secretary of State confined their foreign policy to "pious statements and no action." Hull replied that such was not true. He cited American self-restraint, especially with Japan over American rights in the Far East, and noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations, exemplified by U.S. troop withdrawal from Haiti. The United States had faithfully observed its international agreements; had modified treaties, with Cuba and Panama; had lowered or removed excessive trade barriers; had cooperated with the League of Nations Committees in a moral embargo in the Italo-Ethiopian War; and had not intervened in the crisis in Spain.[53]

Although Japan and Germany had agreed to Hull's declaration of principles, they interpreted the meaning in

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., p. 537.

a somewhat different manner. Germany's response said that the Reich Government's basic principle was "regulation of international relations by pacific agreement and hence coincides with the ideas developed by the Secretary of State." Japan's reply was accompanied by the following note:

> It is the belief of the Japanese Government that the objectives of those principles will only be attained, in their application to the Far Eastern situation, by a full recognition and practical consideration of the actual particular circumstances of that region.[54]

Here was the rub in U.S.-Japanese relations. The latter spoke in realistic terms. She needed and wanted trade, but trade barriers were not lowered for Japanese goods. The way was blocked for a peaceful approach to her needs. The United States, as represented by Hull's principles, replied in idealistic and moralistic phrases. How does one solve realistic world problems with high-sounding rhetoric? Yet the United States continued to deal with Japan through moralistic principles. One cannot doubt Hull's sincerity in his search for peace but his and the President's failure to view the matters realistically was indeed a great misfortune in American diplomacy as the diplomacy of 1937 revealed.

Secretary Hull told the Japanese Ambassador on July 21 that he was greatly concerned about the Far East, and in a gesture of impartiality and friendliness, declared that he would like to do something for the cause of peace. He said the United States, with advance agreement of both China and

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[54] New York Times, August 15, 1937, p. 27.

and Japan, would do anything and say anything to aid the cause, short of mediation.[55] Here was another dilemma in U.S.-Japanese relations. The United States was not really impartial; mostly it was pro-Chinese and became more so through succeeding events in 1937. As time went on China realized that the United States basically was behind her so refused to negotiate with Japan or to concede certain terms. Japan kept insisting the issue between the two countries was a local issue. Therefore, there could be no advance agreement between the two parties and the United States could not attempt to settle the situation.

It was on July 21 that an officer of the Japanese Military Affairs Bureau, who had been an informative source, told the Military Attaché that the United States showed a lack of understanding of the North China events and indicated U.S. attitude showed Americans to be pro-Chinese.[56]

Less than a week later, Hornbeck told the Counselor of the Japanese Embassy, Suma, that the State Department had learned that Japan planned to launch a general attack in and around Peiping. He wanted to know the validity of such a report and warned of the danger to the lives of civilian and foreign nationals in the vicinity. In Japan Hirota denied the Japanese intent to launch an attack against the Chinese Army in and around Peiping. He gave assurance that all efforts

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[55] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 330-31.

[56] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 241.

would be made to protect the lives and property of Americans and other foreign nationals.[57] The protection of American lives and property in the Far East was a major policy of the State Department. There were an estimated 10,500 American citizens in China at the outbreak of hostilities. The majority of them were connected with about 400 American business concerns, but several thousand were in missionary work.[58]

On August 6, Hirota informed Grew that the press bureau of the Foreign Office had informally issed a statement concerning reports that several Americans were planning to serve as aviators in the Chinese Army. The statement implied that unless such action were curbed U.S.-Japanese relations would be in jeopardy. Grew asked the Foreign Minister to keep such information out of the sensitive Japanese press and advised that the American Government would do everything in its legal power to keep Americans out of foreign armies. Hirota called the press bureau and assured Grew that it would not appear in the Japanese press. Four days later Grew called on Hirota to say that the American Government endorsed his statement that it would discourage Americans from joining foreign armies. Grew also offered the good offices of the American Government to settle the current crisis and to find neutral ground where Japanese and Chinese

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[57] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 334-35,338.

[58] Battistini, U.S. and Asia, p. 153; Thomas A. Bisson, American Policy in the Far East, 1931-1940 (Inquiry Series; New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), p. 95.

officials could negotiate. Hirota informed Grew that an approach for such negotiations had been made the day before in Shanghai between the Japanese Ambassador, Kawagoe, and Kao, Chief of the Asiatic Bureau of the Chinese Foreign Office.[59]

Ambassador Grew, sensitively aware of the crisis in the Far East, wrote to Secretary Hull on August 6:

> In view of the extreme importance of our leaving no stone unturned to avoid war I cannot conscientiously recommend against a final effort by the American and British Governments in offering their good offices . . . making it abundantly clear that the proposal is in no sense intervention. We feel that the chances of acceptance in Tokyo are small but not necessarily hopeless. Much would depend on the method and manner of approach. Publicity should be most carefully avoided.[60]

Grew said that he and the British Chargé should ask separately to see Hirota at his home. Hull approved of Grew's method of approaching the Japanese Government. He emphasized that this should be done separately and not jointly, and in a semi-informal and confidential way.[61] Thus concluded the first aspects of diplomacy.

Shanghai Phase: At Home and Abroad

Two concrete issues captured the American attention throughout August and much of September: the invocation of the Neutrality Act and protection of American citizens in China.[62] A New York Times editorial on July 31 stated,

> Events in the Far East throw fresh light on the defects of an American foreign policy prescribed by an

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[59] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 338-41.

[60] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 340.

[61] Ibid., p. 353.

[62] Bisson, American Policy in Far East, p. 59.

> inflexible law which attempts to anticipate all possible emergencies regardless of when and where and in what circumstances they may arise and what their impact on our own affairs may be. This law is the so-called Neutrality Act of 1937 . . .[63]

The editorial continued to say that the cash and carry principle on the export of materials would be far less injurious to Japan than to China because the former had large gold reserves and substantial dollar balances; invocation of the Neutrality Act would show an essentially unneutral influence on Japan and China. Said the editorial,

> Over a long period of years the traditional goal of American diplomacy in the Far East has been the preservation of the territorial integrity of China and maintenance of the "open door" . . . It is difficult to believe that this diplomacy has not been handicapped now by the passage of an act which is designed to isolate us as completely as possible from international affairs. For when we declare, in advance of any contingency which may arise, that we are prepared to defend no rights beyond our borders, to accept no obligations, and to recognize no distinctions between "victim and agressor," we lessen our influence as a world Power.[64]

Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, gave reasons for not invoking the Neutrality Act. Invocation of the act would mean that the United States recognized the existence of a state of war which would allow Japan to clamp a blockade on all Chinese ports. Pittman also said the act was designed to protect the lives of our citizens.[65] Senator J. Hamilton Lewis of Illinois, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee,

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[63] New York Times, July 31, 1937, p. 14.

[64] Ibid.

[65] New York Times, July 30, 1937, p. 1.

supported Pittman's view. To invoke the Neutrality Act, he said, would endanger the security of the United States. It could draw the nation into the Sino-Japanese conflict. American lives, property, and trade would be in danger if either or both Japan and China were declared as enemies. Three weeks later Senators Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, Homer T. Bone of Washington, and Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri urged the President to invoke the act.[66]

The New Republic urged the invocation of the Neutrality Act. It said,

> Of course wars are fought without being declared, and to wait for a declaration of war is therefore unrealistic. How shall we tell whether what is going on is really "a state of war"? Bear in mind that while the law gives the President discretion in deciding whether a state of war exists, it does not give him power to deny that war is war. He cannot stretch his discretion too far. There is no doubt that armies are now fighting each other in the Hopei-Chahar provinces. The situation will not be considered war only if the Chinese forces soon withdraw and let Japan have her way without forcible resistance. They may do this if they are not supported by Nanking. But if troops of the central government come into action, there can no longer be any doubt what is in store. China will be fighting Japan. Whether short or long, the war cannot fail to be called war under any definition of the term or under the intention of the neutrality act. It will be the legal obligation of the President to so proclaim it.
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> In terms of good policy, it will be desirable to apply the law as soon as the Nanking forces become engaged. When this happens, all diplomatic maneuvering will surely have lost its usefulness; there will no longer be any hope of staying the hand of either combatant without a test of strength. Our national business will be to keep from being involved. That is the purpose of the law. It should therefore be promptly invoked and enforced.[67]

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[66]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 337, New York Times, August 1, 1937, p. 30.

[67]"Is It War in China?," The New Republic, XCII (August 11, 1937), 5.

On August 13, Clarence Gauss, the American Consul General in Shanghai met with his Japanese, British, and French counterparts to discuss how hostilities could be avoided in Shanghai. They reviewed a basic proposal for the removal of both Japanese and Chinese troops. Gauss admitted that he did not think such a gesture would be fruitful but said that was the best the Consuls General could do under the circumstances. Japanese and Chinese troops were clashing in one section of the city. Heavy bombing by Chinese planes occurred the next day, on the fourteenth. There was no respect for the International Settlement of Shanghai or the area of refuge. Bombs fell on the waterfront and on two hotels. Hundreds of Chinese civilians were killed and at least one American. Ambassador Grew revealed that the Chinese bombing certainly would hurt China's cause abroad, and called the incident "one of the most horrible episodes in modern times."[68]

Following the Chinese bombing of Shanghai, which left 600 dead, including three Americans, Senator Nye called for an immediate invocation of the Neutrality Act, evacuation of Shanghai, and the withdrawal of all American troops and vessels. Senator William E. Borah of Idaho favored "keeping out of the controversy." Three days later Senators Nye, Bone, and Clark again called for the invocation of the Neutrality Act. The National Council for the Prevention of War urged that Congress not adjourn until the act had been

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[68] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 346; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 408; Grew, Ten Years, p. 216.

invoked and until measures had been taken to control the export of iron and steel scrap. The next day twenty-four members of the House said that the act should be applied for the security of the United States. They agreed that Congress should not adjourn until the President had invoked the Neutrality Act. However, Congress did adjourn shortly. Isolationists at first were for noninvocation but later strongly reversed their position. They seemed confused; they could not embarrass the Administration.[69]

Ambassador Grew predicted that the Japanese reaction to the invocation of the Neutrality Act would be favorable because it would show that the United States made no exception in policy. The Japanese would also see it as a further evidence that the United States intended to refrain from intervention. Grew personally favored the application of the act. He said that the United States could not carry on any substantial trade with China in any case. The trickle of commerce would not be worth the risks involved. Ambassador Johnson was opposed to the application of the Neutrality Act because it would anger the Chinese Government and endanger the lives of Americans in China. Understandably, the Chinese Government was opposed to the invocation of the act. Mme. Chiang Kai-shek was bitter towards such a measure when China was involved in a life and death struggle. "The application of the Neutrality Act," she said, "would be itself evidence

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[69] New York Times, August 15, 1937, pp. 1, 29; New York Times, August 18, 1937, p. 4; Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, pp. 338-39.

to her and to those surrounding and supporting her husband that the United States was actively trying to disable China in its attempt at self-defense."[70]

Throughout the month of August American Consuls in various Chinese cities reported the evacuation of Japanese nationals, including the Japanese Consul and staff, largely because of anti-Japanese activity. Evacuations occurred in Swatow, Tsinan, Canton, and Tsingtao.[71]

On August 19 the Chinese Government demanded that neutral nations keep their warships and merchant vessels five nautical miles from Japanese naval vessels. The Chinese Government would not assume responsibility for damages done to neutral vessels during a conflict between Japanese and Chinese forces. Admiral Harry E. Yarnell, the Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet, said that the demand could not be met because of the necessity of evacuating the nationals of several countries from the International Settlement in Shanghai. The next day a shell fell on the deck of the U.S.S. "Augusta", killing one and wounding eighteen. This incident demonstrated the danger to neutral vessels around Shanghai. Yarnell and his British and French counterparts, C.J.C. Little and Jules Le Bigot, requested that Japanese naval vessels be kept away from neutral vessels. President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull accepted the shelling

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[70]Hull, Memoirs, p. 558; Borg, U.S. and The Far Eastern Crisis, p. 347; Foreign Relations, Far East, III, (1937), 516-17.

[71]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 383-84, 430-31, 463.

of the "Augusta" in Shanghai Harbor as an unfortunate accident and left the decisions up to officials at Shanghai. Senator Pittman endorsed the Administration stand; Clark and Nye again urged the application of the Neutrality Act and withdrawal.[72]

As a sidelight to the Sino-Japanese conflict in Shanghai, China and the Soviet Union announced on August 21 that they had signed a non-aggression pact. The major terms called for no attack on the other, either individually or collectively, and no assistance to any nation aggressing against the other.[73]

On August 23 the Japanese Foreign Office issued a statement concerning the protection of American lives and property in China. It said,

> Desiring as Japan does to avoid harm to Americans or American property the Japanese Navy has issued orders to that effect. . . . The Navy hopes that American properties will be conspicuously marked. The Navy suggests that Americans be advised to evacuate such properties as may be occupied by Chinese forces. It is also the hope of the Navy that the American authorities will continuously feel free to convey any additional information about such properties which might add to the effectiveness of Japan's desire to keep American interests unharmed.[74]

The same day in Nanking the Embassies of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany requested the Japanese not to bomb the vicinity in which their Embassies

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[72] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 487-88; New York Times, August 21, 1937, pp. 1, 3.

[73] F. C. Jones, Japan's New Order in Asia: Its Rise and Fall, 1937-45 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) p. 49.

[74] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 489.

and mooring points for their vessels were located. Japan replied that she understood the request but that this area was also one where various Chinese establishments connected with military operations, Chinese fortresses, and warships were located. Japan said that she would try to warn the powers in advance in case Chinese action might stir up necessary measures by Japan to cope with the situation. The Japanese also suggested that the Embassies, warships, and merchant vessels be clearly marked.[75]

A week later the S. S. "President Hoover," a Big Dollar Liner, was bombed by Chinese planes while approaching the mouth of the Yangtze River fifty miles from Shanghai. The vessel carried all possible markings identifying it as an American ship. Several people were injured, some seriously. The ship was engaged in the humanitarian pursuit of removing refugees from danger zones in China. Secretary Hull informed Ambassador Johnson to lodge a protest to the Chinese Government. Ambassador Wang in Washington expressed official apologies, explaining that the pilot thought the vessel was a Japanese transport since there were Japanese warships near by. Johnson reported that he did not think the attack intentional. The pilot surrendered himself to military authorities, acknowledging his error. Johnson urged that the death penalty not be used as was being contemplated. Consul General Clarence Gauss notified the State Department that

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[75] Ibid., pp. 489-90.

two American pilots and one British pilot reported that there were no Japanese merchant vessels, warships, or transports within sight of the "President Hoover." Somewhat over a year later the United States received an indemnification for $264,887.47 from the Chinese Government.[76]

Following the bombing of the "President Hoover" isolationist feeling flared up again. Senator Borah said he advocated recognition that an actual war was in process in China but at the same time he criticized the Neutrality Act as being favorable to the Japanese cause which he opposed. Borah said,

> There is nothing to be gained by our assuming that war is not being waged in China. The fact that no formal declaration has been made has little to do with realities. There is war — an aggressive war of conquest. . . . we should not permit ourselves to be drawn into war or any controversy. And I think that is the clear policy of the Secretary of State.[77]

Five peace groups formed a joint board of strategy to urge the invocation of the Neutrality Act. They were: World Peaceways, the National Council for the Prevention of War, Emergency Peace Campaign, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, and the Fellowhip of Reconciliation. The Veterans of Foreign Wars voted to

> call upon the nation to establish a policy of mandatory neutrality, to outlaw war, except against invaders; asked for full protection for Americans in war zones abroad only for a limited time, and demanded that no

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[76] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 473-78, 484.

[77] New York Times, August 31, 1937, p. 3.

ships trading with belligerents be permitted to fly the American flag.[78]

Frederick J. Libby, executive secretary of the National Council for the Prevention of War, told an audience of Quakers that pressure should be brought to bear upon President Roosevelt to act. He commended the President for ordering the evacuation of nationals from China but attacked him for permitting warships to remain to protect property. Libby said, "We must localize and isolate it, even as we would a virulent, contagious disease." Senator Clark again urged the application of the Neutrality Act to the Far East. He said that the United States had "no business sending troops to China." Clark called the European situation "more serious and the outlook for a war more likely than it was in the Summer of 1914. The time has come when America should make known her intention to stay out of the possible conflict."[79]

At the end of August Ambassador Grew informed Minister Hirota that the railway that connected Hankow with Canton and Hong Kong was being used by foreign nationals to evacuate China. He urged that Japanese planes not bomb trains or interrupt the use of that railway. Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy made the same request. The Japanese Government replied that it had no intention of interrupting the railway services, but that the railway was being used by China for military purposes, including transportation of

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[78] New York Times, September 1, 1937, p. 3; New York Times, September 3, 1937, p. 3.

[79] New York Times, September 7, 1937, p. 11; New York Times, September 12, 1937, p. 39.

munitions and troops. As long as the railway was used for such purposes the Japanese could not guarantee to refrain from possible interruption of the railway's services. The Japanese Government also stated that it could not be "liable for damages or losses sustained by nationals of third countries as a result of fighting. . . ." Grew, after communication with the State Department, responded that such a position by the Japanese Government was unacceptable to the United States, and that the American Government would hold Japan responsible for loss or damage suffered by the Government or its nationals and would seek compensation under international law. Grew also urged Hirota to stop Japanese indiscriminate bombing operations in China for fear Americans going about their daily occupations or perhaps on their way to places of greater safety would be killed or injured by a serious incident. This, he said, would have an adverse effect on American public opinion and on U.S.-Japanese relations.[80]

On September 1 Grew sent an Aide-mémoire to the Japanese ministry for Foreign Affairs protesting the bombing of Nanking, which occurred on August 26 and caused danger to the lives and property of foreigners and Chinese alike. He urged the Japanese Government not to attack defenseless cities, hospitals, and vehicles. The Japanese reply to the Aide-mémoire stated,

> Nanking is the pivotal base wherein are planned and originated all Chinese hostile operations against Japanese forces. . . .

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[80] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 492-495, 497.

> . . . objectives of their bombing are limited, from the standpoint of humanity, strictly to those military organs and establishments, and absolutely in no instance non-military property and civilians are ever made the direct objectives of attacks.[81]

On September 1 the Japanese Government announced that it could stop the war immediately if Chiang Kai-Shek would accept three conditions: a type of de facto recognition of Manchuria; withdrawal of Chinese troops from North China, with the Japanese troops doing likewise; and the development of good relations between the two nations. The Foreign Minister added that the Generalissimo was weak and in a difficult position. If China had a single strong leader, Sino-Japanese problems could be quickly solved.[82]

The New Republic, annoyed that the President had not invoked the Neutrality Act, revealed its frustration in an article on September 8:

> Not to recognize that a state of war exists in China, and not to apply the measures that the law prescribes, seems to us a defiance of the legislative branch, a denial of democracy. More than that, the course actually adopted appears unwise in the extreme, one that is bound to end either in ignominy or in the sending of American ships and doughboys to fight the Japanese.[83]

When this article was written Japan had already blockaded the Chinese coast to Chinese shipping. The New Republic contended that other vessels carrying munitions would likely be stopped by the Japanese; they would not allow such trade to continue. The Neutrality Act was designed to avoid such

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[81] Ibid., pp. 494, 498.

[82] Ibid., p. 560.

[83] "The President Heads Toward War," The New Republic, XCII (September 8, 1937), 115.

controversies, yet the United States permitted such trade. The article went on to say that allowing such incidents to happen "and then protesting against them is lighting a fuse that will either ignominiously sputter out in the end or detonate a heavy explosion." Such incidents, when continuously occurring, could develop a war sentiment in this nation.[84] With the blockade in effect, the Chinese Government warned the third powers to keep their vessels away from Japanese warships and transports and to have their respective national colors painted conspicuously on the top deck.[85]

On September 14 President Roosevelt announced:

> Merchant vessels owned by the Government of the United States will not hereafter, until further notice, be permitted to transport to China or Japan any of the arms, ammunition, or implements of war which were listed in the President's Proclamation of May 1, 1937.
>
> Any other merchant vessels, flying the American flag, which attempt to transport any of the listed articles to China or Japan will, until further notice, do so at their own risk.[86]

These arms, ammunition, and implements of war were very basic items covering a wide range of guns, vehicles and aircraft, their accessories, and chemicals. The speech of May 1 referred to the Spanish Civil War.[87] This announcement on September 14 by the President was the most direct action taken by him concerning the Far Eastern crisis. The partial

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[84] Ibid., p. 116.

[85] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 371.

[86] Samuel T. Rosenman, ed., The Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Constitution Prevails, VI, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941), p. 354.

[87] Ibid., pp. 188-90.

embargo on arms was made without invoking the Neutrality Act and the Goverment policy towards the act remained "on a twenty-four hour basis."[88] Following the President's statement, the "Wichita," a government owned vessel carrying nineteen planes to China unloaded its cargo at San Pedro, California and proceeded to Manila with another cargo. The Chinese Government lodged a strong protest. Eventually the planes were rerouted to China via Europe. The action by the President weakened the Neutrality Act and the isolationist position somewhat. At the same time Japan resorted to an unrestricted bombing which angered public opinion in the United States and Europe. The demand for the application of the Neutrality Act lessened and never again reached the same proportions.[89]

The controversy over the Neutrality Act caused much confusion. Groups and individuals had different reasons for their views, political, economic, and nationalistic. As one writer said, the confusion caused by the complexities involved in applying the act and the existing political attitudes gave the Administration much flexibility to act in any manner it desired. It chose to avoid applying the Neutrality Act but it did stop the "Wichita." There was pressure from the isolationists, certain peace groups, and from certain newspapers to do so.[90]

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[88] New York Times, September 15, 1937, p. 1.

[89] Bisson, American Policy in the Far East, p. 62.

[90] Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 354.

Back in China, Japan planned another bombing attack on Nanking. Residents, both Chinese and foreign, were given two days advance notice. Although the Japanese said their targets were only military establishments, they warned officials and residents of Nanking to evacuate voluntarily and move to an area of greater safety. Foreign warships were also urged to move from the area. In Tokyo, Ambassador Grew warned Minister Hirota of the danger to diplomatic establishments, personnel, and other noncombatants. He added that the goodwill which the two of them had so carefully built up was quickly dissolving because of Japan's actions in China. The Foreign Minister replied that the naval command had been notified to make every effort to avoid foreign diplomatic establishments and non-combatants. Grew said of his meeting with Hirota:

> Although I talked to the Minister today with an emphasis and directness unprecedented since my arrival in Japan, there was no indication on his part of resentment. His demeanor was naturally graver than usual and he appeared to me to receive my observations rather sadly but without any effort whatever to try to rebut my remarks. While recent developments indicate that he has made and is making efforts to avoid antagonizing the United States by cautioning the military and naval forces in individual local issues, we must reluctantly face the fact that the civil government in Tokyo has very little influence with these forces where their general objectives are concerned.[91]

In Washington, the Japanese Ambassador met with acting Secretary of State R. Walton Moore and Assistant Secretary of State Hugh R. Wilson. Moore said that forty-eight hours notice before the actual bombing was not sufficient time for the

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[91] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 499-501.

Ambassador in Nanking and other American nationals to arrange for the necessary precautionary measures to insure the safety of the Embassy, the American nationals, and their property. Wilson said that killing and injuring of non-combatants would inevitably result, whether accidental or not, and the shock to world opinion would be critical and widespread. Moore urged that if bombing were necessary, to postpone it in order to afford the nationals of third powers to take the necessary precautions. Saito said the message would be relayed to his government.[92]

On September 21, Admiral Yarnell sent a letter to Admiral Kiyoshi Hasegawa, Commander of the Japanese Third Battle Fleet, responding to Japan's request for the removal of foreign warships before Nanking was to be attacked. Yarnell wrote that the U.S. Navy had two gunboats at Nanking, the "Luzon" and the "Guam." He continued,

> As long as the United States Embassy and any United States nationals remain in Nanking, it is necessary for these two vessels to remain there also. These two vessels are distinguished by the United States flag being spread horizontally on the upper works.
>
> It is requested that you issue the necessary instructions to the Japanese naval air force to avoid dropping bombs in the vicinity of these vessels.[93]

The next day in Tokyo Ambassador Grew presented to the Foreign Office a note from the United States Government. It read:

> The American Government objects both to . . . jeopardizing of lives of its nationals and of non-

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[92] Ibid., pp. 502-503.

[93] Ibid., p. 503.

> combatants generally and to the suggestion that its officials and nationals now residing in and around Nanking should withdraw from the areas in which they are lawfully carrying on their legitimate activities. . . .
>
> This Government holds the view that any general bombing of an extensive area wherein there resides a large populace engaged in peaceful pursuits is unwarranted and contrary to principles of law and humanity. . . .
>
> The American Government, . . . reserving all rights on its own behalf and on behalf of American nationals in respect to damages which might result from Japanese military operations in the Nanking area, expresses the earnest hope that further bombing will be avoided.[94]

However, Japanese planes proceeded to bomb Nanking. Grew learned through his British colleague, Ambassador Robert Craigie, that the bombing of Nanking would cease on September 25. Both Ambassadors were convinced that the Japanese Government was becoming increasingly disturbed by the impressions created in the United States and Great Britain by the indiscriminate bombing in China on the part of irresponsible pilots. Grew called on Hirota on October 1 to reveal the contents of a telegram he had received from Johnson in Nanking. The telegram read,

> So far as the American Embassy at Nanking is aware, the only establishments at Nanking which can warrantably be regarded as bases for Chinese military operations are establishments such as the military air field, arsenal and barracks outside the walls of Nanking. The term "military establishment" cannot properly be applied to the Central University, the Central Hospital, the Ministry of Health, the Legislative Yuan, the Ministry of Education, and the electric light plant, all of which have apparently been the targets of Japanese bombers and some of which have been hit and damaged by bombs. The Central University has been bombed three times. It is also to be emphasized that bombs in certain instances have fallen within a hundred yards of the official

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[94] Ibid., pp. 504-505.

residences of certain of the foreign diplomatic representatives in Nanking.[95]

The center of the Chinese scene once again shifted to Shanghai where Consul General Gauss shared the view held by many disinterested foreign observers that China deliberately made Shanghai "the main theater of her war of resistance against Japanese aggression hoping thus to focus world attention on China through Shanghai and to bring about foreign intervention or involve foreign powers to the disadvantage of Japan."[96] In Tokyo Ambassador Grew presented an Aide-mémoire to the Japanese Foreign Office which requested that Japan refrain from using any part of the International Settlement in Shanghai as a base for disembarking troops or unloading military supplies, as had occurred earlier, for use outside the Settlement against Chinese troops. The Aide-mémoire went on to say,

> . . . as the Settlement is an area in which by treaties and agreements a number of countries, including Japan and the United States, have common rights and interests, its use as a base for military operations conducted outside the Settlement is not in keeping with the spirit of those agreements, and that it unwarrantably endangers the rights and interests of all those countries, including the United States, which possess in common those rights and interests.[97]

The Japanese Government replied that it found it necessary to use a part of the International Settlement for military operations to protect Japanese nationals as well as foreign

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[95] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 554; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 508-509.

[96] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 579.

[97] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 379.

nationals and their interests. The American Government replied that it held to the views set forth in their Aide-mémoire.[98] By the end of October Grew reported, "The war spirit in Japan is noticeable growing."[99]

On November 2 there was a conference between the American, British, French, Italian, and Dutch naval officers with General Harada, the Japanese Military Attaché in China, representing the Japanese Military Commander, General Iwane Matsui. The western powers reminded Harada of the grave situation being created by the killing and injuring of neutral non-combatants and uniformed men by the dropping of bombs and firing of shells into the International Settlement and the French Concession. Harada replied that Chinese troops were stationed west of the Settlement and close to British and French troops, and that it was necessary to dislodge the Chinese. Yarnell believed that Harada was impressed with the conference and would attempt to improve the situation.[100]

The Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, on November 21, asked the foreign Chiefs of Mission to leave Nanking for Hankow where the Foreign Office would be established, as soon as possible. The seat of the National Government was moved to Chungking. On November 22 various Ambassadors and Ministers, with some of their nationals, boarded ships to depart for Hankow. Johnson and some of his staff boarded

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[98] Ibid., p. 404.

[99] Joseph C. Grew, Turbulant Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945, II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), p. 1186.

[100] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 515-16.

the "Luzon." Part of the Embassy staff remained in Nanking to keep the Embassy running

> as long as possible in the light of the expected Japanese attack upon Nanking and to render assistance to Americans who, notwithstanding the urging of the Embassy, did not wish to leave on the "Luzon." The U. S. S. "Panay" was instructed to remain at Nanking for the purpose of maintaining communications between the Embassy and other American diplomatic and consular officers and the Department of State and to take remaining Americans aboard when that action should appear necessary.[101]

In Tokyo, Prime Minister Konoe restated Japanese policy. Japan would not object, he said, to neutral third powers offering their good offices to bring about negotiations between China and Japan but could not accept third power participation in the negotiation. Japan would be willing to talk to Chiang Kai-shek or the Kuomintang if Nanking changed her policy to one of cooperation with Japan. There was no intention of declaring war unless military supplies continued to flow into China. And lastly, Japan might propose a revision or abrogation of the Nine Power Treaty.[102]

Back in Nanking, in light of the continuing Japanese air attacks and advance of its troops toward the city, "the Code Section of the Embassy was removed to the U. S. S. "Panay" on December 2." The officer in charge of the Embassy, George Atcheson, Jr., reported on December 7, that,

> everything possible had been done for the Americans in Nanking. . . . Ropes had been prepared for the use of the remaining Americans in case they later wished

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[101] Ibid., p. 517.

[102] Kosaku Tamura, Genesis of the Pacific War. (Tokyo: Institute of the Pacific, 1944), pp. 379-80.

> to escape from the city over the walls, . . . his residence in the Embassy compound was at their disposal in case they were endangered in their own dwellings. . . . To one of the Americans remaining for the purposes of the so-called safety zone, he had given the use of his motor car for himself and other Americans, if needed, and to facilitate escape to the walls.[103]

Diplomacy: Part II

On the diplomatic scene Ambassador Johnson wrote to Secretary Hull on August 12:

> It is my opinion that nothing can save China from the necessity of deciding sooner or later whether to oppose Japanese aggression with force or sink to the condition of a vassal state. If these are in fact the only alternatives open to China, there is a probability any appearance of urging China to purchase peace with the loss of sovereign rights would appear to be encouragement to a predatory national policy on Japan's part of a sort condemned by the pact against war, by various treaties, and as late as July 16, by your statement of American policy.[104]

On August 15, the day after Bloody Saturday in Shanghai, Admiral Yarnell requested an additional 1000 Marines to be sent to the International Settlement. His request came at the time when Senators Nye, Clark, and Lewis were calling for the evacuation of all Americans from Shanghai. Stanley Hornbeck took up the cause of protecting American nationals; top State Department officials supported him. Hull announced in a press release on August 17 that 1200 Marines would be sent to Shanghai for the purposes of protecting and not fighting. He said that the reason why American troops were there was because parts of China were not stable

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[103] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 618.

[104] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 386.

politically and that nationalistic movements broke out in 1900, 1912, 1927, and 1932. The Marines were sent in 1927 to protect American nationals. The Secretary continued,

> Whenever American nationals in any part of the world might be denied equal protection of laws in countries where they were, or were being unfairly treated, . . . this Government came to their assistance by making earnest representations under international law as it is universally recognized, and in support of reasonable and rightful claims of our nationals, . . . we always undertook to carry forward this policy of cooperative international relations peacefully, and in a manner mutually acceptable and mutually advantageous. The question of force was entirely out of mind.[105]

Hull explained the American position as a compromise between extreme internationalism, based on the principle of political commitments, and extreme nationalism which urged Americans to stay at home. Should they go overseas for any reason they could not expect the protection of the American Government. Hull, avoiding both extremes, authorized the sending of Marines but called for their return after the danger had subsided.[106]

As early as July 20 the British Government offered to take joint action with the American and French Governments to approach the Japanese and Chinese Governments "asking them to agree that all further movements of troops be suspended and that the British and American Governments should put forward proposals in an attempt to end the conflict." Hull had three objections to joint action. First, it would appear to the Japanese that western nations were pressuring them. This would only intensify the situation and permit the

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[105]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, pp. 321-22; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 349-51

[106]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 351-52.

military to strengthen their position. Second, if any joint action were to be taken it should be done only by nations which had interests in the Far East, or by all peace-seeking nations in the world and not by just a few. Third, any joint action with Great Britain would stir up fears and enmity of the isolationist element in the United States. Hull also felt that any joint action which did not include a show of force, backed by the intention to use force if necessary, would be unsuccessful. Neither the United States nor Great Britain, distracted by events in Europe, was psychologically and militarily prepared to use force. Hull favored concurrent or parallel action rather than a joint venture.[107]

On August 18 the British Embassy in Washington sent to the State Department an Aide-mémoire which stated,

> If both the Chinese and the Japanese will agree to withdraw their forces, including men-of-war, from the Shanghai area, and will both agree that the protection of Japanese nationals in the International Settlement and on extra-Settlement roads should be entrusted to foreign authorities, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to undertake this responsibility if other Powers will join them in doing so.[108]

Great Britain was eager to learn if the American Government would accept joint responsibility. Hull again replied that the United States would not participate in joint action. Japan said she could not accept the British proposal because foreign forces would not be adequate. Japan was responsible for her own nationals, and China was entirely to blame for

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[107]Hull, Memoirs, pp. 538-39.

[108]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 444.

the present situation. Japan's refusal was not final. The French Government was willing to concur with Great Britain's proposal "provided the participation of French forces in the general protection of the Japanese be given only within the limits of the French concession." Chiang Kai-shek replied,

> I am truly disappointed that the United States did not cooperate with England in an attempt to avert the present crisis which could have been averted by joint representation to Japan and China. . . . United States should not lose her prestige in the world as an upholder of international justice and if she will continue her Stimson policy the present conflict can be prevented also from extending to other countries including the United States. I do not want United States to be dragged into war, but I do look to her position in the Pacific and to maintain peace there.[109]

On August 23 Hull struck out on his own again and issued a press release noting that his statement of principles of July 16 applied to the whole world, especially to the Far East and called on Japan and China to stop fighting. The press release was issued the same day that Chinese planes bombed a densely populated section of the International Settlement. News coverage of this incident overshadowed coverage of Hull's remarks. According to Hull's associates, the Secretary worked hard to make his statement a success and was disappointed at its poor coverage.[110] The New Republic could not refrain from attacking Hull's latest statement. It said,

> Secretary Hull, . . . made a most astonishing declaration of policy — astonishing that is, if it is to be taken at its face value. He said the war is a

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[109] Ibid., pp. 445, 448-49, 460-61.

[110] Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 308.

> bad thing, and called upon China and Japan to remain at peace. If the Secretary meant what he said, and only that, his statement must seem unbelievably naïeve. Could anyone possibly suppose that Japan would change the policy pursued for three decades, just by request?
>
> The danger in Mr. Hull's statement is that it may be the prelude to united action of the Powers, containing the gravest threat of war. . . .[111]

Yvon Delbos, the French Foreign Minister, believed that France, Great Britain, and the United States "should make a united appeal to Japan and China to enter negotiations for the establishment of peace in the Far East." He admitted that it would be difficult for the United States to join Great Britain and France in such a démarche. Delbos reported that Russia would support a démarche if her backing was desired. He believed that Japan's final objective was Russia because Japan knew the Russian Army was disorganized. Delbos believed that neither Japan nor Russia should control the Far East; should Russia intervene and defeat Japan, the entire Far East could become Bolshevik. Therefore, it was desirable to stop the war in China as soon as possible. The next day, August 27, Secretary Hull suggested that Delbos or Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, on their own, should make a strong public statement without reference to the United States. Hull reiterated the American policy," . . . we do not intend to initiate a concert of effort in regard to the Far East; we

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[111]"Should We Join the War in China?," The New Republic, XCII (September 1, 1937), 88-89.

continue to believe in the advisability of approaching the problem through independent but parallel lines."[112]

On August 27 Ambassador Grew wrote what he felt American objectives in the Far Eastern crisis should be. The first was to avoid involvement. The second was to protect American lives and the interests and rights of American citizens. The third objective was "complete neutrality to maintain our traditional friendship with both combatants." Grew said a special effort was needed to solidify relations with Japan but not at the expense of China. Secretary Hull then presented the State Department's views toward the Far East. He urged Japan and China to develop cooperativeness toward each other and towards the rest of the world. He said that this Government had attempted to follow a course of "absolute impartiality." Hull referred to his statement of principles of July 16 and August 23 and said that the actions currently pursued by China and Japan were not in accordance to these principles. He said the United State's first concern should be the protection of American lives and interests. He agreed with Grew's first two objectives but said the third could not be pursued while carrying out the first two. Therefore he did not feel that an effort should be made to solidify U.S. relationship with either combatant. He opposed the courses of both nations, especially Japan. Public opinion in the United States, he reported, had been outraged by the methods of warfare, particularly of the Japanese. Hull continued, writing to Grew,

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[112] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 475-77, 485.

> I feel it desirable that you overlook no opportunity to impress upon Japanese officialdom the importance which we attach to the principles laid down in my statement of July 16 and the significance of my statement of August 23, and to suggest to them that by the course which she is pursuing Japan is destroying the world's good will and laying up for herself among the peoples of the world a liability of suspicion, distrust, popular antipathy and potential ostracism which it would take many, many years of benevolent endeavor on her part to liquidate.[113]

Ambassador Grew replied to Hull's remarks on September 15. He agreed that the third objective was less important than the first two but that it should remain and be more a method rather than a principle. He recommended that the United States stick to its current policy and methods until Japan tried to interfere with American trade and sovereign rights, in which case, new methods would have to be used. Japanese leaders knew the attitude of American public opinion. Whereas Hull's statements of July 16 and August 23 had been made clear to Japanese officialdom, Hull's pronouncements had not come in any detail to the Japanese people. Grew reported that American messages to Japan were twisted and colored by interpreters and the press so that the Japanese viewed U.S. unfriendliness "without the warrant." Grew said the United States could be of greater use to the world if she aimed as far as practicable, to avoid unnecessarily sacrificing relations with either Japan or China. "The Japanese people," Grew continued,

> perhaps more than most people, are capable of long-remembered gratitude for what they consider friendly attitudes on the part of other nations, and long-remembered resentment for unfriendly attitudes. Whatever we may think of the Japanese military machine,

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[113] Ibid., pp. 487-88, 506-508.

> need we penalize our future interests, and perhaps, our own future helpfulness in working for peace, by creating among the Japanese people a renewed antagonism against the United States? I know by personal experience, and bitter experience, how acute that antagonism was when I came here in 1932. The good neighbor policy of the present Administration has completely overcome what formerly amounted to a festering irritation.
> . . . I have not for a single moment advocated that we should in any way or in any degree sacrifice American interests or purhcase Japanese goodwill at the expense of abandoning any American policy or law or any treaty to which we are a party on any consideration, nor that our Government should omit any action demanded by American public opinion. I do not advocate and have not advocated our tying our hands in order not to displease Japan.
> . . . We strongly believe in a united or concerted front with Great Britain and we feel that this front has consistently been maintained since the present hostilities began. . . . I do not, however, feel that British methods are always best calculated to achieve desired results. There sometimes appears an ineptitude in their method, and especially in the tone and language and timing of their official communications, which does not seem to us to characterize the tone and language and timing employed by our own Government. These things count. . . .
>
> These comments go to you with great respect and certainly in no spirit of controversy. I do not like to send them in a formal despatch but appreciate nevertheless the importance of having my general attitude made abundantly clear on the records, and it would therefore give me a feeling of satisfaction if you should be disposed to place this letter on the files of the Department. . . .[114]

The frank quality of Grew's letter encouraged Ambassador Johnson to express his own views far more definitely than at any other time during the early phases of the Sino-Japanese conflict. In a letter to Grew he related how much their thoughts followed the same lines. Both Ambassadors, since the Manchurian crisis, "had progressively written off the possibility of achieving world peace by arresting wars

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[114] Ibid., pp. 526-30.

through various forms of international cooperation." Neither wanted Washington to consider the Marco Polo Bridge incident as a "breach of the peace that should be checked through the concerted efforts of many nations." Rather, they hoped the United States would limit itself to safeguarding its interests, remaining aloof from the conflict, and working to create conditions whereby the American position in the Far East could be maintained "while avoiding a clash with Japan." Therefore, they wanted the Administration to refrain from any diplomatic activity such as mediation or offer of good services proposed by the British. Instead they felt Washington should limit itself to the protection of American nationals in China. Both approved of Hull's two statements but this approval was based on the assumption that the statements "were largely designed to put the United States on record as still committed to the high ideals to which it had always proclaimed allegiance." But the Secretary felt that once the Sino-Japanese conflict erupted into a major military effort, "it should be dealt with by the United States in terms of seeking to promote the postwar effort to eradicate war."[115]

During September, various sources questioned the presence of the United States in China. The isolationists, as seen earlier, favored withdrawal and stated that the nation had no business in China. Why, therefore, did it remain? For some it appeared to be trade and the protection of investments. For others it was tradition. The United States had

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[115]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, pp. 314-16.

long been a champion of China, and such traditions were hard to stop. Finally, some said, if the United States did not defend China, who would? Great Britain and France were preoccupied with events in Europe; the United States was free to act. Three alternatives were open to the current policy: collective action, peaceful change, and isolation.[116] These were not feasible and the United States continued its current policy.

On September 23 Frank P. Lockhart, Counselor of Embassy in China, assessed the Japanese aims thus far. He said,

> The Japanese military have long harbored the belief that the Chinese program of unity, economic development and military advancement . . . constituted a threat to the future security of Japan and that a postponement of the present process of destroying that program would only mean that its destruction would be all the more hard to achieve later.
>
> The threat of communism in North China was believed by the Japanese military to be real . . . The Japanese are determined, in common with Germany and Italy, to prevent the spread of communism, and this was an important factor in the decision of the Japanese military to go ahead now "with their present action rather than wait" for more complete preparations, or alternately, for a better justification than the Marco Polo Bridge incident . . . In any event, what is now taking place was inevitable, but it has come sooner than expected and before Japan had completed all its plans.
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> Another determining factor has been the prospective, if not the real, loss of markets in other parts of the world for Japanese manufactured products.[117]

Ambassador Grew revealed some interesting information concerning Japan and Russia in a note to Secretary Hull on October 1. Grew wrote,

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[116]Varian Fry, War in China, America's Role in the Far East (New York: Foreign Policy Association, Inc., 1938), pp. 78-81, 88, 92.

[117]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 546.

> There is a school of thought in this country, rather widely held, that when Japan was forced to fight either China or Russia she would be forced to fight the other; consequently the present Chinese campaign is being waged in full realization that Russia may become an active enemy at any time. However, it appears to be the intention of the military to get the China situation in hand as rapidly as possible in order that China will be rendered ineffective if and when the Soviets are to be confronted. . . . It is fairly certain that the army in "Manchukuo" and Korea is being kept at full strength and at peak efficiency to meet all possible eventualities.[118]

The same day the Assistant Military Attaché in Japan, John Weckerling, reported that the Japanese press stated that Soviet aid was definitely being given to China. The American Embassy in Nanking reported that 300 Soviet planes would be sent to China. In an effort to discover and stop Soviet aid, the Japanese concentrated air units in Chahar and inspected captured Chinese matériel. Weckerling continued,

> In spite of the present hostilities in China, there is no doubt that now, as for years past, the Japanese Army regards Soviet Russia as its principal enemy, and is convinced that nothing can prevent another Russo-Japanese war. It is difficult to believe that the Japanese Army wants war with Russia while fighting is going on in China, but it is conceivable that if Soviet aid to China has a significant influence on Japanese operations in China, resentment will be too great to be controlled.[119]

On October 9 Grew notified Secretary Hull on Japanese attitudes toward the United States and the Embassy's analysis of the policies pursued by the United States and Great Britain. He said that there had been no large show by the Japanese press of enmity toward the United States. While

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[118] Ibid., p. 564.

[119] Ibid., pp. 566-68.

the press was critical of British attitudes, it was not so towards American attitudes. Grew wrote,

> As we at the Embassy analyze the courses pursued by the American Government and the British Government in the present crisis, it appears to us that the American Government has succeeded in making clear to the Japanese Government and to the Japanese people that Japanese policy and actions in China are quite as repugnant to the United States as they are to Great Britain; that by taking independent action, and simultaneously refraining from encouraging other powers to take a stronger position vis-à-vis Japan than that which they would be disposed independently to take, our Government is at the present time in a better position than is any other Government to protect its interests in China and otherwise to exert influence in a beneficial direction. . . . In the various specific cases which we have taken up with the Foreign Office affecting the lives and property of Americans in China, we are finding eagerness — at times anxiety — to meet our wishes.[120]

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[120] Ibid., pp. 575-76.

CHAPTER II

THE QUARANTINE SPEECH AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS' CONDEMNATION OF JAPAN

In the fall of 1937 President Roosevelt made a speaking tour of the western United States. At Chicago, on October 5, he delivered a speech expressing his concern for the world situation. In his address, which stirred up considerable comment later, the President said,

> Some fifteen years ago the hopes of mankind for a continuing era of international peace were raised to great heights when more than sixty nations solemnly pledged themselves not to resort to arms in furtherance of their national aims and policies. The high aspirations expressed in the Briand-Kellogg Peace Pact and the hopes for peace thus raised have of late given way to a haunting fear of calamity. The present reign of terror and international lawlessness began a few years ago.
>
> It began through unjustified interference in the internal affairs of other nations or the invasion of alien territory in violation of treaties; and has now reached a stage where the very foundations of civilization are seriously threatened. . . .
>
> The peace-loving nations must make a concerted effort in opposition to those violations of treaties and those ignorings of humane instincts which today are creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality.
>
> Those who cherish their freedom and recognize and respect the equal right of their neighbors to be free and live in peace, must work together for the triumph of law and moral principles in order that peace, justice and confidence may prevail in the world. There must be a return to a belief in the pledged word, in

the value of a signed treaty. There must be a recognition of the fact that national morality is as vital as private morality.

There is a solidarity and interdependence about the modern world, both technically and morally, which makes it impossible for any nation completely to isolate itself from economic and political upheavals in the rest of the world, especially when such upheavals appear to be spreading and not declining. There can be no stability or peace either within nations or between nations except under laws and moral standards adhered to by all. International anarchy destroys every foundation for peace. It jeopardizes either the immediate or the future security of every nation, large or small. It is, therefore, a matter of vital interest and concern to the people of the United States that the sanctity of international treaties and the maintenance of international morality be restored. . . .

The peace, the freedom and the security of ninety percent of the population of the world is being jeopardized by the remaining ten percent who are threatening a breakdown of all international order and law. Surely the ninety percent who want to live in peace under law and in accordance with moral standards that have received almost universal acceptance through the centuries, can and must find some way to make their will prevail.

The situation is definitely of universal concern. . . .

It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading.

When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease.

War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostilities. We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down.

Most important of all, the will for peace on the part of peace-loving nations must express itself to the end that nations that may be tempted to violate their agreements and the rights of others will desist from such a course. There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace.

America hates war. America hopes for peace. Therefore, America actively engages in the search for peace.[1]

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[1]Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses of Roosevelt, pp. 407-11.

Official American reaction, to what became known as the Quarantine speech, was one of surprise. Jay Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs of the State Department, wrote,

> We had known that he was to make a speech along these general lines and in fact many notes had been prepared for him by Norman Davis and the Department, but he dramatized them in a way we had little expected, and the sentence regarding the quarantine of nations was a surprise. The Secretary was delighted at the speech and the majority thought it would be strongly approved by the public. It will make easier our subsequent moves but I am not at all sure that it will not ultimately drive us much farther than we would wish to go.[2]

However, Secretary Hull's delight was short-lived. He later said, "The reaction against the quarantine idea was quick and violent. As I saw it, this had the effect of setting back for at least six months our constant educational campaign intended to create and strengthen public opinion toward international cooperation." The day after the Quarantine speech, October 6, the State Department officially condemned Japanese aggression in China, and accused Japan of violating the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Ambassador Grew and the Embassy staff in Tokyo were shocked. Grew's reaction resulted from fear that sanctions would be applied against Japan. Hull, however, did not have this in mind.[3]

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[2]Nancy H. Hooker, ed., The Moffat Papers: Selections From the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 153-54.

[3]Hull, Memoirs, p. 545; Foreign Relations, Far East, III, (1937), p. 586; Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 367.

Reaction to the Quarantine speech from abroad was varied. A Japanese Foreign Office spokesman

> . . . asserted a right of all honest and industrious people to live anywhere in the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, referred to the doubling of the population of Japan in the past fifty years, and stated that the American Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924 is against the natural law of mankind and is greatly deplored by the Japanese. He said that if the "haves" refused to concede to the rightful demands of the "have-nots" peace will be very difficult to maintain. He stated that in the present affair China has refused by force of arms the peaceful co-operation which Japan wants.[4]

The Asahi, one of the two principal newspapers in Japan, referred to the President's speech as "one of the usual order, blossoming with ideas, but poor in concrete facts." It agreed with the principle that wars, like infectious diseases, should be isolated, but complained that the President completely ignored the causes of the war, which were deep-rooted, in his haste to condemn war. It hoped that the United States would not be swayed by sentiment, that of "human tendency to sympathize with the weak and condemn the strong." The Nichi Nichi, the other major paper, wrote that it

> . . . considers the address at Chicago to have been imprudent and lacking in the keen political insight which Mr. Roosevelt usually shows. It regrets that the President is unable to realize that the conflict was brought about by the policy of the Chinese Government of hostility toward Japan as indicated by refusal to cooperate in the economic field with Japan and by threatening the lives and property of Japanese nationals in China.[5]

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[4]Grew, Turbulent Era, p. 1162.

[5]New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 13; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), p. 585.

The day after the American condemnation of Japan, Saito called on Secretary Hull. He said this was the first time he was aware that the United States made a definite statement on the Far Eastern crisis. He felt that Japan had not violated any treaties. Japan wanted the matter closed but criticism of Japan by other nations would mean that the Japanese, being a proud people, would insist on the current course. Hull replied that he could not see how Japan expected the other nations to react differently. The United States, as a signatory to the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellog-Briand Pact, had to express its feelings that these agreements had been abused. The Ambassador replied that Japan did not want other powers to intrude in the matter, but that only Chinese recognition that it could not resist Japan would end the war. From Japan Ambassador Grew wrote that the Japanese Government had

> already made it clear that special consideration must be given to the application to the Far East of the principles set forth in Secretary of State Hull's recent declaration. It betrays an actual lack of knowledge to propose the application to the Far East of the Nine Power Treaty which was concluded many years ago, and of the Kellogg Pact. Conditions having changed these two treaties cannot be applied as a basis for regulating relations between Japan and China.[6]

The Chinese Government was deeply satisfied with the Quarantine speech. It interpreted the speech to mean a severe censure of Japan and saw the United States as

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[6]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 397-99; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 586.

gradually emerging from a period of extreme isolationism and neutrality. Chiang Kai-shek said, "President Roosevelt's speech has not only deeply touched the overridden Chinese but has also aroused those powers who advocate the construction of perpetual peace on the foundation of international ethics." The Chinese Foreign Minister, Dr. Wang Chung Hui, said that the speech "eminently deserves the wholehearted support of all peace-loving nations. The principles he enunciated further afford a timely basis for collaboration between the League of Nations and the United States in a concerted effort to put an end to acts of international aggression." But the response of Finance Minister H. H. Kung was the most bombastic of all. He wrote to the President,

> Allow me to congratulate you on behalf of my country and myself for your Chicago speech which will go down in history as the most courageous and statesmanlike statement ever made. It clarifies for the world the vital issues involved in Japan's policy of armed aggression and strikes at the very core of the problem of world peace and security. Ringing through a world horrified with Japanese lawlessness and brutalism your timely message sounds the clarion call to all who cherish the ideals of justice and humanity and uphold the cause of international peace and order.[7]

From Great Britain the Daily Mail wrote, "Britain, while eagerly responding to the main sentiments of the speech, must recognize its reservations. We must not be led into any hasty action that might afterwards be regretted, on the assumption that we have support of America which is not in fact there." The Daily Express warned,

> Do not misunderstand President Roosevelt's speech. America's leader has expressed the indignation which

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[7] New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 14; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 588, 590, 596.

> his people feel about Japan. He has protested against the wholesale betrayal of treaty obligations.
>
> But what does he propose to do? Join in the cry for a boycott? Bring America into collaboration with the League of Nations? Some newspapers here pretend something like it. Suppose you read the American press?[8]

Leading spokesmen for both the Conservatives and Laborites welcomed the speech and praised the President's stand. Winston Churchill of the Conservatives said,

> Never was there more close and sympathetic understanding of our policy and our difficulties than exists in the United States today. The speech . . . expressed in eloquent language exactly the same ideas that are in our minds . . .
>
> We should have no exaggerated expectations about American action, but an understanding so perfect and spontaneous between the two branches of the English-speaking race is bound to bring an enormous contribution to and consolidation of those forces in the world which stand for peace and freedom.[9]

J. L. Clynes, former Home Secretary, addressed the Labor Party conference in much the same manner. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain hailed the speech as a "clarion call" and promised full British support in a concerted effort for peace.[10]

Yvon Delbos wrote from France that the Quarantine speech was "heartening encouragement to the democratic countries of Europe at a moment when they are daily engaged in a tense diplomatic struggle with dictatorships in an effort to avoid war." Camille Chautemps, the French Prime Minister, said,

> We have found with emotion and pride an echo of all the principles to which we passionately are

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[8] New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 13

[9] New York Times, October 8, 1937, p. 3.

[10] Ibid.; New York Times, October 9, 1937, p. 1.

> attached. For France believes that States, like individuals, must respect the international and moral law and the integrity and liberty of each other. She knows also that to prevent abuse any isolated action would be dangerous and ineffective and that only the common and resolute will of all pacific peoples can form an insurmountable obstacle to an aggressor of international law.[11]

In the Soviet Union the speech was printed on the front pages of newspapers without comment, but it was undoubtedly received with universal satisfaction. When comment came, correspondent Walter Duranty of the New York Times wrote,

> President Roosevelt's Chicago speech receives from the Soviet press a degree of approval that has never been given before to a foreign statesman. To find a parallel for the enthusiasm of today's Izvestia and Pravda editorials one must look back to their comments on the recent speeches of Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinoff in Geneva.[12]

The speech was particularly appealing because it called for action rather than talk. This was emphasized strongly by both papers, especially Pravda.[13]

Not only was foreign reaction varied, but so was that of the American press. A New York Times editorial on the Quarantine speech said the President would have to be able to defend "concerted action" before the public. "And he must," continued the Times, "undertake to convince a nation long steeped in the unrealities of isolation that its safety, its honor and the considerations of its enlightened self-interest all require

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[11]New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 13; New York Times, October 8, 1937, p. 2.

[12]New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 14; New York Times, October 9, 1937, p. 2.

[13]New York Times, October 9, 1937, p. 2.

it to accept a larger share of the responsibilities which fall naturally to a great world Power."[14] Also from New York City the Herald Tribune, an Independent Republican paper, said of the speech, "His appeal was wholly emotional. It named no names. It cited no specific treaty clauses that are in default and no specific way of resenting treaty violation. If it was an appeal for anything it was for a popular emotional mandate to the President to take whatever course in our international relations seemed to him best." The Herald, a Republican paper in Boston, said, "The mantle of Woodrow Wilson lay on the shoulders of Franklin Roosevelt when he spoke . . . in Chicago. It may be true that 'the very foundations of civilization are seriously threatened.' But this time, Mr. President, Americans will not be stampeded into going 3,000 miles across water to save them.' Crusade if you must, but for the sake of several millions of American mothers confine your crusading to the continental limits of America!" The Baltimore Sun, an Independent Democratic paper, revealed that the speech "provided an admirable restatement of the principles of international morality which he and Secretary Hull have been expounding ever since the world situation began to deteriorate. It will be no easy task to implement these moral principles in such a way as to check the warlike forces now at work in the world, but the task is not to be shirked merely because it is hard." The Cincinnati Enquirer, Independent, commented, "It is

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[14] New York Times, October 8, 1937, p. 22.

gratifying to find that President Roosevelt at last has spoken in this view, offering at least a hint that he will adopt a stronger foreign policy — one designed to give real assistance to the peaceful nations already straining to repress international gangsterism." The Pioneer Press, Independent of St. Paul, stated, "Although he spoke in only general terms, President Roosevelt's address in Chicago is the most significant speech he has made on American foreign policy, because he aligns himself definitely with the Woodrow Wilson viewpoint of world cooperation rather than the isolationist policies which have prevailed since the war. This turn of American policy is the birth of a new hope for the restoration of reason and stability throughout the world."[15]

These newspaper comments appeared the day after the Quarantine speech was delivered. Twelve days later, on October 17, a national sampling of opinion appeared in the New York Times. The general attitude around St. Louis felt the United States should do something to stop the war but to stop far short of involving the country in another war. Kansas City was against independent action. Texas newspapers and citizens were almost unanimous in approval of the President's speech. At least half of the papers in the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama solidly backed Roosevelt 's views. New England was unexcited by the speech;

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[15]New York Times, October 6, 1937, p. 17

this region was opposed to both extreme isolationism and international entanglements.[16]

Peace organizations said the speech pointed down the road which led to the World War. They called for the invocation of the Neutrality Act as the only protective quarantine for the United States. Otherwise, the President had a blank check to do whatever he wished.[17]

Senator Pittman recommended an economic boycott of Japan by the ninety per cent of the people who favored peace. He said that such a move would be more powerful than American military force. No government could conduct a war under such ostracism, Pittman concluded. Henry Stimson called Roosevelts's speech "an act of leadership" and hoped it would "result in a new birth of American courage in facing and carrying through our responsibilities in this crisis." Stimson assailed the Neutrality Act, calling it "a policy of amoral drift" bound to make American involvement more certain if continued. He recommended that the United States and Great Britain stop exporting to Japan those commodities essential to her naval and military operations.[18]

The National Peace Conference made up of forty organizations met in late October and approved of the non-application of the Neutrality Act, contrary to other peace organizations which criticized non-application earlier. The

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[16] New York Times, October 6, 1937, p. 17.

[17] New York Times, October 7, 1937, p. 12.

[18] Ibid., pp. 1, 12, 19.

conference said it was not enough to impose a quarantine or condemn the resort to war. Economic adjustments were necessary to improve standards of living everywhere. Carrie Chapman Catt of the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War hailed the President's speech and the State Department's condemnation of Japan as "the most hopeful effort for peace in twenty years."[19]

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America sent the President a letter "enthusiastically acclaiming his reaffirmation at Chicago of the principle of cooperation with other nations for the maintenance of law and order." The Council did not support military action which could lead the United States to general war. The Catholic Association for International Peace supported the speech but said "it need not and ... must not mean war."[20]

Business was almost uniformly opposed to the speech. A business paper commented that the United States was not responsible for European and Asian troubles. The wisdom of isolation was backed by the obvious facts of the world situation. The business view was offset by labor. William Green at the American Federation of Labor Convention meeting on October 7 supported the President's speech and the State Department's action and called for a boycott against Japan. Six days later the AF of L passed a resolution calling for a boycott against Japanese manufactured goods, but did not

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[19]New York Times, October 26, 1937, p. 3; Borg, U. S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 389.

[20]Borg, U. S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, pp. 390-91.

include raw materials such as silk.[21]

There was also some extreme reaction to the President's Quarantine speech. Representative George H. Tinkham, a Massachusetts Republican, in a cable to Hull, charged Roosevelt and the Secretary with challenging the law and Congress by failure to invoke the Neutrality Act. He said Congress should "seriously consider the impeachment of the President and yourself . . . for high crime and misdemeanor." Tinkham stated that there were two antagonistic political groups in Europe: the London-Paris-Moscow group and the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. The United States should avoid both; it would be national suicide to commit the United States to either. Representative Hamilton Fish of New York publicly endorsed Tinkham's statement to impeach the President and the Secretary.[22]

A week after the Quarantine speech Maxwell Hamilton, who had succeeded Hornbeck as Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, was able to give a fairly accurate assessment of the situation. He stated that public opinion was opposed to having the United States assume leadership in a drive to impose restrictive measures on Japan. There were two basic problems: one was the removal of the causes of Japanese dissatisfaction and the other was to weaken the grip which the Japanese military held over the Japanese people. He

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[21] Ibid., pp. 391-92.

[22] New York Times, October 14, 1937, p. 16; Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 350.

therefore suggested that it would be more realistic policy to develop constructive, rather than restrictive measures.[23] Unfortunately, his ideas were not adhered to and restrictive measures were gradually applied. In Japan the military tightened its grip over the civil government and the people.

How did the President himself feel about his speech of October 5? A series of letters gave some indication of his thoughts. To Endicott Peabody at Groton he wrote on October 16,

> As you know, I am fighting against a public psychology of long standing — a psychology which comes very close to saying "Peace at any price."
>
> I have felt, however, that there will be a growing response to the ideal that when a few nations fail to maintain certain fundamental rules of conduct, the most practical and peaceful thing to do in the long run is to "quarantine" them. I am inclined to think that this is more Christian, as well as more practical, than that the world should go to war with them.[24]

On October 19 the President wrote to Edward M. House in New York,

> I hope you liked the Chicago speech and the repercussions across the water. As usual, we have been bombarded by Hearst and others who say that an American search for peace means of necessity, war. I thought, frankly, that there would be more criticism and I verily believe that as time goes on we can slowly but surely make people realize that war will be a greater danger to us if we close all the doors and windows than if we go out in the street and use our influence to curb the riot.[25]

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[23] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 598-99.

[24] Elliot Roosevelt, ed., F. D. R. His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, I (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp. 716-17.

[25] Ibid., pp. 718-19.

To John H. Clarke in San Diego, a former member of the U. S. Supreme Court, the President wrote on October 22, "I am glad to say that what I said in Chicago seems to have had a definite effect in behalf of world peace. That is encouraging and I only hope that the results will be tangible." Roosevelt, on November 10, wrote to Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Minister in Poland, " . . . I am glad that the Chicago speech has apparently made a real dent in government thinking in Europe even though it is heartily disliked by some of the 'powers that be'."[26]

What did the Quarantine speech really mean? What purpose did it serve? One historian, Dorothy Borg, presented the theory that the whole idea was confused. On the day after his return from Chicago the President held a press conference. Members of the press corps felt that Roosevelt's answers to their questions were meaningless and evasive. But the President was really trying to make a point: "that he was searching for a method of furthering the cause of world peace, that his 'quarantine' concept was one of a variety of ideas related to this search, but that he was still in the process of seeking the right solution." Roosevelt was opposed to the use of the word "sanctions." Therefore, this seemed to indicate that the ideas were loosely conceived. The use of the speech was also poorly defined. The President suggested no means for halting lawlessness in Asia and Europe. He showed the United States that he was trying to

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[26] Ibid., pp. 722-23, 725.

do something.[27] Herbert Feis, a Far East scholar, evaluated the Quarantine speech by stating,

> In the middle of the speech which otherwise just rotated around old axioms, he spoke some startling sentences. . . .
>
> The proposal was too sudden, too off the cuff, too different from the President's former comments on the foreign situation. A few vigorous groups hurried to its support. But the rest of the country and Congress were opposed. A sack of silence was wrapped around the remark. It was put in a quarantine for three unhappy years.[28]

The Quarantine speech really did nothing more than express the opinion of the President as well as the outrage felt by many Americans toward the world situation. But Roosevelt did not have anything specific in mind when he made his speech. As has been seen his opposition to the word "sanctions" seemed to indicate he had no definite plan. But because his speech was vague as to meaning and purpose, it incurred the wrath of Japan and sparked the hopes of China, Great Britain and France. The latter three hoped the United States would act. Yet, as the days, weeks, and months went by, there was no definite action to implement the principles of his speech, except, perhaps, the State Department accusations that Japan had violated the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Instead of setting forth a new policy, as some sources felt it did, the speech aroused antagonism in the United States. Isolationism deepened. Perhaps the President was actively searching for peace and sending out peace feelers, but the

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[27]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, pp. 382-85.

[28]Herbert Feis, The Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War Between the United States and Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 11-12.

Quarantine speech was misleading in use and purpose when it was not followed up by complementary action.

Meanwhile, throughout late August, September, and early October, the League of Nations contemplated on what action should be taken towards the Sino-Japanese conflict. American participation was a key question. Stanley Hornbeck, then the Adviser on Political Relations, said that should the League of Nations act on the China question, American action would be the same as that taken from 1931-33 __ "action in general support of an effort to bring hostilities to an end and to prepare the way for a settlement by pacific means, by preserving and practicing full right of independent judgment."[29] According to Victor Chitsai Hoo, the Chinese Minister in Switzerland, China's stand in the present crisis was to regard it as a continuation of the Manchurian conflict. The Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hsu Mo, expressed disappointment "that the United States and other nations had taken such an aloof attitude toward Japanese aggression against China and hopes that the United States would cooperate with the League in any action on China's behalf. . . ."[30]

Secretary Hull, when the League discussed the Sino-Japanese conflict, reiterated the importance of his statements of principles of July 16 and August 23. Joseph Avenol, Secretary General of the League of Nations, expressed pleasure that Hull had communicated his statements of

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[29] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 5-6.

[30] Ibid., pp. 6, 18.

principles and said he would lay them before the conference. Avenol then said that the Council would refer the China question to the Advisory Committee, but Leland Harrison, the American Minister in Switzerland, said there was no assurance that the United States would sit on the Advisory Committee.[31]

On September 18, Secretary Hull authorized Harrison to attend the Advisory Committee meetings on behalf of the Government. If actual participation was desired, Hugh R. Wilson would be sent but without the right to vote, a move to preserve the right of independent action. In drafting the reply to the League's invitation to sit with the Advisory Committee, three men were involved--Hugh Wilson, Stanley Hornbeck, and Pierrepont Moffat. The latter wrote of their problems.

> It is a case of damned if we do and damned if we don't. If we don't we will be accused of abandoning Japan and of dealing entirely into the isolationist sphere. If we do we are to a certain extent the victims of League strategy. Instead of sticking to their normal procedure the League is trying to dump the whole Far Eastern mess onto the Advisory Committee . . . we all agreed that we must make it patent that sitting with the Committee did not imply that we assumed any of the responsibilities of the Members of the League which devolved upon them from the fact of their membership. . . . We had to point out that there were on our statute books certain laws which under given contingencies controlled the actions of the Government. On substance there was no disagreement but in drafting there was a lot; Stanley wanted to lecture the League on what it should do; Hugh Wilson and I maintained that it was sufficient to maintain our position but that we must not tell the League its own business. . . .[32]

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[31] Ibid., pp. 13, 20.

[32] Ibid., p. 24; Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, pp. 150-51.

On September 28, at an Advisory Committee meeting, the Chairman announced that Germany and Japan had refused the invitation to participate and that China had accepted. Concerning Japan's refusal to attend, Secretary Hull wrote to Harrison, "By declining the League Assembly Advisory Committee's invitation, the Japanese have refused even to consult with other governments with a view to adjusting their difficulties with China." Hull said the Sino-Japanese conflict was of concern to the entire world because the problems of economy, humanity, and the security of the world were involved. But he added that the United States did not want to stir the League into action.[33]

The Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee decided to follow a three-step procedure: "to examine (1) question of Japanese forces in Chinese territory; (2) Japan's treaty obligations in the matter; (3) whether there is any justification of Japanese action." As discussions progressed, it appeared likely that the Subcommittee would find Japanese action unjustified and in violation of her treaty obligations.[34]

On October 6 the League of Nations Assembly adopted two reports condemning Japanese aggression in China. The First Report reviewed the events in China since the Marco Polo Bridge incident, outlining both the Japanese and Chinese versions which were diametrically opposed to each other. Aside from the discrepancies over the July 7 incident,

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[33] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 37; Foreign Relations, Japan, I, (1931-1941), 376-77.

[34] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 50-51.

extensive troop movements during negotiations for a local settlement made matters worse. As Japan had warned Nanking not to intervene in the settlement of the Marco Polo Bridge incident, so it warned against moving troops to the north. While local negotiations were underway, hostilities began at the end of July. Japan occupied Tientsin and Peiping, seized railway lines, and moved west towards Inner Mongolia. Japanese activity provoked strong Chinese reaction. China resisted and realized such would be met by a force of arms. This was revealed in Shanghai. Japanese planes began to bomb the capital, the coast, and the Chinese interior. As Chinese resistance stiffened, Japanese action intensified. The League Assembly condemned Japanese aerial bombing of open towns.[35]

Three treaties were involved: the Protocol of 1901 which allowed Japan to station troops in Hopei Province and carry out field maneuvers; the Nine Power Treaty of 1922 which called for the respect of the sovereignty, independence, territorial, and administrative integrity of China, and to allow her to maintain a stable government; and the Pact of Paris of 1928 which condemned war as a solution to international problems. The First Report stated that Japan had violated all three. Only if it could be shown that Japanese action was in self-defence "could the position of the Japanese forces in China possibly be reconciled with Japan's treaty obligations." Japan kept insisting she had no

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[35] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 384-89.

territorial designs in China; Japan wanted Chinese cooperation for the development of Far Eastern prosperity and culture. Japan was determined to settle the issue locally without aid or interference from third powers. The Report concluded it was obvious that Chinese territory was invaded by a powerful Japanese army, that Japan had blockaded the Chinese coast, and that Japanese planes were currently bombing cities. This military action was totally out of proportion to the incident which precipitated it and that such action could not bring about the cooperation between the two nations which Japan had stated was its policy.[36]

The Second Report adopted by the League Assembly stated that the situation was of concern to all nations in varying degrees such as the protection of nationals, material interests, and maintenance of peace. The League urged a peaceful settlement but such would be difficult since Japan was not a member of the League. It called for a meeting of the signatories to the Nine Power Treaty, as was stated in the treaty, to discuss application of treaty stipulations. The League of Nations condemned Japan, expressed its moral support for China, and discussed how each nation, individually, could give aid to China.[37]

The Quarantine speech, delivered the day before the League of Actions adopted the two reports, did much to spur the League into this action. As Pierrepont Moffat wrote,

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[36] Ibid., pp. 390-94.

[37] Ibid., pp. 394-96.

> Its effect in Geneva was instantaneous and put an end to considerable shilly-shally that was going on. We can now regard a nine-power conference as almost inevitable. Three technical steps remain to be done: the first is to prepare a statement agreeing with the conclusions found by the League that Japan had in fact violated the Nine-Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Pact; the second is to prepare an answer to the invitation to join the other signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty and to incorporate a suitable reservation that if this conference should report to the Assembly we would not join in that report, even though we would take full part in the discussions; the third was to formulate in our minds what might be done in the way of constructive action at such a conference. . . .[38]

After the League's condemnation of Japan and the adherence of the United States to the League's Reports, Japanese newspaper editorials expressed shock at the American attitude. Ambassador Grew reported their views:

> The League of Nations has consistently ignored actual conditions in the Far East, and, moved by Chinese propaganda, it has denounced Japan as a violator of the Nine Power and Kellogg Treaties. The United States had been taking an independent course of action which was impartial and just. However, it is now evident that the United States, in associating itself with the League in denouncing Japan as a treaty violator, is equally with the League unable to understand conditions in the Far East and must share with the League responsibility for aggravating the situation. . . .[39]

At the Subcommittee meeting on October 4, Lord Cranborne of Great Britain proposed a meeting of the Nine Power signatories. Wellington Koo, Chinese Ambassador in France, favored this but said it should be held in addition to the League and not in lieu of it. Maxim Litvinov of the Soviet Union concurred and said that sanctions should be

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[38]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, p. 154.

[39]Grew, Turbulent Era, p. 1167.

imposed by some of the League members and that it not be a universal act. The Australian delegate, Bruce, disagreed. Other countries sided with Bruce and approved the Cranborne proposal. The League adopted a resolution to send letters to the members of the League parties to the Washington Treaty. The letters were sent to the signatories: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, India, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, and the Union of South Africa and to adherents: Bolivia, Denmark, Mexico, Norway, and Sweden. The British Government was anxious to know the feelings of the American Government to the calling of a conference of the Nine Power Treaty signatories. Should the United States want to call the conference and hold it in Washington, the British would happily concur. The United States did not want the conference held in Washington, or in any large European capital, or at Geneva, but in a smaller place in Europe. The United States expressed the desire to have the conference held as soon as possible.[40]

While communications were being sent from country to country concerning the feasibility of a conference, its purposes, and a possible meeting place, Ambassador Grew summarized Japanese attitudes towards the United States in the first three weeks of October. At the beginning of the month there was a general recognition that American public opinion was opposed to Japanese activity in China and that

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[40]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 363; Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 61, 64, 66.

the American Government was making strong representations concerning American damages caused by Japan's activities and hostilities. After the Quarantine speech this feeling mounted sharply; the Japanese resented being condemned and expressed "uncertainty as to American intentions of coercing Japan." After two weeks opposition to the United States had become muddled but the public believed that the "United States has prejudiced the issues between Japan and China, thereby abandoning any right to influence the terms of settlement." Grew continued to express their feelings:

> It should be recorded that for better or for worse, the Department's October 6 Declaration coincided in time with the period of Japan's settling down to the serious business of war. By the end of September the initial exhilaration of hostilities was over, and the public was beginning to realize, as the nation's leaders already realized, that a huge effort would be necessary to attain success in the China undertaking. All Japanese were beginning to hear of friends lost in the fighting; the second heavy wave of calling up men to military service, obviously to carry through what was proving difficult, had just got under way. Just as the country was soberly taking a second breath, for the first time generally conscious of the sacrifices necessary, with determination setting itself to seeing the crusade through, came the clear condemnation embodied in the Department's declaration. The degree of reaction to it was in part a consequence of this coincidence. . . . For the present the reaction is resentment and the conviction that the United States cannot now be impartial in any international effort to restore peace in the Far East.[41]

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[41] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 632-34.

CHAPTER III

THE BRUSSELS CONFERENCE

So appealing and logical was the idea of calling a Nine Power Conference that it originated long before Lord Cranborne's proposal on October 4. As early as July 13, less than a week after the initial clash at Marco Polo Bridge, the Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, Alexis Leger, felt that the Far Eastern question could best be handled and discussed by invoking the provision of the Washington Treaty which called for review of treaty stipulations. He thought the League of Nations "would prove to be impotent and would be equally damaging to China for the Chinese would be apt to believe that they could count on real support from the League when in reality they could count on no support from the League." Two weeks later Wellington Koo talked of different ways to mobilize world public opinion in China's favor and suggested that China might call on the League of Nations, invoke the Kellogg-Briand Pact, call for action by the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty, or make appeals through all three simultaneously.[1]

However, it was not until after Lord Cranborne's proposal that definite action was taken. On October 8

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[1] Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), pp. 152-53, 289.

President Roosevelt suggested that Paul van Zeeland, Prime Minister of Belgium, issue invitations to signatories of the Nine Power Treaty who were not members of the League, that the Conference be held in Brussels, and that it should be held within two weeks. Great Britain was in general agreement with the American views but had already asked the Netherlands to host the Conference. The next day the Netherlands Foreign Office declined to call the Conference and offer the Hague as a meeting place because of the vulnerability of the Dutch possessions in the Far East. The British Ambassador in Belgium was then authorized to approach the Belgian Government. On October 13 the Belgian Ambassador in Tokyo strongly recommended to his Government that it not hold the Conference in Belgium. He saw no action short of force that would alter the situation in China and that by holding the Conference the Belgian Government would hamper its own interests in Japan. Meanwhile, China asked the United States to press for London as a meeting place. On October 14 the Belgian Government said that while it would be happy to offer Belgium as a meeting place for the Conference, it in no way wanted to give the impression that it was playing a leading role. It felt that some formula should be agreed upon making it clear that Belgium was acting in concert with other powers. The United States was willing for the Belgians to use a formula reading, "At the request of the British Government and with the approval of the American Government." This was accepted and the invitations were sent on October 16.[2]

[2]Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 68-82.

President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull chose Norman Davis to be the American delegate, with Stanley Hornbeck and Jay Pierrepont Moffat serving as advisers. The President stressed "the importance of mobilizing moral force in all peace-loving nations." He also felt that Japan should repeatedly be asked to attend the Conference should she refuse the initial invitation. Roosevelt thought the Conference should be prolonged to a certain extent and be an agency for educating public opinion and applying all possible moral pressure on Japan. Davis was to be guided in general by Hull's principles of July 16 and August 23.[3]

In Tokyo, Ambassador Grew, wondering what the Nine Power Conference could accomplish, raised a series of questions: "Press the combatants to negotiate for peace — and get thoroughly rebuffed? Try economic sanctions and ignominiously fail as they did in the case of Abyssinia? Or content themselves with moral thunderbolts which would have about as much effect in Japan as a mild hailstorm in the country?" Grew expressed to Hirota that he hoped Japan would attend the Conference since it offered an opportunity to discuss problems. Hirota replied that while Japan had not yet received an invitation it would probably decline. Hirota stated that the "League of Nations had already taken the part of China against Japan and that such a conference would merely result

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[3]Hull, Memoirs, p. 552; Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 84.

in bolstering up China and in prolonging rather than shortening the warfare."[4]

Such was Japan's basic reaction to the Conference and certainly a most understandable one. In discussing the prospects of the Conference Chiang Kai-shek said,

> I am fairly convinced that the forces of righteousness and justice, once set in motion, will not fail to achieve the desired goals. I believe the Conference will accomplish worthy results. China's determination to continue her resistance to the aggressor remains unchanged until the validity of international treaties is restored and international justice firmly reestablished.[5]

The Generalissimo's reaction was what seemed typical of Chinese notes at this time; bombastic and naive. Although probably sincere, he did not appear to deal realistically with matters at hand.

French Foreign Minister Delbos thought the Conference would achieve nothing "but, on the spot, it might be able to invent something." The Vice President of the French Council of Ministers thought nothing would be achieved "unless the United States should be prepared to guarantee with force French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies."[6]

The Italian Government was unreceptive to the idea. It had considered the Nine Power Treaty dead since 1932. The Government would decline the invitation if it were in

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[4]Grew, Ten Years, p. 221; Foreign Relations, Japan, I. (1931-1941), 402-403.

[5]Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 167.

[6]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 635-37.

any way connected with the League, and probably would not participate unless Germany were included.[7]

The American Ambassador in the Soviet Union, Joseph E. Davies, informed Secretary Hull of the Russian reaction to the Conference. He wrote that the Soviet Union was happy that the Conference had been called by the League of Nations. The Soviet Press "inferred that the Nine Power Pact failed because of the non-invitation of the Soviet Union to participate therein." In a later note Davies wrote,

> The Soviet Government does not believe that Japanese aggression in China can be restrained by mere moral condemnation of Japan but that more resolute action such as economic, financial and political, or a boycott of Japanese goods is necessary. It believes that any prolonged discussions . . . will only tend to convince Japan that no resolute action will be taken. . . . Japan should be made to realize that their present policy will not be tolerated and that strong action will be taken if they prove recalcitrant to the decisions of the Conference. The Soviet Union decries any attempt to save Japanese face.[8]

On October 27 Japan refused the invitation to attend the Conference. Germany also declined, but Italy accepted "obviously to represent Japan and Germany."[9] Prior to the American delegation's departure for Brussels President Roosevelt emphasized that a close watch would be kept on the development of public opinion at home and that American policy would eventually be guided by the reactions of the citizens as a whole. Several nations which had accepted invitations to the Conference pushed to get the United States to take

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[7] Foreign Relations, Far East, (1937), 78.

[8] Ibid., pp. 88, 101.

[9] Ibid., p. 112; Hull, Memoirs, p. 553.

the lead. Neither the President nor Secretary Hull relished this idea; Japan's ire towards the United States would be intensified and the isolationists would be in an uproar. Roosevelt suggested that Great Britain not take the lead nor push the United States into the lead, but that smaller nations "should be made to feel their own position and standing."[10]

When Davis and his advisers reached Paris they realized that the nations were not in agreement on the question of future action. The British and the French, especially the latter, wanted to organize an effective front of the democracies in which special burdens and responsibilities would be placed on the United States. Should this not be possible, France would try to obtain a guarantee for Indo-China. Were this not possible, she would most likely lose interest in the Conference. The Soviet Union pushed for a strong policy towards Japan. The smaller nations were afraid the large nations would decide on measures of pressure. As Secretary Hull wrote, "They recalled their unfortunate experience with sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian War. They wanted the conference to do little and end quickly." The day before the Conference opened Davis told Anthony Eden that the United States "had no intention of taking the lead, and that neither the United States nor Britain should follow the other but both should work along similar lines." Davis

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[10]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, p. 157; Hull, Memoirs, pp. 551-52.

said that much of American public opinion felt American interests in the Far East were smaller than Great Britain's and that the British, unable to protect their interest, wanted the United States to bail them out. Eden knew of this feeling but deplored it. Davis said that if both governments followed policies which resulted in Japanese retaliation, the United States would bear the brunt. Eden denied this and said the British could and would send more ships to the Far East. He said that Great Britain would base her policy on American policy in the present situation. "If constructive efforts failed," he continued, "Britain would be willing to join fully in direct pressure on Japan."[11]

Disagreement as to what role each nation should play was the basic problem of the Brussels Conference. As Pierrepont Moffat wrote, two days before the opening of the Conference, "I have never known a conference before where even before we meet people are discussing ways to end it. The Belgians quite frankly would like to see us finish and go home, and several other powers feel the same way."[12]

On November 3 the Conference opened at the Palais des Académies. "The atmosphere was depressed, there was a notable lack of enthusiasm, and I was perfectly well aware," wrote Moffat, "that eight persons out of ten had uppermost in their minds how to close the Conference." After the opening ceremonies Norman Davis addressed the Conference.

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[11]Hull, Memoirs, pp. 552-53.

[12]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, p. 161.

He said,

> Peace, once envisaged only by idealists, has become a practical matter of vital self-interest to every nation. The day has long since gone by when the effects of an armed conflict are confined to the participants. It is all too apparent that under modern conditions the human and material sacrifices and the moral and spiritual costs exacted by the use of armed force not only fall as a heavy and oftentimes crushing burden upon the nations directly involved in the conflict but have grave repercussions upon all nations of the world.
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> We believe that cooperation between Japan and China is essential to the best interests of those two countries and to peace throughout the world. We believe that such cooperation must be developed by friendship, fair play, and reciprocal confidence. If Japan and China are to cooperate it must be as friends and as equals and not as enemies. . . . It is important that equitable adjustment be found.[13]

Count Aldrovandi-Marescotti of Italy

> asserted that unless the realities of the situation were taken into account nothing would result from the meeting but platonic resolutions and fresh proof of the sterility of such intervention. He insisted that the only thing the conference could do was to make an attempt to bring the two parties into direct contact with each other.[14]

The troubles began on November 4. Most of the continental powers wanted to leave Brussels and have a small subcommittee contact the Japanese and work for a basis of mediation between China and Japan. All parties agreed, but when the composition of the committee was discussed everything broke down. France insisted that she be on the committee; she was a great power and held Indo-China. Russia said that a committee composed of itself, the United States, and Great Britain would be the most effective. Italy demanded that she

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[13] Ibid., p. 166; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 405-408.

[14] Tamura, Genesis of the Pacific War, p. 378.

be included, otherwise "the jury would be packed." Several of the more objective powers favored a committee of four with two large nations and two small, namely, the United States, Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands. Great Britain did not want the Soviet Union on the committee because she "had made trouble on whatever body she was sitting." Davis favored the inclusion of the Soviet Union to show Japan that the Conference meant business. Eden then introduced a proposal favoring first of all a committee of three with the United States, Great Britain and Belgium. If this were not approved he suggested a committee of six, adding France, Italy, and the Netherlands, then a committee of nine, adding the Soviet Union, Germany, and one Dominion. Then the matter of a committee was laid aside to allow the entire Conference to agree on a draft approaching Japan. Moffat wrote of this problem of forming a committee, "To one who is not versed in conference procedure this seems a pretty to-do about nothing, but the question of prestige is still so great in the world that few countries were willing to subordinate themselves to assisting an effective piece of work."[15]

Pierrepont Moffat wrote on the following day,

> One message I prepared giving an analysis of the picture as I saw it upset Mr. Davis to a point where I think he would have liked to send me home for pessimism. I summarized the attitude of the different powers: Italy openly playing Japan's game . . . ; France only interested if she can get out of the Conference a guaranty of Indochina or if she can use it as a means of building up a political front of the great democracies; Belgium openly anxious to close the Conference, or at least to divest herself of the

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[15]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, pp. 170-71.

> responsibility; the Netherlands remaining in the background as much as possible; China, instead of voluntarily withdrawing, merely offering to withdraw in case the Conference asked her to, which of course, was not done; Russia arguing in favor of a close lineup between Britain, the United States, and Russia; the smaller powers playing an inactive role. . . . Unfortunately, on the role of Britain I fail to see eye to eye with Norman Davis, as to me Britain is in this Conference to tie us up to direct action with them against Japan, in which their "proportionate share" would be a very small proportion indeed. . . .[16]

Frederick T. Birchall of the New York Times commented on November 8,

> The fact is that despite the noble purpose which inspired it this conference is moving toward the futility which has ended so many League-born assemblies. One after another, when faced with the disagreeable realities with unity of action covering something stronger than mere diplomatic argument, these conferences have taken refuge in phrases that are all but meaningless. Equity has been left on the scaffold and aggression unmolested on the throne.[17]

At a luncheon with the French Prime Minister, Camille Chautemps, on November 10, the American Ambassador in France, William C. Bullitt, revealed to Secretary Hull the feelings of Chautemps. The Prime Minister said,

> What I cannot understand is that you Americans from time to time talk as if you really intended to act in the international sphere when you have no intention of acting in any way that can be effective. I understand how much the President may desire to do something today to preserve peace; but I should infinitely rather have him say nothing than make speeches, like his speech in Chicago, which aroused immense hopes when there is no possibility that in the state of American opinion and the state of mind of the Senate he can follow up such speeches by action. Such a policy on the part of the United States merely leads the dictatorships to believe that the democracies are full of words but are unwilling to back up their words

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[16] Ibid., p. 142.

[17] New York Times, November 8, 1937, p. 1.

> by force, and force is the only thing that counts today in the world.
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> For my part I am convinced that unless the United States is prepared either to announce that it will use at least all its economic strength against any aggressor and eventually perhaps its military strength as well, or unless the United States will make a constructive effort to establish peace on the earth, the world will rapidly enter the most horrible of wars.[18]

Chautemps went on to say that the President should take the initiative to bring peace to the world. Bullitt, in relaying the message to Washington, noted that

> Chautemps throughout his remarks to me was talking with a deadly seriousness.
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> I concur in Chautemps' opinion that it is unwise for us to say anything unless we intend to back up all the implications of our words with an extremely big stick.
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> The idea that he put forth tentatively that the United States might announce that it would act against an aggressor seems to me both impossible constitutionally and contrary to our interests.[19]

Also on November 10 Norman Davis sent a message to Washington warning the President and Secretary Hull that the time was rapidly approaching when the Conference would have to consider what to do should it fail to bring Japan into peace negotiations. The President had suggested keeping the Conference in existence as long as possible, for months if necessary, in hopes the Conference would exert "a united moral pressure of world opinion on Tokyo" and "enable public opinion at home and elsewhere to develop and crystallize." Davis felt such prolongation was not practicable. Most nations involved did not want it. The smaller nations did

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[18] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), pp. 172-73.

[19] Ibid., pp. 174-76.

not want to be drawn into a program led by the big powers for fear that the latter would not pursue the program to a successful end and cause Japan to retaliate against them. Davis listed the remaining possibilities: first, the Conference could say that it had tried and failed; second, there could be united pressure on Japan in the area of shipping and trade; and third, there could be a middle course involving no action against China concerning the military effort, no forcing of concessions on China's part, no recognition of changes, and no military assistance to Japan if she acted against other Conference powers before a China settlement. Davis continued to say that the Neutrality Act "tends to negative our affirmation of high moral principles and advocacy of a moral pressure upon Japan." Should such pressures fail, the United States would find herself embarrassed and impotent. Therefore, he recommended the repeal or suspension of the Neutrality Act concerning the Sino-Japanese conflict. "This would startle and worry Japan, encourage the Chinese and have a dynamic effect upon world opinion." Davis also recommended the construction of battleships. In reply Secretary Hull said there should be no admission of failure and that the principles of the Nine Power Treaty should be reaffirmed.[20]

November 13 was another futile day in Brussels. For the first time, it seemed, "the delegates approached a discussion of realities." Wellington Koo flatly called for sanctions against Japan. But when the United States, Great Britain, and France spoke, they paid no attention to Koo's

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[20] Ibid., pp. 175-77, 181.

speech and continued with their own set speeches speaking in general terms that international relations must be governed by law and respect for treaties, not by violence and "conflicts of national dogmas." Addressing the Conference Davis said,

> The question we are considering here in its final analysis, is whether international relations shall be determined by arbitrary force or by law and by respect for international treaties. In fact that seems to be the greatest issue that faces the world today and is one of the most momentous problems that mankind has been called upon to solve.[21]

The Soviet Union said it would join in any concrete measures. The Italian delegate dropped the bombshell by saying that the delegates were "getting outside the terms of reference of the Conference." He wanted one question answered: "What more does the Conference think it can do?" The session closed on that note. Also on November 13 Japan refused another invitation to attend the conference and even to send a delegate to a smaller conference of nations to discuss the issue. Said Norman Davis, "Had Japan accepted, I am confident that we could have been most helpful to her as well as to China, which it was and is our most sincere desire to be.

Pierrepont Moffat wrote on the same day,

> . . . our delegation is well balanced. The three of us approach the problem before us with three separate preoccupations. Mr. Davis starts on the premise that the existence of the British Empire is essential for the national security of the United States and that

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[21]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, pp. 180-81; Foreign Relations, Japan, I, (1931-1941), 409.

[22]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, p. 181; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 409.

> while we should not follow Great Britain nevertheless we should not allow the Empire to be endangered. Stanley Hornbeck reacts to everything that comes up in specific relation to the Far Eastern situation and the Far Eastern situation alone. My personal preoccupation is to prevent at any costs the involvement of the United States in hostilities anywhere, and to that end to discourage any formation of a common front of democratic powers.[23]

Japanese officials saw to it that delegates in Brussels did not gain faith in one another. The Japanese Ambassador in Belgium, Saburo Kurusu, passed around a telegram from Saito in Washington which stated that the American Government did not support its delegation and that Congressional leaders were severely critical that the American delegates were there at all. On the fourteenth Davis sent a message to Hull concerning the attitude of the American press correspondents in Brussels. He wrote,

> The American correspondents think that this Conference is being used as a cover for inability or unwillingness to take any positive action. Also, today the current gossip among them is that Washington has weakened considerably and is pulling the props from under delegation. We have tried to dispel these ideas. I suspect that this all originated from the Japanese Embassies in Washington and here. The Japanese Ambassador here has been telling that the United States has no intention of doing anything and that my wings are clipped.[24]

The truth of the matter was his wings were clipped. The President and the State Department did not think along the same lines. Davis was convinced that Roosevelt had been prepared to allow him to discuss sanctions, but State Department cables indicated otherwise. Davis was bitterly disappointed; he felt that he had been left out on a limb.[25]

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[23]Hooker, ed., Moffat Papers, pp. 182-83.

[24]Feis, Road to Pearl Harbor, p. 15; Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 183.

[25]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 429.

On November 15 the Conference passed a relatively harmless declaration. Italy voted against it; Denmark, Norway, and Sweden abstained, although agreeing with general principles. The declaration regretted that Japan felt the conflict lay outside the jurisdiction of the Nine Power treaty, while those at Brussels felt it concerned the entire world. It went on to say that international conflicts should be resolved peacefully, that hostilities had affected third powers involving death, property destruction, communications disruptions, and international trade disruptions. The declaration stated that it was Japan's objective to destroy the will of the Chinese to resist Japanese demands, and that while Japan accused China of violating the Nine Power Treaty, China was discussing the matter with other signatories. For these reasons the Conference felt that direct negotiations between the two countries would not resolve the dispute, especially since China could not and would not negotiate with Japan alone for a settlement by agreement.[26]

The next day in Tokyo Ambassador Grew met with Foreign Minister Hirota. The Foreign Minister reported that he understood the declaration passed by the Conference provided for "united action" against Japan. He feared this would have a bad effect on Japanese public opinion. He had also heard that the United States had taken the initiative in calling the Conference and was taking a leading role in Brussels. Grew replied that the initiative "had been taken by a group within the League of Nations of which the United

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[26]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), pp. 410-12.

States is not a member." Hirota said that when news of such American initiative and leadership reached the Japanese press the responsibility of taking the lead against Japan would largely be shifted from Great Britain to the United States. Two days later Grew reported to Hirota that there was no mention of "united action" in the declaration. Hirota was reassured. With instructions from Hull, Grew told Hirota there was no element of truth that the United States took the initiative in calling the Brussels Conference. Grew said that he felt some quarters were trying to damage U.S.-Japanese relations and he urged Hirota to do everything he could to halt rumors. The Foreign Minister said he would take definite steps to do so.[27]

As the Brussels Conference neared its end Secretary Hull favored ending the Conference with a dramatic moral statement, although Davis had already informed Hull that would be anti-climactic. Great Britain objected to a "reiteration of moral generalities" and favored a policy of nonrecognition of Japanese territorial gains plus prohibition of government loans and credits and discouragement of private ones.[28]

On November 24 the Conference adopted a report urging that hostilities cease and that a resort to peaceful processes be followed. The vote was 18-9 in favor; Italy dissented and China accepted very reluctantly. Norman Davis stressed

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[27] Ibid., pp. 413-16.

[28] Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 437.

that the Conference was not adjourning but was recessing until another time when prospects would be better for intervention in the Sino-Japanese conflict. He insisted that interest in the matter had not lessened. Count Aldrovandi-Marescotti said the Conference should have been dissolved.[29]

Why did the Brussels Conference fail? There were several reasons. The most significant factor was the uncertainity of American policy. Also,

> it was apparent at Brussels that no European nations were willing to take any positive steps to implement their high-sounding declarations in view of their troubles close at home. They all expected, perhaps wanted, the United States to assume the burden of preventing further Japanese aggression or of bringing about a settlement of the conflict in China. In the United States, in the fall of 1937, there appeared to be abundance of sympathy for China but little disposition to support the Government in a stronger policy.[30]

Speaking in the same vain Lawrence Battistini, a Far East scholar, said, "It failed because the powers were unwilling to risk any positive action unless leadership in this direction came from the United States. Mindful of the continuing strength of isolationist sentiment in America at that time, the Roosevelt Administration was unwilling to 'stick its neck out,' so to speak."[31]

Dorothy Borg said of the failure,

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[29] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 422; New York Times, November 25, 1937, pp. 1, 25; Tamura, Genesis of the Pacific War, p. 379.

[30] William C. Johnstone, The United States and Japan's New Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 242-44.

[31] Battistini, U.S. and Asia, p. 152.

> . . . no specific terms were ever suggested at Brussels for a solution of the differences between China and Japan or between China, Japan and the powers. This failure to consider the Far East per se goes far to explain why so many of the delegates at Brussels — emphatically including Davis — missed the significance of the movement which was afoot to open negotiations between China and Japan outside the framework of the conference itself.[32]

Others saw the Conference as having totally discredited the concept of collective security. While angering Japan on the one hand, it frustrated the unofficial overtures which were being made, especially by Great Britain, to urge Japan to offer China moderate peace terms. On the other hand, by raising the hopes of the Chinese, it led to their refusal in early November to discuss terms which Japan did offer them at that time. A month later when the Chinese were prepared to consider these, it was too late; the Japanese Army, flushed with victory, had forced Tokyo to issue stronger demands.[33] A New York Times editorial said of the Conference,

> The United States has lost its leadership in world affairs and to that fact largely can be attributed the impotence of the Nine-Power Treaty Conference in Brussels. The reason for this loss of influence is plain: treaty-breaking Governments and dictators have become convinced that for no cause short of actual invasion will the United States initiate or join in any effective movement to assure world peace.[34]

The editorial went on to blame primarily the isolationists and pacifists in Congress and their supporters for this attitude of treaty-breakers.[35]

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[32] Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 441.

[33] Jones, Japan's New Order, pp. 55-56.

[34] New York Times, November 30, 1937, p. 22.

[35] Ibid.

President Roosevelt said of the Conference,

> The Nine Power Conference failed in its immediate objective — the restoration of peace in the Far East. Yet I feel that it demonstrated how actively this Government has been engaged in efforts to seek ways toward peace. The Conference also succeeded in clarifying the blunt fact that Japan was uninterested in the terms of the Treaty which she had signed at Washington in 1922.[36]

Secretary Hull said of the Conference results,

> Action of a positive nature would have solidified the Japanese public behind the Japanese military. It might have led to reprisals by the Japanese and possibly to war. We were not prepared in arms or mind for war. And had it come, we should have had to bear the brunt of it in the Pacific, . . . Our only hope was to keep on good terms with Japan so that, if the right moment came, we should have the same opportunity for stepping in to end the war as Theodore Roosevelt had had in 1904 to end the Russo-Japanese War.[37]

Ambassador Grew was "greatly relieved by the developments at Brussels because he felt that the United States government was demonstrating that having gone on record with the President's 'quarantine' speech and Hull's denunciation of Japan . . . it believed nothing further could be done." Grew added that,

> he could not understand why the Nine Power Conference had ever been convened as it was evident from the start that it "could never in the world agree to take effective measures" against Japan and therefore would only give renewed confidence to the Japanese militarists by showing up the "lack of unity and impotence of the Powers" so far as concerted action against Japan was concerned. "Why . . . can't statesmen think things through?"[38]

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[36]Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses of Roosevelt, p. 464.

[37]Hull, Memoirs, p. 554.

[38]Borg, U.S. and the Far Eastern Crisis, p. 441.

The Brussels Conference was indeed a fiasco. The delegates did not deal with the realities of the situation in the Far East but turned to moralistic principles to condemn Japan. The governments represented did not seem to always know what they wanted. Consequently their delegates were often left stranded, waiting for instructions. Japan's absence from the Conference perhaps contributed to its failure. But looking at the realities of the situation, with the League of Nations and the United States having condemned Japan and expressed moral support for China even before the Conference was called, how could one realistically have expected Japan to attend? The Brussels Conference may perhaps have been a noble venture in search of peace, but when the nations in attendance did not discuss the situation at hand, and in realistic and practical terms, the Conference had to end in complete failure.

While the Brussels Conference was in session, Japan, Germany, and Italy, on November 6, concluded a protocol in Rome. It accused communism of imperiling the civilized world in the West and in the Far East. Only close collaboration, seeking to maintain peace and order, could limit and remove the peril. The protocol was received in Japan with great enthusiasm, Grew reported, and Japan had definitely joined the so-called fascist bloc of nations. Grew went on to say that this marked the "termination of Japan's period of political and moral isolation which followed the Manchurian venture in 1931 and also emphasizes the abandonment of Japan's previous and almost traditional alignment with the democratic

powers." The protocol signatories were out to upset the status quo, representing the "have-nots" against the "haves."[39]

On December 4 Ambassador Grew wrote to the Secretary of State:

> Although Japan is aware that neither the League nor the Nine Power Treaty nations are eager to take coercive measures against Japan, the Japanese Government is reluctant as I have reason to believe to create a further issue with the League without good reason. We believe that unless conditions arise which would materially impede the successful attainment of Japanese objectives in China, such as the continuous flow of arms and munitions to China from abroad in substantially large quantities or the supply of foreign credits to China or some other form of material assistance to China, the Japanese Government will endeavor to avoid placing the League in a position where its member nations would have automatically to apply economic sanctions or overtly proclaim its impotence.[40]

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[39]U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United, States, Japan: 1931-1941, II (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), pp. 159-60.

[40]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), p. 758.

CHAPTER IV

THE "PANAY" INCIDENT

On December 12 the gravest crisis and the most direct U.S.-Japanese confrontation of 1937 occurred when Japanese planes bombed three Standard Oil steamers on the Yangtze River and sunk the U. S. S. "Panay" twenty-seven miles above Nanking. Foreign Minister Hirota called on Ambassador Grew the next day to affirm that Japanese planes, while pursuing remnants of the Chinese Army, had bombed these vessels. Although he had no official report Hirota expressed the "profound apology of the Japanese Government" and stated that Ambassador Saito in Washington would convey the same message to Secretary Hull. Admiral Kiyoshi Hasegawa had accepted full responsibility for the incident. Grew noted that Hirota, when reporting the sinking to him at the Embassy, "seemed as genuinely moved as any Japanese is capable of registering emotion." The sinking of the "Panay" dampened the excitement expressed by General Matsui when he announced the capture of Nanking on December 13.[1]

That same day in Washington the President, in a memorandum to Secretary hull, wrote,

Please tell the Japanese Ambassador: . . .

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[1] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 519-21; Grew, Ten Years, p. 233; Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 802.

1. That the President is deeply shocked and concerned by the news of indiscriminate bombing of American and other non-Chinese vessels on the Yangtze, and that he requests that the Emperor be so advised.
2. That all the facts are being assembled and will shortly be presented to the Japanese Government.
3. That in the meantime it is hoped the Japanese Government will be considering definitely for presentation to this Government:
   a. Full expression of regret and proffer of full compensation.
   b. Methods guaranteeing against a repetition of any similar attack in the future.[2]

Frederick Moore, counsellor to the Japanese Government for fourteen years, wrote of the reaction of the Japanese Embassy in Washington to the sinking of the "Panay": ". . . the whole Embassy was astounded. . . . The Naval Attache, Captain Kobayashi, threw down the paper in rage. . . . It was inconceivable!" The Japanese Ambassador reported that "Japanese officials had been informed by United States authorities as to the whereabouts of the "Panay," and so the bombing and sinking of this boat is considered a very grave blunder." When the Japanese Navy heard of the sinking it sent a war vessel with medical and other supplies to the Americans.[3]

On December 13 Ambassador Grew received a message from Secretary Hull, the first American report of the incident, which he was to convey to the Foreign Minister. The message read in part,

> The essential facts are that these American vessels were in the Yangtze River by uncontested and incontestable right; that they were flying the American flag;

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[2]Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses of Roosevelt, pp. 541.

[3]Frederick Moore, With Japan's Leaders (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Inc. 1942), p. 89; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 522.

that they were engaged in their legitimate and appropriate business; that they were at the moment conveying American official and private personnel away from points where danger had developed; that they had several times changed their position, moving up-river, in order to avoid danger; and that they were attacked by Japanese bombing planes. . . .

In the present case, acts of Japanese armed forces have taken place in complete disregard of American rights, have taken American life, and have destroyed American property both public and private.

In these circumstances, the Government of the United States requests and expects of the Japanese Government a formally recorded expression of regret, an undertaking to make complete and comprehensive indemnification, and an assurance that definite and specific steps have been taken which will ensure that hereafter American nationals, interests and property in China will not be subjected to attack by Japanese armed forces or unlawful interference by any Japanese authorities or forces whatsoever.[4]

On December 14 Hirota's note to Grew stated,

. . . the Japanese naval air force, acting upon information that the Chinese troops fleeing from Nanking were going up the river in steamers, took off to pursue them. . . . Owing to poor visibility, however, the aircraft, although they descended to fairly low altitudes, were unable to discern any mark to show that any one of them was an American ship or man-of-war. . . .

The Japanese Government will make indemnifications for all the losses and will deal appropriately with those responsible for the incident. Furthermore, they have already issued strict orders to the authorities on the spot with a view to preventing the recurrence of a similar incident.[5]

Frederick Moore came up with the following thoughts on the "Panay" sinking:

The Panay affair . . . was a foul piece of business. I would not believe it was an error, as the Japanese contended, on the part of a squadron of young fliers eager to destroy Chinese vessels and mistaking the "Panay" for one. . . . Nelson Johnson,

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[4]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 523-24.

[5]Ibid., p. 525.

> . . . contended that the airmen came to attack American shipping on summons from Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto, and I had no doubt he was right.
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> . . . Hashimoto was a known fanatic, and, it is my opinion, he and a number of officers like him resented the presence of Britons and Americans about Nanking and believed that by audacious attack made directly upon Birtish and American vessels the whole body of foreigners in the Yangtze Valley could be frightened out of the Japanese line of advance against the Chinese. Many Japanese officers had persuaded themselves, as the Germans had, that Britons and Americans would not fight.[6]

On December 14 Ambassador Grew called on the Foreign Minister to formally present the American note sent by Hull on the thirteenth even though some topics were already covered by the Japanese note earlier in the day. But there still was the question of safeguarding American nationals, property, and interests in China. Therefore, the United States expected an answer and Hirota promised quick action.[7]

That same day in Washington the British Ambassador called on Secretary Hull to say that Foreign Minister Eden "was disappointed at the course of this Government when it stepped out so far ahead of the British Government in dealing with the Japanese Government with respect to the sinking of the "Panay" and other American ships." Eden felt that there should have been joint action in a situation as critical as this. He felt that a show of force was necessary to catch the dictators' attention and stop their outrageous actions.

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[6]Moore, With Japan's Leaders, pp. 91-92.

[7]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 526.

But Great Britain was not in a position to make such a showing in either the Far East or Europe. Eden thought Britain would be prepared within a year.[8]

Official reports of the sinking of the "Panay" began to reach Washington on the sixteenth. They declared, Hull wrote to Grew,

> that while the survivors were escaping from the sinking "Panay" Japanese airplanes dived and machine-gunned the boats at extremely low altitudes; that before the "Panay" sank two Japanese Army motorboats approached the ship, machine-gunned it, boarded the ship and stayed for five minutes although colors at the gaff were flying and easily discernible; and that, on reaching shore, the survivors hid the wounded and scattered as planes repeatedly flew over apparently searching to exterminate all. These reports give very definite indication of deliberateness of intent on the part of the Japanese armed forces which made the attack on the U. S. S. "Panay" and American merchant ships.[9]

The Japanese Navy believed that the army officers showed extremely poor taste in disobeying international law by machine gunning a stricken vessel. The Army treated the sinking as "an insignificant matter but an unfortunate accident which occurs in a war where neutrals are present in the area of hostilities."[10]

Secretary Hull, in a memorandum, stated that Ambassador Saito called on him on December 17 to relate that reports reaching Tokyo indicated that

> neither the "Panay" nor any of its survivors were fired upon by Japanese military boats with machine guns. He

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[8] Foreign Relations, Far East, IV (1937), 499-500.

[9] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 527.

[10] Manny T. Koginos, The Panay Incident: Prelude to War (Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Studies, 1967), p. 30.

> had no particular facts, and before he got through I said that there was evidently no question about the fact that two such military motorboats did fire on the "Panay", and some of their crew then boarded the "Panay;" that we have incontrovertible proof to that effect.[11]

Hull went on to say that if the Army and Navy officials responsible for the sinking were Americans acting as such, the American Government would court martial and shoot them. He again expressed shock at the occurrence and again asked if "whether these wild, runaway, half-insane Army and Navy officials were going to be properly dealt with."[12]

On December 21 George Atcheson, Second Secretary of Embassy in China, on board the "Panay," sent the following report to Hull:

> The weather was clear, sunny and still. . . . While we were searching for a way out of the marsh in which we were hidden a fleet of three Japanese bombers proceeding down river flew over us and one Japanese plance circled above the marsh reeds where we had concealed our wounded and ourselves. The actions of this plane and the previous action of the Japanese army patrol boats, in connection with the incredible fact of the bombing of the "Panay" gave us every reason to believe that the Japanese were searching for us to destroy the witnesses to the bombing.[13]

On December 24 Japan accepted the American terms as stated in the note of the fourteenth, but still believed the bombing was unintentional, a case of mistaken identity, and not a disregard for American rights. In the acceptance note Hirota also added that "the commander of the flying force concerned was immediately removed from his post, and

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[11] Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 529.

[12] Ibid., pp. 529.30.

[13] Ibid., pp. 525, 538.

recalled, on the grounds of a failure to take the fullest measures of precaution. Moreover, the staff members of the fleet and the commander of the flying squadron and all others responsible have been duly dealt with according to law." On Christmas Day the American Government accepted the Japanese Government's note of December 14 and 24, "as responsive to the request made by the Government of the United States . . ." However, Hull made it clear that the United States would rely on and accept the conclusions reached by the American Naval Court of Inquiry as to causes and circumstances.[14]

Foreign Minister Hirota expressed his deepest thanks to the American Government's decision. He assured Ambassador Grew "that the Japanese Government has taken and will continue to take all possible measures to prevent the recurrence of such an incident." Grew, writing about the presentation of the American acceptance, noted,

> . . . I was so profoundly happy at the outcome that when I called on Hirota at noon I entered his room wreathed in smiles . . . and told him that I brought good news. When I had finished reading our note to him, his eyes were really filled with tears and he showed as much emotion as any Japanese is capable of showing; . . . I think his relief must have been tremendous, as was mine. We have, for the moment, safely passed a difficult, a very difficult, hurdle.

Grew continued:

> Yet I cannot look into the future with any feeling of serenity. Other hurdles, perhaps even more difficult ones, are almost certain to present themselves, and the patience of the American people is not inexhaustible.

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[14]Koginos, Panay Incident, pp. 71-72; Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 550, 552.

> War between Japan and the United States will not come through mere interference with or even destruction of our tangible interests in China, or yet from the breach of treaty rights, or the breaking down of principles for which we stand, but war may very easily come from some further act in derogation of American sovereignty or from an accumulation of open affronts. Therein lies the danger which no one with knowledge of the irresponsibility of the Japanese military as distinguished from the Japanese Government can eliminate from the picture. I left the Minister's house realizing only too clearly that our satisfaction at the settlement of the "Panay" incident may be but temporary and that the rock upon which for five years I have been trying to build a substantial edifice of Japanese-American relations has broken down into treacherous sand.[15]

In Washington President Roosevelt was not sure that the Japanese apology was completely satisfactory. For example, he did not know whether those responsible for the sinking would be punished or whether Japan would pay a full indemnity. On April 22, 1938 Japan paid $2,214,007.36.[16]

Before the "Panay" incident was settled the President asked the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, for a financial report of Japanese assets in the United States and whether the President could hold these assets should Japan not come up with an offer to pay reparations. The assets ranged from $152 million to $247 million. The President, under the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1933, could declare a national emergency and restrain or forbid monetary exchange transactions with other countries.[17]

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[15]Foreign Relations, Japan, I (1931-1941), 552: Grew, Ten Years, p. 240.

[16]Koginos, Panay Incident, p. 72; Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses of Roosevelt, p. 542.

[17]Koginos, Panay Incident, pp. 61-62.

Secretary Morgenthau said that economically, the United States was prepared "to be placed on a war footing." He saw no reason why the United States should wait for another one of its vessels to be attacked. Morgenthau was "one of the most vigorous and belligerent of the presidential advisers" who urged war. Secretary of the Navy Claude B. Swanson supported war also. However, no other cabinet member did. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Leahy, "believed that the American Pacific Fleet, in a show of determination, should have immediately blockaded Japan in a move which he felt would impress upon the Japanese the intentions of the United States to protect its vessels and nationals." In any case the fleet should at least be mobilized for action. The President and Secretary rejected the idea; they were sure Congress would not approve. The American Ambassador in Germany, William E. Dodd, wrote to the Secretary of State on December 14,

> . . . the United States needs to apply a boycott to Japan. England should cooperate to save herself. If that did not produce prompt effects the American Navy should move toward the Far East with a few British war vessels. If either of these moves were made Mussolini would threaten England, but I believe the Italian people would refuse to fight with America. Germany might threaten moves for Japan but the German people are so much opposed that war would not be made. I think, therefore, that you and Congress can save modern civilization again. This time even without a great war. But continued delay means the loss of democratic civilization.[18]

The Consul General at Canton, Irving N. Linnell, wrote of the Chinese reaction to the incident to the Secretary on December 31. He said that although most intelligent

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[18] Ibid., pp. 57, 62; William L. Neumann, America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 252, 243. Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 806.

Chinese felt that American action was fairly strong, many were disappointed; they had hoped for joint action by the United States and Great Britain against Japan. Linnell continued,

> . . . vernacular press has reverted to allegation that American policy is still dictated by shortsighted moneyed interests without regard for "Japanese menace" to American and world peace.
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> Such disappointment in the democratic powers together with reports convincing local Chinese that Russia had promised substantial aid is serving to increase leaning toward Russia as the only nation to be counted on for immediate material assistance and apparently to make the public sympathetic to reported impending reorganization of Government on more radical lines. At the same time there have been signs of increasing suspicion and hostility toward Facist countries and their nationals in this area.[19]

American public reaction to the sinking of the Panay was varied. The St. Louis Post Dispatch declared, "American military forces must be withdrawn from the Japanese-Chinese battle zone." The paper commented that it was mere folly to risk lives of American military forces to protect nationals who chose to remain in China. The Detroit Free Press stated, "The Tokyo Government generally respected America, has desired its friendship and has been scrupulous in honoring its engagements and keeping its promise with the United States." It felt that Japanese assurances and regrets were sincere. Strongly favoring American withdrawal from China was the Richmond Times Dispatch. The Seattle Daily Times commented that American withdrawal of protection to its citizens would weaken the United States position in the Far East, both morally and economically. The Washington Post rather caustically

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[19]Foreign Relations, Far East, III (1937), 848.

remarked, "it is a type of aggression for which statements of deep regrets by smooth-tongued Japanese diplomats are totally inadequate." The paper attacked isolationists and warned Japan that professional pacifists did not represent total American public opinion. The New York Times favored a strong stand. Walter Lippmann, writing for the New York Herald Tribune, commented that "prevention of such incidents in the future would be impossible if the President's actions in the 'Panay' affair were not supported by Congress and the people." He supported the Administration's stand of not withdrawing from the Far East since there was "no alternative but to insist firmly on nothing more and nothing less than our minimum . . . rights."[20]

In the Senate Hiram Johnson of California supported American rights in China but hoped to avoid war. Agreeing with him was Elbert D. Thomas of Utah who said, "If Japan has accepted responsibility and apologizes there is not much more that the United States can do. You can't go to war with a nation which admits it was wrong." Agreeing with their colleagues were Senators Edward R. Burke of Nebraska, Alben Barkley of Kentucky, and Key Pittman of Nevada. Senator William E. Borah said, "It does not appear so far to require drastic action by the United States." Senators favoring withdrawal were Robert R. Reynolds of North Carolina, Harry

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[20]Koginos, Panay Incident, pp. 31-33, 35-37.

Ashurst of Arizona, and Arthur Capper of Kansas. Also taking this stand was Senator Pat McCarran who said, "we should have been out of China long ago. As soon as the government gave notice, United States citizens should have left. By staying there they jeopardize all Americans." Senator Henrik Shipstead asked, "what are they doing there anyway? Why don't they all get out? The United States Marines should leave too."[21]

The "Panay" incident was settled quickly and easily. The Japanese on their own did everything necessary to accomplish this. The American press aided by playing down the "Panay" sinking. Quick Japanese response kept the American public from regarding the sinking as a casus belli.[22]

There was one important domestic reaction to the "Panay" incident. This was the near passage of the Ludlow Amendment which stated, "Except in the event of attack or invasion the authority of Congress to declare war shall not become effective until confirmed by a majority of all votes cast thereon in a Nationwide referendum." The Amendment was introduced as early as February 1935 by Louis Ludlow, Democratic Congressman from Indiana. By the end of 1936 he had seventy-four signatures on his petition, well below the required 218. In October 1937 the Gallup poll indicated that eighty per cent of those questioned favored such an amendment. By the end of the next month Ludlow had 194 signatures; in the first week

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[21] Ibid., pp. 46-47; New York Times, December 14, 1937, p. 18.

[22] Moore, With Japan's Leaders, p. 90; Johnstone, U.S. and Japan's New Order, p. 245.

of December, 205. In less than twenty-four hours after the sinking of the "Panay" the necessary 218 signatures were acquired. Similar so-called peace amendments were introduced in the Senate, sponsored by Senators Nye, Clark, Capper, and LaFollette. Newspapers as a whole were severely critical of the Ludlow Referendum. The Administration was strongly opposed to it. On December 17 the President denounced it as "incompatible to the security of the nation." The House narrowly defeated the Amendment by a 209-188 vote on January 10, 1938. Most newspapers praised the defeat. The San Francisco Chronicle remarked, "it is incredible that 43 per cent of the House membership could be so misguided as to follow their emotions and not their logic, to impose a national referendum upon any declaration of war." Yet, this entire episode revealed the strong anti-war sentiment and isolationism at home.[23]

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[23]Koginos, Panay Incident, pp. 80-83, 86-87, 95-97.

EPILOGUE

Government officials, historians, and scholars have assessed the series of crises of 1937 in U.S.-Japanese relations. Secretary of State Hull wrote in his memoirs,

> The policy pursued by the United States and the other democracies did not, it is true, prevent Japan from continuing her war in China. But, on the other hand, it did prevent her from imposing her own peace on China. It kept her from consolidating her domination over China even as she had solidified her hold on Manchuria. It kept her from freeing herself for the conquest of all Asia. It marshaled the opinion of the world — excepting the Governments of Germany and Italy — against the Nipponese aggressor, It gave American public opinion time to perceive the basic issue involved. It gave the American Government time to prepare for the life-and-death struggle the Japanese war lords were planning.[1]

T. A. Bisson commented,

> Unless the independence of China is firmly established there can be no real or lasting measure of stability in the Far East. The forces of Chinese nationalism have spread too wide and gone too deep to permit of a "pax Japonica" in East Asia. So long as Japan persists in efforts directed toward that end, the Far East will continue to be a zone of strife and unsettlement.[2]

William C. Johnstone, a Far East scholar, noted that the desire to stay out of war at practically any cost was one point where there was near unanimity of opinion. No Government official, he added, from the President down, ever expressed in concrete terms the issues confronting the United States in the Far

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[1]Hull, Memoirs, p. 571.

[2]Bisson, American Policy in the Far East, p. 95.

East. Both the President and the Secretary of State spoke in generalities.[3]

Herbert Feis neatly summed up the problems of American diplomacy when he said, "When, in July 1937, the Japanese Army marched into China, we were trying to make foreign policy out of morality and neutrality alone. These neither prevented the advent of trouble nor provided effective ways of dealing with trouble."[4]

Robert K. Reischauer, writing as early as February 1937, showed perception and realism when he commented,

> It is not enough for America simply to proclaim her love of peace and hatred of war. Any people so situated would do as much, if not more. Such sentiments are no proof that Americans are real lovers of justice, but merely that they find the present peace quite convenient and to their liking. Those who do not find it so are not inspired by America's example to renounce the use of force. If we Americans are to lay claim to being true lovers of peace, we must be willing to make those sacrifices that will lay the foundations of justice upon which a permanent peace can be erected. If we find such a price too high to pay, then let us at least be intellectually honest enough to admit that it is not justice and peace we love, but our prosperity, that it is not war we hate, but a disturbance of our comfortable existence. Let us admit then that we are helping pave Japan's road to war; and let us not pretend indignation and surprise when some day that road leads to our door.[5]

Several factors in Japanese behavior seem clear. Japan was a trading nation which needed raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods. It was primarily for economic reasons that Japan expanded, first into Manchuria, then North

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[3]Johnstone, U.S. and Japan's New Order, p. 250.

[4]Feis, Road to Pearl Harbor, p. 8.

[5]Reischauer, "Japan's Road to War," Asia, p. 83.

China. When certain western powers, notably the United States and Great Britain, erected high tariff barriers to Japanese goods, peaceful means to obtain Japan's needs were eliminated. Hence, she resorted to force. She represented in the Far East the "have-not" nations who were dissatisfied with the status quo created by the Treaty of Versailles. Japan wanted a change in the status quo but could not do it peacefully. The United States was in favor of the status quo but would accept a change in it if China agreed. Naturally China did not want to lose any territory; therefore, the United States committed itself to the preservation of the status quo and, in a sense, to the protection of China. Japan also had internal political problems. Although she had a civil government the military held the upper hand. The constant clash between the two elements put the civil government into a secondary position. While it understood diplomacy and the need for peace, the military did not.

The Marco Polo Bridge incident spurred Japan on the road to war. A local settlement could not be reached and hostilities extended to Peiping, Tsingtao, Shanghai, and Nanking. No one to this day knows who fired the first shot on July 7 but it is evident that the Japanese took the occasion to further their activities. Japan consequently was accused of violating the Nine Power Treaty, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Covenant of the League of Nations. China was certainly no less guilty of violating the Kellogg-Briand Pact by resorting to as much force and violence as Japan did, even though she was on the defensive. It does not appear that

throughout the crises in 1937 that China was totally guiltless. Treaties often outlast their usefulness and they are only effective if they are adhered to and enforced. Should they be violated, they should be re-examined but by definite and concrete action, not by moralistic principles.

The most obvious and most fundamental factor in the deterioration in U.S.-Japanese relations was the failure of the United States to deal realistically with the crisis. This was epitomized by Secretary of State Hull who expected the world to adhere to a statement of moralistic principles issued on July 16. One cannot deal effectively with realistic situations, for example, Japan's economic needs, with words or pieces of paper. Rhetoric has no power against force. President Roosevelt's Quarantine speech misled many democracies and individuals into thinking the United States was prepared to take definite action when Roosevelt really did not mean that at all. The President might have spoken in more specific terms or avoided the subject of foreign affairs entirely. Then by words and bits of paper the League of Nations and the United States condemned Japanese aggression. With that move the United States quickly lost its so-called "impartiality" in the Far Eastern crisis. But rhetoric did not stop Japanese force.

Another example of failure to deal realistically with the matter was the Brussels Conference. This certainly was the coup de grâce to American diplomacy. Nothing was accomplished except a moral condemnation of Japan. This was Secretary Hull's purpose but it did nothing to alleviate the problems in the Far East.

The sinking of the "Panay," as deliberate and inexplicable as it was, only served to increase the enmity between American and Japanese officials. Although it was settled promptly and efficiently by both sides, the incident epitomized in no uncertain terms the rapid deterioration in U.S.-Japanese relations.

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