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Japanese Foreign Policy Making in the Manchurian Affair

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To My Mother and Father

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PREFACE

Ever since experiencing Japan's defeat in World War II, I have asked myself why Japan adopted a foreign policy that worked to her own destruction. This book is an outcome of my longtime concern. I have chosen to examine the Manchurian Affair because it marks the beginning of Japan's uncontrolled expansion to the Asian Continent, and also because here are found the rudiments of later maladies.

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S. N. O.

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INTRODUCTION

The Manchurian Affair of 1931 was one of a series of military expeditions to the Asian mainland which Japan undertook in modern times. It was certainly not the largest of the ventures. It stands out today in the minds of many because it is linked with the rise of the military: it is considered to be the prelude to Japan's expansionistic adventures through the whole of Asia.

Reconstruction of the step-by-step decision making of the Manchurian Affair reveals how the political power structure changed during the military action, and how the emerging structure affected policy formulation. The process of change was one of struggle. Unlike many other such conflicts--at least as they are typically analyzed--this evolution cannot be reduced to a simple bi-polar formula of civil-military rivalry. It was, rather, a triangular relationship, in which middle and lower grade army officers challenged the existing military as well as civilian leadership, calling for radical reform in foreign and domestic policies. The demands of these junior officers were an expression of the widespread anxieties and dissatisfactions of post-World War I Japan. The nation was suffering from economic, political, and ideological crises at home. The rise of Chinese nationalism and the substantial prospect of Soviet communism presented Japan with a

serious threat to the continued possession of her Manchurian holdings. A bid for radical change in the direction of a strong national-socialist government, for the adoption of positive measures in Manchuria to offset the Chinese challenge, and for the reinforcement of the military along with reforming its and the nation's leadership--this program reified a general desire to break through the status quo, to open to Japan the gates to an heroic future.

Examination of the rise of the military highlights two key issues: the process of power acquisition and the objectives this power pursued. The army and, particularly, the Kwantung Army become the central focus of our observation since they contributed most decisively to the military rise to power, largely through their successful operation of the Manchurian Affair. Moreover, these institutions, in their roles in creating a new state in Manchuria, expressed most elaborately the content of the reform objectives.

Military radicalism served as the lever in the advancement towards political power. In analyzing its functions, we find a basic contrast between the kind of radicalism which resorted to terrorist measures and that which exerted organized pressure. The former served largely to energize the movement, the latter to shape the form of policy and program demands and to steer them towards realization. The strength of the Kwantung Army lay largely in the organized nature of its radicalism.

It was by appeasing radical demands internally and utilizing them externally in the expansion of military power that the existing military leaders met the challenge of the junior officers. Significantly, loyalty to the military as an organized body served as an important factor in preventing military radicalism from taking a revolutionary course in which the junior officers might have attempted outright assumption of power. Yet the effect of radicalism on military discipline was drastic. It caused a breakdown between actual and formal decision-making power, and thus brought about the disintegration of the entire decision-making structure, first within the military and afterwards for the entire nation. In the face of a successful military action in Manchuria which lay far beyond their control, counteraction by civilian leaders was at best ineffective. This situation reflected the lack of convincing and constructive civilian policy to ride over the critical times, as well as lack of determination and confidence to restrain the military pressure in unified ranks. Civilian leadership retreated by premature default.

The ideas and goals which the military radical reformers attempted to realize upon acquisition of power represented, on one hand, a transitory phase in modern Japanese political thought, and indicated, on the other hand, the particular brand of imperialistic ideology that spurred Japan on to Asian conquest. As radical reform thinking grew in opposition to the then developing capitalist and party government system,

which had been inspired by liberal democratic teachings of the post-World War I era, its main criticism was directed against the divisive effects of capitalism and party conflict. These were considered detrimental to the all-important goal of building a strong Japan prepared for external expansion.

Yet, interestingly, radical reform thinking also contained certain of the more egalitarian aspects of the liberal democratic doctrine. It advocated the right of the people to a better life, stressed the need for equalization of wealth, and called for the abolition of class privileges. The concept of greater distribution linked the objectives of expansion abroad and elevation of the popular lot at home. The problem of proper evaluation of radical reform ideology is one of tracing the interrelationships and assessing the relative weights of these diverse objectives.

I have chosen to focus the study on the policy statements and programs of the Kwantung Army. Their leaders were not only affected by reform thinking but were also capable of construing it in concrete form. Many of the principles adopted at the time of the establishment of the state of Manchukuo were direct expressions of criticism of the existing Japanese political, economic, and social systems. Moreover, the Kwantung Army's having to cope with the challenge of Chinese nationalism brought "racial" thinking to the fore. Originally inspired by the plan of the Manchurian Japanese to create a racially harmonious state in Manchuria in which their

position would be safeguarded, the Kwantung Army significantly adopted this proposal, elevating the Manchurian Affair to a Pan-Asian enterprise.

Traditionally, Japanese imperialism in Asia had faced the dilemma of the need to unite with other Asian countries in defending themselves from Western domination and the need to control less powerful neighbors in competing against the Western Powers. Thus, although the Pan-Asian appeal always involved a propaganda function, its meaning at any particular moment depended upon the variant of the power compulsion it was serving at the moment. In the case of the Manchurian Affair, the recognition of the need to comply with Chinese nationalist aspirations and the commitment to the principle of popular welfare as such both characterized and limited the aggressiveness of the imperialist ideology.

This study in political power change and its policy objectives also attempts to indicate where the greatest source of danger lay for the future Japan were she to be successful in subsequent imperialistic enterprises. I believe there were basic weaknesses inherent in the very manner in which the military soared to power, for the breakdown in the military decision-making structure occurred at the time of the Manchurian Affair. Both military and political operations in Manchuria were brought to successful completion by the defiance, frequently, of national decisions and instructions of the top military authorities. The internal cohesion of the

military disintegrated in proportion to the external expansion of its influence. A "system" of irresponsibility resulted. That mistrust and defiance of authority were at the root of the radical reform movement made the military ascendancy that followed vulnerable to the same phenomena.

The process of decision making of the Manchurian Affair strongly suggests that foreign policy formulation is, by nature, limited. Fundamentally, foreign policy alternatives are restricted, especially in the selection of objectives. Japan since the Russo-Japanese War, for example, was committed to the goal of expanding and developing her Manchurian holdings, and policy debates were fought only over the questions of means, timing, and degree. The additional limitation to foreign policy which this study demonstrates is that caused by the domestic power configuration. Perhaps the Manchurian Affair was a rather flagrant episode in which foreign policy decision making deserted merely nominal official makers and fell into the hands of actual power holders. The highest official policy makers--cabinet ministers, including the service ministers--generally lacked control over the developments in Manchuria. That they were forced to accept the outcome of these developments as given conditions upon which to formulate foreign policy explains the series of policy changes that took place in the course of a year and a half. These changes recorded the increasing incorporation of Kwantung Army demands into national policy, and reflected the existing power relationship within the nation.

PART I

THE SETTING

CHAPTER I

EXPANSION AND PROTECTION OF JAPAN'S
INTERESTS IN MANCHURIA

Japan's primary concern during her first half century of foreign relations was the maintenance of national security. The overwhelming supremacy of Western power, manifested in the presence of the Black Ships and proven in the precedents of the Opium War, had forced Japan to enter into a relationship of amity and commerce since 1854 with the United States and the world at large. Paradoxically, victory in her first major war, fought against China in 1894-1895, only confirmed Japan's impotence; when confronted with the demand of Russia, France and Germany to return Liaotung to China, Japan had no alternative but to succumb. Victory after her second major war, against Russia in 1904-1905, found Japan in a different position. Having succeeded to the Russian lease of the Territory of Kwantung and railway rights in South Manchuria, Japan now became the youngest imperialistic power with an active commitment in the neighboring Continent of Asia. Japanese expansion into Manchuria was, then, a legacy of the Russo-Japanese War.

The Seeds of Conflict

From the very beginning, the Japanese adventure in Manchuria faced both internal and external problems. The predominant role played by the army in the conquest as well as

the protection of Manchuria placed it in a position of influence in the formulation of the Manchurian policy. The Office of the Kwantung Governor-General, established in 1906 to administer the Kwantung Leased Territory and the railway zone in South Manchuria, was largely a continuation of the military occupation government. For more than a decade, the Governor-General was a general or lieutenant-general who also commanded the army stationed in the areas under his administration. When the Office of the Kwantung Governor-General became a civilian administration in 1919, the army was brought under the separate jurisdiction of the newly established Kwantung Army Command, which was made responsible for the protection of the Kwantung Leased Territory and the railway zone.¹ Henceforth the Kwantung Army became the chief channel through which was advanced the policy of rapid development of Manchuria--if necessary, by the use of force. The underlying assumption seemed to be "not to recognize Manchuria as entirely Chinese territory, but to treat it in every respect as a special region under [Japanese] influence."²

Civilian leaders, who regarded economic development as the means to bring Manchuria under Japanese control, opposed this approach, advocating a more gradual development. This

¹ For discussion of the institutional development of the Office of the Kwantung Governor-General, see Kurihara Ken, "Kanto totokufu mondai teiyo" ("Resumé of Problems Related to the Office of the Kwantung Governor-General"), Kokushigaku (Tokyo: March, 1960).

² Ibid., p. 181.

group, which recognized the region as Chinese territory, considered direct government control of Manchuria inappropriate.³ The semi-governmental South Manchuria Railway Company was established as the sole organ to carry out the policy of expanding both the economic sphere and political influence. Thus the conflict between the rapid-militaristic and the gradual-economic approach to the common objective of Manchurian development had its inception in the early days of Japanese advancement in Manchuria, and the outcome was to be determined largely by the relative power of the respective advocates.

Nor was Japanese development of Manchuria unopposed by the Western Powers. Japan, as a newly developing capitalistic nation concentrating on the full development of rights and interests acquired through concession, was reluctant to make Manchuria a free arena for international economic competition. On the other hand, the United States was attempting economic penetration into Manchuria, as evidenced in Harriman's bid for the purchase of the South Manchuria Railway and Knox's neutralization plan for all Manchuria's railways and proposed Four Power Consortium for the development of industries in Manchuria. These proposals so threatened Japan that she sought alliance elsewhere, and found in her former enemy, Russia, a willing partner against the threat of American economic advancement. The Russo-Japanese entente of 1907 secretly

³Tsurumi Yusuke, Goto Shimpei (Tokyo: 1938), Vol. II, p. 678.

stipulated the division of North and South Manchuria respectively as Russian and Japanese spheres of influence.

Japanese expansion into Manchuria was thereafter subject to the constant pressure and surveillance of the Powers, and Japanese Manchurian policy was to be formulated in reference to her overall foreign relations.

A third factor that conditioned Japanese development of Manchuria, and one that greatly contributed to its insecurity, was the political unrest in China. The international implication of the revolutionary movement was the possibility of a Chinese partition, in which the Japan of pre-World War I was unprepared to partake. On the contrary, the Japanese leaders of the time--whether, like Yamagata Aritomo, they favored the Ching dynasty, or, like Inukai Tsuyoshi, sympathized with the revolutionaries--considered cooperation with China to be essential for the successful operation of Manchuria. Possessed of a sense of racial affinity, they expected China to serve as partner in the defense of Asia against the encroachment of the West.⁴

Short of a Chinese partition, however, Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria depended largely upon the outcome of the Chinese civil war. When Yuan Shih-k'ai assumed the

⁴Yamagata Aritomo stated that the basic premise for policy formulation was the realization that "Asia exists as Asia of the Asians." Takahashi Yoshio, Sanko Iretsu (Distinguished Deeds of Prince Yamagata) (Tokyo: 1925), p. 98. Inukai Tsuyoshi recounted that he cooperated with Sun Yat-sen for "no other reason than to save the whole of North Asia from the pressure of the white people." Washio Yoshinao, Inukai Bokudo Den (Tokyo: 1939), Vol. II, p. 756.

Presidency of the Chinese Republic in 1911, and attempted to consolidate his power upon the financial assistance of the United States and the European Powers, Japanese anxiety over the future of her Manchurian holdings grew more and more serious. She felt an urgent need to gain assurance of her continued lease of Kwantung and her railway concessions in South Manchuria, since the original term of the Russian lease acquired in 1898 was for twenty-five years. The "Twenty-one Demands" was an expression of the Japanese desire to perpetuate her rights and interests in Manchuria as well as to expand her influence over other parts of China, with the even broader aim of strengthening her position vis-à-vis the Powers while they were absorbed in World War I. The treaty signed between China and Japan in 1915 stipulated the extension of the Kwantung lease and railway concessions to ninety-nine years, Japanese rights of priority for railway and certain other loans in South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia, and the right of Japanese subjects to travel, reside, engage in any business, and lease land in South Manchuria. Thus, through the exercise of strong pressure, Japan consolidated her position in Manchuria--at the expense, however, of a rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in China. Japan's succession to the German rights in Shantung, recognized over Chinese opposition at the Versailles Peace Conference, soon so intensified anti-Japanese feelings in China that they exploded in the violent May Fourth Movement. Thereafter, Japanese imperialistic expansion on the

Continent of Asia had to cope with the increasingly hostile opposition of Chinese nationalism, and in Japan the wisdom of continued reliance on Chinese cooperation for the development of Manchuria came to be increasingly questioned.

Not only the riots and anti-Japanese boycotts in China stood between Japan and her expansion after World War I. The League of Nations, which pledged its members "to respect and preserve . . . the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members,"⁵ and which made "any war or threat of war . . . a matter of concern to the whole League,"⁶ appeared as the guardian of a status quo which Japan was not quite ready to accept.⁷ The United States, moreover, took into her own hands the responsibility of preventing Japan from upsetting the status quo in the Far East through four principle efforts: participation in the Siberian Expedition to obstruct possible Japanese detachment of the Russian Maritime Provinces;

⁵Article 10, Covenant of the League of Nations.

⁶Article 11, Covenant of the League of Nations.

⁷Konoe Ayamaro's essay entitled "Eibei honi no heiwashugi o haisu" ("Reject Advocacy of Peace Designed for the Interest of England and America"), Nihon oyobi Nihonjin of December, 1918, is an interesting example of this viewpoint. Konoe later came to possess sympathy for the ideology of the radical reform advocates in contrast to and in spite of Saionji Kimmochi, both of whom belonged to the highest aristocracy as well as assumed leading political roles. In this essay Konoe observes that the World War was fought between those who found the status quo advantageous and those who considered it disadvantageous, and that the situation prior to the War was far from ideal to many.

organization of the new Four Power Consortium in order to bind Japanese capital investment in China to international agreement; insistence upon Japanese restoration of Shantung to China; and initiation of the Washington Naval Conference with a view to curbing Japanese imperialism through international law.

Aside from the Five Power Naval Disarmament Treaty, the Washington Conference produced two treaties that marked great triumphs for American diplomacy. Through the Nine Power Treaty, which stipulated respect for the "open door" and "territorial integrity" of China, the United States succeeded in binding the Powers to the basic principles of her traditional China policy. Through the Four Power Treaty endorsing the rights of the signatories with regard to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the Pacific region, the United States obtained a Japanese guarantee against aggressive designs on the Philippines and prompted abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The replacement of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance by the Four Power Treaty was a loss to Japan especially, for the former arrangement had served as a bulwark against American economic penetration to China. In short, the system created by the Washington Conference obliged Japan to abstain, if not retreat from the course of continental expansion which she had until then steadily pursued. Later the Conference was branded as the "lost rights" conference⁸ for Japan and the American "table-setting for Chinese

⁸Ministry of War, Waga Manmo hatten no rekishi to

invasion"⁹ which clamped "fetters and shackles"¹⁰ on Japanese overseas ventures. Serious dissatisfaction with the postwar security system germinated among various segments of the Japanese population and leadership.

Foreign Policy

During the next decade, the so-called "soft" foreign policy of Shidehara Kijuro and the "strong" foreign policy of Tanaka Giichi represented approaches to the common objective of maintaining and developing Japanese rights and interests in China, and particularly in Manchuria, in the face of growing opposition from China and stiffening surveillance of the Powers.

The Shidehara "Soft" Policy

The starting point of the Shidehara policy was the acceptance of the new order in the Far East created by the Washington Conference treaties. As Ambassador to the United States and delegate to the Conference, Shidehara considered that Japan's course was to maintain and promote her rights and interests in China within the framework of the international

rekoku kansho no kaiko (History of Japanese Expansion to Manchuria-Mongolia and Reflection on Intervention of the Powers) (Tokyo: 1932), p. 38.

⁹Otani Hayato, Nihon no kiki (Japan's Crisis) (Tokyo: 1931), p. 110. Otani is the alias of Ishikawa Shingo, a navy officer who wrote the book to promote armament and strong foreign policy after the conclusion of the London Naval Disarmament Treaty of 1930.

¹⁰Speeches of Mori Kaku quoted in Yamaura Kanichi, Mori Kaku (Tokyo: 1941), pp. 21, 755.

agreement of respect for the "open door" and "territorial integrity." The two basic principles of his China policy were nonintervention in Chinese civil war and economic advancement.

The former was demonstrated and upheld in a series of decisions rejecting internal and external demands for military expeditions to China. The first incident occurred when Shidehara refused to assist the Manchurian war lord Chang Tso-lin in a war against the North China war lord Wu Pei-fu in October 1925, although the majority of the cabinet members thought it necessary to send Japanese troops in order to prevent Manchuria from becoming the battlefield. A second test came a month later, when Kuo Sung-lin revolted against Chang Tso-lin. Again Shidehara opposed the dispatch of troops to Chang's assistance--assistance which was in fact given by the Kwantung Army. The third and fourth occasions were initiated by the British in 1927, when the foreign communities in Nanking and Hankow were threatened by the violence of the Kuomintang forces on their northern conquest. Shidehara's refusal to participate in the international expedition cost him dearly, for the government soon fell before attacks claiming his policy had exposed Japanese life and property to Chinese assault.

Shidehara defended the nonintervention principle as compatible with the nationally accepted objective of maintaining Japanese rights and interests in China. He made explicit his recognition that those rights and interests in the region of Manchuria were essential for national existence

as well as duly based upon treaties, and that they should be protected from Chinese internal tumult and political change. There is no doubt, however, that he defined the scope of the dangers confronting Japanese holdings narrowly, considering only actual violations such as abrogation of treaties or transgression of leased territory.¹¹ What Shidehara sought in applying his nonintervention principle was to secure China proper as Japan's export market, regardless of political change. This goal assumed, of course, that Japan's economy would continue to expand, and was designed to implement that expansion. Shidehara envisaged the future in terms of an industrial Japan relying largely upon exports to China and to the neighboring nations in the Far East, where, with low transportation costs and low wages, she could compete favorably against the Western Powers.¹² He therefore considered it the task of diplomacy to promote this economic advancement through the conclusion of commercial treaties and assistance to private enterprises overseas. Shidehara's willing acceptance of the Chinese invitation to the Special Tariff Conference in October, 1925, and the declaration by the Japanese delegate granting recognition to the Chinese demand for tariff autonomy were manifestations of the principle of economic advancement

¹¹ Speeches of Shidehara Kijuro quoted in Shidehara Heiwa Zaidan, Shidehara Kijuro (Tokyo: 1955), pp. 365-367, 372f.

¹² Diary of Ishii Itaro quoted in ibid., pp. 331f.

in China through expanding exports.¹³ It is important to note that by giving great weight to exports Shidehara tended to show a more positive concern for Japanese relations with China proper than with Manchuria, which he regarded as a part of China in which Japan possessed rights and interests to be safeguarded. In other words, Shidehara would not allow the handling of Japanese holdings in Manchuria to become detrimental to Chinese-Japanese relations. To this extent, he was an advocate of "China-first."

But could Japan achieve the economic advancement she sought, could she retain her Manchurian rights and interests after nationalism became the rallying point of Chinese unification under the Kuomintang? Some evidence seems to support a negative answer. For example, the Northern Expedition of 1926 was accompanied by radical anti-foreign outbursts in Nanking and Hankow. And Kuomintang diplomacy was keynote by determination to rid China of "unequal treaties." Nevertheless, until 1931 Chinese demands on Japan were largely confined to tariff autonomy, abolition of extraterritoriality, and revision of commercial treaties. In fact, there seemed to have existed between the two states some tacit agreement to attend

¹³ Great Britain and the United States were more willing to grant higher tariff rates to China than Japan which could not afford to be as liberal with regard to rates. Thus Japan attempted to show her sympathy towards the principle of tariff autonomy while preventing the actual increase of tariff rates. For discussion of Shidehara's China policy and Japanese export demands, see Usui Katsumi, "Shidehara gaiko oboegaki" ("A Note on Shidehara Diplomacy"), Nihon Rekishi (Tokyo: December, 1958).

first to the improvement of treaty relations with regard to China proper and thereafter to settle the more complicated Manchurian question.¹⁴ During his visit to Japan in November, 1927, Chiang K'ai-shek himself affirmed to Prime Minister Tanaka that Japanese interests would be duly respected should Japan assist in the achievement of the Kuomintang revolution.¹⁵ Thus the Shidehara policy seems to have been fairly practicable, despite superficial evidence to the contrary, for a substantial portion of the Kuomintang still seemed agreeable to the idea of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria. The scope of this group is not clear, but it included not only Chiang K'ai-shek and the moderates but also the more radical groups of Eugene Chen and Wang Ching-wei, who formed alliances with the Communists against Chiang K'ai-shek on several occasions.¹⁶

To be sure, complete Communist victory would have had drastic implications for Shidehara's policy. His decision to

¹⁴ Shigemitsu Mamoru, Showa no doran (Disturbances in Showa Period) (Tokyo: 1952), Vol. I, p. 46.

¹⁵ Record of conference between Prime Minister Tanaka and Chiang K'ai-shek on November 5, 1927. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nihon gaiko nenpyo narabini shuyo monjo (Chronology of Japan's Foreign Relations and Major Documents, hereinafter to be referred to as Nihon gaiko nenpyo) (Tokyo: 1955), Vol. II, p. 105.

¹⁶ Eugene Chen visited Japan in July, 1931, and held three conferences with Shidehara. The purpose of Chen's visit was to obtain Japanese assistance to the Canton Government in return for which existing Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria short of direct annexation were to be recognized. Ibid., pp. 172-180.

refuse participation in an allied expedition at the time of the Nanking Incident was based, among other things, upon the desire to save Chiang K'ai-shek and the moderates of the Kuomintang from the Communists. The possibility of cooperation with China required that the moderates of the Kuomintang gain control of China, and Shidehara explained that the Nanking outrages were instigated by the Communists in order to invite either international reprimand or pressure on Chiang.¹⁷

The Tanaka "Strong" Policy

The so-called "strong" policy of Tanaka embodied a number of striking contrasts. The two basic principles of the Shidehara China policy were, as we have noted, nonintervention in the civil war and economic advancement through exports. Tanaka focused on military expeditions and aggressive development of rights and interests.

Ready to resort to forceful means had been the tradition of the military as well as the declared line of the Seiyukai. The tradition achieved new vitality in the person of Tanaka, an army general from Choshu¹⁸ and President of the Seiyukai. Three times during the Tanaka Cabinet term of office--in May of 1927 and April and May of the following year--troops were sent to Shantung, officially for the sake of

¹⁷ Shidehara Heiwa Zaidan, op. cit., pp. 302f.

¹⁸ Feudal clan in western Japan that led the Meiji Restoration and that later controlled the army.

protecting Japanese nationals from disturbances that were feared because of the Kuomintang expedition to North China. The underlying reason for the Shantung expeditions, however, was to prevent the extension of civil war to Manchuria, where Japanese rights and interests were concentrated.

Indeed, Tanaka's militaristic policy was explicitly announced on the occasion of the Far Eastern Conference¹⁹ of June, 1927. The following program was outlined. With regard to China proper, Japan expected the Chinese themselves to undertake the task of restoring order, but was ready to take self-defense measures in the event that her rights and interests were in danger of unlawful violation. It was, moreover, not only the militaristic means but also their liberal application that distinguished Tanaka's "strong" policy from the "weak" one of Shidehara. "Danger" was construed to include possible as well as actual violation of Japanese rights and interests and, even more broadly, unfavorable political conditions. With regard to Manchuria, Japan would assume a less ambiguously assertive role, including assistance to those who respected Japan's special position in Manchuria in the course of their attempts to attain political stability. Japan considered herself to be under a special "obligation" to maintain

¹⁹ Conference called by Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi, consisting of Minister to China, Consul Generals of Shanghai, Hankow, and Mukden, representatives from the army, navy, Ministry of Finance, Office of the Kwantung Governor-General, and Office of the Korean Governor-General, to deliberate China policy.

peace and order in Manchuria because of her great interests based on the needs of national defense and existence.²⁰ It was, moreover, not only the militaristic means but also their liberal application that distinguished Tanaka's "strong" policy from the "weak" one of Shidehara. "Danger" was construed to include possible as well as actual violation of Japanese rights and interests and, even more broadly, unfavorable political conditions.

That Tanaka separated China proper and Manchuria in formulating his policy is of major significance. Shidehara regarded Manchuria as part of China and gave priority to Chinese-Japanese relations. Tanaka's emphasis, on the contrary, was upon the special status of Manchuria as an arena of Japan's special interests, and hence upon the priority of Manchurian-Japanese relations. At least three factors--respectively economic, strategic and ideological--can be considered to have influenced Tanaka towards advocating the principle of "Manchuria-first." To begin with, although Tanaka did not deny the importance of China proper as an export market, he considered the development of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria as a more secure and desirable means to promote economic development than trade expansion.²¹ Favoring

²⁰ Foreign Minister Tanaka's directive concerning the Principles of China Policy outlined at the Far Eastern Conference. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., pp. 101f.

²¹ Usui Katsumi, "Tanaka gaiko ni tsuite no oboegaki" ("A Note on Tanaka Diplomacy"), Kokusai Seiji (Tokyo: January, 1960), pp. 26f.

acquisition of rights and interests was more compatible with his politico-military mentality. The predisposition was reinforced by the intensified anti-Japanese boycotts caused by the Shantung expeditions. Tanaka's economic efforts were in line with this view. A prime example is the negotiations undertaken through Yamamoto Jotaro, President of the South Manchuria Railway Company, towards the acquisition from Chang Tso-lin of five new railway rights in Manchuria.²²

Secondly, Tanaka looked to Manchuria as a strategic barrier against Soviet power and Communist penetration. Having become convinced of the permanency of the Russian policy of southward expansion, and having been, as Vice-Chief of the General Staff, the leading advocate of the Siberian Expedition in 1917, Tanaka had long dreamed of a vast buffer zone against Russia: Manchuria, Korea, and the Maritime Province of Siberia. Kuhara Fusanosuke of the Seiyukai, who was sent to the Soviet Union as Special Economic Survey Delegate in October, 1927, even conveyed this plan to Stalin. Soviet approval is said to have been won, but, due to opposition from China and in Japan, the plan did not materialize.²³

Communism lay at the heart of the third--the ideological-issue, too. Communism had become a cause for great concern

²² For a description of Yamamoto's railway negotiations and Tanaka's intentions, see Mori Yoshiaki, "Cho Sakurin bakushi to Machino Takema" ("Death of Chang Tso-lin Resulting from Bombing and Machino Takema"), Nihon Shuho (Tokyo: March 25, 1957), and Tanaka Giichi Denki Kankokai, Tanaka Giichi Denki (Tokyo: 1960), Vol. II, pp. 674-691.

²³ Ibid., pp. 748f.

to Tanaka during his premiership. Not only did he foresee Red Russia and possibly Red China encroaching upon Manchuria, but he also faced rising communist influence in Japan, as evidenced in the reconstruction of the Japanese Communist Party in the first election, in 1928, under universal manhood suffrage. Domestic reaction included the arrest of more than one thousand communists and radicals on March 15 and the official banning of the far-left Rodo Nominto on April 10. On the foreign front, the communist threat intensified Tanaka's interest in safeguarding Manchuria. Tanaka, like Shidehara, expected the moderates of the Kuomintang to hold control over China, but in his determination to eliminate communist influence in China he went much farther than Shidehara, promising support to Chiang K'ai-shek to undertake the subjugation of the Chinese Communist Party and the unification of China south of the Yangtse.²⁴ Until China should be assuredly in the hands of the moderates, however, Tanaka was determined to prevent Kuomintang influence over Manchuria.²⁵

The application of Tanaka's policy of separating Manchuria from China took the form of two lines of pressure--against the Kuomintang to refrain from bringing the whole of China under control and against Chang Tso-lin to abandon his designs on China. The former, as already discussed, was

²⁴ Conference record in Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., pp. 102-106.

²⁵ Instruction to Uchida Yasuya, delegate to the Paris Conference of 1928. Ibid., p. 119.

exerted through the three military expeditions to Shantung and on the occasion of the Chiang-Tanaka conference. The latter situation was somewhat complicated.

Until 1916, Chang Tso-lin had been simply a local war-lord in Manchuria. His leadership in Manchuria had been established largely through the assistance of the Japanese Army. By 1926 he was in complete control not only of Manchuria but also of North China, and was, with this expanded power, becoming increasingly uncontrollable. Tanaka, in line with the Army tradition of assisting Chang Tso-lin as a means of consolidating Japanese power and position in Manchuria, in 1928 still upheld the plan to create a self-governing Manchuria, under Chang, clearly separate from Kuomintang-governed China.²⁶ But Chang had become defiant against foreign intervention in Manchuria and extremely ambitious of gaining hegemony over the whole of China. Indeed, North China was about to become the decisive battleground between him and the north-bound Kuomintang.

In view of this situation, when Tanaka in 1928 once more resorted to his high-handed policy of military preparation and diplomatic intervention, the odds were against him. On May 18, Japan declared her readiness to take "appropriate effective steps" for maintaining peace and order in Manchuria,²⁷

²⁶ General China Policy draft prepared by Arita Hachiro, director of the Bureau for Asian Affairs, by order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, July 13, 1928. "Documents Relating to Japanese Foreign Policy Towards China," PVM 32, pp. 211-226.

²⁷ Communication of the Japanese Government to Chang Tso-lin and to the Nanking Government issued on May 18, 1928. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 116.

and ordered the Kwantung Army Headquarters in Lushun to advance to Mukden and to prepare for the disarming of the Chang forces. By then the Japanese army had grown more than eager to subjugate the audacious Chang as well as to protect Japanese rights, but Tanaka, at the same time, instructed the Japanese Minister in Peking, Yoshizawa Kenkichi, to press upon Chang to withdraw his forces into Manchuria, thus preventing the expansion of hostilities north of the Great Wall. In the event of such peaceful withdrawal, Japan would not move to disarm Chang's forces. In other words, Chang was to be assured at least of his control over Manchuria if he would abstain from his bid for Chinese unification.²⁸

Tanaka's "strong" policy was at its height of success when Chang decided to leave the much coveted capital of China, Peking, for Manchuria. The Tanaka plan to separate China into China proper and Manchuria, to be governed respectively by Chiang K'ai-shek and Chang Tso-lin, was on the verge of accomplishment. Officers of the Japanese Army in Manchuria dramatically terminated the possibility of carrying it out by assassinating Chang on his way back to Mukden on June 4. Tanaka himself did not abandon the plan for separating Manchuria from China. He pursued this objective by attempting to prevent Chang Hsueh-liang, the son and successor of Chang Tso-lin, from coming to terms with the Kuomintang. But in order to be successful, Tanaka now had to strengthen his

²⁸ Tanaka Giichi Denki Kankokai, op. cit., pp. 944-949.

leadership internally, because the direct cause for the upset was the division within his own school of "strong" policy.

Action versus Policy: a Preview

The assassination of Chang Tso-lin is highly significant. It foretells the particular brand of "strong" policy that was to cause and carry out the Manchurian Affair three years later. This policy involved the attainment of a more direct form of Japanese control over Manchuria in defiance of official policy decisions, by resort to deviationary means and underground activities.

The facts of the incident are simple enough. In the early morning of June 4, 1928, Chang Tso-lin's special train was exploded near the junction of the Peking-Mukden Railway and the South Manchuria Railway. The senior staff officer of the Kwantung Army, Colonel Komoto Daisaku, directed the incident. A few Japanese officers of the Independent Railway Guards, who were in charge of the protection of the railway zone, assisted in the execution of the explosion, and a few dead bodies of Chinese were produced to cover up the plot.

The immediate prompting of Komoto's action was an order from the Chief of the General Staff that reached the Kwantung Army on May 26 prohibiting disarming the retreating forces of Chang Tso-lin and assuming the responsibility of maintaining public order in Manchuria. This prohibition was

highly frustrating to the Kwantung Army leaders. As mentioned before, the Kwantung Army had been waiting for action since May 18, when the Chief of the General Staff had instructed the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to be ready to move towards Chinchow to undertake the disarming of the Chang forces.

Although there is no evidence that would indicate the approval of Kwantung Army Commander-in-Chief Muraoka Chotaro, or of Chief of Staff Saito Tsune, with regard to such deviantary means as the assassination of Chang, they were by no means opposed to his displacement; the act cannot be considered an isolated attempt of a lunatic fringe of the Kwantung Army. Finding in Chang a threat to continued Japanese domination of Manchuria, both Muraoka and Saito had strongly favored deposition of Chang and disarming his forces. They had repeatedly urged the central army authorities to issue formal orders for marching towards the Chinese-Manchurian border.

The Kwantung Army leadership in 1928 had for some time wanted Japan to assume an assertive role in the administration of Manchuria, even to the point of sponsoring the severance from China proper of a Manchuria-Mongolia "autonomous" unit under Japanese assistance.²⁹ The Manchurian control which

²⁹For a discussion of the Kwantung Army leadership situation prior to and at the time of the assassination of Chang Tso-lin, see Usui Katsumi, "Cho Sakurin bakushi no shinso" ("Truth of the Death of Chang Tso-lin Resulting from Bombing"), Chisei (Tokyo: Special December Issue, 1956). The article is based upon the Diary of Saito Tsune, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army at the time.

the Kwantung Army had in mind was not merely that of a reconstructed Chinese regime complying to Japanese demands, but control involving direct maintenance of public order in Manchuria by the Japanese. Whether the Kwantung Army in 1928 was thinking, ultimately, in terms of permanent occupation of Manchuria or of annexation is uncertain; it is certain that they were demanding an expansion of their traditional functions to include the right of free troop dispatch over all of Manchuria.

They considered occupation of Manchuria on the occasion of disarming Chang Tso-lin's troops a first necessary step towards establishment of a position of power for Japan. The Kwantung Army had interpreted the May 18 Government Communication expressing Japan's readiness to take "appropriate effective steps for the maintenance of peace and order in Manchuria" as precisely the adoption of a policy of strength in their sense. Hence they accused Tanaka of indecisiveness and fickleness when they were told through informal sources that he bolted at the last minute because of intervention from the United States.³⁰

Whether it was the Kwantung Army that misinterpreted the policy of the Government,³¹ or Tanaka who wavered in his

³⁰ The pressure from the United States is given as cause for Tanaka's change of mind in Yamaura, op. cit., p. 643. However Usui denies the existence of any strong pressure from the Powers in "Chosakurin bakushi no shinso," op. cit., p. 33.

³¹ Tanaka Giichi Denki Kankokai, op. cit., pp. 950f.

determination for action,³² it was the unreconciled co-existence of the two aspects of "strong" policy at the time of the Far Eastern Conference that exploded in the form of the assassination of Chang Tso-lin. Close reading of the China policy directive issued on the last day of the Far Eastern Conference clearly reveals the ambivalence inherent in policy on Manchuria. While Article 6 expressed Japan's positive "obligation" for the maintenance of peace and economic development of Manchuria, Article 7 indicated that political stabilization would best be attained by the efforts of the people of Manchuria themselves. Article 8 adds a further twist by declaring the determination to adopt "appropriate measures" should Japan's rights and interests be threatened.³³

³²Yamaura, op. cit., p. 643.

³³Article 6. "With regard to Manchuria-Mongolia especially in the Three Eastern Provinces, our country must give special consideration because of our important interests deriving from defense and national existence. Furthermore as neighboring country, we cannot but feel particularly obliged to make this region a peaceful place for natives and foreigners through the maintenance of peace and development of economy. It is indeed through the promotion of the economic activities of natives and foreigners upon the principles of the "open door" and "equal opportunity" throughout South and North Manchuria-Mongolia, that peaceful development of the region can be rapidly attained. The protection of our existing rights and interests and solution of pending problems should be treated according to the above-mentioned policy." Article 7. "(This Article is not to be made public.) With regard to the stabilization of the political situation of the Three Eastern Provinces, it is considered best to rely upon the efforts of the people of the Three Eastern Provinces themselves. If certain leaders of the Three Provinces who respect our special position in Manchuria-Mongolia, were to attempt seriously to stabilize the political situation of the said region, the Imperial Government shall give appropriate

Thus the Far Eastern Conference policy could be interpreted either as an expression of Japan's abstention from political intervention in Manchuria and willingness to accept any leader who would respect her rights and interests,³⁴ or as a declaration of determination to advance towards complete control of Manchuria by use of troops at her discretion. Various promoters of the Far Eastern Conference, notably Mori Kaku, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs under Tanaka, tried to make the Conference the occasion to declare Japan's determination to resort to military action in Manchuria under the pretext of maintenance of public peace. Before the Conference, Mori, along with Major Suzuki Teiichi of the Strategic Section of the General Staff, had reached the conclusion that the exercise of force was inevitable for the settlement of Manchuria--by which they meant the severance of Manchuria from China proper and the establishment of a special administrative unit under Japanese influence. Nominal Chinese suzerainty over Manchuria was not questioned, however.

assistance." Article 8. "In case disturbances spread to Manchuria-Mongolia, or public order lapsed in the said region, and our special position and rights and interests were in danger of violation, we must be determined to protect the region against whatever threat that may come, and without missing the opportunity, to take appropriate measures in order to maintain it as the land of peaceful development for natives and foreigners." Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 102.

³⁴Cable from Yoshizawa Kenkichi, Minister to China, to Foreign Minister Tanaka, June 30, 1928. "Documents Relating to Japanese Foreign Policy toward China," PVM 32, pp. 207f.

The Mori-Suzuki group had looked to the Tanaka Cabinet to adopt their view as national policy. Suzuki in turn supported and had the support of a number of influential field-grade officers who formed an informal group that conferred weekly on such problems as modernization of the army, settlement of Manchuria, and internal reform. The regular members of this group included Nagata Tetsuzan, then a member of the Military Affairs Section of the Ministry of War (he was director of this Section at the time of the Manchurian Affair), Ishiwara Kanji, then an instructor at the War College (later crucially involved in the Manchurian Affair as a member of the Kwantung Army Staff), and Tojo Hideki, Okamura Yasuji, Muto Akira and Suzuki Ritsuzo (all of whom were eventually to hold key posts in the army).³⁵ It was this new generation of middle-grade army leaders, mostly lieutenant-colonels and majors, who were to prepare the army for the eventuality of action in Manchuria.

The particular brand of "strong" policy advocated by the Mori-Suzuki line, which for the sake of convenience can be called the "new strong" policy, was characterized, as we have indicated, by their first and foremost interest in establishing Japanese power in Manchuria, although there is no evidence that would prove they had a blueprint for Japanese administration of Manchuria. To them, the traditional policy

³⁵ Statement of Suzuki Teiichi to the writer on July 9, 1960.

of relying upon the successful manipulation of war lords like Chang Tso-lin was inadequate. Moreover, they regarded relationships with the interested Powers as secondary, even though after the conclusion of the Nine Power Treaty in 1922 any action in China that might even slightly hint of exceeding the limits of rights and interests based upon treaties was likely to be subject to international scrutiny and interference. While the moderates cited the international framework within which Japan was to maintain and expand her possessions in Manchuria as supporting their criticism of the "strong" policy, its radical critics branded such considerations as "weak-kneed," excessive deference to foreign Powers.³⁶ Mori went so far as to call for the abrogation of the Washington Conference treaties which to him only confined Japan to the unsatisfactory status quo.³⁷ If international restrictions could not simply be disregarded, they must be discarded through force. Chinese nationalism was to be met forcefully, curbing its course of development.

The course for Japan laid out by this group supporting the "new strong" policy was, then, one of defying the various forces that obstructed Japan's continental expansion. The gradual-economic approach to Manchurian development promoted by civilians of the government and industrial circles was to

³⁶ June 4, 1928 diary entry of Saito Tsune in Usui, "Cho Sakurin bakushi no shinso," op. cit., p. 54.

³⁷ Yamaura, op. cit., pp. 20f.

be overturned not only through resort to military action but--most significantly--also through reform of the socio-political organization of Japan that gave rise to their leadership. The Manchurian Affair was the outcome of this "new strong" policy.³⁸

Chinese Rivalry

The immediate effect of the assassination of Chang Tso-lin on Japanese foreign policy was the passing of the Tanaka policy and the rebirth of the Shidehara policy. The Tanaka Cabinet fell, for it could not punish the plotters of the Chang Tso-lin assassination. Army authorities insisted upon handling the case strictly as an army affair.

In Manchuria, however, the death of Chang Tso-lin brought about a change in Manchuria-China proper relations that completely precluded any possibility of Japan's settling the issues in Manchuria with the local regime. On December 29, 1928, Kuomintang flags were raised over government buildings in Mukden as a symbol of the allegiance of the Three Provinces of Manchuria to the Kuomintang Government at Nanking. With the reunion of Manchuria with China proper, the anti-Japanese nationalist movement spread to Manchuria. To be sure, Chinese nationalism had affected Manchuria earlier, but its centers of

³⁸ Komoto Daisaku stated as follows in a memorandum entitled "Manmo taisaku no kicho" ("Basis for Manchuria-Mongolia Policy"), January, 1929. "A rational and thorough plan for the settlement of Manchuria-Mongolia problems would require the subjugation of the Nanking Government, for which war against China must be expected and moreover that against the United States must be considered."

activities had always been in China proper, at Peking, Shanghai, or Hankow. Now, however, through the organization of the Liaoning People's Foreign Policy Association, the nationalist movement began to be systematically promoted in Manchuria. Recovery of the leaseholds of Lushun and Dairen, of the South Manchuria Railway, and of the consular jurisdiction was demanded. Opposition to the construction of projected Japanese railways grew; expansion of the Fushun mining district was protested. Chinese house owners and landlords were pressured to raise the rents of Japanese and Korean tenants or to refuse renewal of rental contracts. Cases of friction grew more numerous every day.

The Chang Hsueh-liang administration's chief challenge to Japan was most evident regarding railway building and industrial development based upon Chinese capital. The administration undertook an extensive railway-building program designed to provide a great Chinese railway system that would transport freight from the interior of Manchuria to the Chinese port of Yingkou. This network would deprive the South Manchuria Railway and the port of Dairen of their business. Administration-sponsored port construction at Hulutao added to the threat to Dairen's importance. The Chinese reduced their railway rates to compete favorably against the South Manchuria Railway. Industrial development in the hands of government and semi-government corporations ranged from mining and forestry to milling and textile works. Agricultural experimental stations were opened in various parts of Manchuria.

The groundwork for this economic offensive of the Chang administration had already been laid. The marked growth of Chinese capitalism after World War I had already begun to offer genuine competition to Japan. The amount of Chinese capital investment in Manchuria cannot be ascertained, but the construction of Chinese railways unassisted by foreign capital and the establishment of Chinese banks in the leading towns attest to the Chinese economic offensive in Manchuria. Moreover, for several decades, Manchuria had been the outlet for Chinese agricultural immigration. The number of Chinese in Manchuria had doubled between 1907 and 1930 to some twenty-eight million out of the thirty million population. Extensive settlement of Chinese immigrants provided grounds for close social and economic relations between Manchuria and China proper. Thus the political union of the two was solidly founded upon growing economic and social ties that seriously threatened the hitherto sacrosanct Japanese position in Manchuria.

The world depression beginning in 1929 provided a final blow to the Japanese interests. The South Manchuria Railway Company's 1930 income dropped substantially below that of the previous year, forcing postponement of repairs to trains and rails as well as dismissal of employees. Not only were independent Japanese businessmen in Manchuria, most of whom were engaged in middle-sized and small enterprises, seriously affected by the depression; they were now directly

exposed to the pressure of Chinese nationalism systematically promoted through the anti-Japanese policy of Chang Hsueh-liang. They began to organize into groups that stood for the protection of Japanese rights and interests. The most influential of these were the Manshu Seinen Renmei and the Yuhokai. The former was led by Kanai Shoji, head of the Medical Section of the South Manchuria Railway Company, and was composed of junior employees of the company and independent businessmen. The latter, under the direction of Kasaki Yoshiaki, also of the South Manchuria Railway Company and formerly of Yuzonsha,³⁹ was comprised largely of intellectual elements of the company. Through these organizations the Japanese in Manchuria now began to press for the resumption of "strong" policy in Manchuria.

Chinese-Japanese rivalry in Manchuria grew cumulatively intense as new disputes and controversies arose and persisted. "Over five hundred pending cases" became the catch phrase of the advocates of "strong" measures towards Manchuria. The Wanpaoshan Affair of July 1, 1931, which in itself was an insignificant dispute between Chinese and Korean farmers over the digging of irrigation ditches, touched off a series of anti-Chinese riots in Korea and in turn a revival of anti-Japanese boycotts throughout China.

³⁹Nationalist organization formed in 1921 under the leadership of Okawa Shumei.

Meanwhile, the Manchuria policy of the Japanese government represented by Foreign Minister Shidehara was to bolster up the South Manchuria Railway Company.⁴⁰ Shidehara appointed former Foreign Minister Uchida Yasuya to undertake negotiations with Chang Hsueh-liang for the purpose of safeguarding the South Manchuria Railway Company from the threatening competition of the developing Chinese railways. The need for safeguards had become urgent, for in the spring of 1931 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government at Nanking, Wang Cheng Ting, had issued the principles of Nationalist foreign policy. According to the Wang statement, China would aim first at the recovery of tariff autonomy, second at the abolition of extraterritorial rights, third at the return of foreign settlements, fourth at the return of leased territories, and fifth at the recovery of the rights of railway operation, inland navigation, and coastal trade. Moreover, Kwantung was included in the leased territories to be restored, and the South Manchuria Railway was among the railways to be recovered.⁴¹ The two clashing national interests rapidly moved towards a climax.

⁴⁰ Policy of Foreign Minister Shidehara with regard to pending railway problems in Manchuria. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., pp. 168-171.

⁴¹ Shigemitsu Mamoru, Gaiko kaiso roku (Diplomatic Memoirs) (Tokyo: 1953), pp. 86f.

CHAPTER II

CRISIS IN JAPAN AND GROWTH OF THE RADICAL REFORM MOVEMENT

World War I marked a great leap in Japan's power, especially in continental expansion, which in turn prompted growing opposition from China and the Powers. The war also spurred important internal effects.

In a word, the single outstanding feature of postwar Japan was the emergence of what could loosely be called popular power. A combination of factors was involved: the influence of democratic ideals propagated by the Allies in censoring the autocracy of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the impact of socialist concepts that manifested their potency in the Russian revolution; the initiative taken by liberal intellectuals in Japan, notably Yoshino Sakuzo, who called for the establishment of party government and universal manhood suffrage. Moreover, the rapid growth of the working class during and after the war--growth both in number and in power⁴²--provided a receptive audience for the call for political and social change.

⁴² During World War I, the number of factory workers increased as follows:

		<u>1914</u>	<u>1919</u>
Factory workers	Male	488,000	865,000
	Female	598,000	912,000
Other laborers	Male	70,000	108,000
	Female	32,000	28,000
Total		1,188,000	1,913,000

During the same period the number of strikes and participants

"Popular" Government

The movement towards the realization of party government and universal manhood suffrage represented an answer to the trend of rising popular power. For some time, passage of the universal manhood suffrage bill had been the battlecry of labor unions and opposition parties. In 1916, the Yuikai, the forerunner of modern Japanese labor unions, included achievement of universal manhood suffrage in its program. In 1920, the opposition parties, Kenseikai and Kokumin-to, presented their respective universal manhood suffrage bills to the Diet and thereafter, in an attempt to arouse and win over public opinion, repeatedly pressed for their immediate enactment. The Seiyukai steadfastly opposed these bills as threatening the existing social order. At the time of the tri-party "safeguard Constitutional Government" movement, the Seiyukai plank was changed, however, to focus the party's attack on the formation of so-called "transcendental" cabinets composed of bureaucrats and members of the House of Peers; this shift of emphasis signified recognition of the need to comply with popular wishes. After a notable victory for the tri-party coalition in the general elections of May 1924, the universal manhood suffrage bill was enacted into law under the Kenseikai

demanding higher wages and improvement of working conditions increased as follows:

	<u>1914</u>	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>
Strikes	50	64	108	398	417	497
Participants	7,904	7,852	8,413	57,309	66,457	63,137

Cabinet of Kato Takaakira, and thus the institutional framework for party government in Japan was established.

It should be noted, however, that the political party leaders neither passed the universal manhood suffrage bill nor pressed for the establishment of the party cabinet system because of championship of the popular cause. On the contrary, they regarded the masses with misgivings, but felt that concession was unavoidable. As their main source of support, the existing political parties relied heavily upon the propertied electorate of landlords and the bourgeoisie, who now turned away from the hanbatsu⁴³ to the parties as representatives of their interests. The close alliance between the political parties and the bourgeoisie-landlord class was chiefly responsible for the large-scale corruption that stigmatized party government from its inception. Under the much-acclaimed party cabinet of Hara Takashi, charges of corruption were levied through the Diet and the press against the highest leaders of the Seiyukai for granting rights and interests in exchange for election funds as well as for leaking administration secrets to make personal profit on the stock market. Hara himself was murdered by an indignant youth who believed that political corruption could be rectified by elimination of the party leader. Affiliations with the respective zaibatsu were so clear that Kato's Kenseikai

⁴³ Hanbatsu refers to those belonging to the powerful clans, especially those of Choshu and Satsuma, who maintained their clan solidarity in controlling Meiji Japan.

Cabinet was dubbed the "Mitsubishi Cabinet" and the Seiyukai Ministries of Hara and Takahashi were called the "Mitsui Cabinets." During the Seiyukai Cabinet of Tanaka, case after case arose with charges that implicated Tanaka in past and present dealings. Bribery of cabinet ministers and sale of peerages and meritorious awards were widely reported. Battles over charges of corruption were not only political; the Diet frequently became an arena of physical disaster, of raging howls and fist-fights. That the trust in party government was undermined almost simultaneously with its establishment had the devastating effect of leading the forces demanding change and reform to seek salvation in a direction that denied the gradual and legal procedures assured under the system of democratic party government.

Economic Problems

In addition to the political crises deriving from the failure in leadership, economic conditions in postwar Japan brought about widespread social and labor unrest. In the decade after World War I Japanese capitalism showed marked expansion in investment and production, but prosperity was confined to large capital and the people at large suffered first from inflation and then from chronic depression.

In a series of panics that struck Japan in 1920, 1927, and especially in 1929, many middle and small industries were forced to bankruptcy. Unrest took an especially sharp upturn

among agrarian and labor groups. The postwar depression afflicted the entire agrarian community even more than the rest of the nation, for the drastic fall in the prices of agricultural products far exceeded the drop in those of industrial goods. There was also pressure from the large-scale import of inexpensive rice from Korea and Taiwan. Tenant-landowner disputes increased rapidly and leftist influence penetrated even into the conservative agrarian scene. The first agrarian workers' political party, Nomin Rodoto, was organized in December, 1925, under the initiative of the communist-dominated Nihon Nomin Kumiai, but it was banned immediately by government order.

The lot of the urban workers was equally precarious due to increasing unemployment resulting not only from depression but also from rationalization of industry. Labor disputes were on the rise, although labor unions by 1929 could still claim only a little more than 6 per cent of the entire industrial force. The first election under universal manhood suffrage, in 1928, sent only eight deputies from the labor class to the Diet, due in part to the suppressive measures employed by the government but also to the weakness of the labor movement itself, which was ideologically and factionally divided. But in spite of the weakness of the labor movement and the labor bloc in the Diet, the political destiny of the laboring class was watched with fear by the party leaders, by their propertied supporters, and by the public at large,

because of the suspected intrusion of leftist radicalism. The mass arrest of the members of the Japanese Communist Party on March 15, 1928, came as a shock to many of these leaders as well as to the public, for it seemed to prove the invincibility of a Communist Party officially suppressed since 1923. The far-left Rodo Nominto and the Nihon Rodo Kumiai Zenkoku Hyogikai remained active at the bare margin of legality.

National Socialism

Reaction to the growth of leftist movements came in the form of sprouting nationalist organizations. In the early 1920's most of these organizations lacked any social or political program, but aimed directly at counteracting leftist labor and farm unions. The formation of the Yuzonsha in 1921 was to mark an epoch, for hereafter the nationalist movement, promoting programs that called for radical reform of the existing internal and external status quo, was to bid for leadership in reconstructing postwar Japan along lines diametrically opposed to capitalism and party government.

The leaders of the Yuzonsha and of the reform movement that followed were Kita Ikki and Okawa Shumei. A nationalist, socialist, and revolutionary, Kita provided inspiration for the nationalist reform movement in his book, Nihon Kaizo Hoan Taiko (A General Outline of Measures for the Reconstruction of Japan), which was read by countless young militarists and radicals as the gospel for reform. Okawa was a scholar of

Indian philosophy who, through writing and teaching, was also instrumental in spreading reformist ideology, especially, because of his contacts in high military and bureaucratic circles, among policy makers.

The main objective of the Kita-Okawa program was to build a strong Japan that could undertake external expansion. As nationalists, Kita and Okawa struck at the divisive forces in postwar Japan. Capitalism had introduced class conflict. Party government had brought in political conflict. Western thought had weakened the Asian spirit. Thus both Kita and Okawa proposed the restoration of a close union between the Emperor and the people as the primary condition for national cohesion. What distinguished their theory from the traditional Emperor-centered nationalist doctrines was its insistence upon both direct union between Emperor and people and equality among the people.

Kita suggested the abolition of the peerage and of the House of Peers, which he said divided the Emperor and the people.⁴⁴ Okawa also called for the abolition of class differences on the grounds that the Japanese nation could be traced back to one family with the Emperor as the head under whom the people were equally subordinate as children.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Kita Ikki, Nihon kaizo hoan taiko (A General Outline of Measures for the Reconstruction of Japan) (Tokyo: 1923), p. 5.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Home Affairs, Security Section of the Police Bureau, Shuppan butsu o tsujite mitaru go ichigo jiken (May 15th Incident Observed Through Publications) (Tokyo: 1936), pp. 256f.

Moreover, Kita and Okawa extended the principle of equality to the economic sphere. Kita's reform program became famous especially for the threefold limitations it proposed on private assets, private land, and private investment. The excess was to go to the state for redistribution and investment, and basic industries were to be nationalized.⁴⁶

Through Kita and Okawa, the reform movement was to develop along lines of national socialism. Both right and left were to attack capitalism and parliamentarianism in the name of social and economic equality for the people.

In their external programs, however, the left looked to class solidarity crossing national boundaries, while the right sought in national unity the primary source of power to challenge the nations that held world hegemony. As nationalists Kita and Okawa advocated expansion of national power, but as socialists they could not justify expansion in terms of pure conquest and exploitation. They found an answer in identifying the position of a resourceless Japan in the international community with the position of the proletariat in a capitalist society marked by injustice that derived from unequal distribution. Kita insisted that Japan must proceed from solving the question of internal distribution to that of international distribution in order to alleviate her social and economic problems, and that, being a proletarian, as a

⁴⁶Kita, op. cit., pp. 12-35.

nation, she possessed the right to wage war on wealthy, exploiting nations.⁴⁷

Moreover, he regarded Japan as a symbol of the fate of the entire Asian race that suffered from white conquest, and urged a future war of Asian emancipation.⁴⁸ Pan-Asianism, however, did not restrain him from advocating Japanese expansion to the Continent of Asia on the grounds that Japan needed a power base precisely for the sake of pursuing her emancipating mission.⁴⁹ Possession of Manchuria was emphatically defended on the basis that it was taken from Imperialist Russia and not from Nationalist China, with which coöperation was to be reached.⁵⁰ The merger of socialism, imperialism, and pan-Asianism in Kita's theory appealed strongly to those who searched for an answer that would save them from economic misery and that would allow Japan to resume her continental expansion, which had been blocked by international agreements forced upon her by the Western

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 124f.

⁴⁸ The Yuzonsha organ Otakebi explained the mission of Japan as follows. "We the Japanese nation should be the cyclone centre of a war of emancipation of the human race. . . . We do not consider it sufficient to aim at the reform or evolution of Japan herself. We desire to first undertake the emancipation of Japan herself, because we indeed believe in the fate of the Japanese nation as the great apostle in the war of emancipation of the human race." Quoted in Yamamoto Katsunosuke, Nihon o horoboshita mono (Those Who Ruined Japan) (Tokyo: 1949), p. 55.

⁴⁹ Kita Ikki, Shina kakumei gaishi (Unofficial History of the Chinese Revolution) (Tokyo: 1921), p. 185.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 204.

Powers. The main features of the imperialist doctrine of the national socialists were, then, the recognition of expansion as a necessary condition for the realization of socialism at home and the insistence upon the people as participants in as well as beneficiaries of the expansionist program. Many of the rightist organizations that were formed later also came to adopt the combined principles of expansion and popular interest. The Yuzonsha principles had included "the building of a revolutionary Japan" and "the movement for racial emancipation," and the Gyochisha, formed in 1924 under Okawa's leadership after he split with Kita, called for "the building of Restoration Japan" and "the emancipation of the colored races." The two themes soon became ubiquitous.

The impact of Kita and Okawa's program on the growth of the nationalist reform movement cannot be ascribed entirely to its content. Equally important to their theory of reform, both Kita and Okawa acted accordingly. Both perceived that great historical upheavals are attained by the action of a tightly organized elitist group, and both looked to the military to undertake reform through a coup d'état. Kita, who had drawn his conclusions from his analysis of the Chinese revolution, believed that within the military the main source of power was to be found in the energy of the lower-ranking young officers.⁵¹ On the other hand, Okawa, who held that social progress is carried out by the conquering efforts of

⁵¹Kita, Shina kakumei gaishi, op. cit., pp. 66-68.

an inspired hero,⁵² cultivated contacts with the middle-ranking officers of the army. Kita's program undoubtedly called for more revolutionary changes in the existing social and economic organizations than did Okawa's more strictly reformist approach. Kita placed paramount importance on achieving internal reform prior to, or concurrent with, external expansion, while Okawa emphasized the causative role of an external crisis that would arouse national sentiments to the point of accomplishing reform.⁵³ These differences in conceptualizing the process of reform soon divided the reform movement in terms of persons and programs.

Status of the Military

At this point, a survey of the general situation of the military will help clarify the significance of the close relationship that developed between the reform-minded military and Kita and Okawa. Desire for reform existed within the military prior to and independent of the influences of Kita and Okawa. Chiefly this constituted demand for modernization of the military both technologically and in leadership selection.

Participation in the World War had demonstrated, particularly to the army rank and file, that Japanese armaments were far outdated in comparison with the mechanized weapons

⁵² Okawa Shumei, Nihon oyobi Nihonjin no michi (Moral Principles of Japan and the Japanese) (Tokyo: 1926), pp. 5-7.

⁵³ Yamamoto, op. cit., pp. 86-89.

and warfare techniques adopted by the European Powers. Artillery Colonel Kobayashi Junichiro, for example, who had taken part in the European campaign, attempted to introduce a panoramic sighting telescope that would allow for command from covered positions. Still believing in the ideal of personally leading the van, the army elders violently opposed even so simple an innovation. Kobayashi resigned from the army to publish a book entitled Nihon Rikugun Kaizo Ron (Treatise on the Reconstruction of the Japanese Army) and joined the nationalists in advocating the establishment of a powerful defense system through mechanization.⁵⁴

The greatest obstacle to modernization within the military was considered to be its hanbatsu domination. While the history of parliamentary government since the Meiji era marked a slow but steady retreat of hanbatsu influence, the army and the navy continued to be under the leadership respectively of the Choshu and Satsuma clans. In the army, the Choshu control had become absolute under the long leadership of Field Marshall and elder statesman Yamagata Aritomo, and only Choshu men were assured of reaching the rank of general officer. Again, it was the World War that occasioned some change; the mobilization of anti- and non-Choshu forces reflected dissatisfaction with the incompetence of existing leaders in dealing with problems of modern war as well as a growing tendency to identify the feudalistic state of the Japanese

⁵⁴Mitarai Tatsuo, Minami Jiro (Tokyo: 1957), p. 182.

Army with the autocracy of the defeated Central Powers. The pent-up feelings of non-Choshu officers were unleashed soon after the war ended. The first reform directed against the Choshu-dominated army elders was initiated in 1921 by Nagata Tetsuzan, Obata Binshiro, and Okamura Yasuji, who had all graduated with honors from the War College. The outcome was the organization of the Isseki-kai, which in turn led to the birth of Daini Isseki-kai (the Second Isseki-kai) composed of outstanding non-Choshu officers of a younger vintage. The two groups occasionally conferred together, and thus an important nucleus of reform-oriented officers came into existence.⁵⁵ Furthermore, as the experience of the First World War gave birth to the notion of total war in which the social, economic, ideological, and political state of a nation entered the legitimate domain of military concern, the horizon of these officers widened and definition of the proper sphere of military interest became increasingly difficult. For instance, an economic

⁵⁵ Members of the Isseki-kai were as follows: graduates of the 15th class of the Military Academy were Ogawa Tsunesaburo, Komoto Daisaku, Yamacka Shigeatsu; 16th class were Doihara Kenji, Itagaki Seishiro, Ogasawara Toshio, Isogaya Rensuke, Nagata Tetsuzan, Obata Binshiro, Okamura Yasuji; 17th class were Tojo Hideki, Watari Hisao, Kudo Yoshio, Matsumura Masakazu. Members of the Daini Isseki-kai consisted of graduates between the 18th and the 25th class of the Military Academy such as: Yamashita Hobun, Okabe Naosaburo, Ishiwara Kanji, Shichida Ichiro, Yokoyama Isamu, Honda Masa-shiro, Kitano Kenzo, Suzuki Teiichi, Mudaguchi Yasuya, Shimizu Norio, Okada Tasuku, Numata Takazo, Kato Morio, Shimoyama Takuma, Muto Akira, Tanaka Shinichi, Tominaga Shinji, Tsuchihashi Yuitsu. Midorikawa Shiro, Nihon gunbatsu antoshi (History of the Secret Strife of Japanese Military Factions) (Tokyo: 1957), pp. 43-46.

panic which weakened the physical and moral strength of the people became a strategic problem; thus, the government's economic and social policies were considered to bear military implications. The net result was the trend towards politicization of the military.

The attempt to modernize the army found ready response among many young officers who had been exposed to the teachings of democracy and communism in the period following the World War. These Western ideologies undermined the highly vertical order of the existing relationships. Observation of discipline and respect for rank were no longer upheld with the former degree of fervor. While there were demands, on one hand, for equalizing the material conditions of army life,⁵⁶ there were attempts, on the other hand, to differentiate between class as found in society and status as designated in the military. General Araki Sadao, the idol of reform-minded young officers, explained the meaning of discipline and class as follows in a pamphlet entitled Kokoku no gunjin seishin (The Military Spirit of the Imperial Nation):

In order to make military command absolute . . . those giving orders . . . must adhere to the command they give as that of the Emperor. . . . If obedience is enforced simply through class pressure or disciplinary threat, the power of the military on the battle field cannot be

⁵⁶Kita stated that "within the barracks or warships, class difference in material life except emblems designating rank will be abolished." Kita, Nihon kaizo hoan taikei, op. cit., p. 110.

fully demonstrated. . . . Class in our military is a system necessary for control, and is entirely different from class in society. . . . Through the military reform of 1872, universal conscription system was brought into effect, . . . and officers have come to be selected freely from the people at large. They do not differ from soldiers in social origin. Therefore military rank is based upon order deriving from military composition, and is completely unrelated to social class.⁵⁷

These arguments reflect the peculiar way in which the Western concept of social and economic equality made inroads into the army. The effect was definitely in the direction of disrupting the existing order.

Nevertheless, in respect to the army's relations with society at large the spread of Western democratic and communistic ideologies had the reverse effect of solidifying army cohesion. The military found in the postwar Japan that extolled the Versailles legacy of democracy and peace unfavorable, if not hostile, forces working against their hitherto unchallenged sanctity. As privileged subjects under the direct command of the Emperor, the military were confirmed nationalists. They deplored the intrusion of foreign influence. Democracy, which called for the establishment of popular government, also stood for civilian supremacy. The military were attacked as the undemocratic hanbatsu stronghold.

⁵⁷ Araki Sadao, Kokoku no gunjin seishin (Military Spirit of the Imperial Nation) (Tokyo: 1933), pp. 30-36.

Commitment to peace through international coöperation and conciliation minimized the importance of the warriors. All in all, the trend to belittle or despise the military was said to have gone so far as to make it difficult for military men to win the hands of young maidens, or to walk around in what used to be proud uniforms.

Herein lay the second major factor that made the military receptive to reform movements. And the antagonism against the existing civil government was intensified when disarmament became a living issue. While delegates from the leading naval powers conferred in Washington on the means and degree of naval disarmament, deputies in the Lower House of the Diet in Tokyo adopted by an overwhelming majority two resolutions: first, to enforce retrenchment in the army budget by 40 million yen (\$20 million) and to shorten service terms; and, second, to abolish the system of restricting cabinet service posts to the military. The latter was a significant move towards strengthening parliamentary government, which had been denied control over the army and navy through the independence of the Supreme Command. The importance of these resolutions was symbolic, however; in fact, they remained unenforced by the military.

But the political parties pushed forth disarmament programs at every session of the Diet. The depression provided additional incentive: the need to economize on national expenditure and to turn all available revenue to productive

fields. The bourgeoisie stressed that future world domination would occur through economic advancement, and that future war would be determined by total national productive power. The public supported disarmament programs which were expected to alleviate their economic burdens. The military fought the disarmament demands through resorting to nominal cuts and reorganization of existing units.

The conclusion of the London Naval Disarmament Treaty of 1930 marked a climax in the civil-military rivalry over disarmament. The act in itself was a great victory for the civilian government, which had overridden the open and violent opposition of the Chief of Naval Staff, Kato Kanji, and the Vice-Chief of Naval Staff, Suetsugu Nobumasa, the traditional primary advisers to the Emperor in naval affairs. The government decision was also the outcome of the traditional policy of the Minseito, the former Kenseikai, of attempting to cope with internal economic crisis through financial retrenchment and to maintain external peace through international coöperation. With financial retrenchment went disarmament and deflation, and international coöperation at the time meant participation in international disarmament agreements and abstention from expansion to the continent.

The Minseito policy was by no means willingly accepted by all segments of the population, however. Disarmament threatened the existence of the entire military, and especially the livelihood of those to be discharged. Depression

endangered the daily life of all the people, particularly of the petit bourgeoisie, farmers, and laborers.

The rural depression of 1930 in particular provided a radical turn to the anti-government reform movement of the military. The young army officers, themselves largely from small shopkeeping and landowning families and associated with soldiers almost exclusively of peasant stock, upon observing the poverty and suffering of the farming communities, resolved to take action. Moreover, the Minseito policy alienated the nationalists. Indignant at the destruction of Japan's internal unity through the influence of Western ideologies and concerned over her rights and interests in Manchuria in the face of Chinese assertive actions, they ascribed blame to the weakness of the Minseito foreign policy. All the dissatisfied groups attributed the failure of the existing government to parliamentary government as such, and attacked the egoism and corruption of the party politicians and of the capitalists whom they represented. The conclusion of the London Treaty unleashed the forces of grievance in a direction of internal reform.

Organization of Reform Officers

It was under these circumstances that reform societies such as Tenkento, Sakurakai, Kosakurakai and Seiyokai were organized among the young officers of the army and navy. The Tenkento was a secret society organized among the young company-grade officers and cadets by Nishida Zei, a cavalry lieutenant

who left the army to engage in political activities in response to Kita's revolutionary calling. Pledged to resort to direct action and save the nation from the ruinous hands of party politicians and capitalists, the Tenkento represented the most faithful supporters of Kita's Nihon Kaizo Hoan Taiko.⁵⁸ The Sakurakai, formed in 1930 under the initiative of Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingoro, was composed of some ninety-six officers below the rank of lieutenant colonel. It had the double aim of carrying out internal reform and external expansion through radical means. Through Hashimoto, it was under the ideological influence of Okawa. The Kozakurakai was composed of company-grade army officers younger than the 28th term graduates of the Military Academy and the Seiyokai consisted of navy officers below the rank of commander. The specific program of neither organization is clearly known.

Aside from the organized followers of the Kita-Okawa-led radical reform, a considerable number of moderate officers also accepted the substance of reform teachings. The "Sakurakai Prospectus" perhaps best represents the outlook of the reformists.

Though the causes behind the present [critical] state of our nation are many, we must first point out the grave responsibility of the rulers . . . who have been

⁵⁸ Nishida distributed 3,000 to 4,000 copies in May, 1926, 8,000 pocket book copies shortly after, and again 500 in 1935. Ministry of War, Kita Ikki cho Nihon kaizo hoan taiko no hihan (Criticism of Kita Ikki's "Nihon kaizo hoan taiko") (Tokyo: 1936), pp. 1f.

vainly absorbed in political and material self-interest. . . . Moreover, when we observe the London Treaty issue, it is evident that the poisonous sword of the demoralized and covetous party politicians is about to be turned towards the military. The military authorities who have been numbed by terrible social conditions lack the courage and the decision to rise even against corrupt politics. . . . Therefore, those of us who constitute the rank and file of the army must thoroughly strengthen unity . . . and not only prevent the repetition of the navy's failure, but also with a strong patriotic fervor must be ready to wash out the bowels of the corrupt and covetous rulers.

As we observe recent social trends, top rulers engage in immoral conduct, political parties are corrupt, capitalists and aristocrats have no understanding of the masses, . . . farming villages are devastated, unemployment and depression are serious. These present causes for grave concern for the nation. . . . Furthermore, when we examine our external relations, the rulers neglect the long-term interests of the nation, strive only for winning the pleasure of foreign Powers and possess no enthusiasm for external expansion. The positive enterprising spirit that marked the period following the [Meiji] Restoration has completely faded away. Severe population and food problems are minute by minute threatening the people. The Imperial nation will be led to a major deadlock in the future. . . . The people are with us in craving for the appearance of a vigorous and clean government that is based truly upon the masses, and is genuinely centered around the Emperor. Although we, as military men, certainly should not participate directly in government, our . . . devotion to serve [the country], at times and as the occasion demands, could reveal itself

and work for the correction of rulers and expansion of national power.⁵⁹

The major block of reform groups was found, as has been indicated, within the army. At the lowest level were the radical young officers of the Kita-Nishida school who had pledged themselves to the Tenkento and who were ready to employ terrorist means in destroying the existing rulers, the party politicians and capitalists. They held that national reform could not be undertaken without this purge. Though suspicious of the reform advocated by the higher officers, this group did not proceed along any separate course of their own until October of 1931, when the Sakurakai failed in its second coup d'état plan. As early as 1927, its members included Fujii Hitoshi, the leader of a navy group which caused the May 15th Incident of 1932, as well as Muranaka Koji, Isobe Senichi, and Suganami Saburo, who were the main insurgents in the February 26th Incident of 1936.⁶⁰

At the middle level was found the Sakurakai, which largely followed the teachings of Okawa and was also committed to radical measures which were to be expressed in a series of coup d'état attempts. To a considerable extent, the Sakurakai reform program influenced official army policy, as

⁵⁹Tanaka Kiyoshi, "Iwayuru jugatsu jiken ni kansuru shuki" ("Note on the So-called October Incident") Shukugun ni kansuru ikensho (Statement Concerning Purification of the Army), pp. 190-195.

⁶⁰Tanaka Sogoro, Nihon fasshizumu no genryu (Source of Japanese Fascism) (Tokyo: 1954), p. 315.

attested by the report "Analysis of International Situation," prepared by the Second Department⁶¹ of the General Staff, which deviated in 1931 from its practice of supplying information on international affairs and included a section stressing the need first of all to undertake internal reform for the purpose of resorting to positive measures with regard to Manchuria.⁶² Many of the members of the Sakurakai occupied important positions in the Second Department, including Artillery Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingoro, the actual leader of the Sakurakai and director of the Russian Sub-section of the European and American Section, and Infantry Lt. Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi, director of the Chinese Sub-section.

At a still higher level, important officers of the Ministry of War and General Staff were sympathetic with the reformist cause for various reasons. Okawa had established close contact with such key officials as Koiso Kuniaki, Okamura Yasuji, Itagaki Seishiro, Doihara Kenji, and Komoto Daisaku.⁶³ Major General Koiso, director of the politically influential Military Affairs Department of the Ministry of War, Vice-Chief of the General Staff Ninomiya Harushige, and Director of the Second Department of the General Staff Tatekawa Yoshitsugu were especially regarded as patrons of the Sakurakai and supporters of their program. In March, 1931, these

⁶¹The Second Department was in charge of information.

⁶²Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., pp. 139f.

⁶³Yamamoto, op. cit., p. 59.

leading army officials conferred with Hashimoto and Nemoto of the Sakurakai in order to lay plans for a coup d'état by moving troops to the Diet and demanding resignation of the cabinet in order to bring about the formation of a government under Minister of War Ugaki Kazushige. Ugaki himself was alleged to have consented to assuming responsibility in the event of a successful coup, and was known to have a critical attitude towards the existing party government and for his political ambitions. The March plot was suppressed before its execution, however, because Ugaki expressed strong objections. Whether he objected because of learning of the planned use of such radical measures as troop mobilization or as a reaction to hearing that the Minseito was ready to receive him as president is unclear. In any case, the Koiso-Ninomiya-Tatekawa trio wavered and requested the Sakurakai to suspend the plot. The extent of Ugaki's involvement cannot be established, but it is evident that members of the highest echelon of the army leadership were not unwilling to allow development of reform movements, at least of the less radical brand, for the advancement of their political interests.

Objection to the March coup d'état plot came from another group of high-ranking army officers who were definitely committed to the cause of reform. Nagata Tetsuzan, director of the Military Affairs Section of the Military Affairs Department, Okamura Yasuji, director of the Assignment Section of the Personnel Department, and Suzuki Teiichi of the Military

Affairs Section expressed positive opposition to the execution of radical measures contemplated by the Sakurakai, for they believed in maintaining the cohesion of the army as a powerful unit ready to undertake reform measures gradually and within legal bounds.⁶⁴ Furthermore, they feared the disruption of the army as well as of national unity, that might be caused by any radical change. Instead, they stressed the importance of strong action externally.⁶⁵ Nagata was the forerunner of national mobilization planners,⁶⁶ and Suzuki was the forerunner of the school of "new strong" policy towards Manchuria that voiced itself at the time of the Tanaka Cabinet.⁶⁷ This was the group that later incorporated the more

⁶⁴In a memorandum entitled "Joshi ni gushin suru ikensho" ("Statement of Proposals to Superior Officer"), prepared in August, 1935, Nagata stated: "In view of the extraordinary times internally and externally, the control and unity of the military is the most urgent matter for the nation. . . . For the establishment of control . . . illegal reform ideology must be eliminated. . . . I believe it to be unjust to employ the power of the military for purposes of Restoration, except for the almost unthinkable event in which the Imperial nation is so endangered by rebellious subjects that it cannot be saved without the exercise of military power, and even then only upon the order of the Emperor and as a whole. Gradual and legal Restoration, however, is necessary." Shido Yasusuke, Tetsuzan Nagata chūjō (Lt. General Nagata Tetsuzan) (Tokyo: 1938), pp. 285-287. Reform program was advocated under the slogan of Showa Restoration.

⁶⁵Mori Shozo, Senpu Nijunen (Twenty Years' Whirlwind) (Tokyo: 1947), p. 44.

⁶⁶Shido, op. cit., pp. 229f.

⁶⁷See Chapter 1, pp. 31f. Suzuki stated to the writer on July 9, 1960 that he was strongly influenced by Kita's Nihon Kaizo Hoan Taiko in shaping his political thought. He later proposed such reform measures as nationalization of electricity, limitation of private property and gradual abolition of peers.

moderate elements of the Sakurakai and was of primary importance in transforming reform objectives into national policy.⁶⁸ In terms of policy programs, Itagaki Seishiro and Ishiwara Kanji, staff officers of the Kwantung Army who were the main promoters of the Manchurian Affair, could be placed in this group, as they too gave absolute priority to external action over internal reform, which they also supported. Thus, prior to the Manchurian Affair it was undecided whether internal reform was to be attained through radical measures either of the Tenkento or of the Sakurakai brand or through the gradual increase of army power, and whether external action was to follow internal reform or to precede it. But, in any case, the forces committed to reform within the army were substantial in number and in influence.

The navy did not rival the army in promoting the movement for reform although it, too, had its radical young officers of the Kita-Nishida school under the leadership of

⁶⁸ During the hegemony of the Tosei-ha ("control") faction under the leadership of Nagata Tetsuzan, the Ministry of War published a series of pamphlets, the best known of which, entitled Kokubo no hongi to sono kyoka no teisho (Principle of National Defense and Proposal for Its Strengthening), drafted by Ikeda Sumihisa, formerly of Sakurakai, and approved by Nagata, then director of the Military Affairs Department, advocated reform along national-socialist lines. While stressing the importance of stabilizing the life of the people by providing security to the laboring and relief to the farming and fishing populace, the pamphlet called for fundamental reform of the existing capitalistic system that brought about unequal distribution of wealth, class conflict, poverty of the masses, as well as waste in development of resources and industries. See Ministry of War, Kokubo no hongi to sono kyoka no teisho (Principle of Defense and Proposal for Its Strengthening (Tokyo: 1934), pp. 257f.

Fujii Hitoshi. The London Naval Disarmament Treaty divided the navy leadership into two opposing groups, the "Treaty faction" and the "Fleet faction," the former representing those who consented to the conclusion of the disarmament treaty and the latter representing those who fought against it. The latter approached Mori Kaku of the Seiyukai and certain elements of the Privy Council in order to mobilize a political movement against the Minseito Cabinet that concluded the treaty. However, the navy dissatisfaction never reached the point at which key officers thought in terms of taking over the government or of exerting organized pressure upon it. Among the many reasons that account for the modesty of reform movement in the navy, the peculiarly divided and mobile structure of the cruising navy, the relatively cosmopolitan outlook of the officers, the voluntary enlistment of seamen, the effectiveness of the leadership in enforcing the tradition of non-involvement in political affairs, and the absence of a direct stake in Manchuria are among the most fundamental.

Civilian Nationalist Groups

Outside of the military were nationalist groups which also entertained reformist goals, internally against parliamentary government and capitalism, and externally along expansionist lines. These groups fell broadly into two categories: socialist and agrarian. The former envisaged the establishment of a strong centralized state to control and promote industries as well as to enforce socialist policies

and was largely urban in following. The latter was based upon agrarian dissatisfaction against urban-centered industrialism and advocated political and economic reform by way of return to a pre-Western, pre-capitalistic, and decentralized Japan.

The leading national socialists, both in thought and action, were Okawa, Kita, and Nishida, whose influence over the military has been discussed. Okawa helped to transform the existing traditional nationalist groups and brought about the amalgamation of the Kokuryukai, Yuzonsha, and Keirin Gakumei under the Zen Nihon Aikokusha Kyodo Toso Kyogikai in March, 1931. The merger of the Kyushin Aikokuto and certain Kokuryukai followers to form the Dainihon Seisanto also indicates the growing attempt of the nationalist groups to reach national unity and to capture mass support. This trend was matched by the "reverse" conversion of socialist groups to national socialism that occurred during the Manchurian Affair. The army-nationalist-socialist rapprochement was evident at the time of the March Incident in 1931, when Okawa negotiated with the leader of the Zenkoku Rono Taishuto, Asoo Hisashi, to mobilize mass demonstrations to occur simultaneously with the army coup d'état scheduled, significantly, for the day labor bills were to be presented to the Diet.⁶⁹

The agrarian nationalist groups are represented by the Aikyo Juku of Tachibana Kosaburo and the Ketsumeidan of

⁶⁹Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 147.

Konuma Tadashi and Hisanuma Goro, both of which turned sharply towards radical measures after the serious rural depression of 1930 and as a result of contact with the army officers under Nishida's influence. The former participated in the May 15th Incident of 1932, and the latter became notorious for the murder that year of former Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke and Dan Takuma, director of the Mitsui Holding Company.

Within the party government itself there were also groups who joined the reform movement, either out of sympathy or because of power considerations. The Seiyukai took the occasion of the conclusion of the London Treaty to embark upon violent attacks against the "Minseito depression policy" and "weak-kneed diplomacy," and thus generally played into the hands of the reformist camp. However, it was the powerful party Secretary-General Mori Kaku who conceived reform along national-socialist lines. Mori shifted drastically to the right in the spring of 1931, abandoning his former commitment to parliamentary democracy in favor of creation of a dictatorial government through the alliance of the Seiyukai and the army.⁷⁰ He felt that only internal reform unifying political authority and adopting economic controls could enable Japan to carry out an expansionist policy in the Continent of Asia. He pushed this cause in coöperation with reform-minded army officers, among whom his close association with Suzuki Teiichi is well known.

⁷⁰Yamaura, op. cit., p. 764.

Mori at times acted in concert with Hiranuma Kiichiro, Vice-Chairman of the Privy Council and director of the Kokuhonsha, a patriotic organization established in 1924 to foster the national spirit against the growing influence of the left. Although Hiranuma disapproved of socialism and communism,⁷¹ his opposition to party government and his demand for a strong foreign policy placed him in the reformist camp as useful leader, if not potential figurehead. Hiranuma's influence in high bureaucratic circles, especially over bureaucrats in the Ministry of Justice, and his association with top military, industrial, and academic leaders through the Kokuhonsha were of considerable importance in helping to topple the existing party government leadership.

As the various forces lined up for an all-out offensive in demanding reform of party government, reorganization of capitalist economy, and reassertion of Japanese power on the Continent of Asia, the world depression began to exert its influence over the already hard-hit populace, who turned their eyes in search for new leadership and new outlets. The increasing threat of the growing Chinese nationalist offensive in Manchuria was observed with renewed alarm and anxiety. The argument that Manchuria served as the "life line" of Japan began to assume an urgent note. Matsuoka Yosuke was not simply attacking the regime as an opposition deputy of the

⁷¹ Hiranuma Kiichiro, Hiranuma Kiichiro Kaikoroku (Memoirs of Hiranuma Kiichiro) (Tokyo: 1955), p. 119.

Seiyukai when he stated on the Diet floor in January, 1931, that "we feel suffocated as we observe internal and external situations. What we are seeking for is that which is minimal for living beings. In other words, we are seeking to live. We are seeking for room that will let us breathe."⁷²

Manchuria symbolized the promised "room" considered not only as necessary but also as Japan's due. The fate of Japan depended generally upon the success of the existing Wakatsuki Government in overriding the internal crisis by enforcing retrenchment, by carrying out disarmament, and by preventing dispossession of Japan's holdings in Manchuria through negotiation. More specifically, however, the course of 1931 rested upon whether the coup d'état attempts of the army radicals were to bear fruit, or whether action was to be taken in Manchuria. The first Sakurakai plot in March was suppressed by army leaders who themselves were convinced of the need for internal reform and positive protection of Japanese holdings in Manchuria.

⁷²Matsuoka Yosuke's statement at the plenary session of the House of Commons on January 23, 1931. Matsuoka Yosuke, Ugoku Manmo (Moving Manchuria-Mongolia) (Tokyo: 1931), p. 119.

CHAPTER III

MANCHURIAN SETTLEMENT POLICY OF THE KWANTUNG ARMY AND OF THE JAPANESE IN MANCHURIA

The year 1931 opened with renewed demands for a strong Manchuria policy both in Manchuria, where Sino-Japanese relations worsened seriously, and in Japan, where the reform forces lined up for an all-out attack against the party government of the Minseito and its policy. As we have seen, control of Manchuria had become part and parcel of the program of national-socialist reform of Japan. We now examine the specific ideas and demands of the Kwantung Army and the Japanese in Manchuria who clamored for strong action. Since the Manchurian Affair settled the issue of priority between internal reform and external action, and since the war as well as the succeeding political reconstruction of Manchuria were carried out by the Kwantung Army with the assistance of many Japanese civilians in Manchuria, their ideology and policy program are of immediate relevance to the evaluation of the political and policy implications of the Manchurian Affair.

Dissatisfactions of the Manchurian Japanese

Chinese nationalism, expressed in systematic economic and political discrimination by the Chang Hsueh-liang regime, was considered, as we noted earlier, an urgent threat to

Japanese rights, interests, and existence in Manchuria. Many Japanese in Manchuria began organizing in order to protect themselves against Chinese pressure and to call on the Japanese Government for a "strong" policy towards Manchuria. Many of these Japanese in Manchuria by the late 1920's had come to possess their sole social and economic stake in Manchuria. In the course of some twenty years, they had lost whatever land and property they had left at home, and no longer thought it possible to return to Japan, which appeared cramped and crowded to their continental eyes.⁷³ The Japanese Government's decision to establish the Showa Iron Works in Korea against the strong desire of the Japanese in Manchuria to bring it to Anshan or to any area within the Kwantung Territory greatly disappointed them. The government argued that since no iron-manufacturing bounty could be extended to industries outside the country and that import duties would be levied on foreign-produced goods, the site of this iron works had to be within the Japanese territory.⁷⁴ The Japanese in Manchuria concluded they were treated as "stepchildren by the Japanese administrators at home,"⁷⁵ and felt that Japan was unwilling to render them assistance. All in all, the Japanese in Manchuria had become highly conscious of their identity as Manchurian Japanese.⁷⁶

⁷³ Manshu Seinen Renmeishi Kanko Iinkai, Manshu Seinen Renmei shi (History of Manchuria Youth League) (Mukden: 1938), p. 389.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 272f.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 462.

⁷⁶ Royama Masamichi and others, Manshu mondai kaiketsu

Although their main efforts took the form of driving home the imminence of the Manchurian threat (evidenced, for example, by a series of speech-making teams they dispatched to Japan), the underlying sense of abandoned desperation gave birth to various ideas and programs that were to be of later significance in the creation of the independent state of Manchukuo. In this respect the Manshu Seinen Renmei (Manchuria Youth League), formally organized in November, 1928, in defense of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria, is of particular importance. To begin with, this group, drawing some three thousand members in the first year, mostly junior officers of the South Manchuria Railway Company and young independent businessmen, was dissatisfied with the ineffective leadership of its seniors in Manchuria and critical of the foreign policy of the apparently corrupt as well as senile party government leaders in Japan. They felt that in order to revive Japan and to help establish a new national policy for Manchuria-Mongolia, they could no longer leave the matter in the hands of rulers of the older generation.⁷⁷ Their mood, like that of their brothers at home, was reformist; their answer, however, had to be found in a principle that could effectively meet the appeals of Chinese nationalism.

It is important to recall at this point that the nationalist policy of the Chang Hsueh-liang regime, while

an (Plan for Settlement of Manchurian Problems), 1932, p. 18.

⁷⁷ Manshu Seinen Renmeishi Kanko Iinkai, op. cit., pp. 6f.

intensifying anti-Japanese feelings through discriminatory measures and indoctrination, was, at the same time, based upon growing economic, social, and aspirational ties between China proper and Manchuria. Left to its natural course, nationalism in Manchuria would leave no place for the Japanese. Those Japanese in Manchuria who felt that they could not rely upon their government to offset the surge of Chinese nationalism reached the conclusion that

they should make sure of their consciousness as [belonging to a] small and weak race. The only way to survive . . . would be to join hands with the various racial groups living in Manchuria . . . to devote themselves to the harmony of races . . . and to bring about a paradise-like republic to the land of Manchuria-Mongolia backed by Japanese civilization.⁷⁸

What they sought, therefore, was a principle that accorded with nationalist aspirations without destroying the possibility of coexistence on the part of the minority races.

The outcome was the proposal for a "Manchuria-Mongolia Autonomous State" based upon the principle of "racial harmony" which had been originally made at the First Manchuria Youth Congress that was convened in May, 1928, under the auspices of the Dairen Shimbun (Dairen Newspaper) and out of which was formed the Manshu Seinen Renmei. Based upon the assumption that Manchuria-Mongolia constituted a special region apart from China, and upon the observation that the thirty million

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 464.

people of various racial origins were suffering from the tyrannical rule of the Chinese war lords, a new state was to be created by and for the people then living in the region, including the Japanese.⁷⁹ The distinction between the suffering peoples of Manchuria and the exploiting Chinese war lords is significant, for it opened the way for the Japanese to fight the regime in Manchuria in alliance with the indigenous populace. It also enabled them to confront the disruptive effects of Chinese nationalism in the fraternal name of "racial harmony."

From the standpoint of the traditional loyalty of the Japanese, however, this proposal had revolutionary implications. Not only was the existing feudalistic Chinese Government to be overthrown by popular action, but the Japanese, through actively promoting the movement, were to join the new Manchurian State as full citizens. To the question of whether "the Japanese would have to give up their citizenship in the event that they joined the Autonomous State, and whether such an [outcome] would not be against [their] true objective," the proposer expressly stated that "if a peaceful country in Manchuria-Mongolia were established upon Japanese-Chinese reconciliation, [the Japanese] would be happy to adopt the citizenship of the [new] state."⁸⁰ At the time, however, when the

⁷⁹ From the Minutes of the First Manchuria Youth Congress, June 1-3, 1929. Ibid., p. 102.

⁸⁰ From the Minutes of the Second Congress of Manshu Seinen Renmei, November 23-24, 1929. Ibid., p. 157.

maintenance of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria was upheld as national policy, the establishment of a Manchuria-Mongolia Autonomous State with participation of individual Japanese signified the possibility of bringing about the loss of Japan's vital colonial holding.⁸¹ Although it was later argued that the Japanese in Manchuria could best serve their country through contributing to the development of Manchuria once Japan's control over the entire state of Manchukuo became a reality, the line that divided a colony from an independent member of a yet unformed "commonwealth" was such as to result in repeated postponement of the Manshu Seinen Renmei action on the proposal to initiate a movement for autonomy.⁸²

On June 13, 1931, the Manshu Seinen Renmei officially adopted a slogan calling for the "harmony of various races residing in Manchuria-Mongolia," and on October 23 presented a memorial to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army

⁸¹ From the Minutes of the First Manchuria Youth Congress, ibid., p. 103.

⁸² There were some Japanese in Manchuria, especially those who were influenced by Okawa Shumei, who advocated armed uprising of the Japanese in order to create an independent state in Manchuria. An official of the South Manchurian Railway Company gave a speech in Lushun in January, 1931, in which he urged the establishment of a Four Races Republic of Japanese, Manchurians, Chinese and Koreans through armed uprising of the Japanese. They were to seize upon the unrest in Manchuria, resort to arms, occupy South Manchuria Railway Company and use their funds for further military occupation. In case Japan applied military pressure against the Republic, the Japanese would have to endure a state of rebellion against the homeland, which however, was to be temporary. Text of speech is entitled "Kagakuteki ni Manmo taisaku o miru" ("Observe Manchuria-Mongolia Measures Scientifically").

then in occupation of all South Manchuria, in which the establishment of a "Manchuria-Mongolia Free State" was strongly recommended as the only permanent solution of the Manchurian situation. The proposed Free State was to be based upon principles of racial harmony and popular autonomy. By the latter was meant a system of administration consisting of three tiers of committees--the central, the provincial, and the hsien. At the lowest level, the committee, which was to be called the hsien autonomous organ, was to appoint a hsien governor as well as to rule on major issues. It was to be composed of members elected by the hsien constituents and those recommended by the governor on the basis of learning and moral repute. The hsien autonomous organs would select members of the provincial executive committees, which in turn were to choose the members of the central executive committee.⁸³

The principles of racial harmony and of government by autonomous bodies are both found in traditional Chinese political thought. In the period immediately preceding the Manchurian Affair, a group of Chinese under the leadership of Chang Ku also attempted to create an autonomous Manchuria based on coöperation of its six largest ethnic groups (Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Mongolians, Koreans and Manchurians) in order to protect the area from Japanese, Chinese, and

⁸³"Memorial concerning the Establishment of Manchuria-Mongolia Free State" in Manshu Seinen Renmeishi Kanko Iinkai, op. cit., pp. 656-659.

Soviet encroachment.⁸⁴ Members of the Manshu Seinen Renmei were in contact with Chang Ku and even helped propagate his program among the South Manchuria Railway Company officials and the Kwantung Army authorities,⁸⁵ so it is entirely likely that the Manchuria-Mongolia autonomy program of the Manshu Seinen Renmei was in part influenced by indigenous aspirations.

Kwantung Army Perspectives

By contrast, there is no evidence to suggest that the Kwantung Army contemplated the creation of a multi-racial autonomous state in Manchuria prior to the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities in September of 1931. Indeed, the Kwantung Army had traditionally meddled in Manchurian politics, as evidenced in the assistance given to Kawashima Naniwa in his twice-attempted Manchuria-Mongolia independence movement,⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Memorandum of Chang Ku titled "Manmo to toa no wahei" ("Manchuria-Mongolia and Peace of Asia"), ibid., pp. 404f.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 404.

⁸⁶ The main feature of the 1912 and 1915 Manchuria-Mongolia independence movement in terms of objectives was the division of Manchuria from China proper wherein Japan would establish her hegemony through the institution of an acquiescent Chinese regime. The choice fell on Prince Su of the Ching dynasty whom Kawashima had befriended and who looked forward to the restoration of Ching power. The first attempt failed due to the discovery of the plot by the Japanese Government, but the second collapsed due to discord among the Japanese promoters of the movement, i.e., between those who continued to uphold Prince Su and those who chose the rising Chang Tso-lin as the future leader of independent Manchuria with Japanese support. Tanaka Giichi, then Vice-Chief of the General Staff, was the main advocate of the latter and officially endorsed him over Prince Su to the Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army. It is important to recognize that the two

but its objective was to establish Japanese hegemony over Manchuria through the creation of an acquiescent regime. And while the Kwantung Army leadership at the time of the Chang Tso-lin assassination contemplated the severance of Manchuria-Mongolia from China proper, they intended to bring the resulting "autonomous" state under direct Japanese control.

The top leaders, Senior Staff Officer Colonel Itagaki Seishiro and Staff Officer Lt. Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, not only shared the objectives of their predecessors in aiming at Japan's positive assumption of Manchurian control, but went even further in believing that Japanese possession of Manchuria was the only means of settling Manchuria's problems.⁸⁷

incidents of the Manchuria-Mongolia independence movement were carried out under the auspices, either tacit or active, of certain influential members of the General Staff, by the officers of the Kwantung Army and the civilian adventurers in collaboration with the dissident or ambitious elements among the native population. Under conditions of competing war lords, revolutionaries, and bandits, that Manchuria provided an excellent milieu for political intrigue and instigation cannot be denied. The Japanese trio of the General Staff, Kwantung Army, and civilian adventurers indulged in the exercise of the threefold tactics of selecting suitable indigenous candidates for titular leadership, giving them assistance in terms of arms and funds, and eliminating them when they proved detrimental. Care was always taken to provide the various political activities in Manchuria with the form of spontaneous and indigenous movement. For a discussion of the 1912 and 1915 Manchuria-Mongolia independence movement, see Kurihara Ken, "Daiichi-ji, dainiji Manmo dokuritsu undo" ("The First and Second Manchuria-Mongolia Independence Movement"), Kokusai Seiji (Tokyo: Summer, 1958), and Marius B. Jansen, The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 137-140. For a discussion of Kawashima, see Aida Tsutomu, Kawashima Naniwa O (Tokyo: 1936).

⁸⁷ Ishiwara Kanji, "Manmo mondai shiken" ("Private View on Manchuria-Mongolia Problems"), May, 1931. Prepared for Kwantung Army staff. Itagaki Seishiro, "Manmo mondai ni tsuite" ("On Manchuria-Mongolia Problems"), May 29, 1931.

What distinguished them from preceding Kwantung Army leaders was that both had breathed the air of reform in Japan, largely through their association respectively with the Isseki-kai and Daini Isseki-kai and with the informal group that conferred weekly in 1927 under the initiative of Suzuki Teiichi.⁸⁸ Their reformist ideology played a major role in the shift from the original goal of forthright possession of Manchuria to the acceptance of the Manshu Seinen Renmei program of an independent Manchuria that took place during the course of the Manchurian Affair.

In pressing for the occupation and annexation of Manchuria, Itagaki and Ishiwara stood for objectives that far exceeded the positive policies of the past. The thoroughness of their policy was based upon the importance they attached to Manchuria as a strategic base. Traditionally, the Kwantung Army's strategic planning was concerned with war against Russia. With the rise of Chinese nationalism and anti-Japanese activities in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army in 1928 began to formulate additional plans against the possibility of war with China, but basically its view was of Manchuria as the fortress against Russian southern advancement, which became increasingly threatening as Soviet influence over the Chinese Revolution became more and more apparent.⁸⁹ That the Kwantung

⁸⁸ See Chapter I, pp. 31-32, and Chapter II, p. 51.

⁸⁹ In 1927 Suzuki Teiichi was sent to China by Tanaka Giichi to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to carry out the Chinese Revolution upon eliminating the communists. Suzuki became

Army's strategy was directed against the Soviet Union is indicated by the call of the Itagaki-Ishiwara program for inclusion of North Manchuria in the Japanese area of occupation and annexation. The Kwantung Army observed that as long as Soviet influence centered around the Chinese Eastern Railway continued, a Japanese-Soviet war would have to be fought in the plains of North Manchuria. For such a war, Japan would have to maintain large forces in Manchuria. Once Soviet power was pushed back beyond the natural boundaries of the Baikal Desert area to the west and the Amur River and the Hinganling to the north, Soviet expansion would be diverted from the Far East.⁹⁰ Only possession of North Manchuria, therefore, would relieve Japan of her defense problems in the north, freeing her to expand wherever her national interest led.⁹¹ But the proposed possession of North Manchuria did not find support among central army authorities, not even among those who favored strong measures in Manchuria. They drew the northern operational limit to Changchun and the Sungari River line. In other words, they considered no military action north of

convinced that prevention of Soviet Communist influence even at the price of war was the key point of Japanese policy towards China and Manchuria. He thereafter took the initiative in forming a group of field-grade officers that included Ishiwara Kanji to discuss the problems of modernization of the army, settlement of Manchuria, and internal reform. Statement of Suzuki Teiichi to the writer on July 9, 1960.

⁹⁰ Ishiwara, op. cit. Itagaki, op. cit.

⁹¹ Ishiwara, op. cit.

the area of the South Manchuria Railway.⁹² The conflicting views between the Kwantung Army and the central army authorities with regard to North Manchuria clearly reflected the priority which the former attributed to the importance of deterring Soviet expansion. This difference developed into a major point of discord during the Manchurian Affair.

Theoretically, however, both Itagaki and Ishiwara argued that the most dangerous future opponent to Japanese continental expansion would be the United States with her growing economic power and interest in the Far East. Ishiwara saw the possibility of a Japanese-American war only in a far distant future, forecasting its arrival only when Japan had become the champion of Eastern civilization and airplanes flew non-stop over the circuit of the globe. He felt that Japan, the United States, and airplane technology were surely and simultaneously moving on towards their destiny, that the outcome would be the world's greatest and last war of annihilation, after which the millenium of everlasting world peace would arrive.⁹³ He expected that the United States was the most likely country to intervene in Japan's expansion to

⁹²Katakura Tadashi, Manshu kenkoku no kaiso (Reflection on the Establishment of Manchuria) (Hsinching: 1941), I, p. 5.

⁹³Ishiwara Kanji, "Senso shi taikan" ("General View on History of War"), July, 1929. Ishiwara Kanji, "Genzai oyobi shorai ni okeru Nihon no kokubo" ("Japan's Present and Future Defense"), April, 1931. Printed material based on lecture given to students of War College on December 30, 1927.

Manchuria, and believed that Japanese-American war would be occasioned by conflict over that region.⁹⁴

Itagaki endorsed Ishiwara's views. He stated in a lecture to instructors of the Military Academy in March, 1931, that analysis of the Far Eastern policy of the United States since the announcement of the "open door" doctrine and especially since the Washington Conference had led him to conclude that war in the Pacific would be brought about by disagreements over China, and that no nation except the United States would intervene in Japan's Manchurian policy.⁹⁵ Since the responsibility for a war in the Pacific would fall largely on the navy, the immediate importance of the Japanese-American war argument was to buttress the Kwantung Army's demand for controlling Manchuria as a supply source as well as for its salience as a fortress against the Soviet Union.

Itagaki and Ishiwara conceived of Manchuria primarily, then, as a strategic base which was to serve as the supply source to prepare Japan for future expansionistic adventures. In 1929, the Kwantung Army set up a special research group to study the administration of Manchuria under occupation, expressly for the purpose of investigating the means by which Manchurian resources could be utilized effectively. The

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Itagaki Seishiro, "Gunjijo yori mitaru Manmo ni tsuite" ("On Manchuria-Mongolia from the Standpoint of Military Strategy"), March, 1931. Lecture to instructors of the Military Academy.

opening comments of this study, called "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" ("Study on the Administration of Occupied Manchuria") are worth quoting in full.

In observing modern warfare and considering the conditions of Japan's future wars, internally the need is keenly felt for strengthening national power, for training all the people and for controlling and consolidating the entire war capacity through general mobilization plans. Externally the policy of so-called feeding war by war should be established without relying upon Japan's present resources. . . . We must think in terms of occupying a certain area of the continent, not only for purely strategic reasons but also for the purpose of acquiring resources. China proper and Manchuria-Mongolia are such areas. Leaving aside, for the time being, the question of occupying China proper, we shall examine conditions where operations for the above objective can be undertaken easily.⁹⁶

The policy of "feeding war by war" is, at the same time, a reflection of the economic limitations of Japan against which the Kwantung Army was forced to prepare its expansionistic program. After elaborating upon the general policy of occupation and administration, "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" states among the guiding principles that "all expenses required for the administration of the Manchuria-Mongolia occupied territory should not only be self-supporting, but ⁹⁶Kanto of strategic resources and alleviation of the

⁹⁶Kantogun Sanboku Chosahan (Research Section, Kwantung Army Staff), "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" ("Study on the Administration of Occupied Manchuria"), Summer, 1931, p. 2.

national economy should also be attempted through the development of resources in the occupied territory.⁹⁷ In fact, this study takes great pains to prove that the administration of the Manchuria-Mongolia region would not be an economic burden. Despite the vastness of the area of contemplated occupation, the study points to the surprisingly small yearly non-military budgets of the provincial governments, and concludes that Japanese administration would be possible within the existing means of the local Chinese governments.⁹⁸ It speaks, furthermore, of lowering direct taxes for the Manchurian people, for the Japanese administration would eliminate the graft and waste of the Chinese administration.⁹⁹ The Japanese occupation forces were also to be self-supporting, relying on funds to be raised from the occupied territory through taxes and procurement of goods and arms. Ishiwara emphasized that the most important task of research on the administration of occupied territory was to study in detail how large an army the territory could support, as well as its requirements for the maintenance of public safety.¹⁰⁰ The Kwantung Army was making plans tailored to a Japan in the midst of a severe economic crisis.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Ishiwara, "Genzai oyobi shorai ni okeru Nihon no kokubo," op. cit.

Here several significant characteristics of Kwantung Army policy prior to the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair are evident. Itagaki and Ishiwara, who had both recognized the need for internal reform, blended the argument stressing the importance of Manchuria for national livelihood with that focusing on strategic considerations. Though conceding that the depression in Japan was part of a worldwide phenomenon, Itagaki emphasized that the weakness of Japan's industrial foundation would not allow her to survive the pinch through internal measures alone. Not only could Japan not develop as an industrial state without controlling raw material sources and a market for finished goods; she could not even maintain her relatively retarded economic position because rapidly growing population pressed upon her limited land and resources. The possession of Manchuria was presented as the first step in breaking through the deadlock.¹⁰¹

It is important to note that Itagaki also emphasized the importance of Manchuria for the non-propertied majority of the Japanese people.

Manchuria is of course important from the point of view of Japanese capitalism. From the standpoint of the proletariat who would find it necessary to demand equalization of national wealth, no fundamental solution could be found within the boundaries of naturally poor Japan that would assure livelihood for the people at large.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Itagaki, "Manmo mondai ni tsuite," op. cit.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Moreover, he perceived the various business opportunities in Manchuria as a means to alleviate unemployment in Japan.¹⁰³ In the minds of the Kwantung Army leadership, there was a definite connection between the welfare of the Japanese people and the need for foreign expansion. Imperialism closely resembling that growing in the minds of the national socialists in Japan was clearly congenial to the leadership of the Kwantung Army.

The Kwantung Army leadership reconciled their belief in the cause of the welfare of the Japanese people with their professed program of Manchurian conquest, which would necessarily involve the subjugation of all people living in Manchuria. In short, the Kwantung Army joined with the Manshu Seinen Renmei in identifying the thirty million people in Manchuria as suffering masses who had been sacrificed to the misrule of war lords and the avarice of wicked officials, masses deriving no benefits of civilization despite the natural abundance of the region.¹⁰⁴ The Chang government in Manchuria threatened the security and livelihood of the people through war, inflation, and heavy taxes. It also engaged in anti-Japanese educational, economic, and political activities. It could, therefore, be presented as the common enemy of all the people living in Manchuria, including the Japanese. Thus Itagaki and Ishiwara insisted that it was the mission of

¹⁰³ Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Kantogun Sanboubu Chosahan, op. cit., p. 4.

the Japanese to destroy the common foe, the existing government of Chang Hsueh-liang.¹⁰⁵

"Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" also equates Japan's occupation and administration of Manchuria with the happiness of the populace, stating that Japan would bring about a complete change in the conditions of Manchuria,

by maintaining public peace, immediately assuring security of residence and travel, replacing the former misgovernment by good rule and thereby gradually alleviating the economic burden of the people, opening up means of transportation which would develop industries and allow full use of the natural wealth of the region. Thus the welfare of the people would be enhanced as shown in the cases of Korea and the Kwantung Territory, and they would, for the first time, be able to obtain their longed-for goal of hokyo anmin [secure boundary and peaceful life].¹⁰⁶

The study optimistically promises that "in comparison with the welfare which the people would enjoy forever in the future, temporary war disasters preceding our occupation are not worth scrutinizing."¹⁰⁷

Avowals of this kind are poor indicators of the true intentions of conquerors, however. Further examination of the proposed Japanese administration reveals that the Kwantung Army planned to establish a military government under the rule

¹⁰⁵ Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit. Itagaki, "Manmo mondai ni tsuite," op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Kantogun Sanbobu Chosahan, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

of either a Japanese governor or a Japanese Manchurian Army Commander-in-Chief. This military government was to replace what was equivalent to the central government in Manchuria, but local governments were to be preserved to administer local affairs.¹⁰⁸ Although Chinese forces in Manchuria were to be disarmed and kept as prisoners or to be sent out of the area, and the Chinese police were to be abolished, Chinese civil officials below hsien directors were to remain in their posts or to be replaced by other Chinese. Senior Chinese officials were to resign from their posts and Japanese were to be assigned instead. Among the so-called "prominent persons"--prominent either because of rank or popularity--those who expressed allegiance to the Japanese Army were to be given protection of life and property, assured of their residence under the military government, and, if necessary, granted respectful treatment or assigned to the military government as advisers or non-regular staff members. Those engaging in public works such as railway, postal, telegraphic, and electric services as well as arsenals, banks, mines, and schools were to be retained under Japanese supervision.

Thus the general policy was expressly to avoid major dislocation of the lives of the people at large.¹⁰⁹ "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" declares that "with regard to matters directly concerning the lives of the masses, it is

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 21-24.

advisable to let them develop naturally according to former institutions or traditions so long as they are not against the demands of the Army, and it is not necessary to undertake a policy of assimilation or of cultural guidance.^{*110} We can surmise, then, that although the Kwantung Army proposed occupation and annexation of Manchuria it was not thinking in terms of reshaping the social and cultural fiber of the people as mid-twentieth century foreign conquests have attempted. They recognized the value of responding to the nationalist and economic aspirations of the people by allowing them to develop their respective skills and characteristics, and warned against short-sighted measures such as overprotection of the Japanese in Manchuria.¹¹¹ "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" states that

administration with regard to persons in the occupied territory should consider the Chinese populace in Manchuria as the primary objective, and in addition, take note of the problem of Japanese colonization of the area. Indeed the attitude of the people under occupation, directly and indirectly, greatly influences our administration and eventually leads to significant consequences for our Imperial Nation. The foundation of our administration must be strengthened by providing welfare to the Chinese people, by enabling them to live peacefully under our administration and thereby, delivering them from their former unstable life and leading them to praise our administration.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹¹ Ishiara Kanji, "Taibei senso keikaku taiko" ("General Outline of War Plan Against the United States"), April, 1931.

Maintenance of public order, alleviation of tax burdens, and development of industries, transportation, and financial systems were to be the principal means of appealing to Chinese residents.¹¹²

Although the Kwantung Army argument for annexation and the Manshu Seinen Renmei program of independence of Manchuria seem to be antipathetical, their respective political, social, and racial concepts are, as has been shown, highly congenial. It is highly significant that the Kwantung Army program appreciated the right of the people to a better life, a recognition reflecting the impact of reform views that developed in protest to the existing domestic situation. This outlook was reinforced by realization that the people in Manchuria had to be satisfied with their racial and economic situation in order to prevent the inroad of Chinese nationalism and Soviet communism.

Kwantung Army Strategy

The Kwantung Army program of bringing Manchuria into Japanese possession was supplemented by substantial plans concerning the time and manner of execution. These were based on consideration that turmoil in China was likely not only to continue but also to reach Manchuria, and that although Japan could easily wage total war on China to safeguard her interests in Manchuria and prevent China from complete self-

¹¹²Kantogun Sanbobu Chosahan, op. cit., p. 10.

destruction, any positive measures would involve international interference.¹¹³ The overall time limit for operations in Manchuria, minimizing disadvantages and maximizing advantages, was 1936, both Itagaki and Ishiwara argued.

The timing of Japanese action was concerned with possible reactions of the Powers, notably of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain, which all had avowed and actual interests in the fate of China. The Soviet Union, at the time hampered from mobilizing forces in the Far East due to post-revolution reconstruction, was still intent upon maintaining its power in North Manchuria through the Chinese Eastern Railway. And, as its series of five-year plans progressed, the Soviet Union would be increasingly capable of undertaking strong action in the Far East, as was evident in its already considerable success in rebuilding its military power.¹¹⁴

The United States was also involved in internal problems deriving from the depression; but--what most precipitated Japanese action--the London Naval Conference provided for a growing difference between the naval power of Japan and the United States in the latter's favor.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the London naval limitation was to be effective only until 1936,

¹¹³ Ishiwara, "Genzai oyobi shorai ni okeru Nihon no kokubo," op. cit.

¹¹⁴ Itagaki, "Manmo mondai ni tsuite," op. cit.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

after which the United States could embark upon a massive naval expansion program. Great Britain was written off as a possible opponent in the rivalry over Manchuria so long as her interests in Central China were unaffected.¹¹⁶ Thus, Japanese military action in Manchuria had to be undertaken at the latest by 1936, before Soviet recovery and of American naval expansion.¹¹⁷

Aside from the implicit pressures of the Powers that on one hand prevented Japan from settling Manchurian problems on her own terms but on the other hand necessitated action within the fairly near future, internal conditions of Japan seemed far from suitable for a showdown. As "there existed groups within Japan that opposed positive measures in Manchuria as aggressive imperialism,"¹¹⁸ great preliminary efforts were required to "enlighten" the Japanese public regarding a campaign against China.¹¹⁹

Moreover, the matter of the relative priority of internal reform was divisive. The Kwantung Army, and especially Ishiwara, recognized the need for preparing Japan for the event of strong action in Manchuria, but it is doubtful that they were committed to the cause of internal reform to

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit.

¹¹⁸ Ishiwara, "Genzai oyobi shorai ni okeru Nihon no kokubo," op. cit.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

the same extent as the Sakurakai. In discussing the question of relative priorities, Ishiwara stated:

It appears very reasonable to argue that on the basis of present conditions in Japan national unity is not likely to be attained at the time of war, so that priority should be given to internal reform. The so-called internal reform is extremely difficult to undertake without national unity. . . . However, when war plans are formed and capitalists are convinced of our victory, it will not be impossible to spur on the existing government to employ positive policy. History has proven that military success at the initial stage of war arouses and unites the public. War necessarily brings about prosperity, after which, should war continue for a long time and grave economic difficulties grow, various reform measures can be introduced under martial law. Under the circumstances, internal reform can be attained much more naturally than when attempted during time of peace. I do not necessarily reject giving priority to internal reform if I were convinced that political stability can be attained, if concrete plans concerning the reform are prepared and if 1936 is not taken as target date for settlement. Conditions in our country, however, make it more appropriate to drive the nation to foreign expansion, in the course of which, internal reform can be accomplished.¹²⁰

To Ishiwara, then, internal reform including reform of social organization and introduction of a controlled economy¹²¹ was necessary primarily for the sake of mobilizing and effectively unifying the total power of the state. But he feared

¹²⁰ Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit.

¹²¹ Ishiwara, "Genzai oyobi shorai ni okeru Nihon no kokubo," op. cit.

dislocation and destruction of national power, even temporarily, as a result of the reform. He distrusted the slow pace required for internal measures; in contrast, Manchuria promised rapid and large gains. Thus he shared the views of Nagata Tetsuzan and Suzuki Teiichi.

Within the overall time limit of 1936 and prior to attempts at internal reform, when exactly was the Manchurian operation to be undertaken? The Kwantung Army in "Jokyo handan ni kansuru iken" ("Opinion with regard to Estimation of Affairs") prepared in August, 1931, disagreed with the situational analysis of the General Staff and insisted upon "the need for immediate action."¹²² The General Staff divided the Manchurian settlement process in four stages: first, seizure of Japanese interests through diplomatic negotiation; second, establishment of a pro-Japanese government; third, the employment of military measures; and, fourth, the possession of Manchuria. Whereas the General Staff judged that the Japanese Manchurian settlement program was still amenable to diplomatic negotiation with the Chang government,¹²³ the Kwantung Army considered that possession was at that time the only opportune measure.¹²⁴ The Kwantung Army criticized the General

¹²² Kantogun Sanboku, "Jokyo handan ni kansuru iken" ("Opinion with regard to Estimation of Affairs"), August, 1931. Criticism of the Kwantung Army Staff on the Estimation of Affairs of 1931 prepared by the Second Department of the General Staff.

¹²³ Mitarai, op. cit., p. 242.

¹²⁴ Statement of Katakura Tadashi to the writer on July 18, 1959.

Staff for "not taking decisive steps for action,"¹²⁵ and, directly exposed to the desperate mood of the Japanese in Manchuria and the tense state of Sino-Japanese relations, was not willing to wait for an accident to touch off Japanese military action. Kwantung Army leaders wished to seize the numerous opportunities of local discord and to expand them into extensive occupation. They held that even if Japan were not prepared to take action in Manchuria openly, it would "not necessarily be difficult to fabricate an occasion through intrigue that would lead to military action, and then drive the nation to war, so long as the Army was united and able to establish the general outline of a war plan."¹²⁶

In the summer of 1931, with the Kwantung Army standing ready as well as determined for all-out action, the Manshu Seinen Renmei dispatched their first speech-making team to Japan. The Chinese Nationalist Government had already issued the goals of the revolutionary foreign policy, which included the recovery of Lushun, Dairen, and the South Manchuria Railway. The number of local clashes between the Japanese and Chinese in Manchuria was mounting daily. The Manshu Seinen

¹²⁵ Kantogun Sanboubu, "Jokyo handan ni kansuru iken," op. cit.

¹²⁶ Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit. Itagaki enumerates the possibilities that might provide an occasion for Japanese action as follows: violation of Japanese existing rights such as railway and commerce; spread of Chinese civil war to Manchuria; unrest caused by change in Manchurian government; accidents such as anti-Japanese riots and clash of Sino-Japanese troops. Itagaki, "Manmo mondai ni tsuite," op. cit.

Renmei campaign proposed "to awaken the brothers at home where party politics 'ran riot,' to appeal to the entire nation on the existing state of affairs in Manchuria-Mongolia, and to prepare for the liquidation of the international root of the calamity, by striking a blow to the Chinese Government . . . with the support of the public opinion of eighty million brothers."¹²⁷ The Japanese in Manchuria--civilian and military--were clamoring for military action.

¹²⁷ Statement issued on July 2, 1931 prior to the departure of the first speech-making team. Manshu Seinen Renmeishi Kanko Linkai, op. cit., p. 475.

PART II

**MANCHURIAN AFFAIR AND THE PROCESS OF
POLICY FORMULATION**

CHAPTER IV

MUKDEN INCIDENT AND THE SPREAD OF WAR

As the Kwantung Army came to possess a definite program for the settlement of Manchuria and increasingly pressed for its immediate execution, the military authorities in Tokyo became aware of the need for policy revision. Among the junior staff members of the General Staff and the Ministry of War who had been for some time coping with the Manchurian issue, many had come to the conclusion that the use of force would eventually be inevitable. No agreement had been reached, however, as to the time and manner of action in Manchuria.

Plans and Preparations

The first army document of major importance that foresaw Military measures in Manchuria was prepared by Major General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, director of the Strategic Department of the General Staff, while he was still director of the Second Department. For some time, the Second Department had been a hot-bed of advocates of radical reform. In June of 1931, this document, "Manmo mondai kaiketsu hosaku" ("General Principles Concerning the Settlement of Manchuria-Mongolia Problems"), was adopted by the senior officers of the General Staff and Ministry of War, including the Chief and Vice-Chief

of Staff, Minister and Vice-Minister of War, and directors of departments. It read as follows:

- 1) The alleviation of anti-Japanese activities of the Chang regime shall continue to be undertaken primarily through negotiation by the Foreign Office, and the Army shall maintain close contact with the Kwantung Army in order to make them act with discretion.
- 2) In spite of the above-mentioned efforts, should anti-Japanese activities be intensified, military action might become necessary.
- 3) Internal as well as international understanding are absolutely necessary for the settlement of Manchurian problems. The Minister of War through the Cabinet, and the Military Affairs Department [of the Ministry of War] and the Second Department of the General Staff, upon close contact with the Foreign Office, shall make careful preparations, such as publicizing the realities of anti-Japanese activities in Manchuria to the people of our country and of the Powers, so that in the event of military action, public opinion will support the measure and the Powers will not take opposing or suppressive steps.
- 4) The General Staff shall make plans concerning necessary forces and guidance of their movement in the event of military action.
- 5) Measures with regard to cultivation of internal and international understanding shall be undertaken with a view to achieving results in approximately one year, that is, by the spring of 1932.¹²⁸

Thus the top army authorities, while officially recognizing the possibility of action in Manchuria, gave greater weight

¹²⁸ Quoted in Mitarai, op. cit., pp. 242f.

to problems of international repercussions and were much more discreet in policy planning than the Kwantung Army. Nagata Tetsuzan, director of the Military Affairs Section of the Ministry of War, and Imamura Hitoshi, director of the Strategic Section of the General Staff, were respectively assigned to prepare the political and strategic details based on the "Manmo mondai kaiketsu hosaku." Imamura recalls that the major target of the strategic planning was the Soviet Union, whose possible intervention against Japanese adventure in Manchuria obliged the central army authorities to adopt a course of prudence.¹²⁹ In all, the official attitude of Tokyo was one of caution, as reflected in the designation of a one-year preparatory period before embarking on military action in Manchuria.

It cannot be concluded, however, that the central army authorities were unanimously committed to a course of prudence in Manchuria in the summer of 1931. Kwantung Army pressure for immediate action found favorable response among various officers of the General Staff, especially members of the Chinese Section of the Second Department. Section Director Colonel Shigeto Chiaki even maneuvered privately to bring about an early initiation of action. Assuming that anti-Japanese sentiment and action would not be modified through diplomatic means, these officers reasoned that it was a strategic necessity for the Kwantung Army to make the first attack

¹²⁹ Recorded statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

in order to destroy the numerically far superior Chang forces. An occasion had to be fabricated to touch off military action. By May, Shigeto and his staff in the Chinese Section had decided to resort to intrigue, and were in close contact with the Kwantung Army staff.¹³⁰

The situation in Manchuria offered numerous possibilities for Japanese action: anti-Japanese riots, accidental clashes between Japanese and Chinese troops, and the spread of the Chinese civil war to Manchuria. Although no authoritative material exists on the content of the planned intrigue, it seems reasonably certain that some kind of attack by Chinese civilians on Japanese interests was contemplated.¹³¹ The Chinese Section, meanwhile, formally obtained the approval of Director of the Second Department Tatekawa and Director of the Strategic Section Suzuki Shigeyasu to order the Kwantung Army to initiate preparation for propaganda and intrigue measures that would bring about Chinese provocation.¹³²

¹³⁰ Recorded Statement of Nemoto Hiroshi at the Office of Military History, Defense Agency.

¹³¹ Nakano Masao, who was closely associated with Fujita Isamu, cousin and financial source of Shigeto Chiaki, reveals the following plan. Colonel Doihara Kenji was to train a corps of Chinese civilians to attack the Japanese Consulate, the Japanese Army, and other major Japanese institutions in Mukden in order to provide the pretext that Japan was provoked by Chinese plain-clothes soldiers. The attack on the Consulate was to involve the use of machine guns and hand grenades, at the risk of causing considerable damage. Such a drastic measure was considered a necessary evil, since severe attack on Japanese institutions would diminish international suspicion of Japanese instigation. Nakano Masao, Sannin no hokasha (Three Who Set Fire) (Tokyo: 1956), pp. 35f.

¹³² Statement of Nemoto Hiroshi, op. cit.

Two conferences in the early summer of 1931 indicate the extent of liaison between the Kwantung Army and Tokyo. The first meeting took place in June, when Major Hanaya Tadashi of the Mukden Special Service Station secretly returned to Tokyo to convey the strong desire of the Kwantung Army to resort to action in Manchuria in the coming fall. Aside from the Kwantung Army judgment that the time had come for the adoption of the fourth and final step, military action, the possibility that further delay would allow for the transfer of Itagaki and Ishiwara prompted haste.

Itagaki had been appointed to Manchuria to replace Komoto Daisaku in June, 1929, at the time of the general shuffling of the Kwantung Army staff after the assassination of Chang Tso-lin. Ishiwara, who long had been concerned with Sino-Japanese relations, to the point of requesting to serve with the Japanese forces in Hankow in 1918, when it was the practice of Imperial-sword-awarded honor graduates of the War College like himself to be sent to Europe, came to the Kwantung Army in October, 1928, as the second senior staff officer in charge of strategic matters. The Itagaki-Ishiwara team, as we have seen, led the Kwantung Army ideologically, politically, and strategically, with the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of Staff providing merely nominal leadership. Both Itagaki and Ishiwara had served in their Manchurian posts for more than three years, and were eligible for routine transfer.

To Hanaya's plea the following officers are said to have given consent: Director of the Second Department

Tatekawa, immediately; Director of the Chinese Section Shigeto Chiaki and Director of the Russian Sub-section Hashimoto Kingoro without hesitation; Director of the Organization and Mobilization Section Tojo Hideki and Director of the Chinese Sub-section Nemoto Hiroshi, although expressing apprehension of inadequate preparation. Vice-Chief of Staff Ninomiya Harushige, Director of the Military Affairs Department Koiso Kuniaki, and Director of the Military Affairs Section Nagata Tetsuzan were also informed of the development. Thus the Manchurian expedition was approved by the most influential of the central army authorities but was kept as a top secret among them.¹³³

Unlike the first, which was entirely unofficial and secretive, the second meeting took place when the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief, Honjo Shigeru, and Chief of Staff Miyake Mitsuharu of the Kwantung Army were in Tokyo to attend the Division and Army Commanders Conference in early August. After the formal Conference, they convened a secret meeting. To Vice-Chief of Staff Ninomiya, Vice-Minister of War Sugiyama, Tatekawa, Koiso, and the army commanders of Kwantung, Korea, and Taiwan the Kwantung Army leaders revealed their preparation for military action in the near future. A request for assistance was made to the Korean Army.¹³⁴ Commander Hayashi

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴The Japanese Army was assigned to the following defense districts: 14 division districts in Japan proper which were in charge of defense of the respective areas under

Senjuro of the Korean Army expressed determination to come to its aid whenever the Kwantung Army was in danger. Neither Chief of the General Staff Kanaya Hanzo nor Minister of War Minami Jiro participated in this decision plotting military action in Manchuria, for it was considered advisable to relieve the two army leaders with direct responsibility to the Emperor from involvement in a plan that included deviantary means.¹³⁵ But concrete proof of endorsement of the Kwantung Army plan by the central authorities exists in the approved transfer from the fort of Lushun to Mukden of two heavy field guns considered absolutely necessary to defeat the walled city of Mukden with minimum time and loss.¹³⁶

Meanwhile, central army authorities played up the Manchurian issue for the purpose of winning over the public to the cause of the coming expedition and also to create an atmosphere of imminence to forestall disarmament. In the summer of 1931, the tension in Manchuria was highly relevant to the existence of the army, which feared reduction in military appropriations as part of the administrative readjustment

command; the Imperial Guard Division; the Korean Army in charge of defense of Korea; the Taiwan Army in charge of defense of Taiwan; the Kwantung Army in charge of defense of Kwantung Leased Territory and the railway zone in South Manchuria. Sasaki Shigezo, Nihon gunji hosei yoko (Outline of Japanese Military Laws) (Tokyo: 1939), pp. 145f. The division and army commanders were directly under the Supreme Command, which alone could order troops to move outside of their districts.

¹³⁵ Statement of Nemoto Hiroshi, op. cit.

¹³⁶ Recorded Statement of Katakura Tadashi at Manmo Doho Engokai (Organization to Assist the Japanese in Manchuria-Mongolia) on July 9, 1954.

program of the Minseito Cabinet and conclusion of disarmament agreements at the World Disarmament Conference to be held in February of the following year.¹³⁷ Early in July, the army had prepared its own military organization reform plan in order to meet the need of replenishing its forces under severe financial restrictions. As the plan involved reduction and reorganization of troops, it was bound to cause opposition and dissatisfaction within the army, and officers who had decided to push the reform plan as their minimal demand were obliged to prevent any further budget slash by the Diet for the sake of keeping the army under control.

The address of the Minister of War at the Division and Army Commanders Conference caused a great sensation by making a frontal attack on the authority of the civilian government to undertake military reduction. It also emphasized the need to prepare for the growing danger of war in Manchuria. The address achieves particular significance in the light of the intense insecurity in which the army found itself.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Asahi Shimbun editorially commented on the relationship between the Manchurian issue and disarmament on August 5, 1931, as follows: It is currently rumored that in view of the present "administrative readjustment program or the World Disarmament Conference of next February, the Army attempts to forestall the growth of public opinion concerning armament, and even tries to lead popular interest to the need of military expansion by purposely aggravating the Manchurian situation. . . . We feel that the rumor . . . is not entirely groundless, and regret deeply the Army's actions." Asahi Shimbun, "Rikusho no seidan enzetsu" ("Political Speech of the Minister of War"), August 5, 1931.

¹³⁸ Minister of War Minami's address to the Division and Army Commanders Conference in part read as follows: "3) The content of the military organization reform plan represents

In fact, the Harada Diary records that the army seemed determined to push through its military organization reform plan at the expense, if necessary, of overthrowing the cabinet by preventing the passage of the budget. If they should fail in this attempt, "they are trying somehow to find a way of changing the situation by creating an extremely drastic attitude towards Manchuria-Mongolia in the near future. At any event, since they are seriously dissatisfied over the existing

the minimal demand for the regeneration of the Army. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that in the course of its execution great sacrifices are to be made, not a few who are either irresponsible outsiders or without serious concern for defense, tend to observe that the Army is blind to the present state of the nation and dare present undue demands, or indiscriminately advocate disarmament without clarifying the situation surrounding the nation, or dare resort to propaganda disadvantageous to the nation and the national Army. You are requested to coöperate with the authorities in correcting these mistaken views, and at the same time proceed to make known to the forces under command, the need and justice of these reform measures, and thereby make the greatest efforts in bringing about understanding and cooperation between the Army and the people centered around the Imperial family and the state. 4) In spite of the fact that Manchuria-Mongolia region possesses extremely close connection to the existence and development of the Imperial nation because of defense, political and economic reasons, it is indeed regrettable that the situation in the region has recently moved towards a direction highly undesirable to the Imperial nation and has even suggested a serious turn. Presumably, the causes underlying such a state are the change in international political situation, decline in external prestige of the nation resulting from relapse in national vigor, anti-foreign national rights-recovery ideology of the neighboring state cultivated over a long period through propaganda, attempt of the newly rising economic powers to advance towards Manchuria-Mongolia. These trends must be recognized as more than transitional. At such a time, those who engage in military affairs should strengthen their spirit of service [to the nation], and should resolve to be prepared to fulfill their duties through attending to education and training with zeal and devotion." Quoted in Mitarai, op. cit., p. 218.

political state, anything might happen in the army in which no discipline is maintained in reality."¹³⁹ Rumors of a Manchurian expedition circulated in August and September of 1931. Reporters frequently questioned the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister when war was to begin in Manchuria.¹⁴⁰

Within the Kwantung Army, whose leadership had been pressing for military action through the "fabrication of an occasion through intrigue,"¹⁴¹ a group was formed to prepare a plot. It is certain that both Itagaki and Ishiwara were leaders of the group, and that Hanaya and Captain Imada Shintaro, assistant adviser to Chang Hsueh-liang, were closely connected. Captain Kawashima Tadashi, commander of No. 3 Company of the Railway Guards, as well as several young officers were taken into confidence. This was the group that was in touch with the Shigeto-Hashimoto-Nemoto group of the Second Department of the General Staff who were pulling the strings in Tokyo for a Manchurian expedition.¹⁴² In mid-summer of 1931, Sino-Japanese relations in Manchuria reached a critical point over the case of Captain Nakamura, who was killed by

¹³⁹ Harada Kumao, Saionji ko to seikyoku (Prince Saionji and Political Developments, hereinafter to be referred to as Harada Diary) (Tokyo: 1950), Vol. II, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁴¹ Ishiwara, "Manmo mondai shiken," op. cit.

¹⁴² Hashimoto told Captain Tanaka Kiyoshi of the Sakurakai on August 4, 1931, that "in the middle of September the Kwantung Army will execute a plot and produce an occasion to settle Manchurian problems." Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 158.

Chinese soldiers in the distant interior of Manchuria. In order to alleviate severe Japanese reprimands, Chinese commissions of investigation were in search for the assassins.¹⁴³ It was expected that whatever drastic measures were to be taken by the Kwantung Army would be in connection with the results of the report of the second Chinese commission of investigation, due on September 16. Nightly exercises were carried out in mid-September as part of the 1931 Kwantung Army troop inspection. A railway explosion plot was set on September 28.¹⁴⁴

The charged atmosphere in Manchuria was observed with great concern by the policymakers in Japan. Upon Saionji's recommendation, through Makino, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Emperor summoned the Ministers of Navy and War on September 10 and 11, respectively, to question them on the state of military discipline.¹⁴⁵ The Minister of Navy was greatly

¹⁴³ For details of the case, see The Report of the Commission of Enquiry of the League of Nations into the Sino-Japanese Dispute, 1932 (hereinafter to be referred to as the Lytton Report), pp. 125-130.

¹⁴⁴ Memorandum of Kawashima Tadashi quoted in "Tokyo saiban o nogareta shichi tsu no kimitsu bunsho" ("Seven Secret Documents that Escaped Tokyo Trial"), Nihon (Tokyo: January, 1960), p. 45.

¹⁴⁵ Harada asked Saionji whether the Emperor asked out of his own accord. Saionji stated that Makino had asked his opinion on requesting the Emperor to question the Minister of War and Chief of General Staff concerning military discipline at the coming occasion of fall maneuvers in Kumamoto when such an act would not be conspicuous. Saionji answered that the situation was imminent and that it could not wait until fall. He also suggested that the Minister of Navy should also be summoned. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 55.

surprised by the Emperor's concern and promised the Emperor to maintain and tighten control.¹⁴⁶ Minister of War Minami, however, seemed ready for the occasion.

When the Emperor was about to question the state of military discipline, the Minister of War proceeded to report that recently some of the young officers have been criticizing the weakness of foreign policy. . . . The authorities recognize that foreign policy is national policy and do not approve of their statements and actions, and they intend to adopt careful supervision.¹⁴⁷

While evading the reprimands of the Emperor and of Saionji, whom he visited on September 14, the Minister of War decided upon dispatching Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, director of the Strategic Department of the General Staff, to request prudence of the Kwantung Army. On September 12 or 13, the Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army had cabled the Minister to send Tatekawa and Koiso Kuniaki, director of the Military Affairs Department of the Ministry of War, to observe the mounting tension in Manchuria.¹⁴⁸ As Koiso at the time was involved in military organization and budget matters, Tatekawa alone left for Manchuria on September 15 with orders from the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff to caution the Kwantung Army against rash action and to warn that support could not be expected from the government.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. Kido Koichi, Diary, September 10, 1931.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Suzuki Kantaro, Grand Chamberlain, to Makino Nobuaki, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal on September 11, 1931. Makino Papers. Possession of the Diet Library.

¹⁴⁸ Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit. Mitarai, op. cit., p. 255.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

The purpose of the Tatekawa mission was relayed to the Kwantung Army even before his arrival, however. Hashimoto cabled secretly to Hanaya of the Mukden Special Service Station that Tatekawa was coming to prevent the Kwantung Army from taking action.¹⁵⁰ The plotters in Manchuria considered two alternatives. Some insisted upon immediate execution, while others advised postponement in view of the absence of support from the General Staff. As no decision could be reached on the basis of debate, the story goes that a lot was drawn.¹⁵¹ At any rate, the plot was suspended temporarily when the Tatekawa dispatch was reported, and Hanaya was excluded from the succeeding decision made by Itagaki and Ishiwara: to start the war before Tatekawa relayed the prudence policy of Tokyo to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army.¹⁵²

Military Action Begins

The Kwantung Army had just finished exercises in Liaoyang on September 17, and the Commander-in-Chief and the staff were about to return to Headquarters at Lushun when the

¹⁵⁰ Recorded Statement of Hanaya Tadashi at Manmo Doho Engokai on October 14, 1954. Possession of Manmo Doho Engokai.

¹⁵¹ Memorandum of Mitani Kyoshi quoted in "Tokyo saiban o nogareta shichi tsu no kimitsu bunsho," op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁵² Ibid. Yamaguchi Juji, Higeki no shogun Ishiwara Kanji (Ishiwara Kanji, the Tragic General) (Tokyo: 1952), p. 113. Hanaya, who was the strongest of the diehards, expressed dissatisfaction over the change in program to Katakura on September 16, 1931. Statement of Katakura Tadashi, op. cit.

official cable notifying Tatekawa's arrival reached them. They continued to Lushun, but Itagaki, as senior staff officer, remained in Mukden to receive and welcome the Tokyo envoy. The reception was indeed cordial. Tatekawa arrived in Mukden on September 18 and was promptly taken to "Kikubumi," a Japanese restaurant where he was wined and dined until he lay intoxicated. Around 10:00 P.M. an explosion occurred on the South Manchuria Railway to the north of Mukden. Fighting between the Japanese Railway Guards and Chinese troops followed. The occupation of Mukden by the Kwantung Army had been achieved by the next morning.

It has been repeatedly stated that Tatekawa knowingly cooperated with the plot and allowed the fatal night to elapse before transmitting the orders of the Minister of War.¹⁵³ Although we can only speculate, evidence supports this view. Tatekawa was indeed the patron of the Sakurakai,¹⁵⁴ and did favor military action in Manchuria as advocated by the Kwantung Army. Having been formally instructed by the Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff to prevent the outbreak of hostilities in Manchuria, the only course left to him seems to have been one of intentional delay.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Tanaka Ryukichi testimony at the International Military Tribunal Far East. IMTFE Proceedings, No. 25, p. 15.

¹⁵⁴ Imamura states that though no evidence is available, it is reasonably certain that Tatekawa gave money to the Sakurakai from his secret funds. Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

¹⁵⁵ Harada writes that since Koiso recommended Tatekawa to Minami to act as emissary, and since Vice-Chief of Staff

Action was carried out solely by the Kwantung Army, however, without any regard for Tatekawa. When fighting was reported between the Railway Guards and the Chinese troops, Itagaki decided to send out reinforcement from the Battalion Headquarters at Mukden. This action expanded the shooting to a major offensive.¹⁵⁶ Kwantung Army Headquarters in Lushun received the news of the clash a little after 11:00 P.M., and staff officers were summoned immediately by the Chief of Staff.

The Katakura Diary expressly states that "this diary begins by treating the Mukden Incident as an unexpected accident,"¹⁵⁷ and disavows any attempt to inquire into the causes of the war. Lt. Katakura Tadashi, who had been assigned to the Office of the Staff of the Kwantung Army in August 1930, was the youngest member of the staff at the outbreak of the

Ninomiya, Koiso, and Tatekawa were the main manipulators of radical plots in the army, he probably intended to enable Tatekawa to execute the plot while explaining that Tatekawa alone could bring the radical young officers to the desired course. Thus the Incident broke out on the night of Tatekawa's arrival before he relayed the preventive order to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 61f. Imamura firmly denies that Tatekawa went to start action, but to control it along the policy outlined in "Manmo mondai kaiketsu hosaku." He considers that the dispatch of Tatekawa brought about the unintended result of precipitating the setting of fire. Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

¹⁵⁶ Kantogun Sanbobu Somuka, "Manshujihen kimitsu koryaku nisshi" ("Manchurian Affair Secret War Diary," hereinafter to be referred to as Katakura Diary upon the approval of Katakura Tadashi), Vol. I, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Manchurian Affair. As assistant to Itagaki, Katakura was not only in a position to read all incoming telegrams, but was also assigned to draft telegrams, memoranda, and reports, and thus participated in all decision-making conferences of the Kwantung Army. His semi-official diary is the most valuable depository of official and unofficial information on the Manchurian Affair. He recorded that at the moment of the episode, "the Commander-in-Chief had not yet decided upon an offensive, and planned only to mobilize the [Kwantung] Army in Mukden and to undertake disarmament [of enemy], but the staff insisted that once fighting had taken place, the attack of the walled city of Mukden should be left to the Commander of the Second Division, Yingkou and Fenghuangcheng should be disarmed, and then Changchun should be supervised."¹⁵⁸ The staff feared that the Commander-in-Chief's plan to concentrate troops in Mukden and to await the reaction of the enemy might induce the Kwantung Army to comply with orders coming from Tokyo, with results as futile as those following Komoto's assassination attempt on Chang Tso-lin.¹⁵⁹

Persuaded by the staff and informed of the actual spread of hostilities in Mukden, the Commander-in-Chief agreed to the strategy laid out by the staff. At 3:30 the following morning, the Commander-in-Chief and staff officers left Lushun,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2. The Kwantung Army was composed of the Second Division and the Independent Railway Guards.

¹⁵⁹ Statement of Katakura Tadashi, op. cit.

arriving in Mukden some eight hours later. By then Mukden was completely in Japanese hands. Fighting was still going on in Changchun, but they were greatly encouraged by news that the Korean Army would send reinforcements as well as by reports of the favorable tide of battle. The Commander-in-Chief consented to the proposal of the staff and cabled the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff that it was now necessary "to positively assume the responsibility of maintaining public order over the entirety of Manchuria." He requested "reinforcements of three divisions" while emphasizing that "even if the Kwantung Army assumed the responsibility of maintaining public order over all Manchuria in the future, it could support and supply its own expenses."¹⁶⁰

Official orders from Tokyo opposed expansion of hostilities. Around 6:00 P.M. on September 19, cables from the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff stated that while they recognized the appropriateness of the initial measures of the Kwantung Army, the cabinet wished not to enlarge the battle front.¹⁶¹ The Commander-in-Chief of the Korean Army also cabled that, despite repeated requests, the Chief of the General Staff had forcefully prohibited dispatch of reinforcements, and that troops would be in wait south of

¹⁶⁰ Cable from Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to Minister of War and Chief of General Staff. Sent September 19, 1931. *Katakura Diary*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Cables from Chief of General Staff and Minister of War to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Arrived September 19, 1931. *Ibid.*

Shingishu. Without the assistance of the Korean Army, no major operation could be conducted. "The atmosphere of the [Kwantung Army] staff became extremely tense, and Itagaki, Ishiwara and others conferred over further means of dealing with the situation."¹⁶²

It should be recalled once again that central army authorities were neither unanimously agreed nor cognizant of the instigated staging of the Manchurian Affair. Chief of the General Staff Kanaya regarded the mobilization of the Korean Army as both rash and unnecessary, and prohibited dispatch of its troops to Manchuria. He judged that the situation in Mukden did not call for reinforcements. Minister of War Minami reported at the cabinet meeting on the morning of the 19th that the fighting in Mukden was purely an act of self-defense on the part of the Kwantung Army against Chinese provocation. Both the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War thus issued orders, in compliance with the cabinet policy, prohibiting the Kwantung Army from expanding hostilities.

It does not follow, however, that the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War intended to ignore the Kwantung Army requests for reinforcements. The Kwantung Army action was regarded with great sympathy on the part of all army authorities in Tokyo. Furthermore, they were responsible for directing the operations to a successful conclusion even

¹⁶² Cable from Commander-in-Chief of the Korean Army to the Kwantung Army. Arrived September 19, 1931. Ibid., pp. 4f.

if no deliberate expansion of hostilities were envisaged. The Korean Army was waiting for orders. Thus, the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War, while complying with the non-enlargement policy, stressed the need for reinforcements to the government, indicating the extreme danger to which the slightly more than ten thousand Japanese soldiers were exposed in confronting two hundred and sixty thousand Chinese.¹⁶³ Minami revealed to Prime Minister Wakatsuki that "troops would be or 'might have already been sent'" from the Korean Army. To Wakatsuki's accusation of dispatching troops without government approval, the Minister of War answered that he had acted on the basis of precedent established at the time of the Tanaka Cabinet.¹⁶⁴ The conversation took place, according to the Harada Diary, before the evening of the 19th. Either the Minister of War must have felt impotent to stop the arbitrary action of the Korean and Kwantung Armies or stressed the urgency of the state of affairs to coerce the government into approving the action.¹⁶⁵

Government Crisis

The cabinet, fearing the impossibility of controlling the battle front, faced a crisis. When Harada was called by

¹⁶³ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 64, 68.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁶⁵ Imamura Hitoshi affirms the latter; he reiterates that the need for reinforcement was recognized from the very beginning but that the Korean Army was prevented from action until Imperial sanction was obtained. Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

the Prime Minister during the evening of September 19, Wakatsuki seemed to be in great agony, feeling that "he could not control the army by his own power"; moreover, he did not know what measures to take if troops were moved without Imperial sanction.¹⁶⁶ The chances seemed to be that cabinet decisions would not be pressed on the army overseas.¹⁶⁷

The loss of Wakatsuki's confidence seemed to displease the leaders of the court circle, Minister of the Imperial Household Ichiki Kitokuro, Grand Chamberlain Suzuki Kantaro, Secretary of the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido Koichi, when they were told of Harada's visit with the Prime Minister. The Kido Diary entry of September 19 records that Kido "was annoyed that the Prime Minister was relying on outside assistance, so to speak, in solving this crisis. [He] insisted that [he] believed the cabinet had to hold conferences after conferences, and thereby attempt to unify public opinion and reveal the unswerving determination of the cabinet itself."¹⁶⁸ Although Harada denied that the Prime Minister was asking for the help of the court circle,¹⁶⁹ he told them of Wakatsuki's anguish. He also transmitted to the Prime Minister the advice of the court circle that the "unity of the cabinet members seemed weak and that no other way seemed to exist than to

¹⁶⁶ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 64.

¹⁶⁷ Kido Diary, September 19, 1931.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 67.

control the army through cabinet meetings repeatedly held.¹⁷⁰ Thus the cabinet was to serve as the primary political power to fight back the pressure of the army. Saionji on September 20 recommended to the Emperor that even if the cabinet should wish to resign "the Emperor should absolutely not allow it at present, and no resignation should be granted until the Incident is completely settled."¹⁷¹

There were grounds, however, for the loss of confidence among the cabinet leaders. Suspicion that the Incident was another plot of the army was widespread.¹⁷² Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro was informed that the Mukden Incident was not unexpected, but was part of the premeditated action of the Kwantung Army. Prior to the Incident, the Consul General in Mukden, Hayashi Kyujiro, had reported that the Fushun Railway Guard had disclosed a plan to resort to military action on September 18.¹⁷³ When fighting broke out, Hayashi

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁷² Harada notes that on September 20, the Chief of General Staff was at pains to emphasize that the Incident was not plotted by the Japanese Army. Harada states that though he believed in what the Chief of General Staff said, many people could not but feel that the army had again resorted to measures similar to the assassination of Chang Tso-lin. Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁷³ On September 14, the captain of the Fushun Railway Guard Company opened an extraordinary defense conference with the head of the reservists organization, chief of police, chief of military police, chief of general affairs section of mines, and station master. He requested that since the Company was leaving around 11:30 P.M. on September 18 to attack the Chinese air force troops, as part of military action to

cabled that the Kwantung Army "seems to follow the policy of immediately embarking upon positive action along the Manchuria Railway zone,"¹⁷⁴ and that Itagaki stated that "since the Chinese troops attacked the Japanese Army, the policy is to fight it all out."¹⁷⁵ President of the South Manchuria Railway Uchida Yasuya also reported to Shidehara that

military occupation of Chinese military bases along the South Manchuria Railway was expected to continue as proven by the advance to Fenghuangcheng. . . . The reason for military occupation is reportedly the destruction of the railway by Chinese troops from the North Barracks, but railway supervisors have been sent to the spot three times so far and have been refused entry. . . . The present military action has been practised as an emergency exercise since the 14th . . . and is assumed to be the execution of prearranged plan.¹⁷⁶

The information of Tatekawa's secret arrival in Mukden was interpreted as confirming the premeditated action of the

back up the negotiation over the Captain Nakamura case, the South Manchuria Railway Company would prepare for the trains, and the defense team under the leadership of the reservists would protect the coal mines after its departure. Letter transmitted from Hayashi Kyujiro to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Arrived September 19, 1932. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 9.

¹⁷⁴Cable No. 624 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 19, 1931. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 180.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Cable from Uchida to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 20, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

Army.¹⁷⁷ Shidehara read these cables at cabinet meetings¹⁷⁸ and convinced the cabinet of the injustice of the case. The fact of spreading hostilities in Manchuria and suspicion of the army's intention of deliberate expansion, though the extent of the contemplated operation and degree of involvement of the Kwantung Army as well as the army as a whole were not clear, seemed enough to impress the cabinet with a sense of impotence.

The civil-military conflict had its first showdown in Mukden. When Consul General Hayashi visited the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army on the evening of September 19, he referred to the statement of the Captain of the Fushun Company and expressed his observation that the Incident was connected with it. Itagaki was indignant and pressed Hayashi to apologize for rash judgment.¹⁷⁹ Cables from the army in Tokyo on the following day seemed to indicate that it was concerned that the present Incident gave room for suspicion on the part of the Foreign Office. The Chief of Staff of the Kwangtung Army, Miyake, thereupon called on Hayashi to question what exactly had been reported concerning the Fushun case and the present hostilities. Miyake emphatically denied

¹⁷⁷ Cable No. 630 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 19, 1931. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁷⁸ Information provided by Ando Toshikichi, Director of Military Service Section, Ministry of War. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 26.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

any relationship between the two and explained that the Incident had been caused by Chinese attack. Hayashi, according to the Katakura Diary,¹⁸⁰ promised to correct his report to the Minister, but in fact cabled that the Chief of Staff expected to expand the battle front to Kirin and Harbin.¹⁸¹ Relations between the Kwantung Army and the Consulate General became increasingly strained as the former considered that Tokyo's disapproval, particularly the prevention of the Korean Army dispatch, was caused by reports of the latter.¹⁸²

Military Action Continues

While blaming the Consulate General in Mukden for misleading the government, the Kwantung Army on September 20 faced a crucial choice on how to cope with the preventive orders from Tokyo--to comply and allow the long-sought opportunity of military occupation of Manchuria disappear, or to take advantage of the reported unrest in Kirin and Harbin and expand the battle front to all of Manchuria?

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸¹ Cable No. 630 from Hayashi, Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁸² Hanaya blamed Morishima Morindo, Consul in Mukden, since the Consulate on the night of September 20 reported to the Foreign Office that the Chinese were taking a non-resistance policy and had requested that bombardment be stopped, that the Korean Army was prevented from mobilization. He almost resorted to violence in criticizing the softness of the Foreign Office. Cable No. 110 from Tsukamoto, Governor of Kwantung, to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 22, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

The Katakura Diary treats vividly the process through which the decision was reached in favor of a deliberate offensive.

The Chief of Staff, the staff members, Itagaki, Ishiwara, Arai, Takeda, Nakano and Captain Katakura conferred in Itagaki's room . . . past midnight to discuss measures to be adopted. All agreed upon dispatching troops to Kirin. The Chief of Staff . . . visited the Commander-in-Chief in his bedroom and recommended twice that he adopt the decision but he would not consent. . . . All visited the Commander in his room. . . . Arai first explained the situation in Kirin, then Ishiwara urged upon Kirin expedition from the standpoint of tactics and strategy, and Itagaki followed by expressing the need for resolutely pursuing the objective. Atmosphere of great strain prevailed. The Commander was angered by Itagaki's statement, "If the Kwantung Army wavers," and turned all out except the Chief of Staff and Itagaki and conferred for two hours. He finally decided upon Kirin expedition. The time was 3:00 A.M. . . . The Commander-in-Chief was in great pains. The staff firmly believed that once the situation has come to this point, destruction of the Chinese Kirin Army is an absolute necessity which provides favorable opportunity for settlement of Manchurian problems. They were resolved to resort to resignation in concert unless this proposal could be adopted.¹⁸³

Immediately, orders were sent to the Commander of the Second Division to proceed to Kirin. But the decision was not reported to the Minister of War, the Chief of the General Staff, or the Korean Army until 6:00 A.M. The report to

¹⁸³Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 17f.

Tokyo was purposely delayed because "interference from Tokyo was feared," and the Kwantung Army wished "to create a situation in which the troops were already ordered to position and on the move" so that instructions from Tokyo would be inoperable.¹⁸⁴

That unrest existed in Kirin is true. Japanese residents pressed the Consul General, Ishii Itaro, to ask for troops to protect them from Chinese attack, and Ishii tried to find out whether aid could be expected in such an event. However, it is recalled by Ishii that the unrest was deliberately created by Lt. Colonel Osako Michisada, Japanese Military Adviser to the Kirin Government, who had instructed his adventurous henchmen, for instance, to throw a pistol into a Japanese owned store in the center of the city.¹⁸⁵

The Katakura Diary credits the activities of Osako as having "contributed to the guidance of the policy of the Kwantung Army in the right direction."¹⁸⁶ It is evident, then, that the Kwantung Army continued to operate on two fronts: the informal creation of chaos through devious measures and the formal pursuit of action through official decision-making channels. The importance of the Kirin expedition lies in having been the first major formal decision of the Kwantung

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁸⁵ Ishii Itaro, Gaikokan no issho (Life of a Diplomat) (Tokyo: 1950), p. 182.

¹⁸⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 17.

Army to expand hostilities in Manchuria in accord with its premeditated program and against the orders of the central army authorities and the policy of the government.

The Korean Army responded immediately to the decision of the Kwantung Army. At noon of September 21, the Commander-in-Chief cabled that the 39th Mixed Brigade had been ordered to move.¹⁸⁷ The Kwantung Army rejoiced over the favorable action, for one of the main grounds for Honjo's decision to move troops to Kirin was to "draw out the Korean Army and thereby to increase troops"¹⁸⁸ that would contribute to the occupation of Manchuria. From the viewpoint of military discipline, the arbitrary dispatch of the Korean Army to Manchuria was indeed a major disaster. The dispatch of troops to Kirin was of course a case of expanded interpretation of the authorized function on the part of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, for Kirin was neither in Kwantung nor adjacent to the railway zone entrusted to his command. The Korean Army was assigned to defend Korea, and only the Supreme Command could legally order it to Manchuria.

The Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff were in grave difficulty when the Korean Army's decision was reported. The Commander-in-Chief of the Korean Army cabled in advance the exact time of the expected crossing of the Korean border, as if to allow central army authorities to

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

stop the action if they could. The General Staff attempted to keep the Korean Army within Korea until the Emperor's approval could be obtained.¹⁸⁹ The Imperial sanction was, however, hard to obtain. The cabinet meeting of September 22 did not give consent to the Minister of War's request to dispatch the Korean Army to Manchuria on grounds that the Kwantung Army was insufficient in number. The cabinet considered that such action would become a matter of concern for the League of Nations and would complicate eventual troop withdrawal.¹⁹⁰ After the cabinet meeting, the Minister of War told the Prime Minister that one division of the Korean Army had left Korea. The Chief of the General Staff informally reported to the Emperor, who would not sanction the move, holding that the government had not yet made appropriations for the expedition. Saionji on the previous day had already recommended that the "Emperor should definitely not give permission when the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff report on having moved the Army without Imperial sanction."¹⁹¹ The Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff both attempted to persuade the Prime Minister that night to promise the Emperor that the cabinet would approve the dispatch the following morning. The Prime Minister refused.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

¹⁹⁰ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 70.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 71.

The next day the Emperor summoned the Prime Minister and stated that he approved the cabinet non-enlargement policy and emphasized that it should be faithfully observed.¹⁹³ The Chief of the General Staff again called on Wakatsuki to ask for cabinet approval. The Prime Minister again refused. The cabinet meeting of that afternoon had great difficulty in reaching a decision as the ministers, especially Foreign Minister Shidehara and Finance Minister Inoue censored the defiant action of the army.¹⁹⁴ Some thought it unnecessary to appropriate for expenses incurred without the knowledge of the government. However, since "soldiers could not live for a day without the government providing for the expenses," the Prime Minister gave in and allowed for the ex post facto approval of the Emperor.¹⁹⁵ By that time one battalion of the Korean Army had crossed the border, and the all-important legitimacy was now granted to the arbitrary action. The Emperor showed his displeasure to the army leaders when he granted approval, and cautioned the Chief of the General Staff "to behave discreetly in the future."¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, the army felt great dissatisfaction concerning the attitude of the Emperor. Information collected by Kido indicated that

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁹⁵ Wakatsuki Reijiro, Kofuan kaikoroku (Memoirs of Kofuan) (Tokyo: 1950), p. 378.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

"the army was indignant as it considered that the Emperor's message to the Prime Minister and Minister of War approving the government policy to endeavor not to expand the Incident any further, was based upon the advice of the Imperial entourage." The army attitude led Kido to conclude against the wisdom of issuing Imperial messages, unless they were compelling, and also against the expected visit of Saionji to Tokyo.¹⁹⁷

In the three days after the Mukden Incident, while Tokyo was desperately seeking ways to control the spread of hostilities, the moves of the Kwantung Army were rapid and farreaching. Mukden, which had succumbed in one night, was officially declared on September 21 to be under the administration of a temporary municipal government with Doihara Kenji as mayor. Although central army authorities indicated that the Kwantung Army itself should not directly assume the responsibility of administration and should not go farther than maintenance of public order, the Kwantung Army had a blueprint for the administration of Manchuria, "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu," and was able to undertake quick measures to meet the need of restoring normal civil life.¹⁹⁸ On the same day, Kirin was occupied without bloodshed, as Lt. General Hsi Hsia, the acting head of the provincial administration, wished to save the city from destruction. Changchun had been

¹⁹⁷Kido Diary, September 22, 1931.

¹⁹⁸Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21.

brought under control on the 19th and Antung, Fenghuangcheng and Yingkou, strategic points in the neighborhood of the South Manchuria Railway zone, were occupied on the 20th.

While South Manchuria rapidly fell into the hands of the Kwantung Army, unrest was reported from Harbin. Chinese officials claimed that mysterious explosions had been instigated by the Japanese as an excuse for occupation. Consul General Ohashi Chuichi, taking note of the dangerous situation to which the Japanese residents seemed exposed, repeatedly requested troop dispatch.¹⁹⁹ The Kwantung Army, which indeed had been unofficially instigating unrest in Harbin through Captain Amakasu Masahiko of the Special Service Station, requested Tokyo's approval to proceed north in protection of the lives of four thousand Japanese and the center of Japanese economic power in North Manchuria. The Chief of the General Staff ordered that any further operations were to wait for the direction of Tokyo, and the Minister of War transmitted the fundamental policy of the government not to advance north of Kuanchengtzu nor to undertake the supervision of facilities other than the South Manchuria Railway. Furthermore, Tokyo flew the Director of the Military Service Section of the Ministry of War, Colonel Ando Toshikichi, to relay the Minister's intention of not expanding the Incident.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹Cables No. 199, 206, 218 from Ohashi, Consul General in Harbin to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 22, 22, 23, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²⁰⁰Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 25.

Neither the Consul General nor the Kwantung Army could accept the decision without further protest.²⁰¹ On September 24, the Chief of the General Staff cabled that "troops were not to be sent to Harbin even if the situation suddenly became critical,"²⁰² and the Minister of War reported that the Prime Minister had told the Emperor that "no on the spot protection would be provided for the Japanese in Harbin, and that if necessary they will be evacuated without sending troops."²⁰³ The Chief of the General Staff and the Minister

²⁰¹ Ohashi cabled the Minister of Foreign Affairs that "if the decision was final, no other alternative existed but to evacuate the Japanese residents to South Manchuria in case of danger. In view of the facts that the major point of Manchuria railway conflict lay in winning cargoes from northern railways, that among the 4,000 Japanese in Harbin are those with substantial business interests and property attained through many years of hard work, and that the new leaders of the South Manchuria Railway Company have expressly stated that they consider Harbin the most important center of Japanese advancement in Manchuria, on what grounds has the Government decided against expedition? Is the decision absolute? Cable No. 226 from Ohashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 24, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair." The Kwantung Army cabled the Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff that "though they were in watchful wait, they felt the need of resolutely acting for protection in case Japan's only center in North Manchuria was to be lost." Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 32.

²⁰² On September 25, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army told Hayashi that "previously the order was not to send troops north of Changchung unless absolutely necessary, but on 24th the Chief of General Staff formally ordered that the expedition to Harbin would not be allowed under any circumstances." Cable No. 769 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 26, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²⁰³ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 32.

of War were still acting within the non-enlargement policy of the government and the Kwantung Army was again faced with a major obstacle to its plan of total occupation of Manchuria. The Katakura Diary records the atmosphere of the Headquarters as follows:

Ah, where lies the true intention of the government? Why does not the Minister of War confront the government with the determination to dare bring about a head-on collision? The time has come when no other than decisive action would save the situation. The staff was angered and grieved. The Commander-in-Chief seemed in grave pain.²⁰⁴

Determined opposition from Tokyo pressed the Kwantung Army to reconsider its program for Manchurian settlement based upon the possession of both South and North Manchuria. Kwantung Army leaders found that even generally sympathetic army colleagues in Tokyo seemed suspicious of their version of the Incident.²⁰⁵ The Kwantung Army took revenge on the Consulate General of Mukden by denying the Consulate General access to information and ordering the South Manchuria Railway Company not to release any news dealing with military secrets to the Consulate.²⁰⁶ The relationship between the

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁰⁵ Ando Toshikichi questioned the connection between the Fushun case and the Mukden Incident and the fact of Japanese attack despite Chinese expression of non-resistance. Ibid., pp. 26f.

²⁰⁶ Cable No. 765 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 26, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

Consulate and the Kwantung Army became such that President Uchida of the South Manchuria Railway Company observed that the Consul General had difficulty in performing official duty.

For example when the Consul General transmitted the request of the Chinese officials to negotiate for the stoppage of Japanese firing in exchange for absolute non-resistance, [his] message was not only disregarded, . . . he was even advised against communicating with the Chinese officials who were enemies. In the important problems of occupation and supervision of Peking-Mukden, Ssupingkai-Taonan and Mukden-Kirin railways, . . . he was left uninformed while plans were made and issued to the local officers of the South Manchuria Railway Company. . . . Left without any order concerning exact government policy, . . . the Consul General is believed to be forced to let the army act as they will, while entertaining serious doubts and concern over the legal nature of the Mukden occupation and the occupation and supervision of the Chinese railways. . . As [these] would undoubtedly create important diplomatic problems, I consider it necessary that the Consul General, as government representative, be placed in a position to be consulted from the beginning on major international problems and be possessed of the right to express his views.²⁰⁷

Consul General Hayashi himself reported that the situation was beyond his control and that he "only hoped now that the government could thoroughly control the army and make their action comply swiftly with the proper course."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Cable No. 2 from Uchida to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 21, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²⁰⁸ Cable No. 737 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister

Having prevented the spread of hostilities northward to Harbin, the government succeeded in gaining policy control, however precarious and temporary. At long last, on September 24 it issued its first official statement concerning the Sino-Japanese dispute. The delay had already caused much soul-searching, for it gave grounds for detecting "discrepancy" and "estrangement" between the army and the government.²⁰⁹ The statement expressed the government decision to make all possible efforts "to prevent the aggravation of the situation," noting that though "a detachment was dispatched from Changchun to Kirin, it was not with a view to military occupation but only for the purpose of removing a menace to the South Manchuria Railway on its flank." The bulk of the detachment was to be withdrawn "as soon as that objective has been attained." Any territorial design in Manchuria was categorically denied.²¹⁰

A reply along similar lines was sent to the League of Nations on the same day in answer to the Council resolution of September 22 that appealed "to the Chinese and Japanese Governments to refrain from any action which might aggravate

Shidehara. Arrived September 23, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²⁰⁹ Asahi Shimbun, "Chugai ni seimei suru tokoro are" ("Issue Statement to the World at Large"), September 23, 1931.

²¹⁰ Statement issued after the Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting of September 24, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Information, Manshujihen oyobi Shanghai jihen kankei kohyoshu (Collection of Official Statements Related to Manchurian Affair and Shanghai Affair), January, 1934, pp. 5f.

the situation," and declared that the Council would endeavor, "in consultation with the Chinese and Japanese representatives, to find adequate means of enabling the two countries to withdraw troops immediately."²¹¹ The Japanese answer was conciliatory in affirming troop withdrawal, but it was not without reservation, as it promised withdrawal only "in proportion as the situation improves" and declined assistance of the Council in the settlement of the dispute.²¹²

International Negotiations

Ever since the beginning of the Incident, the basic policy of the Japanese Government with regard to the League of Nations was "to keep the dispute outside of the domain of the League."²¹³ This policy was assiduously followed along the lines of insisting upon direct Sino-Japanese negotiation for the settlement of the dispute and of refusing any dispatch of neutral observers by the League. When the Incident in Manchuria was reported on the morning of the 19th, Japanese

²¹¹ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, September 22, 1931. Quoted in Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs, 1931 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 483.

²¹² Reply of the Japanese Government to the Council of the League of Nations, September 24, 1931. Ibid., p. 484.

²¹³ Cable No. 10 from Foreign Office to Delegate in Geneva. Sent September 21, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Asian Affairs, "Nisshi jihen ni kansuru kosho keikaku Renmei oyobi taibei kankei" ("Process of Negotiations Related to the Sino-Japanese Dispute: League of Nations and the United States," hereinafter to be referred to as "Nisshi jihen," September, 1933, Vol. I, p. 21.

Minister in Shanghai Shigemitsu Mamoru immediately visited Finance Minister of the Chinese Nationalist Government Sung Tzu-wen to pledge joint efforts for the solution of the Sino-Japanese dispute, as negotiation between them had already been under way over the Captain Nakamura case. Sung offered to go to Manchuria with Shigemitsu to assume responsibility for the settlement.²¹⁴ The Chinese Government still seemed willing to negotiate with Japan over Manchuria, despite its avowed objective of full recovery of the region.

The Japanese Government on the 21st accepted the Sung offer and instructed Shigemitsu to enter into negotiations. It also informed the Japanese Council Delegate, Yoshizawa Kenkichi of the Chinese proposal and the intention of the government to settle the dispute through direct negotiation, without the intervention of the League.²¹⁵ The Chinese Government, however, formally presented the case to the Council under Article 11 of the Covenant²¹⁶ on the same day, and

²¹⁴ Shigemitsu, Gaiko kaisoroku, op. cit., p. 105.

²¹⁵ Cable No. 10 from Foreign Office to Delegate in Geneva. Sent September 21, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21.

²¹⁶ Article 11. 1. Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary-General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council. 2. It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends."

simultaneously addressed an appeal to the United States. Furthermore, China withdrew the proposal for direct negotiation on the grounds that military action had spread all over Manchuria and that the Japanese Government seemed incapable of controlling the army.²¹⁷

Nevertheless, the Japanese Government continued to maintain the principle of direction negotiation, and at the Council meetings expressed readiness to enter into negotiation with the Chinese Government. It rejected a British plan for inquiry on September 25. Three days later, it also rejected a Chinese proposal to seek the assistance of neutral representatives in reaching a Sino-Japanese agreement on troop withdrawal. The Foreign Minister, explaining the refusal to the Ambassadors of Council member countries, said that although Japan was in no need of covering up the Manchurian situation, it had to oppose any proposal concerning the dispatch of observers as such a measure would arouse not only the army but also the public, and would lead the government to a position of extreme difficulty.²¹⁸ Instead, the League was expected to trust the Japanese Government, which had announced its decision "to prevent the aggravation of the situation," and

²¹⁷ Cable No. 1 from Shigemitsu to Foreign Office. Arrived September 23, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 149f.

²¹⁸ Cable No. 629 from Foreign Office to Geneva, England, United States. Sent September 25, 1931. Ibid., p. 152. Cable No. 18 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent September 25, 1931. Ibid., p. 160.

was steadily carrying out withdrawal of troops. The Council adjourned on the 30th upon securing from the Japanese Government the understanding that the withdrawal of troops "is in no way dependent on negotiations for a settlement of the dispute itself."²¹⁹ It expressed hopeful conviction that both the Japanese and Chinese Governments "are anxious to avoid taking any action which might disturb the peace and good understanding between the two nations," and requested "both parties to do all in their power to hasten the restoration of normal relations between them."²²⁰

In the first round of the diplomatic contest over the Manchurian Affair, Japan pulled through well. In the first few days after the opening of the Incident, the League was deeply alarmed and the Japanese Delegate suffered from lack of adequate information to cope with the accusations.²²¹ But Japan's position improved steadily once the government issued its official non-enlargement statement and appeared to be preventing the spread of hostilities. Moreover, Japan was greatly aided by favorable international circumstances. The

²¹⁹ Cable No. 117 from Delegate in Geneva to Foreign Office. Arrived September 30, 1931. Ibid., p. 251.

²²⁰ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, September 30, 1931. Quoted in Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 486.

²²¹ The Japanese Delegate in Geneva repeatedly requested additional information on September 23 and 24, as extreme lack of information made it impossible to comprehend the facts of the Incident. Cables Nos. 66, 77 from Delegate in Geneva to Foreign Office. Arrived September 23, 24, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 73, 124.

Council was "eager to settle the dispute skillfully . . . as the treatment of the case was of major importance in relation to the prestige of the League."²²² The Chinese Government was "expected to solve civil strife immediately . . . , seek to gain the backing of the League and of the United States through invoking the Kellogg Pact . . . and force the withdrawal of Japanese troops by resorting to propaganda."²²³ Additionally, the situation in Europe was such that, "overcome with various apprehensions, especially resulting from the recent depression in England, [Europe] possessed no psychological margin for paying great attention to an incident in the Far East."²²⁴

The Manchurian Affair in fact "came at the worst possible moment for stern action by Great Britain."²²⁵ The National Government was less than a month old and was fully occupied in economic problems. Besides, British opinion was "that Japanese action was by no means entirely unjustified."²²⁶

²²² Cable No. 133 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 2, 1931. Ibid., pp. 275-277.

²²³ Cable No. 1022 from Shigemitsu to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 24, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²²⁴ Cable No. 133 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 2, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 275f.

²²⁵ Charles Lock Mowat, Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940 (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1955), p. 49.

²²⁶ R. Basset, Democracy and Foreign Policy--A Case History--The Sino-Japanese Dispute, 1931-1933 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 31.

The Times asserted that "Japan had a strong case, but had put herself regrettably and unnecessarily in the wrong. Hardly one of its leading articles on Manchuria failed to emphasize . . . that the Japanese action in Manchuria was inconsistent with the obligations of the League Covenant and the Pact of Paris . . . [but] stress was continuously placed upon the lawless conditions prevailing in China, the weakness of the Central Government, the absence of any effective authority on its part in Manchuria, and the provocations given by anti-Japanese activities."²²⁷ In Geneva, the British Delegate endeavored to strengthen the position of the League by mustering American coöperation. He proposed that documents concerning the Sino-Japanese dispute be transmitted to the United States as signatory of the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg Pact, and pressed forward the plan to dispatch an inquiry consisting of military attachés of neutral powers stationed in China, which included the United States.

The United States was unwilling in the first few weeks of the Manchurian Affair to assume any positive role in the settlement of the dispute, and turned down the British proposal. Policy makers in Washington felt that American treaty rights were not involved and that "the army in Manchuria was proceeding without authorization from Tokyo, and therefore the Japanese Government could hardly be accused of violating

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

the Kellogg Pact."²²⁸ Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson privately even "resented the way the League kept 'nagging' him," as he "wished to avoid action that might antagonize Japan against the United States, or that might strengthen the military element in Japan."²²⁹ The Secretary felt that Japan was clearly divided into two opposing groups, the "Wakatsuki-Shidehara ministry" and the "rampageous army" and that his problem was "to let the Japanese know we are watching them and at the same time to do it in a way that will help Shidehara, who is on the right side, and not play into the hands of any nationalist agitators on the other."²³⁰ His opposition to the plan for a neutral commission was based on his trust in and consideration for Shidehara, who was taking pains to forestall third party intervention in any form.²³¹

His policy of cautious vigilance was popular "almost everywhere except Geneva--and Nanking,"²³² whence "came demands for a stronger stand by the United States, pleas for action by all the signatories of the Kellogg Pact, threats of a rapprochement with Russia as China's only alternative."²³³

²²⁸ Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson--A Study in Statecraft (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. 72.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Cables Nos. 629, 18 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent September 25, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 151f., 159-162.

²³² Current, op. cit., p. 75.

²³³ Ibid.

The Secretary merely reaffirmed his policy to the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, pointing out that "We have not attempted to go into the question of right and wrong . . . we are not taking sides . . . we are 'playing no favorites.'"²³⁴

The third Power that had loomed in the Japanese mind as a possible block to Japanese operations in Manchuria, the Soviet Union, also remained unprovoked. The initial Russian reactions to the Manchurian Affair were temperate, not necessarily because she underestimated the importance of Manchuria but because she had more urgent preoccupations at home and in Europe.²³⁵ Barring a direct Japanese attack on Soviet territory, which the Soviet Union feared as an eventuality,²³⁶ she was willing to refrain from making any signs of intervention.

Was the Japanese Government actually assisted by the passivity of the Powers in controlling the expansionistic program of the Kwantung Army? Did the policy of "playing no

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), Vol. I, pp. 78-82.

²³⁶ The account of Kawai Sadakichi's spy activities in Shanghai and Manchuria in 1931 are indicative of the Soviet concern. Kawai was introduced to Agnes Smedley and Richard Sorge in the middle of October, 1931, in Shanghai and was commissioned to go to North China and Manchuria to "collect general information, especially to pay attention to the invasion of Japanese Army to Siberia." It was Kawai's first assignment and he was apprehensive of his ability, but he felt that he would be "willing to go to the gallows, if he could discover the time of Soviet attack even one week sooner." Kawai Sadakichi, Aru kakumeika no kaiso (Reflection of a Revolutionary) (Tokyo: 1953), pp. 50-55.

"favorites" in fact help bolster up the Wakatsuki-Shidehara Ministry as Stimson hoped? It possibly postponed an immediate fall of the regime. It may have prevented a war involving the major Powers. But it is entirely likely that soft-pedalling was interpreted by Kwantung Army leaders as the sign to resort to even more drastic measures in defiance of the government without risking the chance of a major war.

CHAPTER V

REVISION OF THE KWANTUNG ARMY MANCHURIAN SETTLEMENT PROGRAM AND ITS EXECUTION

The power balance among the major contestants was uneasy at the end of the first week of the Manchurian Affair. The successful Kwantung Army was faced with opposition from the top central army authorities against further occupation. The shattered government was desperately attempting to make its policy effective. The alarmed world was, however, in a state of watchful passivity.

Policy Confusion and Program Revision

It was in the light of strong opposition from Tokyo that the Kwantung Army was forced to revise its original policy of forthright occupation and annexation of all Manchuria as established prior to the outbreak of hostilities on September 18. When the first preventive order from the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War reached the Kwantung Army in the late afternoon of the 19th, the Kwantung Army staff held a conference with Tatekawa to convince him of the necessity to pursue their program of occupation. Though Tatekawa promised that he would not obstruct the Kwantung Army expedition, he would not acquiesce in the matter of operations in North Manchuria. In order not to invite Soviet intervention, the Kwantung Army was not to cross the line

connecting Changchun and Taonan.²³⁷ When Tatekawa conferred with Commander-in-Chief Honjo on the following day, he re-emphasized the need to refrain from crossing the Changchun-Taonan line, but advised attacking Kirin and Taonan and destroying the existing Manchurian regime. Afterwards, a new regime under former Emperor Hsuan-Tung would be established with the support of Japan. Thus, although he recommended the ouster of the Chang regime in South Manchuria, he was thinking in terms of a regime friendly to Japan and not of Japanese occupation of Manchuria or of building a new State of Manchuria severed from China.²³⁸

The Kwantung Army thus discovered that Tatekawa, who was considered the most positive of the central army authorities, fell far short of the expectations of the Kwantung Army in terms of the Manchurian settlement program. The September 19-20 conference between Tatekawa and the Kwantung Army staff significantly demonstrated the surprising lack of agreement between the Kwantung Army and its leading supporter in Tokyo with regard to the content of the so-called Manchurian settlement. The only point of agreement, apparently, was the resort to military action. There was certainly no agreement on the scope of the Manchurian expedition, a division of opinion which was to bear increasingly important effects in reference to the issue of North Manchurian operations.

²³⁷ Statement of Katakura Tadashi, op. cit.

²³⁸ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 15.

Tatekawa was contemplating the establishment of a pro-Japanese regime in South Manchuria, under the former Emperor Hsuan-Tung. Director of the Chinese Section Shigeto was aiming at the expulsion of Chang Hsueh-liang, after which he was willing to bring an outstanding Kuomintang leader, perhaps Chu Cheng, to rule the Three Eastern Provinces.²³⁹ Neither was thinking in terms of violating Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria. But Vice-Chief of the General Staff Ninomiya, Director of the Military Affairs Department Koiso, and Director of the General Affairs Department of the Inspector General's Office Araki Sadao were said to have resolved in the morning of September 19 to settle the Manchurian problems, in the occasion of the present expedition, by forcefully securing a guarantee from Chang Hsueh-liang to uphold Japanese treaty rights.²⁴⁰

Program of September 22

Upon conferring with Tatekawa, the Kwantung Army agreed to establish a new regime in Manchuria and thereby retreated from their original plan of occupation and annexation of all Manchuria. Tatekawa's recommendations concerning the establishment of a pro-Japanese regime in South Manchuria through political maneuvering were approved by Vice-Chief of the General Staff Ninomiya on September 22.²⁴¹ On the same

²³⁹ Nakano, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁴⁰ Information provided by Inaba Masao, Office of Military History, Defense Agency.

²⁴¹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 43.

day, the second policy conference of the Kwantung Army staff took place, in which Doihara Kenji of the Mukden Special Service Station also participated. The conference concluded that, since neither the Japanese Government nor the world at large seemed ready to approve Japan's formal control over Manchuria, the Kwantung Army should aim at the realization of "substantial results" instead.²⁴² It was at this point that the idea of a multi-racial autonomous State of Manchuria, which had been entertained by various members of the Manshu Seinen Renmei, entered the realm of official policy of the Kwantung Army. Upon the suggestion of Doihara, who is known to have been under the influence of Kanai Shoji, director of Manshu Seinen Renmei, it was adopted as the second-best solution.²⁴³

The policy program that resulted from the conference stated that "a Chinese regime would be established with Japanese assistance, comprising the four provinces of the North-eastern region and Mongolia under the leadership of former Emperor Hsuan-Tung, and it would be made a paradise for all races existing in Manchuria and Mongolia."²⁴⁴ This regime

²⁴² Ibid., p. 16.

²⁴³ Doihara suggested the inclusion of the objective of racial harmony in the policy statement of September 22, which was later affirmed in that of October 2. Statement of Katakura Tadashi to the writer on May 5, 1959.

²⁴⁴ "Manmo mondai kaiketsu sakuan" ("Manchuria-Mongolia Problems Settlement Program"). Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 24.

was to be severed from China proper, and was to maintain the right of administration, but it was to entrust Japan with functions relating to defense, foreign relations, and management of major transportation and communication systems. Five local leaders (Hsi Hsia of Kirin, Chang Hai-peng of Taonan, Tang Yu-lin of Jehol, Yu Chih-shan of Tungpientao, and Chang Ching-hui of Harbin) who had been in contact with the Kwantung Army and in support of Emperor Hsuan-Tung, were earmarked to assume responsibility for maintaining public peace in their respective regions.²⁴⁵ The decision of the Kwantung Army to aim at the creation of a new state in Manchuria based upon the coöperation of various racial groups was brought about by considerations of practical politics and rooted in the tradition of political meddling by the army in Manchuria. The particular form which the decision assumed was, however, relevant to the ideals of racial harmony, popular autonomy, and social welfare which many members of the Kwantung Army and of the Manshu Seinen Renmei had come to entertain with varying degrees of sincerity before the outbreak of hostilities.

As soon as the first revised Manchuria settlement program was formed on September 22, the Kwantung Army initiated underground activities for establishment of a new regime. Concrete plans were set up to contact the Manchurian leaders and to spur them on to declaring independence from the Chinese National Government. The Katakura Diary entries of September

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

25 and 26 vividly record the first steps in the fabrication of an independence movement: "Captain Imada was sent to Kirin on 22nd to contact Hsi Hsia. On 23rd, Commander of the Second Division, Adviser [to the Kirin Government] Osako and Imada conferred and made [Hsi Hsia] promise organization of new government."²⁴⁶ By the 26th, "preparation for Hsi Hsia's independence in Kirin was finished. . . . Furthermore, through Osako, Hsi Hsia would be guided to persuade the independence of Chientao."²⁴⁷ With regard to the Harbin area, "on 22nd, Itagaki secretly visited Chang Ching-hui at his home in Mukden, urged him to reach decision" and "on 23rd made Chang Ching-hui return to Harbin accompanied by Arai Soji. They left at 3:30 P.M."²⁴⁸ "Cables No. 163 of 25th and No. 169 of 26th from Harbin relayed Arai Soji's report that the Special District finally decided to declare independence from the central government in the name of Chang Ching-hui."²⁴⁹ From Kirin, "Captain Imada went further on to Taonan on 25th, . . . and contacted Chang Hai-peng. Before Imada's arrival, Kono [Masanao, head of the Taonan Liaison Office of the South Manchuria Railway Company] had suggested and obtained pledge of allegiance from Chang Hai-peng. On 24th Oya Shinkei was sent to Yu Chih-shan. Oya had already had a plan. The details

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

were communicated to staff officer Ishiwara.²⁵⁰ Measures were also taken with regard to Emperor Hsuan-Tung. "At 4:00 P.M. on September 22nd, notice was sent to the Commander-in-Chief of the Tientsin Army to bring under protection Emperor Hsuan-Tung, Lo Chen-yu, Hsu Liang."²⁵¹ Itagaki summoned Lo Chen-yu and "conferred with him on 23rd. The same evening he contacted Hsi Hsia in Kirin and further went to Taonan to reach Chang Hai-peng."²⁵²

Thus, within a few days, contacts were made and steps were taken in all directions to create a new regime in Manchuria which would be Chinese but which would assure Japan of substantial gains. The Kwantung Army decided on September 26 that "Hsi Hsia would be made to declare independence on September 28, and Chang Ching-hui, Chang Hai-pen, Yu Chih-shan to follow; Mukden would be made to issue a resolution within about a week that it would no longer be presided by Chang Hsueh-liang; Pu-yi²⁵³ would be placed first in Kirin and then in Taonan; Chinchow would be bombed by airplane to exert a threat," in view of the report that a government for the Three Eastern Provinces would be established there under Chang Tso-hsiang. Four advisers were assigned to the designated local leaders: Lt. Colonel Osako to Kirin, Reserve Lt.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵³ Personal name of Emperor Hsuan-Tung.

Yoshimura Sookichi to Harbin, and Wada Kei and Amakasu Masahiko to Chang Hai-peng.²⁵⁴ The Vice President of South Manchuria Railway Company and the Governor of Kwantung were prohibited from relaying information concerning Kwantung Army contacts with the Chinese leaders.²⁵⁵ The Foreign Office, however, knew very soon at least this much: that the maintenance of public peace by Chinese leaders was based upon the instigation and under the control of the Kwantung Army, and that independence movements were in the making. Consul General Ishii from Kirin reported on September 26 that "the Army is backing up Chief of Staff Hsi Hsia to become the new leader of the Provincial Government to take charge of maintenance of public peace throughout the Province. Though the Army refers to the maintenance of public peace, [this] includes both military and civil administration comprehensively."²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 40f.

²⁵⁵Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵⁶Cable No. 104 from Ishii to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 26, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair." Ishii later reiterates in his memoir that on September 23 he was asked to arrange for a meeting between Hsi Hsia and Commander of the Second Division Tamon, as Hsi Hsia requested that the Kirin Army be disarmed by the Kirin Provincial Government in order to prevent any clash between the two armies. Ishii was to stay out of the conference, which was to deal with military matters. As the meeting lasted for a long time, Ishii went to the room, which was heavily guarded by officers bearing arms. After the conference he learned Tamon had demanded that Hsi Hsia declare independence of Kirin, at the threat of life. Disarming of the Kirin Army was left to the Provincial Government. Ishii protested to Tamon that the demand of Kirin independence was intervention into Chinese internal affairs, but the Commander answered that there was

Consul General Hayashi also reported on the same day that he was informed that

Lo Chen-yu upon pressure from certain sources, went to Kirin on the 23rd via Mukden and persuaded former Chief of Staff Hsi Hsia with whom he had been well acquainted, . . . to make the Kirin Provincial Government become independent from the Nationalist Government. It was decided to declare independence around the 28th. In Harbin too, a plan is reported which would declare severance from the Nationalist Government on the same 28th with Chang Ching-hui as leader.²⁵⁷

The September 22 program with regard to the establishment of a new regime in Manchuria was reported to central army authorities. The names of local leaders who possibly were to serve in the regime under Hsuan-Tung were disclosed. Three days later, Vice-Chief of the General Staff Ninomiya followed up his previous approval of resorting to political maneuvering, and revealed the plan to "destroy the regime of Chang Hsueh-liang without using the actual force of the army, which was expected to form a government in the vicinity of Chinchow." Director of the Military Affairs Department Koiso also conveyed the message that he desired "the immediate construction of the Kirin-Huining Railway and the seizure of

no room for reconsideration as he was acting on orders from the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, and suggested that the Consul General ignore the maneuvers. Ishii, op. cit., p. 187.

²⁵⁷ Cable No. 781 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 27, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affairs."

salt tax.²⁵⁸ These instructions were interpreted as expressions of support of the central army authorities for the Kwantung Army program.

As had been the case with the plotting of the Mukden Incident, the decision to resort to political maneuvers to bring about a new regime in Manchuria was apparently neither made nor approved by the Chief of the General Staff or the Minister of War. Vice Minister of War Sugiyama also seems to have been kept in the dark. Aside from mutual lack of confidence and communication between the Kanaya-Minami-Sugiyama group and the junior officers who advocated drastic reform measures internally and externally, they were separated also by the matter of official responsibility, which made the former more susceptible to and coöperative with the adopted policy of the government. They were, therefore, unsolicited by the latter.

On the same day that the Kwantung Army received the cable of the Vice-Chief of the General Staff approving political maneuvering, strict orders were issued by the Minister and Vice Minister of War which respectively prohibited "participation in the movement to establish a new regime in Manchuria" and flatly denied any understanding of the matter on the part of the central army authorities.²⁵⁹ On the 29th,

²⁵⁸ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 43. For background of this railway construction controversy, see C. Walter Young, Japan's Special Position in Manchuria (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1931), p. 247.

²⁵⁹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 43f.

the latter cabled the warning that "a rumor was circulating among cabinet ministers that the Commander of the Kwantung Army was involved in the movement to push forth Emperor Hsuan-Tung, and that the Army should guard itself from having absolutely any connection with it." The Minister himself wrote in a private letter to the Commander that "for the army to participate in the movement for a regime is to lead itself to destruction."²⁶⁰ A few days previously, the Chief of the General Staff had avowed to the Prime Minister that the reported "participation of army officers in the Emperor restoration movement is a total lie, and that he would not allow such action."²⁶¹

The central army authorities were in a tug of war, and their instructions to the Kwantung Army were divided. As late as October 12, the Vice-Chief of the General Staff and Vice Minister of War could not offer any single course of action, but cabled that "our desire concerning the new regime in Manchuria cannot be directly cabled to you due to extremely complicated circumstances, and therefore we have disclosed the situation to Major General Hashimoto."²⁶² Director of the Second Department of the General Staff Hashimoto Toranosuke had arrived in Mukden on September 26 to

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁶¹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 79.

²⁶² Cable from Vice Minister of War and Vice-Chief of General Staff to Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 105.

attempt policy coördination with the Kwantung Army. All that Hashimoto could state, however, was that "though the policy [of] rapidly forming a new regime has been decided on, it has to be carried out secretly."²⁶³

The Kwantung Army was displeased and confused by Tokyo's attitude and concluded that the "Minister of War had no guts,"²⁶⁴ that "the Kwantung Army alone had something of an established program regarding the settlement of Manchurian problems."²⁶⁵ Succeeding events indicate that Tokyo's indecision led the Kwantung Army to resort to means both daring and drastic in order to push forth its program. In policy and military action, it constantly kept ahead of the government, whose decision and control dragged far behind the steps taken in Manchuria. It was firmly determined to make the Japanese Government comply with its program; the Katakura Diary of October 2 records: "if by any chance the government does not accept our policy, those volunteers among the army in Manchuria would be required to abandon Japanese citizenship temporarily and to dash on in order to realize our objective."²⁶⁶

Program of October 2

A second policy document of importance, prepared by the Kwantung Army on October 2, further clarified the objectives

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 105.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

given in the September Manchurian settlement program. It distinctly designated the new regime to be established in Manchuria as "an independent state under Japanese protection." The new state was to be formed as rapidly as possible "by making all efforts in promoting the various independence movements now about to grow, especially by providing considerable assistance to those that resort to military action."²⁶⁷ In other words, the Kwantung Army now was to enter into the political reshaping of Manchuria under the mantle of an indigenous movement for independence. Whatever military action might be necessary was to be carried out by Chinese troops holding allegiance to the new regime.

Once it was decided to solve the Manchurian Affair through a policy of political maneuvers, policy statements had to be cast in a different light. The much recited slogan of "protection of existing rights" of Japan in Manchuria, now formally designated obsolete was replaced by "establishment of a new Manchuria and Mongolia," henceforth to be widely publicized.²⁶⁸ The new state was not only to become "the paradise of racial harmony," as stated in the September 22 program, but the various races in Manchuria were even expected "to develop on a basis of equality."²⁶⁹ The Japanese

²⁶⁷"Manmo mondai kaiketsu saku" ("Manchuria-Mongolia Problems Settlement Program"), ibid., p. 61.

²⁶⁸Ibid., p. 63.

²⁶⁹Ibid., p. 62.

were not to monopolize the ruling power of the new state, but "a committee consisting of an equal number of Japanese and Chinese, including Mongolians, was to govern in order to promote the happiness of the various races on equal grounds."²⁷⁰ The October 2 program foretold that future developments in Manchuria were, on one hand, to be heavily coated with symbols of racial harmony, equality, and autonomy, and, on the other hand, to be kept increasingly outside the realm of official control by the Japanese Government.

Neither the Chief of the General Staff nor the Minister of War adopted the Kwantung Army proposal. They affirmed their previous stand opposing both expansion of hostilities and participation in political activities. On October 3, they requested that the Kwantung Army leave major policy issues to Tokyo. This slap sharpened the Kwantung Army staff's feeling that drastic action was in order. Moreover, they learned to their great grief "that the foundation of the cabinet was growing increasingly solid, that the 'weak policy' argument of Foreign Minister Shidehara who had power in both the government and court circles was dominating the cabinet, and that the atmosphere of the court was suddenly becoming unfavorable to the army."²⁷¹ Upon the initiative of Ishiwara, the staff decided to create a situation by issuing a statement that the Chang Hsueh-liang forces should be thoroughly punished.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 66.

Kwantung Army Diplomatic Offensive

The anti-Chang statement of October 4 publicly announced the policy which the Kwantung Army held and proposed to Tokyo. The true intention of the staff was "especially to make the army resolute, and if necessary, to lead it to clash against the government."²⁷² Upon branding the Chang regime as well as its forces as destroyers of order, the statement made the following observations and conclusions:

Recently movements have been growing everywhere to establish a regime, and though the people all praise the dignity of the Japanese Army, they do not in the least attempt to uphold their former leader. This is none other than the result of indignation felt against many years of oppression by war lords. The [Kwantung] Army stands aloof from politics and diplomacy and concentrates on maintaining public peace by keeping its forces prepared and by holding quiet vigilance. . . . However, it sincerely wishes to realize rapidly the paradise of coexistence and co-prosperity for the thirty million residing in Manchuria and Mongolia, and believes that from a moral point of view to promote the unification [of various independent movements] is the urgently needed means of relief that proves the neighborly friendship of our country.²⁷³

The statement came as shocking evidence of the growing tendency of military intrusion into the realm of diplomacy. The Asahi, in an editorial on October 6 entitled "Gun no jisei

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ "Kantogun shireibu kohyo" ("Official Statement of the Kwantung Army Headquarters"), October 4, 1931. Ibid., pp. 68f.

ni matsu" ("Expect Self-Control of the Military"), judged that

the Commander-in-Chief must admit that he has stepped out of his competence and has put his foot into politics and diplomacy. . . . The reason why European and American public opinion centered around the League of Nations has turned to our favor is because it has recognized that our action would not exceed the limit of exercising the right of self-defense. This has greatly depended upon the self-control of the military. Whether the Foreign Office has been led by the military, or whether the military has been controlled by the Foreign Office is an internal matter. The will of a state to the outside world must be expressed unitedly. If the military were to insist upon the independence of its action on the basis of the prerogative of the Supreme Command, it must respect the prerogative of diplomacy as well as thoroughly observe the spirit of division of military and political affairs. This is the duty of the Imperial officers and soldiers who uphold the national constitution and obey the national laws. At this time the army is expected to observe self-control.²⁷⁴

The anti-Chang statement was issued, however, precisely in order to destroy the expressed "will of the state," which was to limit hostilities in Manchuria.

The Kwantung Army now swiftly followed up the anti-Chang statement with another act of even more drastic effect, the Chinchow bombing of October 8. The Kwantung Army had tentatively planned this attack some fortnight earlier.

²⁷⁴Asahi Shimbun, "Gun no jisei ni matsu" ("Expect Self-Control of the Military"), October 6, 1931.

Ishiwara himself took part in the bombing. No evidence points definitively to prior approval by central army authorities. Indeed, the main objective was to exert pressure on top army leaders. The Katakura Diary suggests such a purpose. Formal approval of the bombing was not forthcoming until October 14 by the Vice-Chief of the General Staff and October 15 by the Vice Minister of War who also cautioned the Kwantung Army to take appropriate measures before resorting to such action from then on, as "bombing of cities creates a strong impression on Europeans and Americans who are sensitive to air-raids as a consequence of the World War and do not understand the situation in Manchuria." On the other hand, the government and the army in Tokyo decided to refute any attack on the Chinchor case on grounds that "bombing those who obstruct reconnoitering activities with regard to sources of public disturbance is a local problem and a proper military action."²⁷⁵ International repercussions to the anti-Chang statement and the Chinchor bombing were bound to be severe, as they occurred during the fortnight in which the League expected Japan to carry out the withdrawal of troops to the railway zone, and both Japan and China "to hasten the restoration of normal relations between them."²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 109f.

²⁷⁶ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, September 30, 1931. Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 486.

The Uchida Mission

As mentioned previously, the Kwantung Army had learned informally, through officers sent from Tokyo, that the army was fighting singlehandedly the non-enlargement policy advocated by the Foreign Minister, who was supported by the court circle led by Saionji and Makino. The Kwantung Army felt the need of a spokesman who could enter into the inner core of policy makers to advance its cause. In mid-October, President of the South Manchuria Railway Company Uchida, until the Manchurian Affair a faithful follower of the Shidehara-Minseito policy, was scheduled to return to Japan for consultation. He had in the past persuaded the Chang Hsueh-liang Government to enter into negotiations over the railway dispute, and had also resorted to drastic retrenchment measures within the South Manchuria Railway Company, including salary and personnel reduction. When hostilities broke out, he made known to the Foreign Minister his suspicion that "the present operations were presumed to be the execution of a pre-established plan" on the part of the Kwantung Army and his fear that the Incident "might create world opinion disadvantageous to Japan."²⁷⁷ It was not for very long, however, that Uchida maintained his critical attitude. Informed of the Kwantung Army indignation, he quickly resorted to promising it coöperation even with regard to its

²⁷⁷ Cable from Uchida to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived September 20, 1931. Op. cit.

contemplated northern operations, despite orders from the Minister of Overseas Affairs to the contrary.²⁷⁸ Uchida thereafter began to rise in the estimation of the Kwantung Army, which decided on October 25 "to make use of him" in a mission to win over Tokyo.²⁷⁹

In terms of basic objectives, what Uchida was expected to drive home were reiterations of the principles set forth in the Kwantung Army programs of September 22 and October 2. The establishment of a new regime was to be the only means of settling the Manchurian Affair. The new regime, severed completely from China proper, was to rule North and South Manchuria as a single unit. The new Chinese regime was to be the governing body outwardly only, however; it was in substance to be brought under Japanese protection.²⁸⁰ In terms

²⁷⁸ On September 25, Uchida was informed that the Kwantung Army was indignant at his uncooperative attitude with regard to troop advancement to Harbin and negotiation with the Chinese Eastern Railway involving Japanese troop transport. On the following day, directors of the South Manchuria Railway Company Kimura Eiichi and Godo Takuo were sent to the headquarters of the Kwantung Army to explain the president's position. Kimura stated that though the president was in receipt of a cable from the Minister of Overseas Affairs on the 22nd that instructed the government policy to prohibit the occupation and management of railways other than those of the South Manchuria Railway, as well as military movement to the area north of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and though he was aware of the discrepancy between government policy and the Kwantung Army plan, he decided upon his own responsibility to prepare the company employees to move in cooperation with military action. Aoki Shin and Aoki Keiji, "Uchida Yasuya Denki," unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

²⁷⁹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 80.

²⁸⁰ "Uchida Mantetsu sosai ni taisuru Honjo Kantogun Shireikan yori no kondan jiko yoshi" ("Essential Points of

of procedure, what Uchida was requested to propose marked a major deviation from the avowed foreign policy of the government to carry out direct negotiations with the Chinese Government in Nanking concerning the various points of Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria. Having insisted upon the severance of the new Manchurian regime from China proper, the Kwantung Army now attempted to open the way to a denial of Chinese claims on the fate of Manchuria. Negotiations with regard to pending Sino-Japanese problems in Manchuria were to be conducted with the new regime.²⁸¹ This proposal was most important; it meant postponement of the settlement of the Manchurian Affair until the political reshaping of Manchuria was completed according to the Kwantung Army blueprint. It introduced, moreover, the question of the legitimacy, from the point of view of international law, of the outcome of any settlement reached between Japan and the Japanese-controlled regime.

Uchida agreed to advocate the two points. He also consented to attempt to explain the situation in Manchuria in a light which would soften the attitude of the cabinet and court circle.²⁸² On October 10, Uchida left for Tokyo via Korea, where he conferred with the Governor of Korea,

Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army Honjo's Conference with President of the South Manchuria Railway Company Uchida), October 6, 1931. Ibid., p. 75.

²⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 75f.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 84.

Ugaki Kazushige. The two "agreed completely on the need for establishing a new regime with which to settle Manchurian problems in the future."²⁸³ Encouraged by the backing of the powerful Ugaki, Uchida returned to Tokyo to propound the Kwantung Army program.

Saionji, after receiving Uchida on October 14, confided to Harada that he "was indeed disappointed to find him with unexpectedly strong views on Manchuria, and wondered if it were not the result of being somewhat overwhelmed by the army upon breathing the air of Manchuria." Saionji was especially disturbed by Uchida's views on the independence movement and the use of Emperor Hsuan-Tung. Uchida was quoted to have explained that when he "first went there [Manchuria], [he] tried to oppose the policy of the army, but since the young officers were already the central figures, [he] came to feel that no other way was left but to get into the army and to control it from within. . . . The situation is extremely serious, and [he] wishes to report on the existing atmosphere as much as possible but the ministers here do not seem to find it as imminent due to distance."²⁸⁴

The Foreign Minister rejected Ushida's suggestions concerning the independence movement.²⁸⁵ Uchida, however,

²⁸³ Ugaki Kazushige, Ugaki nikki (Ugaki Diary) (Tokyo: 1954), p. 152.

²⁸⁴ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 96f.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 95.

seemed to have appreciated the importance of the international aspect of the Manchurian Affair, as he emphasized, with Saionji's agreement, the need for maintaining a line that would "uphold the prestige of the League and would respond to the good will of the United States, as well as for supporting the present Foreign Minister, and therefore the cabinet."²⁸⁶ Although the effects of Uchida's mission can hardly be ascertained, they were at least enough to endear him to the army,²⁸⁷ and he made known the Kwantung Army programs for the settlement of the existing crisis.

The pivotal point of Japan's policy was rapidly becoming the question of the new regime, how much assistance to provide, and what role to make it play. The Prime Minister, who had been "extremely concerned of the possibility of a head-on collision with the army over the question of the regime with which to negotiate Manchurian Affair,"²⁸⁸ by the middle of October, however, stated that the cabinet had come to agree that it "would not prevent the activities of the Chinese to establish a new regime in Manchuria," but

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Itagaki sent a cable on November 1, 1930, praising his efforts in enlightening public and government opinion concerning Manchurian settlement. Uchida's diary of October 15 records: "matter concerning establishment of Manchurian regime; avoided clear answer to request for Foreign Minister." Uchida's biographers interpreted the clause to mean that he did not commit himself to accepting Foreign Ministership as recommended by Minister of War and Chief of General Staff with whom he conferred that day. Aoki Shin and Aoki Keiichi, op. cit.

²⁸⁸ Kido Diary, October 6, 1931.

would not allow Japanese "assistance or support," although he conceded that "underground activities could not be helped."²⁸⁹ The cabinet maintained the policy of settling the existing dispute through direct negotiations with the Chinese Government, but came to add the qualification that, although "the general principles of the settlement would be negotiated and agreed upon with the central Chinese Government, the details of pending matters in Manchuria would be negotiated and resolved between Japan and the Government in Manchuria."²⁹⁰

Popular Support

Uchida was perhaps the only spokesman of the Kwantung Army during the Manchurian Affair to reach the highest echelons of Japanese policy makers. But many Japanese in Manchuria were no less eager to persuade and popularize the cause for total settlement of Manchurian problems on the occasion of the military expedition. As the Mukden Incident expanded to a large-scale occupation by the Kwantung Army, the Japanese in Manchuria rallied round in support.

Renewed attempts were made at organizing and dispatching speech-making teams and petitions. The Zen Man Nihonjin Taikai (All Manchuria Japanese Convention), held on September 21, resolved that "military occupation of all Manchuria should be carried out."²⁹¹ The Mukden Japanese Overseas Association

²⁸⁹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 98.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Cable No. 701 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister

petitioned the Minister of War that "neither Chang Hsueh-liang nor any group under his leadership should be allowed to participate in a Manchurian regime," but that a new regime should be "immediately established."²⁹² Representatives were sent to Japan from the Zen Man Nihonjin Rengokai²⁹³ with a twelve-point demand that included the establishment of a new regime, abolition of custom duties between Japan and Manchuria, and participation of resident Japanese in the official Japanese organ in control of Manchuria.²⁹⁴ The Kwantung Army decided on September 23 to assist these civilian movements,²⁹⁵ and Seinen Renmei dispatched a series of speech-making teams that lectured throughout Japan concerning the causes of the Manchurian Affair as well as the ideals of the new state.

Shidehara. Arrived September 22, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

²⁹² The Japanese Overseas Association Chairman in Mukden, Sumiyakani Manmo seiken no kakuritsu o yobo sonota ni tsuite seigan no ken (Matters Related to Request for Rapid Establishment of Manchuria-Mongolia Regime and Others), September 29, 1931. Man ju dai nikki, Vol. I of 27 Vols. 1932, No. 1. Microfilm in the possession of the Diet Library.

²⁹³ Federation of All Manchuria Japanese was formed in November, 1931, upon unifying various local groups supporting the Manchurian expedition that grew up since the outbreak of hostilities. An eight-member team was sent to Tokyo on December 20, 1931.

²⁹⁴ Ueda To, "Zaiman doho ni kawarite kansha to kibo" ("Gratitude and Desire Representing Japanese in Manchuria"), Teikoku zaigo gunjin kai, ed. (Imperial Reservists Organization), Manmo mondai kenkyu shiryo (Materials for the Study of Manchuria-Mongolia Problems) (Tokyo: February, 1932), No. 6, pp. 85-93.

²⁹⁵ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 36.

International Reactions

As the Japanese became increasingly aroused in support of the Manchurian Affair, the world became more and more alarmed by the unexpected extension of hostilities. The Chinchor bombing certainly marked a climax.

At that time growing anti-Japanese sentiment and movements all over China were reported, and the situation was feared of "turning into war against Japan."²⁹⁶ The Chinese Government sent a note to the Japanese Government on October 5, asking for the withdrawal of troops before the reassemblage of the League of Nations Council on October 14. In a reply of October 9, the Japanese Government rejected the Chinese request on grounds that only upon "agreement on certain fundamental principles to serve as basis for establishing normal relationships between the two nations" for the purpose of pacifying national sentiments could Japanese troops be withdrawn completely into the railway zone.²⁹⁷

The Japanese reply caused further alarm on the part of the League, which saw in the statement contradictions to the Japanese commitment to withdraw troops "in proportion as the safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals is effectively assured."²⁹⁸ Secretary General of the League

²⁹⁶ Cable No. 120 from Paris to Foreign Office. Arrived October 8, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 128f.

²⁹⁷ Cable No. 125 from Foreign Office to Paris. Sent October 9, 1931. Ibid., p. 122.

²⁹⁸ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, September 30, 1931. Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 486.

Sir Eric Drummond on the day before that reply was sent appealed to the Chinese Government, noting that, "in my view, efficacy [of the] Council's action in obtaining full execution [of the] resolution mainly depends [upon the] capacity [of the] Chinese Government [to] control anti-Japanese movement and observe moderation."²⁹⁹ He stated to the Japanese Delegate on October 11 that "while Japanese troops acted audaciously as at present, it is almost impossible to blame the reality of boycotts and anti-Japanese movements to China alone."³⁰⁰

Under the circumstances, the Chinchor bombing seriously weakened Japan's moral position before the world, which generally interpreted that Japan had deliberately enlarged hostilities in spite of her peaceful commitments to the League. The bombing brought about the first change in American policy with regard to the Manchurian Affair. Secretary Stimson, upon hearing the news, concluded that "for all Debuchi's³⁰¹ promises, the Japanese army was expanding rather than contracting its operations. [He] told himself: 'I am afraid we have got to take a firm ground and aggressive stand

²⁹⁹ Drummond's appeal to the Chinese Government. Cable No. 121 from Paris to Foreign Office. Arrived October 8, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. II, p. 130.

³⁰⁰ Cable No. 155 from Paris to Foreign Office. Arrived October 12, 1931. Ibid., p. 284.

³⁰¹ Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Debuchi Katsuji.

toward Japan."³⁰² The Secretary abandoned the policy of leaving the Sino-Japanese dispute to direct negotiation and started considering American action under the Nine Power Treaty or the Kellogg Pact.³⁰³ A message was dispatched to the League on October 9 expressing the desire that "the League in no way relax its vigilance and in no way fail to assert all the pressure and authority within its competence towards regulating the action of China and Japan." It promised that the American Government "will endeavor to reinforce what the League does . . . and is not oblivious to the obligations which the disputants have assumed to their fellow signatories in the Pact of Paris as well as in the Nine Power Pact."³⁰⁴ Identical memoranda were sent to the Chinese and Japanese Governments on the following day, expressing concern over the events at Chinchow and reminding them of their commitments made under the September 30 resolution. In conversation with the Japanese Ambassador, Stimson stated that he

³⁰² Current, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Communication of Stimson to Secretary General of the League, October 9, 1931, quoted in Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 489. Under Secretary of State William R. Castle, Jr., expressed regret to Japanese Ambassador Debuchi Katsuji that the United States was obliged to promise cooperation with the League of Nations due to internal and external pressure. Even an anxious friend of Japan like himself found it difficult to appreciate the Chinchow bombing, so it seemed matter of course that the world blamed Japan for it. Cable No. 316 from Debuchi, Washington, to Foreign Office. Arrived October 14, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 356f.

could not but wonder whether the policy of the Japanese Government was made fully known to the army in Manchuria, and what the attitude of the government was with regard to the anti-Chang statement and the Chinchor bombing. His trust in Shidehara started to waver.³⁰⁵

The Council meeting was reconvened on October 13 in response to a Chinese request based on the deteriorating situation in Manchuria. The Japanese Government continued to follow the policy of keeping the Manchurian settlement outside of the League by insisting upon direct Sino-Japanese negotiations which, however, were to deal first with the fundamental points to guide the relationship of the two states and thereafter with the question of evacuation. Without being allowed by the government to disclose the content of the fundamental points, nor to request the League to "take note" of them, the Japanese Delegate was obliged to face the Chinese contention that direct negotiations could

³⁰⁵ Stimson in a conversation with Debuchi on October 10 stated that he had requested American Chargé d'Affaires Nevil to ask Shidehara first whether the Japanese Government approves the statement made by Commander-in-Chief Honjo, and second whether it approves the action of the Chinchor bombing. He was greatly disappointed to learn that Shidehara's response to the first question was unclear but in essence seemed to mean that the Japanese Government did not recognize Chang Hsueh-liang, and wished to make settlements with a responsible party that could represent all of China; that Shidehara observed that the second was a minor case undertaken by the army in the fields; in other words, that he seemed to approve the action of the army. As the situation had become indeed serious, Stimson felt that it might be inevitable to cooperate with the League in taking appropriate measures. Cable No. 300 from Debuchi, Washington, to Foreign Office. Arrived October 11, 1931. Ibid., p. 246.

not be held unless preceded by troop withdrawal and the Council resolution to carry out its duty to "safeguard the peace of nations" through effecting withdrawal of Japanese troops to the railway zone.³⁰⁶ The controversy at the League was inevitably a deadlock.

The League, however, began to exert greater influence over the Sino-Japanese dispute in the course of the second Council meeting, for the United States now participated. When Stimson turned from Shidehara to the League as the medium through which to attempt to prevent the expansion of hostilities, he came to the conclusion that the United States must be represented officially on the Council.³⁰⁷ Being aware of the possible opposition such an act might invoke both from American and Japanese sources, he arranged

³⁰⁶ Yoshizawa protested the leakage of information, as The Times reported on the fundamental principles on October 20, which had been ordered to be kept secret, and mentioned the embarrassment of the negotiators. Cable No. 220 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 23, 1931. Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 575f. He suggested that the League be asked "to take note" of the fundamental principles in order to win support. Cable No. 196 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 21, 1931. Ibid., pp. 400f. The Foreign Office rejected the proposal on grounds that "taking note" gave the impression of allowing League intervention. Cable No. 120 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent October 21, 1931. Ibid., pp. 412-414.

³⁰⁷ When Stimson resolved to consider action under the Kellogg Pact, he was supported by both President Hoover and Under-Secretary Castle. The President "'even went so far as to say that we should authorize our man in Switzerland to sit with the Council.' This suggestion had come originally from Norman Davis, head of the American delegation to the preparatory disarmament commission in Geneva, and Stimson had dismissed it as one of Davis's 'rather wild propositions.' He now welcomed the idea." Current, op. cit., p. 77.

for the Council invitation for American participation to "appear to come unprompted from the League."³⁰⁸ The Japanese reaction to Council President Briand's proposed invitation to the United States was one of determined opposition. The government ordered Yoshizawa to forestall the United States participation on the Council on constitutional grounds³⁰⁹ and simultaneously attempted to persuade the United States to voluntarily decline participation in the Council. The showdown came on October 15 when the invitation was authorized by a vote of thirteen to one, with Japan casting the single dissenting vote. Stimson was alarmed at the Japanese opposition as he found the United States line up "vis-à-vis Japan," in "just the position that [he had] been trying to avoid."³¹⁰

The American Consul in Geneva, Prentiss Gilbert, sat with the Council and participated in the decision on October 17 to invoke the Kellogg Pact. Identical notes to the Japanese and Chinese Governments invoked their obligation under the Pact to settle the dispute through peaceful means. However, the American representative, fearful of bearing the brunt of the Japanese attack,³¹¹ did not continue to

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Cable No. 97 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent October 15, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. III, p. 82.

³¹⁰ Current, op. cit., p. 77.

³¹¹ After the decision was taken, Stimson "thought it

participate in discussions of the Council. He therefore did not take part in adopting the October 24 resolution, passed over the negative vote of Japan, which called for setting a fixed date by which withdrawal was to be total.

Japan had been promising the League that troops would be withdrawn to the railway zone "in proportion as the safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals is effectively assured,"³¹² and upon achieving understanding with the Chinese Government "as regards the fundamental principles governing normal relations."³¹³ But she never bound herself to any time limit. In view of its ineffective control over the Kwantung Army, commitment to a time limit would only have made the government vulnerable, internally, to charges of allowing third party intervention, and, externally, to violating international agreement. The Council resolution of October 24 set November 16, the date of its next meeting, as the

advisable to terminate the outward appearance at least of Gilbert's connection with the Council." As the British and the French protested against such withdrawal on the grounds that it might appear as American disapproval of the League's action, "reluctantly Stimson concluded to 'let him go on sitting at the damned table' on the condition that he 'keep his mouth shut' to show that he was no longer a participant, only an observer." Stimson furthermore delayed sending the United States note on the Kellogg Pact to Japan and China till three days after the other members had sent theirs.
Ibid., p. 78.

³¹² Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, September 30, 1931. Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 486.

³¹³ Japanese draft resolution presented to the Council of the League of Nations on October 23, 1931. Ibid., p. 495.

deadline for troop withdrawal.³¹⁴ Developments at the League caused the Japanese Government to fear that the League itself might be turning into an object of public dissatisfaction.³¹⁵ Minister of War Minami had already suggested, at the cabinet meeting on October 1, that Japan withdraw from the League of Nations should it insist upon immediate troop evacuation.³¹⁶ Now the newspapers editorially criticized the "illusion of the Council,"³¹⁷ and branded the Council resolution as an "attempt to deprive the rising nation of Japan of her natural rights."³¹⁸ The Kwantung Army paid no heed to the League, and doggedly followed its own course.

³¹⁴ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, October 24, 1931. Ibid., p. 494.

³¹⁵ Cable No. 80 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent October 12, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 268-271. Cable No. 124 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent October 21, 1931. Ibid., pp. 417-421.

³¹⁶ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84.

³¹⁷ Asahi Shimbun, "Shina towa nanzoya: Rijikai no sakkaku" ("What Is China: Illusion of the Council"), October 21, 1931.

³¹⁸ Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun, "Seigi no kuni, Nihon, hiri naru Rijikai" ("Japan, the Country of Justice, Unreasonable Council"), October 26, 1931.

CHAPTER VI

OUTBURSTS OF ARMY RADICALISM--KWANTUNG ARMY "INDEPENDENCE" AND THE OCTOBER INCIDENT

Reverting once again to the actual scene of the Sino-Japanese dispute, Manchuria, it should be recalled that no major military action was undertaken by the Kwantung Army since it had been prevented from advancing north on September 24. The Chinchow bombing had drastic effects, but it was an isolated act. Militarily, the Kwantung Army was restrained throughout October. But it continued to instigate Chinese leaders to reorganize their respective local governing bodies with a view to uniting them under a new state.

In the task of producing an independent state, the Kwantung Army was faced with situations that differed according to the regions. The reorganization of Kirin was attained with the greatest of ease and speed: a pistol-point demand on Hsi Hsia resulted in the declaration of a new provincial government on September 26th. On the previous day, Yuan Chin-kai, vice president of the Northeastern Political Committee and former provincial governor of Liaoning, assumed the chairmanship of the Liaoning Committee for the Maintenance of Peace and Order. But he did not consent to the "forming of a government or to the declaration of independence,"³¹⁹

³¹⁹ Cable No. 898 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived October 8, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

for the Committee was faced with Chinese propaganda attacks that branded it as a "reaction organization" and "puppet of Japanese military clique" and the members were subjected to an avalanche of threatening letters.³²⁰ However, although the formation of the new provincial government in Liaoning was slow, the Kwantung Army had the area under control. In the Special District of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Chang Ching-hui, in accordance with Itagaki's demand, organized the Emergency Committee of the Special District on the 27th and declared its independence. But since Chang had no military force to back him up, the independence was nominal.

In Heilungkiang Province, a much more complicated situation existed. Taonan Garrison Commander Chang Hai-peng upon instigation of the Kwantung Army declared independence on October 1. He then had to resort to the use of arms against the powerful forces of Ma Chan-shan. Equipped with Japanese arms,³²¹ the Chang Hai-peng forces started an advance along the Taonan-Angangchi Railway in order to reach the provincial capital, Tsitsihar. At the Nonni River, however, the advancing army was obstructed by the destruction of the bridges by the Ma Chan-shan troops, and here the two

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Katakura Diary of September 28 records that 5,000 rifles and 10,000 uniforms were promised to Chang Hai-peng to be delivered at Taonan. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 51. On October 2, the Diary states that 3,000 rifles and 10,000 uniforms were delivered. Ibid., p. 59. On October 8, Hsi Hsia contributed 300,000 yen (\$150,000) of which 200,000 yen (\$100,000) were given to Chang Hai-peng. Ibid., p. 89.

armies confronted each other across the river. As the Kwantung Army could not openly assist the Chang forces,³²² it demanded that the Ma troops repair the bridges, basing this demand on the grounds that the destruction of bridges over the Nonni River interrupted the Taonan-Angangchi Railway, which had been built with capital supplied by the South Manchuria Railway and was thus a legitimate Japanese interest. The negotiation continued for some time.

The Nonni Bridge operation was an integral part of the overall problem of North Manchurian operations which, from the very beginning, had divided the Kwantung Army and the army leaders in Tokyo. Despite the strict orders against overt Kwantung Army operations, that Army never revised its objective of bringing North Manchuria under the new regime, and pressed upon Tokyo the idea that a power "vacuum in North Manchuria would allow invasion by Soviet Russia," and that "division of North and South Manchuria . . . could not be agreed to by the Kwantung Army as a matter of fundamental policy."³²³ Furthermore, information was received in the middle of October, through a newspaper correspondent of the Kokumin Shimbun, that the government had reached an agreement

³²² Oya Shinkei, the adviser to Chang Hai-peng, requested for provision of airplanes, but Ishiwara disapproved on the basis that such an act would disclose Japanese assistance and would bring about disadvantageous repercussions. Ibid., p. 116.

³²³ Statements of Ishiwara and Itagaki to Major General Hashimoto. Ibid., p. 114.

with the Soviet Union not to advance north of the Sungari and Tonh Rivers. As the report coincided with the letter of Shigeto, director of the Chinese Section of the General Staff, that the policy was "to prevent expedition north of the above mentioned line but allow advancement to Shan Hai Kwan," the Kwantung Army feared that Tokyo intended to settle the crisis only in South Manchuria.³²⁴ Thereupon Itagaki requested Hashimoto Kingoro, director of the Russian Sub-section of the Second Department of the General Staff and leader of the Sakurakai, to inquire into the question, and at the same time wrote to General Araki, director of the General Affairs Department of the Inspector General's Office, to ask for his assistance.³²⁵ Towards the end of October, the Kwantung Army was, on one hand, moving towards its goal of creating an independent state in Manchuria, including the northern provinces, while at the same time persuading the army and the government to agree to the independence of a new regime severed from China proper and to northern operations through political or military means.

Radical Mischief Making

The course of contesting policy developments was greatly influenced by two incidents that turned the balance in favor of the Kwantung Army--Kwantung Army "Independence" and the October Incident. On the night of October 17, Captain

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

³²⁵ Ibid.

Katakura was surprised to receive cables from the Minister and Vice Minister of War which respectively read as follows:

1. Kwantung Army is to refrain from such new project as to become independent from the Imperial Army and to control Manchuria and Mongolia.
2. General situation is developing according to intentions of the army so that you may be completely rest assured.³²⁶

* * *

We have been united in making desperate efforts in order to solve the existing difficulty; we are determined to achieve fundamental settlement of Manchuria-Mongolia problems, by contemplating, if necessary, the formation of government compatible with our desire. Trust our zeal, take great prudence, guard against such impatience as independence of Kwantung Army and wait for favorable turn of events on our side.³²⁷ (Araki, Ninomiya, Lt. General Sugiyama)

The preventive, if not appeasing, cables seem to have caused genuine surprise. Ironically, they arrived on the night before the Aide-de-Camp to the Emperor was making his first visit to the Kwantung Army to transmit the Imperial message expressing appreciation to the services of the soldiers. Similar cables were sent from Tokyo directly to the Military Police, Division, and Mixed Brigade Headquarters in Manchuria without going through the regular line of command, i.e., the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army.

³²⁶Cable from Minister of War to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Ibid., p. 143.

³²⁷Cable from Vice Minister of War to Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army. Ibid., p. 144.

The reaction of the Kwantung Army to the reported independence moves was both a denial and a protest. The Commander-in-Chief, upon consultation with the staff, cabled back on the 19th.

Greatly regret for sake of sovereign state receipt of [cable,] "Riku-man 109," which indicated that the Kwantung Army is resorting to impermissible plot to become independent from Imperial reign, and that Minister himself believes in this information. Such attitude signifies lack of confidence towards myself and staff, and is greatly deplored. Moreover, Vice Minister's dispatch of similar cables to the corps under my command by-passing myself, bears great effect on discipline of the army. Though incompetent I have my determination. Complete trust should be granted so long as I am alive.³²⁸

In a long cable to the Vice Minister of War, the Commander-in-Chief admitted that the "Kwantung Army has tended to act over positively and arbitrarily," but affirmed that "it was making its united efforts for the country," and requested the Vice Minister "to retrieve the cables sent to the corps that seemed to derange the Supreme Command."³²⁹ The Kwantung Army staff protested in more violent terms that they "absolutely could not yield to letting the glorious Kwantung Army be regarded with ineffaceable suspicion. . . . Should there

³²⁸ Cable from Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to Minister of War. Ibid., p. 147.

³²⁹ Cable from Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to Vice Minister of War. Ibid., p. 148.

be any who would disturb military discipline, they would be immediately subject to drastic measures."³³⁰

The Kwantung Army staff assumed that the report of independence derived from either the misguidance of a few machinators or the agitation of young officers who, at the time, were known to be expressing radical views in Tokyo.³³¹ They considered that Tokyo blundered by acting in dismay. However, the cable from the Vice Minister and Vice-Chief of Staff the following day, which expressed regret for having had to dispatch cables of admonishment and rejoiced that the anguish was in vain, referred to "various information from unauthentic sources" in Manchuria having made it necessary to take action in order to safeguard against the worst.³³² Moreover, Tokyo suddenly decided on sending General Shirakawa Yoshinori, Military Councillor, and Colonel Imamura Hitoshi, director of the Second Section [i.e., the former Strategic Section] of the General Staff, to Manchuria. The Kwantung Army had learned the seriousness of Tokyo's misgivings.

Imamura states that it was the military police who informed the central army authorities that the Kwantung Army

³³⁰ Cable from Kwantung Army Staff to Vice-Chief of Staff, Vice Minister of War, director of General Affairs Department, director of Military Affairs Department, Tatekawa, director of Military Affairs Section. Sent October 19, 1931.

³³¹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 146.

³³² Cable from Vice-Chief of General Staff and Vice Minister of War to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Ibid., p. 159.

were rumored to be determined to resort to independence in order to settle the Manchurian Affair according to their program in the event that Tokyo continued to disapprove it.³³³ The immediate source of the rumor was Major Cho Isamu, a radical member of the Sakurakai who had secretly returned from his post in Peking with the Office of the Military Attaché. He widely circulated the story of Kwantung Army dissatisfaction and reported that "they were aroused by the irresponsible words and actions of the court and government circles as well as the senior statesmen," that they were indignant that "while they are fighting a sacred war in order to expand national power and prestige, the Emperor does not approve and the government has been obstructing every move," that they felt that "their death is meaningless" and therefore "resolved that if the first signal for internal reform is fired in Japan, they would make Commander Honjo declare the independence of the Kwantung Army, abandon Japanese citizenship, and entrench themselves in Manchuria."³³⁴

Although Cho is said later to have admitted that the report of Kwantung Army independence was a false rumor which he created and propagated for the sake of promoting positive policy on the part of the Army,³³⁵ radicalism of the Kwantung

³³³ Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

³³⁴ "Seinen shoko o chasen to shitaru kokka kaizo undo no gaiyo" ("General Outline of National Reform Movement Centered around Young Officers"), Harada Diary (Tokyo: 1956), Bekkan (Special Volume), p. 358.

³³⁵ Major Cho's statement to Tanaka Ryukichi in Tanaka's testimony to the IMTPE. IMTPE Proceedings, No. 26, p. 3.

Army was known to be such as to provide convincing grounds for information of this sort. Ishiwara, for instance, spoke widely in terms of "severing relations with Japan in case the Manchurian expedition fails,"³³⁶ and of "abandoning Japanese citizenship . . . to realize our objective."³³⁷ Ishiwara, Itagaki, and Hanaya were said to boast frequently, albeit in intoxication, that "the [Mukden] Incident was planned from the very beginning. . . . Since we have succeeded in this project we shall next undertake a coup d'état when we return to Japan, destroy parliamentary government, and establish a state based on so-called national socialism centered around the Emperor. We shall overthrow such capitalists as the Mitsui and Mitsubishi, and carry out equal distribution of wealth."³³⁸ Such wild talk might have been expressions of determination as well as of careless heroism. However, in view of the Kwantung Army eagerness to assert its strength as well as to persuade army leaders to support its program, and especially in view of the fact that it provided some 200,000 yen (\$100,000) out of the salt tax fund to Komoto Daisaku on September 26 to engage in internal maneuvering,³³⁹ Cho's disavowal of conspiracy with the

³³⁶ Katakura statement to the writer on May 30, 1959.

³³⁷ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 63.

³³⁸ Account of Morishima Goro, director of the First Section of the Bureau for Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after his return from a trip to Manchuria. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 77.

³³⁹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 40.

Kwantung Army cannot be accepted at face value. The significance of the Kwantung Army independence incident should be evaluated in connection with another outburst of army radicalism that was suppressed in Tokyo on the morning that the Kwantung Army received the first cable prohibiting independence, October 17.

Warnings and rumors had been spreading that army officers were planning another coup. The subject of army radicalism had been a source of grave concern to the higher echelons of court and government circles ever since the abortive March Incident came to light in the middle of August. Both the Kido and the Harada Diaries of October record the circulation of the alarming information that an "extraordinarily large coup d'état" was about to occur,³⁴⁰ and that the army scheme was receiving wider support from civilian groups.³⁴¹ The reported action and ideology of the young officer groups seemed to be broadening their targets from hitherto relatively strictly government and capitalist enemies to include court circles suspected of being behind the government policy of non-enlargement.³⁴² Saionji suspected that "the Reds might have penetrated into the army," as he had been hearing rumors started by the army that the Emperor

³⁴⁰ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 91. Kido Diary, October 1 and 7, 1931.

³⁴¹ Kido Diary, October 14, 1931.

³⁴² Harada Diary, op. cit., Bekkan, pp. 355f.

was playing mah-jongg with the Empress till late at night instead of studying state affairs, that the Emperor looked displeased when he received the Chief of the General Staff or the Minister of War, and that some of the members of the royal family were in support of the army coup. Saionji seemed to fear that the forthcoming outburst of army radicalism might even have revolutionary implications.³⁴³

On October 17, government and court circles learned that several General Staff officers had been arrested that morning. It was reported that the Minister of War and army leaders had held an all-night conference, after which they undertook these arrests in the belief that orders were about to be issued for the young officers to start a coup d'état in a few days.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, plots against the lives of Prime Minister Wakatsuki, Foreign Minister Shidehara, Finance Minister Inoue, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Makino, Minister of the Imperial Household Ichiki, Grand Chamberlain Suzuki, and leaders of political parties were also reported. Some sources disclosed that the young officers intended to keep Makino alive in order to have him report the incident to the Emperor, after which the assassins were to commit suicide, in apology, in front of the Imperial palace.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 88.

³⁴⁴ Kido Diary, October 17, 1931.

³⁴⁵ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 100. Kido Diary, October 20, 1931.

The scope of the coup d'état plan was unprecedented. The Battalion Commander of the Imperial Guards and one or two companies were said to be involved.³⁴⁶ The leader of the plot, Hashimoto Kingoro, was chief of the radical elements of the Sakurakai. Cho Isamu, who was behind the Kwantung Army independence rumor and had been instigating the young officers in Tokyo to demand a positive settlement in Manchuria, was second in command. Together with some one hundred and twenty pledged officers in Tokyo and the companies under their command, as well as followers of Okawa Shumei, Kita Ikki, and Nishida Zei, and a few from the navy, Hashimoto planned to attack the cabinet ministers in conference at the Prime Minister's Residence, occupy the Metropolitan Police Office, encircle the Ministry of War and the General Staff Headquarters to forcefully win over the senior officers, and at the same time send Fleet Admiral Togo to the Emperor to request that they be ordered to form a new cabinet. Their roster of cabinet ministers included General Araki Sadao as Prime Minister and Minister of War, Lt. Colonel Hashimoto as Minister of Home Affairs, Major General Tatekawa as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Okawa Shumei as Minister of Finance, and Major Cho as Chief of the Metropolitan Police.³⁴⁷ The coup d'état was planned with a view to "seizing the reins of government by the military and thereupon bringing about

³⁴⁶ Kido Diary, October 20, 1931.

³⁴⁷ Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 171.

dictatorship through which to execute political reform.³⁴⁸ Not only was the abolition of existing political parties projected, but also the liquidation of court circles, for the "politicized treacherous subjects close to the Emperor" were endeavoring to separate the Emperor and the military.³⁴⁹ The uprising was scheduled for October 21.

The October coup was abortive, as had been the March attempt. A basic split within the Sakurakai led to exposure of the plot and to the arrest of the plotters. Various versions exist as to the source of disclosure, including the selling of the secret by non-military participants such as Okawa, Kita, and Nishida.³⁵⁰ It is certain, however, that Hashimoto's request for support to Vice Minister of War Sugiyama revealed the plot to the authorities of the Ministry of War.³⁵¹ Nemoto Hiroshi, Fujizuka Shikao, and Kagesa Sadaaki, who were among the originators of the coup, asked Imamura Hitoshi of the General Staff to obstruct the plot by calling in the military police.³⁵²

The collapse of the October Incident demonstrates the existence of diverse expectations and viewpoints among the officers of the Sakurakai. As discussed earlier, the Sakurakai

³⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 160.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 181.

³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 176.

³⁵² Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

considered the twin objectives of internal reform and external expansion as complementary and inseparable; but they never settled the problem of priority. The March Incident reflected a decision to give priority to internal reform. On the other hand the Manchurian Affair cannot be attributed to any decision of the Sakurakai to give priority to the program of external expansion as too many non-Sakurakai members played too great a role in the military expedition to Manchuria. Nevertheless, once external expansion was started, the Sakurakai leaders had to confront the question of whether to undertake internal reform. Their opinion divided: Hashimoto wished to take advantage of the roused state of the young officers after the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair and resort to internal reform measures;³⁵³ objected to the creation of a political upheaval in the midst of a military expedition; some others opposed on grounds of insufficient planning and liaison with non-military revolutionaries of the Nishida brand.³⁵⁴ The disagreement among the Sakurakai leaders enabled the central army authorities to successfully suppress an incident that would have brought about political chaos in the midst of the Manchurian Affair.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., pp. 163f.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 163f., p. 173.

³⁵⁵ Those arrested were as follows: Lt. Colonels Hashimoto Kingoro, Nemoto Hiroshi; Majors Cho Isamu, Wachi Takaji, Manaki Takanobu, Sato Yukinori, Kagesa Sadaaki, Fujizuka Shikao, Noda Kengo; Captains Ohara Shigetaka, Amano Isamu, Tanaka Sakae.

Whether there was a significant connection between the Kwantung Army independence case and the October Incident, especially with reference to the Kwantung Army, poses an interesting question. There is no doubt that the radicalism of the Kwantung Army gave convincing grounds for the rumor of an independence movement circulated in Tokyo by Cho, the most faithful disciple of Hashimoto. The purpose of the rumor was definitely to exert pressure on military authorities and the government to support the demands of the Kwantung Army regarding Manchuria. It is also beyond dispute that the Kwantung Army requested the support of Hashimoto, Nemoto, and Okawa to arouse and manipulate opinion in Japan, and that funds were advanced by Itagaki through Komoto Daisaku.^{356,357} The available material would indicate, however, that the rumor of independence was not devised by the Kwantung Army, although it was entirely willing to utilize and rely upon whatever radical influence the Sakurakai leadership could create in Tokyo. In other words, the Kwantung Army independence case seems to have been the product not so much of overt conspiracy but of passive collaboration in the common objective of positive action in Manchuria.

³⁵⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 40, 98.

³⁵⁷ Yamaguchi argues that since the program of the October Incident referred to the "200,000 yen funds that have been prepared for use at any time," and since 200,000 gen (\$100,000) have been sent from Itagaki, "the Kwantung Army was undertaking internal operations as well as North Manchuria operations," and praises Ishiwara for having been behind the October Incident. Yamaguchi, op. cit., p. 161. However such a conclusion cannot be accepted without more evidence of the financial aspect of the October Incident.

A similar interpretation seems appropriate with regard to the October Incident. Prior to the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair, an understanding existed between certain members of the Kwantung Army and the Sakurakai that when the former resorted to action in Manchuria the latter would undertake a coup d'état to bring about fundamental political reform in Japan.³⁵⁸ As the Kwantung Army leadership was committed to the cause of social and political reform in Japan, so was the Sakurakai advocating strong action in Manchuria. Their objectives were complementary if not entirely identical. Hashimoto, Nemoto, Cho, and the Sakurakai leaders in fact gave full assistance in Tokyo to the demands of the Kwantung Army, using official as well as unofficial means.

The reverse does not necessarily hold true, however; aside from the lack of any positive evidence of Kwantung Army participation in the October Incident planning, circumstances seem to deny such a possibility. To begin with, the planning of a coup d'état by the Sakurakai had been far from carefully organized or unanimously approved. The Kwantung Army in distant Manchuria, with its serious political and strategic problems, could not have directed or even followed the course of events in Tokyo. Moreover, the central figure in the Kwantung Army, Ishiwara, although definitely in sympathy with the cause of internal reform, had misgivings with regard to its priority. When we recall that he had opposed internal reform

³⁵⁸Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 158.

in favor of external measures on the grounds that the former created a weakening in national power,³⁵⁹ it does not seem likely that he would have supported internal measures in the midst of the Manchurian Affair. Ishiwara's disapproval is even attested to by Cho, who admitted that he was accused by Ishiwara of having resorted to the October Incident.^{360,361} Thus, the role of the Kwantung Army in the two cases does not appear to have been active and specific in the sense of program direction and with regard to time, place, and means. It was more passive and general. What concerned the Kwantung Army most at the time was the exertion of pressure on the central authorities for immediate action on the all-important objective of settling the Manchurian Affair on its terms. To grant any greater role to the Kwantung Army would be to assume a greater degree of rationality and organization than existed in a reform movement which was impulsive and entangled.

³⁵⁹ See Part I, Chapter 3, p. 91 for discussion of Ishiwara's views on internal reform and foreign expansion.

³⁶⁰ Cho's statement to Tanaka Ryukichi. IMTFF Proceedings, No. 26, p. 3.

³⁶¹ In IMTFF IPS 2177, the record of the Okawa interrogation at the time of the May 15th Incident is introduced in which Okawa answers "Yes" to the interrogator's question whether "Shigeto, Hashimoto, Itagaki, Doihara were connected [with the October Incident]." However, this seems too weak a source from which to infer Kwantung Army-Sakurakai conspiracy. First of all, the assortment of names is incomplete, secondly, the term "connected" is not clarified, and thirdly, Okawa explains in the preceding conversation that he was only instructed on his own part in the plot and only guessed at the roles of others as well as the names of the top planners.

Consequences in the Army

What then, were the effects of the outbursts of radicalism? Within the army, the Kwantung Army independence flurry and the October Incident did not result in any shift of power in favor of the radicals of the Sakurakai. The suppressors, who were the highest army authorities, were committed to a more moderate course of action, although they were by no means against internal reform or military action in Manchuria. Their moderation related only to the means of attaining these ends, and their opposition was against the kind of illegal radical approach to internal reform entertained by the Sakurakai leaders, especially at a time when the nation was required to give full attention to the execution of the Manchurian Affair. What they expected was to dominate Japanese political power and policy formulation through the use of a well-disciplined army as a political lever. Nagata, Imamura, and Tojo, who were active in persuading such leaders as Minami and Araki to arrest the Sakurakai radicals, argued that should the army unite and fight out their cause in the cabinet, then either their demands would be accepted or their pressure would cause a cabinet crisis. In either case, their objectives could be attained within the bounds of legality.³⁶² After the prevention of the October Incident, this group of "moderates" under the leadership of Nagata, came to be identified as

³⁶² Statement of Imamura Hitoshi, op. cit.

the Tosei-ha, or the "control" faction, due to their avowed interest in maintaining control over army discipline.³⁶³

Having crushed the Sakurakai, the army authorities later attempted, through more moderate means, to obtain the very ends which had been sought by the radicals. That the authorities were in sympathy with the objectives of the radicals made their leadership fundamentally vulnerable to radical pressure. The words of the cables sent from the Minister and Vice Minister of War to the Kwantung Army on the occasion of its reported independence movement indicates the nature of their leadership. The independence of the Kwantung Army was prohibited, but assurance of support by the authorities with regard to policy objectives was simultaneously offered. "We have been united in making desperate efforts in order to solve existing difficulties; we are determined to achieve fundamental settlement of the Manchuria-Mongolia problems, by contemplating, if necessary, the formation of government compatible with our desires."³⁶⁴ In short, the authorities were requesting the radicals to entrust them, as official leaders of the army, with carrying out the twofold objectives of Manchurian settlement and internal reform.

Similar appeasement can be found in the treatment of the leaders of the October Incident. The twelve plotters of the coup d'état were arrested, but only for the purpose of

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ See p. 178 for full text.

detention. Not only were they not imprisoned while awaiting punishment, but they were even wined and dined and given the best of treatment under the supervision of the military police in various localities outside Tokyo. Nor were they court-martialed. Hashimoto was given the severest punishment, twenty days' confinement. Cho and Tanaka Sakae were confined for ten days. The rest were acquitted after admonition. All were later transferred from their present posts, however.³⁶⁵

The extremely lenient treatment of the plotters resulted from fear of sympathy for the radicals as well as desire to maintain a façade of army unity. Araki, who had been known for his understanding of the indignation of the young company-grade officers, tended to emphasize the purity of motive of the plotters of the October Incident, attributing their behavior to love of country rather than self-interest or greed.³⁶⁶ The Kwantung Army cabled Tokyo that it "desired that the arduous officers be dealt with in appreciation of their spirit, as from another viewpoint, they are rare treasures to the nation."³⁶⁷ Significantly, emphasis upon the purity of motive implicitly condoned opposition to existing social and political conditions. Araki opposed any severe punishment that might openly defame the army.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 179.

³⁶⁶Nakano, op. cit., pp. 140f.

³⁶⁷Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 158.

³⁶⁸Nakano, op. cit., p. 142.

He attempted to minimize the significance of the October Incident and to create the impression that the officers are "grieved over the corruption of the existing political parties, and might start moving any time upon any sort of stimulation."³⁶⁹

Political Consequences

Here we arrive at the further question of the effects of radicalism outside the army. Internally, the army authorities placed themselves in a position subject to radical pressure by appeasement. Externally, they were to use radicalism as an instrument to gain power.

The single most important result of army radicalism was its fostering of the sense of impotence the government, political party leaders, and court circle had already felt. The Kwantung Army kept urging Tokyo to bring all of Manchuria under control, and, although the reported Kwantung Army independence move was not taken at face value, the Prime Minister feared an act of this sort and its great harm to Japan and the Japanese Army. In searching for a solution, he came to the conclusion that "the Kwantung Army disregarded the commands of the government, which is a Minseito party government that represents the views of but a portion of the people. . . . If a coalition government is formed, the will of the government would represent the will of the entire people and the Kwantung Army would be made to comply to its orders."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 107.

³⁷⁰ Wakatsuki, op. cit., pp. 383f.

The President of the opposition party also felt uncertain as to whether the Seiyukai power was sufficient to confront the army singlehandedly. Inukai feared that, under the circumstances of a threatening army coup d'état, the government would have to deal with the fundamental reorganization of the army. For this, a government based on the concerted forces of several political parties should be formed.³⁷¹

The October Incident had indicated the possible extent of army radicalism. It had raised the immediate question of responsibility, which left the government in an extremely precarious position at the forthcoming Diet session. Prime Minister Wakatsuki requested Minister of Home Affairs Adachi Kenzo to feel out the possibilities for establishing a coalition cabinet. Here perhaps was a chance to mobilize the existing political forces to meet the increasing challenge of military power.

Party politics assumed such magnitude, however, that Wakatsuki soon rejected his original plan. Moreover, the Seiyukai reversed its idea of accepting a coalition offer. Wakatsuki was opposed, furthermore, by Shidehara and Inoue, who considered the gold embargo program of the Seiyukai as fundamentally incompatible with the financial policy of the Minseito Government. However, the Minister of Home Affairs insisted upon its realization, and began to move in spite of

³⁷¹Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 98f.

Wakatsuki's suspension. But under Adachi the coalition cabinet movement degenerated from one conceived to control the army to one which sought army support in order to gain the reins of government. Discord in the government party encouraged various factions within the Minseito to make deals with various factions within the Seiyukai. Such political tycoons as Governor of Korea Ugaki Kazushige and Privy Councillor Hiranuma Kiichiro were discussed as possibilities to head the cabinet, for they were considered capable of pacifying or of controlling the army.³⁷² The greater the possibility seemed of a cabinet fall, the stronger were the demands within the Seiyukai, led by Mori Kaku, for formation of a single Seiyukai Cabinet.

The showdown came when Adachi stated at a press conference on November 21 that he was ready to respond to any call for coalition government, and openly refused to retract his stand. On December 10, the Wakatsuki Cabinet resigned on grounds of disunity. The coalition cabinet movement did not contribute to the consolidation of party government, but, on the contrary, served to bring about the further enfeeblement of the power of the government vis-à-vis the army. The first major political victory of the army was won by default on the part of Wakatsuki and the political parties.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 129.

Internal and External Negotiations

Central army authorities now attempted to make further efforts at policy coördination with the Kwantung Army. The Manchurian settlement formula of Tokyo, as conveyed to the Kwantung Army through Shirakawa and Imamura, was the creation of a "political center in Manchuria that moved according to the will of Japan. . . . This regime did not necessarily have to declare independence from China. . . . No objections were to be raised to a declaration of independence by the Chinese . . . but assistance from the Kwantung Army or from Japan was not only unnecessary but also harmful." This of course did not mean that no assistance would be given in substance.³⁷³ Conscious of the critical state of international as well as internal public opinion with regard to forthright severance of Manchuria from China, not to speak of annexation, Tokyo seemed to feel that a regime should be established as rapidly as possible without clarifying its status. The fact of control in Manchuria was the main concern of Tokyo. It preferred to leave the matter of title to some later date. In essence, Tokyo was envisaging a form of control in Manchuria "that paralleled that of the Soviet Union over Outer Mongolia, or of the British over Tibet."³⁷⁴

The Kwantung Army saw that Tokyo intended to negotiate with the Government of China concerning fundamental issues

³⁷³Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 184.

³⁷⁴Ibid., p. 181.

while treating the dispute in Manchuria as a local conflict, the details of which were to be settled by agreement with the local government. The Kwantung Army staff, however, were unanimously in support of the policy of severing Manchuria from China proper. The Chinese Government was not to be given any greater right over the settlement of the Manchurian Affair than "the recognition of the new state, and Sino-Japanese negotiations in the future were to be confined to matters involving China proper alone."³⁷⁵

On October 24, the Kwantung Army presented to Tokyo a memorandum on its fundamental policy with regard to the settlement of Manchurian problems, holding that "the objective is to establish an independent new state of Manchuria-Mongolia, that is severed from China Proper, externally unified by Chinese, but substantially under control of the Japanese, composed of the four Northeastern Provinces and Inner Mongolia."³⁷⁶ In achieving this objective, greater assistance was to be given internally in order to promote the movement for the establishment of the new state, "especially in reforming the provincial government of Heilunkiang, in suppressing the government in Chinchow, and in destroying the forces of Chang Hsueh-liang." The Kwantung Army requested, therefore, that "public opinion in Japan as well as

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 182.

³⁷⁶ "Manmo mondai kaiketsu no konpon hosaku" ("Fundamental Policy with Regard to Settlement of Manchuria-Mongolia Problems"), October 24, 1931.

among the various racial groups in Manchuria, be directed towards the establishment of the new state, and at the same time that no commitment be given to the League of Nations, or in the course of diplomatic negotiations or in government statements that would obstruct the movement for this establishment." It also warned the government that "matters concerning the domain of the new state" should be excluded from all negotiations to be undertaken with the Chinese Government in Nanking.³⁷⁷

The army leaders' conference in Tokyo, participated in by the Minister of War, the Chief of the General Staff, and the Inspector General, decided, however, that though "interference from the League or from any foreign Power would be rejected with regard to the Manchurian Affair" and "negotiations would be held between the new regime, . . . the formal relationship between the new regime and China proper would be recognized" as before.³⁷⁸ The aggravated Kwantung Army cabled on November 7 that "it absolutely cannot accept a settlement that does not allow the Manchurian regime to break off from China proper."³⁷⁹ The tenacity of the Kwantung Army seems at least partly to have been due to its realization that it was the driving force of a policy that neither the government nor the army had the power to execute or to

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 214.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 23.

obstruct. The Katakura Diary discusses the enormous responsibility of the Kwantung Army leadership in directing the Manchurian Affair as it approached "the stage of constructive policy making, while servilely the state and the army do not stand in the forefront but await the inward activities of the army overseas. . . . Today, the state is dragged on by the army, and the army by us, the Kwantung Army."³⁸⁰

The need for a workable policy was more than evident to the government. However, beyond lacking control of the circumstances that necessitated revision of policy, the government now found itself on political quicksand. To the world at large, the government had first promised to withdraw its troops to the railway zone "in proportion as the situation improves."³⁸¹ It had declared that the withdrawal would be completed "as the present atmosphere of tension clears and the situation improves, by the achievement of a previous understanding between the Chinese and Japanese Governments as regards the fundamental principles governing normal relations."³⁸² As we have seen, ever since the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair the government policy was to keep the dispute outside of the League and to demand direct Sino-Japanese negotiations.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 193.

³⁸¹ Reply of the Japanese Government to the Council of the League of Nations, September 24, 1931. Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 484.

³⁸² Japanese draft resolution presented to the Council of the League of Nations on October 23, 1931. Ibid., p. 495.

Direct Sino-Japanese negotiation was, however, a complex problem. It required clarification of which Chinese Government to deal with, and on what matters. The Kwantung Army demanded that Manchurian problems were to be settled with the new government to be formed under Japanese control, keeping the existing Chinese Government out of the negotiations. Central army authorities also were considering negotiation of Manchurian problems with the new regime. The Japanese Government had been pressing for direct negotiations with the existing Chinese Government which, however, had been refusing to respond until troops were withdrawn. But the Japanese Government could not enforce evacuation, and embryonic governments were sprouting in Manchuria.

In a second official statement, issued on October 26, the Japanese Government disclosed fundamental principles that were to govern future relations between Japan and China. They related to:

- (1) mutual repudiation of aggressive policy and conduct;
- (2) respect for China's territorial integrity;
- (3) complete suppression of all organized movements interfering with freedom of trade and stirring up international hatred;
- (4) effective protection throughout Manchuria of all peaceful pursuits undertaken by Japanese subjects;
- (5) respect for treaty rights of Japan in Manchuria.³⁸³

³⁸³ Declaration of the Japanese Government of October 26, 1931. Ibid., p. 498.

³⁸³ De

The fifth point was subject to dispute, as the Japanese and Chinese Governments were far apart in their interpretation of treaty rights.

The points themselves were not particularly startling. What was startling was the timing of the announcement of fundamental principles, just after the adjournment of the League Council session. Throughout the session, the Japanese Delegate had steadfastly refused to provide any information concerning the principles to be proposed. Now Yoshizawa protested that the government announcement at that time meant defiance of the League and loss of personal confidence by him.³⁸⁴ The Foreign Office replied that its earlier refusal had expressed the determination of the government that the present dispute was to be settled between Japan and China alone.³⁸⁵

The Foreign Office further informed Yoshizawa that "the present Chinese political situation is complicated and delicate, and no authority can be found either in the center or in the localities that can settle the present case with full responsibility. . . . Thus Japan is obliged to comply with the existing situation in Manchuria, undertake police measures . . . through her army, and at the same time promote

³⁸⁴ Cable No. 159 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 28, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 31-34.

³⁸⁵ Cable No. 146 from Foreign Office to Yoshizawa. Sent October 29, 1931. Ibid., pp. 35f.

the development of the Chinese 'local organs for maintenance of peace and order,' and thereby gradually transmit police measures to these organs and attempt to restore the region to normality.³⁸⁶ Although the kind of regime to be established in Manchuria was admittedly "the internal problem of the Three Eastern Provinces which should be decided primarily by the people," the Chang Hsueh-liang regime was no longer to be regarded the legitimate power in Manchuria. The Foreign Office argued that the Chang regime had maintained its position in Manchuria under the shield of Japan, and it had now forfeited that position by its hostile action. In a directive of November 15, the Foreign Office stated that "as a practical problem, it is impossible to designate either the Nanking Government or the local government recognized by it as a party in the negotiations," and that "it suffices for the Council of the League to recommend direct Sino-Japanese negotiations" without interfering into the question of the Chinese party to the negotiations.³⁸⁷

In a word, the Foreign Office now connected troop withdrawal not only with direct negotiations but also with the development of the new political power in Manchuria. This was a major foreign policy revision not in accord with earlier official government policy, which had treated the

³⁸⁶ Cable No. 134 from Foreign Office to Yoshizawa. Sent October 28, 1931. Ibid., pp. 35f.

³⁸⁷ Cable No. 194 from Foreign Office to Yoshizawa. Sent November 15, 1931. Ibid., pp. 648f.

Manchurian Affair as a local police action in protection of Japanese lives, rights, and interests centered around the South Manchuria Railway. The Foreign Office undoubtedly knew that the various so-called Committees for Maintenance of Peace and Order "were in fact virtually under the direction of the Kwantung Army,"³⁸⁸ which was engaged in the movement for establishing a new regime. Nevertheless, it formally notified its ambassadors on November 12 of the government "policy to assist the Committees to Maintain Peace and Order in Manchuria" in view of the "various complicated internal conditions."³⁸⁹

Public opinion in Japan by then was considered to have become united in demanding strong measures against China. Not only the army and the rightist groups, but also those who had held relatively liberal views were now expressing anti-Chinese sentiments. Thus, though the government was obliged to prevent the radicalization of public opinion, it feared that "should it resort to indiscriminate suppression, the anti-Chinese sentiment of the people would immediately change its direction, and blow up internally. Fueled by the maneuvers of certain extremists, the force of circumstances

³⁸⁸ Cable No. 1108 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived October 20, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

³⁸⁹ Cable No. 1427 from Foreign Office to France, United States, China. Sent November 12, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 623-629.

might cause [them] to induce grave consequences."³⁹⁰ Little imagination is necessary to connect the October Incident with this explosive internal situation. The Foreign Office emphasized that it was not trying to be alarming but was describing the actual case in Japan. It confided that the dangerous internal conditions subtly affected "the relationship between the government and the army, and the army in Tokyo and the army overseas, therefore in the attempt to make the action of the army overseas concur with what, from the policy standpoint, was regarded as the main issue," considerable meandering was necessary in adopting the means.³⁹¹

The course of change in foreign policy demonstrates that the outbursts of army radicalism, although physically aborted, seem to have impressed the government with the inevitability of concession. With the government politically impotent to confront the army and fearful of successful, possibly even more outrageous actions, the so-called Shidehara peace policy began to crumble rapidly. Wakatsuki and Shidehara themselves might have been "committed to peace"³⁹² and "on the right side,"³⁹³ as Stimson believed, but their policy was no longer developing along the line of

³⁹⁰ Cable No. 1553 from Foreign Office to France, United States. Sent November 18, 1931. Ibid., pp. 656-658.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Current, op. cit., p. 70.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 73.

its label. Saionji intimated to Ugaki, who visited him on November 18, that "though he had upheld the Shidehara diplomacy as the standard formula which was without danger, . . . he had to reconsider it from the point of view of living diplomacy when the entire national opinion called it mistaken and wrong."³⁹⁴

Shidehara diplomacy was being "alive"--though perhaps not alive enough or soon enough--when it chose to support the changing political trend in Manchuria. The change in the substance of the Shidehara policy shows the limits of choice in foreign policy making imposed by factors of external circumstances as well as power relations. It also indicates how the label often outlives the substance, and how it is praised or blamed for what it no longer represents.

³⁹⁴Statement of Saionji to Ugaki in Ugaki, op. cit., p. 160.

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONAL DISPUTE BETWEEN THE KWANTUNG ARMY
AND CENTRAL ARMY AUTHORITIES

Although Tokyo moved towards supporting the Kwantung Army program of establishing a new regime, if not a new state, in Manchuria, it did not acquiesce in the demand for North Manchuria operations. On September 24, the Chief of the General Staff had forbidden, in absolute terms, the dispatch of troops to Harbin. Thereafter, northern operations had to be undertaken indirectly or secretly by the Kwantung Army, which instigated Chang Hai-peng to advance towards Tsitsihar. As was discussed earlier, the Chang forces were stalled at the Nonni River in the middle of October, and negotiations were carried on between Major Hayashi Yoshihide, the representative of the Kwantung Army in Tsitsihar, and Ma Chan-shan over the reconstruction of the bridges.

Nonni Bridges Operation:
Kwantung Army Prevails

What the Kwantung Army was desperately in search for, at the time, was "an excuse for dispatching troops to North Manchuria."³⁹⁵ An excuse might be found by getting the Chang Hai-peng forces to advance farther north and then dispatching Japanese troops to protect the Taonan-Angangchi Railway or

³⁹⁵Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 2.

the Japanese residents in the Tsitsihar area.³⁹⁶ Or an excuse might be found by encouraging the Ma Chan-shan forces to occupy areas south of the Chinese Eastern Railway, enticing them to attack the Japanese troops, and then hitting back.³⁹⁷ The pretext was discovered, however, in the protection of the interests of the South Manchurian Railway Company, which suffered losses due to the stoppage of cargo transport from the North. The Kwantung Army on November 2 sent an ultimatum to Ma Chan-shan and Chang Hai-peng demanding that both forces be withdrawn to a distance of ten kilometers from their respective sides of the river, and that they allow the Japanese to carry out repair work. Obstruction, the ultimatum noted, would be answered by action.³⁹⁸

Tokyo approved the use of the Kwantung Army for protecting the repair operations at the Nonni River bridges. The Chief of the General Staff warned, however, that "the dispatch of troops away from the Nonni River and far into North Manchuria would not be permitted without his authorization regardless of the reason," and the Vice Minister of War cabled that "the repair work and related military activities should be carried out swiftly and skillfully, so that by the 13th or 14th the repair would be finished and covering forces would be completely withdrawn." The Vice Minister notified

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

the Kwantung Army that in order to gain the understanding of the League Council, indirect operations were advisable, and that 3,000,000 yen (\$1,500,000) would be provided for political maneuvers in North Manchuria.³⁹⁹ The funds were to be advanced by the South Manchuria Railway Company; 500,000 yen (\$250,000) were to be available immediately although detailed instructions concerning their use were to be given later by the General Staff.⁴⁰⁰

Apparently the army leaders in Tokyo were not convinced of the Kwantung Army's submission to discipline. On November 5, the day after the order authorizing North Manchuria political maneuvers, the Chief of the General Staff cabled the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army as follows: "You are hereby notified that according to precedent, the Chief of the General Staff has been entrusted with the decision making and ordering of part of the action of the corps under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army until the end of the present situation."⁴⁰¹ Four hours later, the first order of the Chief of the General Staff was issued stating that "no positive operational action was to be executed for the time being with regard to North Manchuria," and that "covering forces for the repair work of

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁰¹ Cable from Chief of General Staff to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Ibid., p. 10.

the Nonni River bridges were to confine their operational action to the occupation of the line that crossed the Tahsing station."⁴⁰²

Reserving the right of decision making and ordering to the Chief of the General Staff was a grave matter. It meant, in effect, the suspension of the command authority of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. According to the command hierarchy of the Japanese Army, the ultimate right of command belonged to the Emperor, who, with the assistance of the Chief of the General Staff, directly ordered commanders of the armies overseas and of the divisions. At times, in order to relieve the Emperor of the chores of co-ordinating orders, the Chief of the General Staff could request to be entrusted to take the command over several armies and/or divisions simultaneously involved in a major operation. It was this entrusted right of command that the Chief of the General Staff invoked.

The Kwantung Army staff received the notice with great indignation, calling it a "violation of Supreme Command," and a "serious matter concerning the confidence of the Commander-in-Chief."⁴⁰³ They learned, moreover, that the Commander-in-Chief had resolved to request an appropriate

⁴⁰²Cable from Chief of General Staff to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁰³Ibid., p. 10.

replacement.⁴⁰⁴ The staff, in order to forestall the resignation of the Commander-in-Chief, conferred and sent a cable of protest to Tokyo, stating that it was tactically impossible for Tokyo to direct the operations, and that the new order signified lack of confidence in the Commander-in-Chief. "Should the Commander-in-Chief be restricted to details of pure strategy and tactics, activities related to such national policy as the settlement of the Manchurian Affair would be utterly impossible to undertake. It might be more appropriate to assign the task to the Foreign Office, which is better versed in internal as well as international affairs."⁴⁰⁵

The reference to the Foreign Office was clearly sarcastic. Tokyo had been prohibiting North Manchuria operations on grounds of having to avoid antagonizing the League of Nations and provoking the Soviet Union. To the Kwantung Army, the Foreign Office was the symbol of policy vacillation caused by too much deference to the pressures of the League of Nations and of the Powers. And this view was not without grounds. The Japanese Delegate to the League emphasized that "reasonable moral pressures of the Council," must be taken into consideration,⁴⁰⁶ and that the real solution of Manchurian problems could be gained not at the expense of, but

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁰⁵ Cable from Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army to Vice-Chief of General Staff, Vice Minister of War, director of the General Affairs Department. Ibid., pp. 19f.

⁴⁰⁶ Cable No. 133 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 2, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. I, p. 278.

rather in accord with the approval of the world at large.⁴⁰⁷ The Foreign Minister stressed at cabinet meetings that Japan should conform to the expectation of world opinion, through, for example, the troop evacuation repeatedly promised to the League.⁴⁰⁸ When the report began to circulate that the Kwantung Army was about to embark upon North Manchuria operations, Yoshizawa cabled from Paris urging the government "to reject the proposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, and at the same time take strict measures so that the army in the field would not commit rash action against the will of the government," for the advance of troops to Tsitsihar would invite unfavorable world opinion as well as make further negotiating at the Council no longer possible.⁴⁰⁹ Appeals from Briand on November 6 and 11 to Japan and China, respectively, reminded them of their obligations under the Council resolution.

Both the General Staff and the Ministry of War were taking note of the need to defend Japan in the eyes of the world. The Chief of the General Staff gave repeated instructions to the Kwantung Army against advance to the North, for such an undertaking "would stimulate the anxiety of those at

⁴⁰⁷ Cable No. 175 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived November 2, 1931. Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 136-146.

⁴⁰⁸ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84.

⁴⁰⁹ Cable No. 217 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived November 3, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. IV.

home and abroad and might lead to obstructing the further course of development. Public opinion in foreign countries and at the League might affect our people, and serve to disturb their confidence in the Army.⁴¹⁰

The most important reason behind the determined opposition to the North Manchuria operations, however, seemed still to lie in the fear of Soviet intervention once Japanese troops approached the area crossed by the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Ma Chan-shan troops were definitely considered to have received Soviet assistance of arms and funds.⁴¹¹ The policy of Tokyo was to "avoid the use of Japanese military forces so long as no Russian provocation was made in North Manchuria, and to strengthen the power of the Chang forces, or to buy off Ma Chan-shan forces."⁴¹² The Kwantung Army, on the other hand, observed that so long as it maintained a position of strength, Soviet Russia would not advance her forces, even if she undertook to provide arms and funds to the regime in North Manchuria, and that the expedition to North Manchuria would promote the establishment of a new regime in Manchuria, before which the Manchurian Affair could not be settled.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 54.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 214. Vol. II, p. 85.

⁴¹² Ibid., Vol. I, p. 213.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 214.

Hostilities broke out on November 4. The Japanese repair corps that started working on the Nonni bridges were fired by the Ma Chan-shan forces. Fighting continued for two days. The Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army informed the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War that the time had arrived to destroy the Heilungkiang forces and requested that strategic decision be left to the discretion of the Kwantung Army.⁴¹⁴ The request was rejected.⁴¹⁵ The Kwantung Army was successful in bringing Tahsing station under control and thus was able to cover the repair work of the bridges, but it was prevented from pursuing the retreating Ma forces. Days of negotiation again followed between Major Hayashi and Ma Chan-shan. On November 11, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army instructed Hayashi to ask for "the retirement of Ma Chan-shan, the evacuation of the Ma forces from Tsitsihar, and the right of the Japanese troops to advance to Lungkow station for the protection of the security of the Angangchi line."

In his reply on the following day, Ma rejected the demand for retirement and evacuation, questioned the Kwantung Army's right to advance troops when the Japanese Government was denying any intention of advancing troops to North Manchuria to the League of Nations, and asked, furthermore, whether he was to concede the Heilungkiang Government to

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 17.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

Chang Hai-peng or to the Japanese Army, in view of the fact that the people cannot be left without a government for even a single day.⁴¹⁶ Ma Chan-shan seems to have been taking advantage of both Soviet assistance and Japan's commitments to the League.⁴¹⁷ Meanwhile, the situation had reached such a state of tension and deadlock that even the Consul General in Mukden suggested to the Foreign Minister "that troops be advanced to Tsitsihar."⁴¹⁸ He observed that "the situation had already moved beyond the point where it could be settled by negotiations with the Chinese Government, for not only the protection of vested rights and interests but also the operation of North Manchuria. . . became objects of the present crisis."⁴¹⁹

Tsitsihar Occupation Dispute: Tokyo Prevails

Ma Chan-shan was reported to have gathered about 20,000 troops, to have mobilized the forces of General Ting Chao, and to have grown increasingly threatening. These developments were heavily emphasized by the Kwantung Army. The Katakura Diary notes that a military cable warning of the

⁴¹⁶ Cable No. 1278 from Morishima to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived November 14, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

⁴¹⁷ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 73.

⁴¹⁸ Cable No. 1253 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived November 11, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

offensive of the militant Ma Chan-shan forces on November 13 or 14 "was part of a previous arrangement. The gathering of the Ma forces was indeed a fact, but their offensive designs were doubtful."⁴²⁰ The Japanese forces finally began their northward move on November 17 and occupied Tsitsihar two days later.

The action was undertaken by the Kwantung Army on the basis of urgent need for self-defense. Tokyo's approval was still half-hearted. The Minister of War on the 19th reemphasized the policy "of refraining from use of force in North Manchuria," and forbade the Kwantung Army "to occupy Tsitsihar for the purpose of engaging in North Manchuria operations. Moreover, the army was to be aware of the need of avoiding internal as well as international suspicion . . . through such acts as establishing a regime and assuming the maintenance of peace and order."⁴²¹ The understanding between the Prime Minister and the Minister of War over the North Manchuria operations had been "that Japanese forces should be withdrawn to their original quarters once the enemy forces had been subjugated, even if it were necessary to cross the Chinese Eastern Railway and advance to Tsitsihar." In other words, troops might reach Tsitsihar out of strategic need, but the policy was to be made clear that no intentions existed "to occupy Tsitsihar, or to fight against Russia."⁴²²

⁴²⁰Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 72.

⁴²¹Ibid., p. 97.

⁴²²Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 134f.

The Kwantung Army was faced with grave problems on November 24 when the Chief of the General Staff issued the following instructions.

(1) In accordance with established policy, the Division Headquarters and the main forces are to quickly evacuate to the prescribed area without considering the resulting situation, leaving a force of about one infantry regiment in the vicinity of Tsitsihar. The action is to be immediately undertaken. (2) It is necessary to evacuate the remaining corps within approximately two weeks.⁴²³

Ishiwara believed that the instructions could not be accepted and insisted that they had to be either disregarded or argued out. The Kwantung Army cabled the Chief of the General Staff, requesting that, due to the danger of the revival of the Ma forces and the need to protect the safety of the Angangchi Railway, discretion be granted concerning the evacuation. It was decided not to refer to the need for "stabilization of the political situation,"⁴²⁴ as Tokyo was extremely sensitive to the demand for Ma's retirement made by the Kwantung Army and feared it might be regarded as Japanese interference in Chinese internal affairs.⁴²⁵

The answer from the Chief of the General Staff took the form of strict orders. "In view of the principles of

⁴²³Cable from Chief of General Staff to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 108.

⁴²⁴Ibid., p. 109.

⁴²⁵Ibid., p. 82.

fidelity of the Japanese Army and of the general international situation, your army is to submit to the execution of the instructions given in Cable 163 without delay."⁴²⁶ The Commander-in-Chief, in great distress, decided to obey and then submit his resignation. Ishiwara and Katakura concluded, however, that his decision was inconsistent, and proposed that the Commander-in-Chief should either "withhold the execution of the order on his own discretion, or determinedly present his resignation, or submit and then replace the staff." The Commander-in-Chief now changed his stand, adopted the third course, but also persuaded the staff to follow suit.⁴²⁷ Despite opposition and dissatisfaction, the evacuation of the division occupying Tsitsihar was executed, with only a small force left to hold the city against Ma Chan-shan's forces in the North.

The Kwantung Army thereafter concentrated on political maneuvers to bring about the reorganization of the Heilung-kiang Government. The Kwantung Army had chosen Ting Chao and Chang Ching-hui to establish a new pro-Japanese regime and to assume responsibility for maintaining peace and order.⁴²⁸ The former, however, was not willing to commit himself fully, and the latter, though willing, had neither the army nor the money to bring the area under control.⁴²⁹ The Kwantung Army

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 113.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 19. Vol. II, pp. 100f.

provided Chang with funds⁴³⁰ and even adopted his proposal to persuade Ma Chan-shan, the actual Chinese power in Heilungkiang, to cooperate with the new government by offering him a post.⁴³¹ Itagaki succeeded in contracting a military agreement with Ma Chan-shan in early December,⁴³² and Ma in turn reached an understanding with Chang Ching-hui to submit to and acknowledge the latter as the head of the province and to sever relations with the Chinese Nationalist Government.⁴³³ The execution of the understanding between Ma Chan-shan and Chang Ching-hui was delayed, however, and on January 1, 1932, Chang declared the independence of the Heilungkiang Government from China without formal endorsement by Ma.⁴³⁴

Action in the South

While the political rearrangement of North Manchuria took place, new military operations were undertaken in the South. In the middle of November, the Chang Hsueh-liang forces, which had gathered in the vicinity of Chinchow, caused such threat to the Japanese troops that military action seemed likely in the event of provocation.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 101.

⁴³¹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴³² Ibid., Vol. II, p. 30.

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 57.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 18.

⁴³⁵ Cable No. 240 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent November 24, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 299-301.

The situation in the South had been aggravated by disturbances in Tientsin which were at least in part created by Colonel Doihara, who had been sent on October 27 to assist the Japanese Army there to conduct various political maneuvers with a view to undermine the government of Chang Hsueh-liang. Considerable funds had been provided to Doihara by the Kwantung Army.⁴³⁶ The first Tientsin Incident of November 8, though not exactly carried out in accordance with Doihara's plans,⁴³⁷ facilitated the escape of the former Emperor Hsuan Tung to Lushun, a move previously obstructed by the Japanese Consul General in opposition to the September 22 Manchurian settlement program of the Kwantung Army.⁴³⁸

Direct connection between the Doihara maneuvers and the second Japanese-Chinese military clash in Tientsin of November 26 is denied in the Katakura Diary.⁴³⁹ However, when the threatening situation was reported from Tientsin on that day, the Kwantung Army staff urged the Commander-in-Chief to initiate an attack on Chinchow and to move troops towards Shanhaikwan in order to assist the endangered Tientsin Army of Japan. The Commander approved and ordered the troops under his command to leave the Tsitsihar area to start

⁴³⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 97.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 66.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 55.

southward.⁴⁴⁰ Thus the reluctant Tsitsihar evacuation was made acceptable in view of the new operations. The new developments were then reported to Tokyo.

The Kwantung Army advance to Chinchow created great concern in Tokyo. The Japanese Delegate to the League had been urging the Foreign Minister to forestall the reported Chinchow operations,⁴⁴¹ and the Ambassador to the United States had reported on Stimson's anxiety over the situation and his desire to prevent further enlargement of hostilities.⁴⁴² On November 24, the Council of the League held a meeting, without Japan or China being present, and drafted a resolution that recalled their obligations under the resolution of September 30. The new resolution requested them "(A) to give the strictest orders to the commanders of their respective forces to refrain from any initiative which may lead to further fighting and loss of life; (B) to take all measures necessary to avoid any further aggravation of the situation."⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 114f.

⁴⁴¹ Cables Nos. 291 and 331 from Paris to Foreign Office. Arrived respectively November 21 and 24, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 283f, 364-366.

⁴⁴² Cable No. 520 from Debuchi, Washington, to Foreign Office. Arrived November 29, 1931. Ibid., pp. 543f.

⁴⁴³ Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations, November 24, 1931, in Cable No. 332 from Paris to Foreign Office. Arrived November 24, 1931. Ibid., p. 368.

When the Foreign Minister learned that the Kwantung Army had started on its southward move, he immediately called upon the Chief of the General Staff, who had not yet received the report.⁴⁴⁴ On the following morning, Chief of the General Staff Kanaya requested and received the Emperor's permission to recall the troops that had left for Chinchow. Kanaya's decision was regarded as an act of great courage by both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister.⁴⁴⁵

The order reached the Kwantung Army on the 27th "to evacuate to the east of the Liao River irrespective of all conditions."⁴⁴⁶ The request of the Kwantung Army for assistance of the Korean Army was rejected.⁴⁴⁷ Ishiwara perceived that evacuation was inevitable. The existing strength of the Kwantung Army was not sufficient to bring about the fall of Chinchow.⁴⁴⁸ The forces in the front by then had already crossed the Liao River and were in combat with the Chinese, but by the 29th the Japanese forces were withdrawn to Hsinmin.

Meanwhile, the Kwantung Army staff were in conference with the Vice-Chief of the General Staff, who suddenly changed his scheduled visit to North Manchuria and went to Mukden.

⁴⁴⁴ Shidehara Kijuro, Gaiko goju nen (Fifty Years' Diplomacy) (Tokyo: 1951), p. 178.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., Wakatsuki, op. cit., p. 380.

⁴⁴⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 118.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 117, 119.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 118.

He regarded the Kwantung Army action with considerable sympathy, and seemed convinced that "the Kwantung Army was undoubtedly sincere in upholding the intentions of Tokyo, although the sudden execution of troop advancement to west of the Liao River without approval was a step that lacked proper procedure."⁴⁴⁹ The Chief of the General Staff cabled that night that the Vice Chief was to "frankly express the views of Tokyo to the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of Staff, urge their serious reconsideration and make them pledge never to repeat an act that might in any way be seen as violating 'the entrusted orders' which were identical to the Imperial orders." It was evident that the Chief of the General Staff interpreted the Kwantung Army's arbitrary move to Chinchow as proof of its "lack of sincerity in submitting to the discipline of Tokyo, and as disunity within the Kwantung Army command."⁴⁵⁰ As with the North Manchuria operations, Tokyo was determined not to tolerate violation of formal strategic decisions.

Action in Paris

In Paris, the Council of the League reassembled on November 16, the date by which the withdrawal of the Japanese troops was to have been effected according to the October 24 resolution. November had already seen expansion of the area

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁵⁰ Cable from Chief of General Staff to Vice-Chief of General Staff. Ibid., pp. 122f.

of Japanese military operations in Manchuria and renewed pressure of the League to forestall further aggravation of the situation. Some of the delegates to the Council at that time "were thinking unofficially, of the possibility of the League's resorting to economic sanctions,"⁴⁵¹ but the United States remained undecided on this issue, which was feared as "the road to war,"⁴⁵² for the United States "did not intend to get into war with Japan."⁴⁵³

In view of the obvious prolongation of military operations in Manchuria, Japan was now faced with the necessity of devising new means of waging her diplomatic battle at the League. When suggestions had been made for the dispatch of neutral observers by the League during the early days of the Manchurian Affair, the Japanese Government had rejected third-party intervention. The idea of neutral observers had not, however, been completely abandoned by the Japanese Delegate and some Ambassadors to Western capitals, who believed in the importance of "taking measures that would save the honor of the League and would win it over to take our side."⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ Current, op. cit., p. 80.

⁴⁵² Ibid., p. 84.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁵⁴ Cable No. 151 from Yoshizawa to Foreign Office. Arrived October 11, 1931. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. II. Ambassador Yoshida from Italy suggested that Japan propose dispatch of investigation committee on similar grounds. Cable No. 143 from Yoshida to Foreign Office. Arrived October 12, 1931. Ibid., pp. 182f.

Furthermore, Consul General Hayashi from Mukden at the end of October had reported that "many of the foreigners who inspected the actual situation seemed to understand the impossibility of rapid withdrawal of Japanese troops under the present conditions in Manchuria," and proposed that Japan should "offer to have investigators sent from the League." He added that the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army "considered it advantageous to make known the realities of the area to the League investigators."⁴⁵⁵ Japan formally proposed on November 21 at the Council meeting "that the League of Nations should send a Commission of Inquiry to the spot."⁴⁵⁶ Thereafter, the Council went into secret session to draft a resolution embodying this proposal.

The main point of concern of the Japanese Government in itself proposing a commission of inquiry was to keep the supervision of Japanese military action outside the commission's competence and thus to avoid the indignation of the army.⁴⁵⁷ The Foreign Office instructed the Delegate to the League to demand the exclusion from the resolution being drafted of clauses referring to Japanese troop withdrawal

⁴⁵⁵ Cable No. 1140 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived October 29, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

⁴⁵⁶ Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 501.

⁴⁵⁷ Cables Nos. 232 and 236 from Foreign Office to Paris. Sent respectively November 22 and 23, 1931. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 230, 330.

within a fixed time. Moreover, it ordered the addition of a paragraph stating that "nothing in this resolution shall preclude the Japanese forces from taking such military measures as may be needed for the protection of the lives and property of Japanese subjects against the activities of bandits and other lawless elements in Manchuria.⁴⁵⁸ The Japanese Delegate was surprised and disturbed by the instructions, which seemed contrary to the avowal of evacuation that Japan had been making and that had so far forestalled any harsh condemnation on the part of the League.⁴⁵⁹

Negotiations between the Japanese Delegate and the Council members resulted in a resolution that referred to speedy withdrawal of Japanese troops to within the railway zone without specifying any time limit and established "a Commission of five members to study on the spot and to report to the Council on any circumstance which, affecting international relations, threatens to disturb peace between China and Japan." The commission was to interfere neither with any direct negotiations which China and Japan might undertake nor with the military arrangements of the two countries.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Cable No. 245 from Foreign Office to Paris. Sent November 25, 1931. Ibid., p. 387.

⁴⁵⁹ Ito Nobumi, then Assistant Secretary General of the Japanese League of Nations Secretariat, states that he later learned from Shiratori Toshio, director of Information Bureau of the Foreign Office, that Shiratori himself had dispatched the instructions mentioned above without which the army would not have consented. Shidehara Heiwa Zaidan, op. cit., p. 483.

⁴⁶⁰ Resolution of the Council of the League of

In affirming the resolution on December 10, Yoshizawa issued a statement reserving the right of military measures "against the activities of bandits and other lawless elements in Manchuria." On balance, the appointment of the commission of inquiry signified a diplomatic victory for Japan, gaining time for settling the Manchurian Affair on her own terms. The decision put aside China's demands for immediate withdrawal of Japanese forces simultaneous with the investigation. The United States supported the investigation proposal and helped strengthen the Japanese cause. The League was to drop the Sino-Japanese dispute in Manchuria until it received the report of the commission of inquiry.

Succeeding Japanese military operations in Manchuria were executed on grounds of suppressing banditry. The General Staff justified the attack on Chinchow as such a suppression of banditry, which "at present could hardly be distinguished from regular troops."⁴⁶¹ Indeed, on December 27 Governor Tsang Shih-yi of the Province of Fengtien, which by then had declared independence, issued a formal petition requesting the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to suppress bandits, especially in the Liaosi area.⁴⁶² Chinchow and Shanhaikwan came under Japanese occupation on the third day of the New Year.

Nations, December 10, 1931. Royal Institute of International Affairs, op. cit., p. 502.

⁴⁶¹ Kataura Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 85.

⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 89.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KWANTUNG ARMY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF MANCHUKUO

The first steps taken by the Kwantung Army in the political reshaping of Manchuria were provincial. As described in the previous chapters, the Liaoning Committee for the Maintenance of Peace and Order was formed on September 25, 1931, the Provincial Government of Kirin on the 26th, the Emergency Committee of the Special District of the Chinese Eastern Railway on the 27th, and the Provincial Government of Heilungkiang on January 1 of the following year. All were led by prominent Chinese with Japanese support. Reorganization of local administrative organs was undertaken by utilizing the traditional self-governing bodies. Much confusion seemed to have occurred in respect to the latter, due to the number of Japanese and Chinese who took the occasion to vie for personal advantage. In the first few weeks after the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair, local political movements were left to their own courses, but an uprising in Tiehling on October 9 by Noda Ranzo, a machinator and a non-regular staff member of the South Manchuria Railway Company, brought to the forefront the need to bring all local movements under the control of the Kwantung Army. The Kwantung Army staff particularly feared that social reform movements might be carried

out under the cloak of popular movements.⁴⁶³ They decided, therefore, that although attempts at destroying former political war lords and organizing popular self-government bodies would not be expressly prevented, these attempts would be required to obtain Kwantung Army sanction.⁴⁶⁴

Efforts at Coördination of Government

It was in the light of the disorderly and confusing growth of local self-government bodies that the Kwantung Army decided to establish an independent organ to guide and direct them along unified principles. Japanese civilians were recruited from the Manshu Seinen Renmei and Yuhokai⁴⁶⁵ to be trained as advisers for self-government. Yu Chung-han, a prominent elder statesman of the Mukden Government then in recuperation from an illness, was called out and installed as chief of the Self-Government Guiding Board on November 10. Yu had been the leader of the civilian group in Manchuria which, in contrast to the war lords, had held to the principle of absolute hokyo anmin (secure boundary and peaceful life). According to him, the protection and prosperity of the Northeastern Provinces assumed priority over all, including the relationship with China proper.

Through tax reform, improvement of the wage system of

⁴⁶³Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 95.

⁴⁶⁴Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵For former see Part I, Chapter III, pp. 70-71 and Chapter I, p. 36. For latter see Part I, Chapter I, p. 36.

government officials, and abolition of a costly army, the people in Manchuria were to enjoy the benefits of peaceful labor while defense was to be entrusted to their most powerful neighbor, Japan.⁴⁶⁶

The political views of Yu Chung-han were adopted to a great extent by the Kwantung Army in preparing the guiding principles for local self-government. Yu Chung-han's ideology was indeed accommodating. Moreover, they were compatible with the outlook of the "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" prepared by the Kwantung Army before the Manchurian Affair, which also referred to the desired goal of hokyo anmin of the people in Manchuria and which had established the general policy of allowing daily life to continue undisturbed without attempting assimilation or cultural guidance under Japanese occupation.⁴⁶⁷ In other words, the Kwantung Army was utilizing as well as cultivating aspirations and practices that were indigenous to the people of Manchuria. At the time of its inception, the Self-Government Guiding Board, with its central office in Mukden, aimed at putting the local self-government bodies in order, both organizationally and financially, and at improving local economic conditions through promoting production and commerce and by

⁴⁶⁶ "U Chu Kan no shutsuro to sono seiken" ("Appearance after Illness of Yu Chung-han and His Political Views"), November 22, 1931. Memorandum of Morita Fukumatsu.

⁴⁶⁷ See Part I, Chapter III, pp. 86-87.

forming coöperatives in the villages.⁴⁶⁸ Under the direction of the Central Board, local self-government executive committees were formed in the districts along the South Manchuria Railway.

The Veils Drop: Independence

The function of the Self-Government Guiding Board soon became one of fostering and coöordinating the independence movement, especially after the reorganization of Fientien Province was completed in the middle of December. Although an emergency committee with a majority of Japanese members under Doihara had administered Mukden since September 20, and although the Liaoning Committee for the Maintenance of Peace and Order had been in existence since the 25th, the organization of the provincial government in Liaoning as well as the declaration of independence were delayed because of the steadfast resistance of Chinese leaders. The President of the Liaoning Provincial Government, Tsang Shih-yi, who had refused to organize a provincial government independent of the Chinese Central Government, was put under arrest. Yuan Chin-kai, who agreed to the formation of the Committee for the Maintenance of Peace and Order, insisted it was a temporary organization designed strictly for maintaining peace and

⁴⁶⁸ Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army, "Chiho ken shi jichi shido ni kansuru shorui sofū no ken" ("Transmittal of Documents Relating to Guidance of Self-Government of Local ken and shi"), December 21, 1931. Man ju dai nikki, Vol. I of 27 Vols., 1932, No. 6, p. 6. Microfilm in the possession of Diet Library.

order in Mukden. He said it was not to serve as nucleus of a future independent government.⁴⁶⁹ In the name of this committee, however, the Board of Finance, the Board of Industry, and the Northeastern Communications Committee were organized, and the sponsoring body gradually came to undertake substantial functions of a provincial government, transforming itself formally into the Liaoning Provincial Government ad interim on November 7 and finally declaring its severance from the government of Chang Hsueh-liang and of Central China. On November 20, the name of the province was changed to Fengtien, its name before its union with Kuomintang China in 1928, and Tsang Shih-yi was released from confinement and installed as governor in the place of Yuan Chin-kai.

Former Emperor Hsuan Tung, who was to be the rallying point of the local independent governments, was in wait in Lushun after the November 8 uprising in Tientsin. The degree of his willingness to assume the leading role remains unclarified. However, prior to the Manchurian Affair, movements for the restoration of the Ching dynasty had been carried on by his former subjects, assisted at times by both civilian and military Japanese. Among his entourage were persons who readily took up the Kwantung Army plan after the outbreak of the crisis, and who kept close contact with incoming leaders such as Hsi Hsia and Chang Hai-peng.

⁴⁶⁹ Cable No. 1082 from Hayashi to Foreign Minister Shidehara. Arrived October 23, 1931. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Documents Relating to Manchurian Affair."

The actual inducement of Hsuan Tung was staged by Doihara. The Commander-in-Chief himself was unenthusiastic about the plan for Ching restoration, which seemed anachronistic,⁴⁷⁰ but, as established in the Kwantung Army Manchuria settlement program of September 22, he agreed to the idea of utilizing Hsuan Tung in whatever capacity seemed appropriate. On September 29 the Vice Minister of War warned the Kwantung Army against participation in the Hsuan Tung restoration movement,⁴⁷¹ and on November 15 the Minister of War instructed the Commander-in-Chief to prevent Hsuan Tung's involvement in any political development in Manchuria. The Minister's observations reveal the reasoning behind Tokyo's objections, a kind of reasoning which persisted throughout the political maneuvers of the Kwantung Army.

You are well aware of the fact that the Powers are strictly following the course of action of Pu Yi as well as the movement of the new regime in Manchuria. . . . Should Pu Yi suddenly enter into the midst of the establishment of the new regime today, even if the act is formally committed in the name of popular will, it would make the world suspicious of the intentions of the Imperial Army, . . . and might rapidly bring about a situation extremely disadvantageous to our national policy with regard to the Powers. . . . Thus you are to give directions to keep Pu Yi completely unininvolved in the question of the political regime whether actively or passively for some time.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Komai Tokuzo, Tairiku e no higan (Earnest Wish for the Continent) (Tokyo: 1952), p. 228.

⁴⁷¹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 54.

⁴⁷² Mitarai, op. cit., pp. 287f.

So long as international discovery and disapproval were the main criteria for Tokyo's objections, the Kwantung Army was compelled to use great discretion, but it did not necessarily have to revise its course of action. Thus the preparation for the new all-Manchuria government could progress through the undercover activities of the Kwantung Army.

Kwantung Army Blueprint for the New State

Blueprints for the new state had been prepared by the Kwantung Army in its "Manmo kyowakoku tochi taikoan" ("Draft of the General Principles Concerning the Government of the Manchuria-Mongolia Republic")⁴⁷³ and "Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko" ("General Principles Concerning the Proposed Establishment of the Manchuria-Mongolia Free State")⁴⁷⁴ written by Matsuki Tamotsu, legal adviser to the Kwantung Army, after a series of conferences with the staff, on October 21 and November 7. Several complementary documents covered topics such as the development of Manchuria, the nature of Japanese advisers, the internal guidance policy, and the concept of the new state.

⁴⁷³"Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an" ("Draft of the General Principles Concerning the Government of the Manchuria-Mongolia Republic"), October 21, 1931. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 167-176.

⁴⁷⁴"Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko" ("General Principles Concerning the Proposed Establishment of the Manchuria-Mongolia Free State"), November, 1931. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 24-51.

Control of Government

The decision to establish a new state in Manchuria was adopted, it is important to remember, only as an alternative to the original Kwantung Army objective of bringing all of Manchuria into its possession. It should also be recalled that the Kwantung Army insistence that the new state be independent from China was opposed to Tokyo policy, which was willing to recognize a regime with formal ties to China. The preface of "Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko" argues that "so long as Manchuria-Mongolia is to be regarded as part of the Chinese state, it is absolutely impossible to manage it at will, for there is no excuse for eliminating the participation of the central government in the Manchuria-Mongolia regime."⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, should an attempt be made to control a regime that is not fully independent from the central government, "it would become necessary to interfere thoroughly in its internal affairs, which would in turn be impossible to carry out."⁴⁷⁶ But conflict between the Kwantung Army and Tokyo regarding the status of an all-Manchuria government was basically a matter of difference in the degree of commitment to the same policy objective, control of Manchuria. To the Kwantung Army, with its eyes fixed solely on the Chinese Continent, the control of Manchuria was the single most important goal. To Tokyo, with its eyes upon

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

the entire world, it became a somewhat qualified goal, a step toward the ultimate.

The guarantee of a special relationship between Manchuria and Japan was, therefore, the most important task in the Kwantung Army's planning for the new state. Both the "Manmo kyowakoku" and the "Manmo jiyukoku" foresaw the conclusion of a military agreement through which the new state would entrust Japan with national defense and the management of railways and airways related to defense.⁴⁷⁷ Some Manchurian forces were to be stationed at strategic points, but only for the maintenance of peace and order.⁴⁷⁸ Once the military control of the new state was complete, Japan was not to interfere in the details of government except through the "internal" device of Japanese advisers who were "to seize the key positions of the various organs."⁴⁷⁹ The assignment of these advisers was also to be stipulated in a treaty between Manchuria and Japan, the details of which were to be incorporated in the internal law of Manchuria.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷"Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an," ibid., Vol. I, p. 170. "Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," Ibid., Vol. II, p. 45. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 116.

⁴⁷⁸"Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an," ibid., Vol. I, p. 170.

⁴⁷⁹"Jihen chokugo yori tochibu setsuritsu made no sanboubu daisanka no jimu gaikyo" ("General Situation of the Third Section of the Staff from the Beginning of the Incident to Establishment of the Government Department"), December 18, 1931.

⁴⁸⁰"Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an," Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 176.

Overall Japanese control of the new state was to be carried out through three channels: the army based in Manchuria, the transportation systems managed by Japan, and the advisers assigned by Japan. As early as January, 1932, it was decided that these arrangements would be initiated at the request of the new state.⁴⁸¹ A letter from Pu Yi to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army was to seek these devices for Japanese domination.

The advisers were to be attached to the various levels of government. Advisers assigned to the Privy Council were to assist the head of the state by guiding him in important affairs, thereby assuring Japanese control of the highest authority of the state.⁴⁸² A supreme adviser was to be named to each province, and chief advisers would be sent to the various departments and boards of the central and the provincial governments. These advisers "were to supervise and direct the operations [of the Chinese governing organs], . . . and no major operation was to be executed without the approval of the respective chief adviser," who "was to constantly maintain contact with the Kwantung Army staff office and the supreme adviser in order to learn of their intentions." The supreme adviser was to control the advisers under the jurisdiction of the provincial government to which each was

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 116.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

assigned.⁴⁸³ Care was to be taken, however, "that Japanese supervision and direction would as much as possible be below the surface, and would be limited to behind-the-scene manipulation." Not everything was to be brought under Japanese control, but only the most fundamental and the pivotal matters.⁴⁸⁴

"Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko" emphasized the importance of avoiding ostensible Japanese intervention, for "the Chinese have traditionally been people who value face, so that should it become outwardly clear that they are subject to Japanese interference or supervision, the authority of the administrators would not be effective."⁴⁸⁵ Self-government bodies were to be the main political units below the provincial governments, as the Kwantung Army considered it both appropriate and economic to utilize these traditional Chinese units. Some control would be attempted through the local self-government executive committees, which were already in charge of the organization and direction of the local bodies in pursuance of the policy of the Central Self-Government Guiding Board.

⁴⁸³"Jihen chokugo yori tochibu setsuritsu made no sanboubu daisanka no jimu gaikyo," op. cit.

⁴⁸⁴"Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 47.

⁴⁸⁵Ibid., p. 43.

Public Welfare

The policy of indirect control of internal affairs followed the already-mentioned principle of the Kwantung Army of allowing wide latitude to the daily lives of the people residing in Manchuria. While control of the military and governing functions of the new state was envisaged largely in terms of power, control of the people was to a great extent considered in the light of welfare. That Kwantung Army leaders had great sympathy for the miserable lot of the Manchurian masses has been discussed earlier. These leaders also had recognized the importance, in order to carry out successful operations in Manchuria, of winning over the people through providing them with peace and prosperity. Every Manchurian settlement program prepared by the Kwantung Army since the beginning of the Manchurian Affair spoke of the "paradise of various races"⁴⁸⁶ and of the "promotion of equal happiness of various races"⁴⁸⁷ and called for the decrease of government officials, reform of tax system, development of natural resources, and promotion of trade and industry.⁴⁸⁸

The Guarantee Law of Civil Rights, also prepared by Matsuki with the assistance of staff members of the Kwantung

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 24.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁸⁸ "Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an," Ibid., pp. 169f. "Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 35-37.

Army, was promulgated as the fundamental law of the state on March 9, 1932. It attests to the social welfare consciousness of the Kwantung Army. In it, the Sovereign pledges "to guarantee the freedom and rights of the people, and to designate their obligations" in accordance with the enumerated civil rights. These rights include personal liberty, property rights, religious and racial equality, right to public office, right to petition and to trial according to law. In addition to these widely accepted civil rights, the Guarantee Law specified two rights which deserve careful attention. "Article 9. Unless in accordance with law, the people of Manchukuo shall not be subject to taxation, requisition, penalty under any name. . . . Article 11. The people of Manchukuo should be protected from usury, excessive profit and all other unjust economic pressure."⁴⁸⁹ Article 9 was largely a guarantee against the traditional forms of economic injustice from which the people had suffered under bandits, war lords, and corrupt officials. Article 11, however, showed the attempt to forestall the modern forms of economic injustice caused by capitalism.⁴⁹⁰

The socio-political thinking of the Kwantung Army is clearly indicated in the recommendations prepared on the occasion of Itagaki's trip to Tokyo in January, 1932, which in

⁴⁸⁹ Guarantee Law of Civil Rights, ibid., Vol. V, p. 231.

⁴⁹⁰ Katakura Tadashi, Manshu kenkoku no kaiso, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 24.

part read as follows:

The struggle and efforts of the officers and soldiers during the present crisis are comparable to those at the time of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. However, among the soldiers are many who, unlike at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, have experienced labor movements or agrarian movements. Therefore, should they discover upon return to their native places that the economic conditions have worsened from the time of their departure, or feel that the various enterprises in Manchuria have been monopolized by capitalists, concession hunters or party politicians, they might complain of their struggles and think that they suffered in vain. If such became the case, the foundation of the Army could not be said to be unswerving. On the other hand, in considering that the industrial economy of the Imperial State has reached a deadlock, the time seems to have come to take the occasion of solving Manchurian problems to engage in serious reconsideration of the reform and progress of our social policy.⁴⁹¹

Through the establishment of the new state in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army attempted to expand the area under Japanese control, but the type of expansion was unusual: it held--and genuinely, it would appear--the beneficiaries to be the "People" of Japan and Manchuria.

The draft documents on the "Manmo kyowakoku" and the "Manmo jiyukoku" again designated as fundamental the two governing principles of "respect for the popular will," and of "equality of races," both of which inevitably possessed

⁴⁹¹ Instructions given to Itagaki, January 4, 1932. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 24-29.

certain propaganda functions. Yet, from the point of view of the ideology of the Kwantung Army, the content of these basic governing principles is of telling significance. The ideal of respect for the popular will is relevant to the form of the proposed government, which was termed a "constitutional republic" in the former and "democracy" in the latter. Certain limited elections for the selection of the legislators were considered. By a "democracy" was meant "a system that could carry out a government based in practice upon popular will," in which "the Sovereign--be he a monarch, a president or a chairman--represents the will of the people."⁴⁹² Although "will of the people" referred not to that of the individuals, but to the will of the local power holders,⁴⁹³ it is important to note that the Kwantung Army leaders who prepared for the new state upheld popular will as the source of political authority. Their thinking is in a clear contrast to the existing Japanese concept of the Sovereign as a sacred being who derived his authority from a source unrelated to the people. The "democratic" interpretation of sovereign authority was shortlived, as a few years later when the Manchurian Imperial System was promulgated, the source of sovereign authority in Manchuria was declared to depend upon the authority of the Japanese Emperor.⁴⁹⁴ A shift in the

⁴⁹²"Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," ibid., Vol. II, pp. 38f.

⁴⁹³Statement of Katakura Tadashi to the writer on June 13, 1959.

⁴⁹⁴Manchukuo Imperial Succession Law quoted in

Kwantung Army leadership brought about the change in the interpretation of the governing principle. At the time of the establishment of the new state, however, Pu Yi was installed "on the basis of the confidence of all people."⁴⁹⁵

The principle of racial equality, in view of the reality of Japanese domination, can be considered at worst a perfect sham, at best a concession to Chinese nationalism. Indeed, prior to the Manchurian Affair, the Kwantung Army leaders had warned against over-protection of the Japanese and had emphasized the importance of regarding the Chinese masses as the primary objective of administration. The "Manmo kyowakoku" and "Manmo jiyukoku" drafts expressly state that the new state is "as much as possible to provide equal treatment to its nationals and aliens, and thus no discrimination is to be set up with regard to the activities of the Japanese citizens."⁴⁹⁶ Non-discrimination had various meanings, however. Japan was to renounce the right of extra-territoriality, an act which could be considered a Japanese concession. On the side of gains, the acquisition of rights for mixed residence in the interior, land possession, deforestation, and mining should be mentioned. In other words, the

Katakura Tadashi, Manshu kenkoku no kaiso, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 20f.

⁴⁹⁵ Guarantee Law of Civil Rights, Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 230.

⁴⁹⁶ "Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," ibid., Vol. II, p. 47. "Manmo kyowakoku tochi taiko an," ibid., Vol. I, p. 170.

Japanese in the new state of Manchuria were to receive the same rights as the Chinese, and in turn assume equal responsibilities in tax, police, and legal duties. But the balance was definitely in favor of the Japanese, who were anxious to obtain a claim to Manchuria equal to that of the Chinese, the age-old masters of the Manchuria-Mongolia region. If the Japanese in Manchuria were to enhance their positions substantially under the coming state, it was not formally guaranteed that they would achieve superiority over others as a racial group. The Kwantung Army, like some members of the Manshu Seinen Renmei prior to the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair, now ruled that the Japanese should join the new state as "constituent parts," and not remain as aliens or conquerors.

The drafts also reject discrimination against foreign capital. Not only were the principles of the "open door" and "equal opportunity" affirmed, but the introduction of capital and technique from abroad were even encouraged. In particular the assistance of United States capital and technique were considered,⁴⁹⁷ and clearly Japan was to take the leading role in development of Manchuria's unexplored resources. Economic activities--capital investment as well as initiation and management of enterprises--were not to be left to free competition, however. For example, the development of natural resources was to be undertaken by capital groups under state control. National capital, including that of

⁴⁹⁷"Manmo jiyukoku setsuritsu an taiko," ibid., pp. 36f.

local government bodies, was to participate as much as possible, thereby preventing capitalists from monopolizing profits. Moreover, the development of Manchuria was to follow an overall economic plan that comprehended Japan, Japanese colonies, and Manchuria as a single unit.⁴⁹⁸ Thus, it was unlikely that much capital or technical assistance would be advanced from countries other than Japan, since the Kwantung Army welcomed capital but not capitalists, assistance but not participation. It was even doubtful that much help would come from Japan, which was suffering from depression and whose leadership was adverse to the system of state-controlled economy.

The various Kwantung Army blueprints for Manchuria which were full of ambiguities due to political and ideological considerations, were not necessarily understood or even known among its own officers. As late as January 27, 1932, twenty copies of "Manmo mondai zengo shori yoko" ("Outline of Manchuria-Mongolia Problems Settlement Measures")⁴⁹⁹ were prepared and distributed to the officers of the Kwantung Army in order to prevent the criticism that "the Army policy was unclear."⁵⁰⁰ From this document that candidly elaborated

⁴⁹⁸"Manmo kaihatsu hosaku an" ("Manchuria-Mongolia Development Plan"), ibid., Vol. III, pp. 32-36.

⁴⁹⁹"Manmo mondai zengo shori yoko" ("Outline of Manchuria-Mongolia Problems Settlement Measures"), January 27, 1932. Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 130-134.

⁵⁰⁰Ibid., p. 130.

Japanese interests, conclusions can be drawn concerning questions of priority, namely the relationship between the people of Japan and the people of Manchuria as beneficiaries of new Manchurian developments and the relationship between the Kwantung Army and the Government of Japan as controllers of the new state.

"Manmo mondai zengo shori yoko" insists upon the need to prevent economic opportunities in Manchuria from being abused by party politics or monopolized by capitalists, and emphasizes socialistic measures in Japan. It is surprisingly silent, however, on the question of the welfare of the Chinese masses. Moreover, it specifies that "though the policy of the 'open door' and 'equal opportunity' are to be declared, the interest of Japan and the Japanese shall, as a general rule, be given primary consideration."⁵⁰¹ In Manchuria the people of all racial groups were to be protected from class exploitation, but the Japanese were to be more protected. Formally, however, the Japanese in Manchuria were to be equal to the members of other racial groups.

With regard to the relationship between the Kwantung Army and the Government of Japan in controlling the new state, "Manmo mondai zengo shori yoko" again clearly indicates that "the execution of the policy of the Imperial State in Manchuria-Mongolia shall be initiated by the Kwantung Army

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 130-134.

Headquarters, and upon the establishment of the new state, shall be undertaken by the above in connection with the Privy Council to be formed in the new government.⁵⁰² The organization of the Government Department within the Kwantung Army Headquarters on December 18 could also be considered an attempt to maintain the supremacy of the Kwantung Army in dealing with Manchurian affairs, for it was created as a countermeasure to the planned formation of a Temporary Manchurian Affairs Committee under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister of Japan, presided by President Uchida of the South Manchuria Railway Company, and comprised of the Governor of Kwantung, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army, Consul General of Mukden, and Vice President of the South Manchuria Railway Company. It was to be in charge of the planning and execution of all matters concerning Manchuria except purely military operations.⁵⁰³

The Kwantung Army objected to this plan, holding that conditions in Manchuria required direction by a "simple and plain dictatorial organ," that the establishment of a new regime through undercover guidance necessitated secrecy, and that Chinese political leaders were already in close connection with the Kwantung Army.⁵⁰⁴ Later, the decisive position

502 Ibid., p. 133.

503 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 7.

504 Ibid., p. 13.

of the Kwantung Army was to be firmly established through international agreement, for the letter of Pu Yi to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army requesting Japanese defense, management of transportation, and assignment of advisers also specified that the "assignment will be upon the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, and the discharge will require the agreement of the said Commander."⁵⁰⁵ The Kwantung Army was not only to hold the reins of the Manchurian Government, but it was also to hold them over and beyond the control of both the central army authorities and the Government of Japan.

Execution of Kwantung Army Plans:
Manchukuo Established

Blueprints for the new state of Manchuria having been completed, the Kwantung Army turned to consideration of the means of execution. To this end, a series of staff conferences in January and February of 1932 dealt with such concrete issues as sources of funds, immigration program for Korean laborers, composition of customs officials, and construction of barracks and railways.⁵⁰⁶

The January 27 conference was of special importance as it laid out an outline of the order through which the

⁵⁰⁵ Letter of Pu Yi, Regent of Manchukuo to Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 217.

⁵⁰⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 35-37, 46f., 53-56, 91.

establishment of the new state was to proceed. It proposed that the governors of the provinces of Fengtien, Kirin, and Heilungkiang organize a Supreme Administrative Council responsible for the coördination and preparation of the establishment of the new state. The Administrative Council would issue a statement declaring independence from the Central Chinese Government. The Administrative Council would then consider such matters as the name, flag, declaration, government system, personnel, capital, and head of the new state. Decisions would be presented to the popular representative organs to be formed in each province for their agreement. The expression of popular will would take the form of petition and proposal. The Administrative Council was to decide upon the establishment of the central government in accordance with the trend of the popular will. The head of state would issue declarations, and enact laws. The representatives of Jehol and Mongolia would be invited to participate in the new state.⁵⁰⁷

In accordance with the Kwantung Army conference decisions of January 27, contacts were made with the provincial governors, who met on February 16-17 to execute the first steps of this program. This meeting had been delayed by a conflict between the forces of Ting Chao and Hsi Hsia that brought about the occupation of Harbin by the Japanese on

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-6.

February 5. Hsi Hsia of Kirin, Tsang Shih-yi of Fengtien, Chang Ching-hui of Heilungkiang and of the Special District, Ma Chan-shan, the incoming Governor of Heilungkiang, and Chao Hsin-po, the Mayor of Mukden, met and decided that a new state should be established, and that a Northeastern Administrative Council should be organized which would temporarily assume the functions of supreme authority over the three provinces and the Special District. The Supreme Council would make all necessary preparations for the founding of the new state.

The major point of contention among the Chinese leaders concerned the form of the state. The leaders were divided: Hsi Hsia insisted upon a monarchy, Tsang Shih-yi and Chao Hsin-po demanded a republic, and Chang Ching-hui was ambiguous. The Mongol Princes who attended the meeting on the second day also urged a monarchy. Hsuan Tung and his entourage desired to be restored.⁵⁰⁸ The conference agreed, following the decision of the Kwantung Army, to make Hsuan Tung the head of state, but the final decision on his title and the form of state was not reached until the 24th, when Itagaki, representing the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, persuaded Hsuan Tung to accept the title of Regent. The state, which had been conceived as minshu (which could be translated as "democracy" or "popular sovereignty"), was

⁵⁰⁸ Statement of Katakura Tadashi, op. cit.

changed to minpon (popular oriented). It was to be called Manchukuo.⁵⁰⁹

The remaining story of the birth of Manchukuo is relatively simple. Succeeding steps exactly followed the plans laid out by the Kwantung Army. The Northeastern Administrative Council issued the declaration of independence from China on February 18. The declaration was sent to all places in Manchuria. Societies for the acceleration of the foundation of the new state were organized in the various districts under the initiative of the Self-Government Guiding Board. Provincial conventions of the acceleration societies were held in Kirin, Heilungkiang, and Fengtien on February 24, 25, and 28, respectively, and were held as evidence of the general desire of the people for the founding of the new state. The All-Manchuria Convention took place in Mukden on the 29th, adopting a resolution designating Hsuan Tung as provisional head of the new state. The Northeastern Administrative Council then sent delegates to invite the former Emperor, who consented to accept the post for one year and was inaugurated as Regent of Manchukuo on March 9. On the same day, the Organic Law and the Guarantee Law of Civil Rights were promulgated as fundamental laws of the new state. The government principal members were appointed. Notification of the establishment of Manchukuo was then sent to the Powers, together with a request for recognition. The Pu Yi-Honjo

⁵⁰⁹Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 89f.

letters were exchanged on the 10th, although they were in fact signed on the 6th, prior to the formal establishment of Manchukuo. The Japanese, or, more specifically, the Kwantung Army control of the new state was thereby legalized.

Recapitulation

There can be no doubt that the independence of Manchuria, now Manchukuo, "was only made possible by the presence of the Japanese troops."⁵¹⁰ Every phase of the process followed the plans carefully prepared by the Kwantung Army staff. It should be clearly recognized, however, that in the course of policy planning and execution the Kwantung Army never operated in a vacuum. There were genuine opposition and resistance, and this restrained them from pursuing their most desired goal.

The most effective opposition from Tokyo was exercised in the realm of formal military action. Orders were issued and complied with on three occasions: prohibiting military action in Harbin on September 23, evacuating Tsitsihar on November 24, and suspending the advance to Chinchow on November 27. Each operation would have speeded up the military conquest of Manchuria; but each might also have invited an international uproar. Tokyo was, on the whole, sensitive to the reaction of the Powers. But the army leaders were equally concerned with the possibility of losing control over the

⁵¹⁰Lytton Report, op. cit., p. 198.

Kwantung Army, as was clearly evident in the Chief of the General Staff's decision to take over the command of the Kwantung Army.⁵¹¹

In the realm of overall policy planning, however, Tokyo's intentions were far from respected by the army in Manchuria. The reasons are complex. The nature of the disorderly Manchurian situation certainly gave room for political maneuvering. Political maneuvering by its very nature allowed little control, especially from a source far removed. Moreover, the very source of control lacked convincing policy to enforce. The Kwantung Army staff soon perceived that neither the military nor the civilian leaders in Tokyo had an established, viable Manchurian settlement program. Their impression is substantiated by comments in the Kido Diary of November 17 on "the lack of firm policy outside the army with regard to the future of the state."⁵¹² It seems that the difference between the government and the army, and between army leaders in Tokyo and in Manchuria, was not so much a matter of final policy objectives, but of scope and timing. Indeed, as far as the final objectives were concerned there was marked agreement not only to maintain but to expand Japan's interests in Manchuria. This agreement

⁵¹¹ Kido Diary records that Hayashi, director of the Bureau of Supplies and Equipment of the Ministry of War, remarked that the postponement of Manchurian settlement had disadvantageous effects from the point of military discipline. Kido Diary, October 15, 1931.

⁵¹² Ibid., November 17, 1931.

at the fundamental level undermined opposition and resistance at the program level. Tokyo's instructions regarding political maneuvers were more often warnings against exposure than against political activities per se.

The most important single concession of the Kwantung Army in respect to the political settlement of Manchuria was the creation of an independent state. However, it is in the very form of the concession that the ideological parentage of the Manchurian Affair is best indicated. The creation of an independent state based upon a popular movement for autonomy but controlled by Japan through international agreements and incorporating national-socialist principles was a settlement that far exceeded the imagination and approval of military and civilian leaders in Tokyo. The Manchurian Affair constituted an external expression of the radical reform movement that was originally inspired by Kita and Okawa and that grew among the young army officers believing in the need for action in depression-ridden Japan. The socio-economic thinking of the Kwantung Army, reflected in the administrative principles of the new state, attested to the anti-capitalistic attitude of that Army that developed in opposition to the existing system in Japan.

Also evident in the relationship between the Kita-Okawa radical reform movement and the Manchurian Affair, however, are important differences in ideology and in action that deny the full identity of the two. For example, although

the Kwantung Army leadership of Itagaki and Ishiwara had been affected by national-socialist thinking, particularly that of Okawa, they were simultaneously faced with other ideological challenges of a compelling nature. Being in Manchuria, they were greatly exposed to the rising impact of Chinese nationalism, for which the radical reformers at home had little answer. The principle of racial harmony, though in line with traditional Pan-Asianism, was born among the Manchurian Japanese and adopted by the Kwantung Army as the most effective counterweapon to the spread of Chinese nationalism. The emphasis upon the welfare of the Manchurian people also had the role of forestalling capitalist exploitation that might leave Manchuria vulnerable to the inroads of communist influence from the Soviet Union. Thus, the declarations of the Northeastern Administrative Council, the State of Manchukuo, and the Kyowa-kai (Harmony Association), which grew out of the Manshu Seinen Renmei, all expressed commitment to racial harmony and social welfare in order to offset the divisive effects of nationalism and class conflict.

As for action, it has been already indicated that the Manchurian Affair was not the conspiracy of the Sakurakai and that the Kwantung Army leadership was not under the control of Kita or Okawa. The Kwantung Army was willing to and actually did utilize the radicals at home to agitate for the settlement of Manchuria according to their plan, but there was no detailed planning or coördination between them to carry

out the Manchurian Affair and internal reform as a unified movement. On the contrary, the Kwantung Army leaders tended to view revolutionary radicalism as detrimental to national power; their disapproval of the October Incident shows this. They were thus more akin to such high army officers as Nagata, Imamura, and Tojo, who believed in extending the political and policy control of the army as a disciplined whole for the sake of successful action abroad.

Moreover, whereas the Kwantung Army was able to develop its ideas into programs, the radical reform movement in Japan never got beyond the stage of destructive action. Aside from Kita's Nihon kaizo hoan taiko, there is no document that would suggest the kind of reform that the military radicals might have undertaken. There are even doubts as to whether those radical officers were temperamentally capable of carrying out reform programs. The Kwantung Army, on the other hand proved its skill in translating goals and beliefs into policies and programs. Its radicalism showed the possibility of functioning not only in exerting general pressure, as was the case with the Sakurakai coups d'état or the later May 15 and February 26 Incidents, but also in imposing practical demands with which national policy had to come to terms.

As far as events in Manchuria are concerned, the establishment of Manchukuo marked the conclusion and culmination of the Sino-Japanese dispute which had begun on

September 18. But in the context of Japanese political and policy developments, the founding of the new state was only a beginning. Now Japan had to confront this massive fait accompli of the Kwantung Army, Manchukuo.

PART III

EFFECTS OF THE MANCHURIAN AFFAIR

CHAPTER IX

POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE MANCHURIAN AFFAIR

As events moved rapidly in Manchuria, culminating in the establishment of a new state on March 9, 1932, the Japanese Government came to realize the need to adjust its policy to the changing situation. The first sign of concession to the political developments was seen as early as November of 1931 under the Wakatsuki Cabinet, when the Foreign Office disclosed the official policy of assisting the sprouting Committees to Maintain Peace and Order. Since these local committees came to serve as nuclei of the independence movement, and since the newly organized provincial governments declared one after another their intention of merging into a single state, Tokyo was faced with the need to cope formally with the changing political situation.

New Seiyukai Cabinet Formed

Whereas the major efforts of the Wakatsuki Cabinet with regard to the Manchurian Affair had been directed towards preventing the expansion of hostilities, the task of the succeeding cabinet was to settle the crisis by recognition of the newly created order. This task fell upon President Inukai Tsuyoshi of the Seiyukai on December 12.

The immediate cause of the fall of the Wakatsuki Cabinet was disunity brought about by the maneuvers of the Minister of Home Affairs, who had been promoting a coalition cabinet movement. Before becoming the government party, the Seiyukai, in accordance with its traditional strong stand in foreign policy, had publicly endorsed the line of "independent diplomacy," by which it meant positive settlement of the Manchurian Affair regardless of the intervention of the League of Nations and the Powers. On December 27, 1931, the first statement of the Inukai Cabinet concerning the Manchurian Affair approved Japanese troop advancement to the hitherto prohibited area west of the River Liao on grounds of growing banditry and put the blame squarely on the Chang Hsueh-liang Government.⁵¹³ In tone and in fact, the Inukai Cabinet seemed to be in closer agreement with the demands of the military.

Inukai himself, however, was far from willing to settle the war in Manchuria on the terms of the military. In recommending Inukai to form a cabinet, the Emperor had requested Saionji to see that the new Prime Minister should be in full understanding of the gravity of the times, by which he meant the existing state of "undiscipline and despotism of the military."⁵¹⁴ Saionji had secured Inukai's agreement

⁵¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Information, Manshu jihen oyobi Shanghai jihen kankai kohyoshu, op. cit., pp. 97-99.

⁵¹⁴ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 160.

to maintain discipline of the military and to assert great prudence in financial and foreign policy.⁵¹⁵ The Inukai Cabinet was to bring the military under control in the attempt to bring about a settlement of the Manchurian Affair. The Inukai Cabinet from its very beginning had a significant weak spot, however--its Minister of War. The army had recommended for the portfolio Araki Sadao and Abe Nobuyuki. The former seemed to have been supported by the section chiefs of the Ministry of War and the General Staff, while the latter was largely the choice of Chief of the General Staff Kanaya.⁵¹⁶ Araki's popularity among the young officers was a known fact. Inukai assigned Araki to the portfolio, not because of positive preference but because of his desire to forestall the radicalism of the young officers by keeping their idol within the cabinet.⁵¹⁷ But the presence of Araki was to have quite the opposite effect, placing the cabinet under direct radical

⁵¹⁵ Kido Diary, December 12, 1931.

⁵¹⁶ Nakano, op. cit., pp. 171f.

⁵¹⁷ In organizing his cabinet, Inukai decided to exclude those who had engaged in the political maneuvers that caused the fall of the Wakatsuki Cabinet, notably Adachi Kenzo of Minseito and Kuhara Fusanosuke of Seiyukai. Kuhara was so incensed by this decision that Inukai feared that Kuhara might resort to such action as agitating the already restless young army officers, and felt the need of bringing Araki into the cabinet. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 163f.

pressure.⁵¹⁸ The appointment of Mori Kaku as Cabinet Secretary also undermined the political foundation of the Inukai Cabinet, for he engaged in various political maneuvers when he found the Prime Minister unsympathetic to his plan for full cooperation with the army.

Because his long association with Chinese problems had brought him into personal contact with Chinese leaders of various groups, Inukai considered himself well qualified to settle the Manchuria dispute. He was the patron of many Japanese adventurers who sought their fortunes in China. Although he did not object to the use of Japanese military power in the maintenance and expansion of Japanese rights and interests, he considered Chinese cooperation as essential and objected to overbearing and rash action that might cause adverse effects. Accordingly, Inukai's prescription for the settlement of the Manchurian Affair was prepared in the light of overall Chinese-Japanese relations. Attempts at reaching

⁵¹⁸ Upon becoming Minister of War, Araki undertook a major personnel change by appointing Prince Kanin as Chief of General Staff and bringing back General Mazaki Jinsaburo, Commander-in-Chief of the Taiwan Army, to the post of Vice-Chief of General Staff. Mazaki had been sent away to Taiwan three months before by Minami and Kanaya because of the danger of his instigating the radical young officers. Vice Minister of War Sugiyama, Vice-Chief of Staff Ninomiya, and Director of the First Department Tatekawa were respectively sent out to Fukuoka, Hiroshima, and Geneva. Nagata was transferred to a minor post in the General Staff, Tojo to Kumamoto, and Imamura to Shanghai. In other words, those who had suppressed the October Incident because of their belief in the need to control the radicalism of the young officers were transferred from the key posts in Tokyo.

an understanding with China on Japanese rights in Manchuria were to be largely economic, in return for which continued recognition was to be granted to Chinese suzerainty over Manchuria, which was to be governed by a separate regime.⁵¹⁹ Inukai's plan ran counter to that of the Kwantung Army, which regarded Japanese control of Manchuria as the key objective and insisted upon denying China any claim in the future of Manchuria. In a letter to Marshal Uehara Yusaku written on February 15, 1932, Inukai clearly expressed his plan and determination to undertake the settlement of the Manchurian Affair.

The end of the Manchurian Affair is approaching, but should an independent state be established [in Manchuria], head-on collision with the Nine Power Treaty would be inevitable. I have therefore been working hard at keeping the form of a separate regime and at attaining our objectives in substance. My aim is to terminate the present crisis as soon as possible, and my ideal is to take the occasion to improve relations with China. As I have many old friends among the leaders of the various factions in both south and north China, I am in a much more advantageous position than the ordinary government officials to undertake negotiations.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ Kojima Kazuo, Ichi roseijika no kaiso (Recollection of an Old Politician) (Tokyo: 1951), pp. 265f.

⁵²⁰ Letter from Inukai Tsuyoshi to Uehara Yusaku, February 15, 1932. The letter was deleted from Washio Yoshinao, Inukai Bokudo Den by order of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The New Negotiations

Negotiations with China were attempted through Inukai's personal channels. Kayano Nagatomo, an old China hand and a confidant of Inukai, was sent secretly to Nanking shortly after the formation of the Inukai Cabinet. The proposed settlement formula involved Japan's recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, the establishment of a political affairs committee, headed by Chu Cheng, then head of the Judicial Yuan and leader of the Kuomintang, to settle local problems and economic development of Manchuria by Japan and China on the basis of equality. Yamamoto Jotaro, past president of the South Manchuria Railway Company and of the Seiyukai, was to be sent to Manchuria to conclude formal arrangements with Chu Cheng.⁵²¹ Kayano is said to have succeeded in reaching agreement with Sun Fo, head of the Executive Yuan and son of Sun Yat-sen, but his mission failed when it became known to Mori, who disclosed the plan to the army.⁵²²

Mori believed in the need to sever Manchuria from China by means of military force in order to keep the area under complete Japanese control.⁵²³ In his determination to bring Manchuria under control, he went farther than the

⁵²¹ Inukai Takero, "Yamamoto Jotaro to Inukai Tsuyoshi, Mori Kaku" ("Yamamoto Jotaro and Inukai Tsuyoshi, Mori Kaku"), Shinbunmei, July, 1960.

⁵²² Kojima, op. cit., pp. 265f.

⁵²³ Yamaura, op. cit., pp. 700f.

Kwantung Army at the time, rejecting the approval of an independent state of Manchukuo on the basis that such action might obstruct the possibility of later annexation.⁵²⁴ Thus Inukai's Manchurian settlement plan was by no means agreed upon by the inner circle of the cabinet, but Inukai and Yoshizawa Kenkichi, who had returned from Paris to become Foreign Minister, attempted to forestall the creation of an independent Manchukuo. When Ishiwara returned from Manchuria in February to confer with the central army authorities, Yoshizawa requested him to postpone the scheduled independence of Manchukuo since adverse international repercussions seemed inevitable. Ishiwara responded, however, that preparations had been completed and the government could prevent the execution of independence only by issuing a formal order.⁵²⁵ Forthright destruction of the Manchurian regime by that time was impossible, for such action would vitally affect Japanese foreign policy as well as endanger the cabinet's existence. Thus the government policy with regard to the crucial point of the independence of Manchukuo remained unclarified.

Attempts at policy coördination continued within the army as well as between the army and the government. Minister of War Araki summoned the staff officers of the Kwantung Army to Tokyo for consultation. Itagaki, who returned in early

⁵²⁴ Kojima, op. cit., p. 266.

⁵²⁵ Yoshizawa Kenkichi, Gaiho rokuju nen (Sixty Years' Diplomacy) (Tokyo: 1958), p. 142.

January, was commissioned by the Kwantung Army to insist upon the need for the new regime in Manchuria "to clearly sever relations with China proper, for which it had to be made an independent state in name as well as in fact." Moreover he was to explain that "though neither the Nine Power Treaty nor the Covenant of the League permits Japan to resort to direct action in order to sever [Manchuria] from China proper, it is not against the spirit of the respective international agreements for the Chinese themselves to break up internally."⁵²⁶ He was to report on the details of the plans prepared for the new state in Manchuria, including the installment of Pu Yi, the time of the establishment, the site of the capital, the organization of the government, and the territory under administration.⁵²⁷

"Shina Mondai Shori Hoshin" ("China Problem Settlement Policy"), which was drawn upon the agreement of the Ministries of War, Navy, and Foreign Affairs on the occasion of Itagaki's return to Tokyo, is a document of compromise on the fundamental question of the regime in Manchuria. "For the time being, the region of Manchuria-Mongolia will be under the administration and control of a regime which is separate and independent from the regime in China proper, and gradually it

⁵²⁶ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 25.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., pp. 23f.

will be directed towards possessing the form of a state."⁵²⁸ "The local government or the newly unified regime in the Manchuria-Mongolia region is to be the party with which to negotiate the restoration and expansion of Japanese rights and interests in the region." However, with a view to directing the Chinese Government to abandon any claim over Manchuria-Mongolia, "direct negotiations with the Chinese Government are to be postponed as long as possible."⁵²⁹ No clarification was made as to the type of relationship to be left between China and the new regime in Manchuria, although the direction which the document suggested was one towards complete severance. There are, furthermore, no reflections of the bits of idealism, like racial solidarity and social equality, that characterized the Kwantung Army blueprints for the new state. From the point of view of national policy formulation, the interest of the indigenous population of Manchuria receded far into the background, while Japanese interests were predominant. The establishment of the new regime "was to take the form of voluntary action by the Chinese" in order to avoid conflict with the Nine Power Treaty.⁵³⁰ The placement of Japanese in the new regime was to be part of a policy "to strengthen Japan's political control" over

⁵²⁸"Shina mondai shori hoshin" ("China Problem Settlement Policy"), January 6, 1932. Ibid., p. 63.

⁵²⁹Ibid., p. 67.

⁵³⁰Ibid., p. 65.

Manchuria.⁵³¹ The fundamental objective with regard to Manchuria was to make it function "under Japanese power" to serve as "major element for the eternal existence of the Imperial nation."⁵³² In addition to upholding the objective of integrating Japan and Manchuria as a "common economic unit," the Kwantung Army's anticapitalist bias was reflected in the document, which stated that "the Japanese rights and interests in the region will not be left to the monopoly of certain capitalists, but will be such as to let the general public enjoy the benefits equally."⁵³³

Two months later, on March 12, the cabinet adopted "Manmo Mondai Shori Hoshin Yoko" ("Outline of Manchuria-Mongolia Problem Settlement Policy"), which is an almost exact reproduction of the main points of the interministerial "Shina mondai shori hoshin." Some omissions seem significant, notably disappearance of the policy to avoid negotiations with China and the denial of free entry of capitalists to Manchuria. A few changes in phrasing are, moreover, in the direction of moderation. The fundamental objective with regard to Manchuria was changed from making it function "under the power" to "under the assistance" of the Imperial nation. The new regime in Manchuria was to be directed towards possessing not "the form" but "the substance" of a state.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Ibid., p. 64. ⁵³² Ibid., p. 63.

⁵³³ Ibid., pp. 65f.

⁵³⁴ "Manmo mondai shori hoshin yoko" ("Outline of Manchuria-Mongolia Problem Settlement Policy"), Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., pp. 204f.

The importance of these changes should be recognized: three days prior to the cabinet adoption of "Manno mondai shori hoshin yoko," the new state had been formally declared, and on the 12th notifications were sent to the Powers to request recognition. The cabinet revision under the circumstances indicates continued reluctance within the government to acknowledge the established state of affairs in Manchuria. The Inukai Cabinet could not prevent the independence of Manchukuo, as it had originally attempted, but it was now to deny formal recognition of the new state in order to alleviate international accusations.

The Shanghai Affair

The gravity of the decision concerning Japanese relations with the State of Manchukuo must be evaluated against the backdrop of international relations in the spring of 1932. Although ever since the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair Japanese operations had been subject to international reproach, a certain sympathy among the Powers had considerably modified its severity. The Powers were forced to reconsider their attitude in late January of 1932 when Sino-Japanese hostilities expanded to Shanghai. Any action against the Chinese taken by a Power with treaty rights at Shanghai involved the others. The International Settlement and the French Settlement, in which most foreign nationals resided, had come to be recognized as neutral ground in regard to hostilities between Chinese armies engaged in civil strife.

The Powers could resort to the use of their respective armed forces in order to protect the settlements. When Sino-Japanese tension, resulting indirectly from the Manchurian Affair and directly from a case of Chinese assault on Japanese nationals, reached a point of imminent danger to the peace and property of the settlements, the Municipal Council of the International Settlement declared a state of emergency and called for the garrison troops of the Powers to occupy the sectors of the settlement assigned to them for defense. It was during the Japanese occupation of its assigned part of the settlement that war broke out with the Chinese forces.

The international implications of the Shanghai Affair were well understood by the Japanese Government. Whereas the fundamental policy with regard to the Powers concerning the Manchurian Affair was one of rejecting intervention, the Japanese Government from the very beginning solicited the aid of the British, American, and French Governments in persuading the Chinese authorities to withdraw troops to a safe distance from Shanghai, and continued to rely on the mediation of the Powers in bringing about a cessation of hostilities.⁵³⁵ The principal reason for invoking the assistance of the Powers to reach an early settlement in Shanghai, aside from the question of common international interest in

⁵³⁵Cable No. 57 from Foreign Office to Shigemitsu. Sent February 6, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 492-494.

the restoration of peace, was the desire to forestall as much as possible unfavorable effects on the settlement of the Manchurian Affair.

In this respect, both the army and the navy seem to have concurred with the government. On February 13, the Ministers of Army and Navy respectively instructed the Ninth Division Commander and the Third Fleet Admiral in Shanghai that the policy of the government was "to avoid aggravation and expansion of the situation . . . especially in the Shanghai area." They explained that Japanese

policy with regard to China proper differs entirely from that with regard to Manchuria, in that the former has to be in accord with the principle of coöperating voluntarily with the Powers in order to bring about a peaceful market. . . . It is most desired that Japanese military action be kept under control in order to maintain coöperation with the Powers, . . . [and] [that] no interference be attempted with regard to Chinese internal politics so long as international treaties are respected and duties are executed faithfully by the Chinese regime or administrative body.⁵³⁶

In other words, neither through overt military action nor through political maneuvers was Japan to entertain territorial or political control in China proper.

⁵³⁶ Instruction of Ministers of War and Navy transmitted in Cable No. 493 from Foreign Office to Geneva, United States, China, Peking, Mukden, Canton. Sent February 13, 1932. Ibid., pp. 691f.

In spite of Japan's policy of avoiding aggravation of the Shanghai Affair and willingness to seek international mediation, which did succeed in attaining a cessation of hostilities on March 3 of 1932, the reaction of the Powers to Japanese adventures on the continent hardened drastically. From the League came the warning--addressed, for the first time, to Japan alone--that she "had an incalculable responsibility before the public opinion of the world to be just and restrained in her relations with China."⁵³⁷ A special session of the League Assembly to consider the Sino-Japanese conflict convened on March 3 upon Chinese request. The smaller Powers advocated vindication of the moral authority of the League through use of strong measures against Japan. The major Powers, which previously had been less inclined to reproach Japan partly out of desire to safeguard their own interests in China from lawlessness and recovery claims, and partly out of fear of becoming involved in a war against Japan, now also leaned in this direction.

The United States openly condemned Japan. Having become increasingly concerned with what seemed, with the occupation of Chinchow on January 3, the complete subjugation of Manchuria by Japan, the Secretary of State of the United States had already sent identical notes to Japan and China on the 7th

⁵³⁷ Note dispatched by Paul-Boncour, President of the Council, on February 16, 1932. Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs 1932 (Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 566.

in which he outlined the so-called Stimson doctrine of non-recognition.⁵³⁸ With the spread of hostilities to Shanghai and the hardening of Stimson's attitude, a second American public document of non-recognition was issued on February 23 in the form of a letter addressed by Stimson to Senator Borah, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. In short, the non-recognition doctrine was a declaration of disapproval by the United States of any situation, treaty, or agreement entered into by the Government of Japan or the Government of China in violation of the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

The effect of the Stimson doctrine has often been minimized on the grounds that it lacked teeth and failed to win the support of other Powers. In fact, Stimson was twice turned down by the British Foreign Minister, Sir John Simon, in his attempt to bring about an Anglo-American joint protest against Japan. However, the non-recognition doctrine found its way into the League through the very person who had rebuffed Stimson. On March 7 Simon proposed that the Assembly declare that "changes brought about by means contrary" to the principles of the Covenant and of the Kellogg-Briand Pact "manifestly could not receive the approval of members of the

⁵³⁸ Note dispatched by Secretary Stimson, Secretary of State of the United States, on January 7, 1932. Ibid., pp. 540f.

Assembly of Nations."⁵³⁹ The final draft of the Assembly resolution of March 11 embodied the doctrine of non-recognition of situations achieved in violation of treaty obligations. Furthermore, the principle was declared to apply to Manchuria as well as to China. Thus, by the time the new state of Manchukuo declared her independence, the world had clearly lined up against granting recognition to the creation of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. The hostile international climate resulting from the Shanghai Affair, and the declaration of the non-recognition doctrine by the United States and the League Assembly, exerted great pressure on the Japanese Government, which now had to come to terms with the most powerful and organized segment of its population.

Japan: Party Government Threatened

The Inukai Cabinet continued to postpone granting de jure recognition to Manchukuo. With the all-important purpose of avoiding further complications with the Powers, the cabinet decided "not to grant for the time being recognition within the meaning of international law," but only to direct the new state to consolidate its internal conditions and "gradually to develop foreign relations, especially with regard to treaties and recognition."⁵⁴⁰ The Japanese Govern-

⁵³⁹ Resolution of the Assembly of the League of Nations, March 11, 1932. Ibid., pp. 578f.

⁵⁴⁰ Cable No. 798 from Foreign Office to United States, Geneva, Russia. Sent March 15, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. IX, p. 7.

ment on March 18 merely acknowledged the receipt of the notification of the establishment of Manchukuo.

The postponement of recognition, under the circumstances, was a significant act. It provided time for the government to gain control over the military and negotiate a settlement over Manchuria both agreeable to China and acceptable to the world. Should Chinese formal suzerainty be recognized, the world was still willing to allow Japanese control over Manchuria, as the Lytton Report was to demonstrate a few months later. The successful use of the time thus gained obviously depended, however, upon the political strength of the Inukai Cabinet. The February general elections had given the Seiyukai an absolute Diet majority of three hundred and four to the Minseito's one hundred and forty-seven members. But although the political power of the Inukai Cabinet within Parliament was strengthened, the power of the Parliament itself was waning vis-à-vis the military. The control of the military, which had been the major problem of the government ever since the beginning of the Manchurian Affair, now became all the more important in the effort of saving Japan from world-wide condemnation, and all the more difficult.

The political pendulum during the course of the Manchurian Affair had swung far right. The Manchurian Affair had received the wholehearted support of the people at large, who had listened to the appeals for action of the army and

the Japanese in Manchuria even prior to the opening of hostilities. The populace rejoiced over the military achievements. Moreover, since the whole issue of the protection of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria was closely related to the feeling of unrest and uncertainty at home, Japanese control over Manchuria was taken as a sign for a more prosperous future. The actual war boom seemed to confirm that great benefits were expected of Manchuria. In fact, the leading dailies fully endorsed the military action in Manchuria as a righteous act of self-defense. Even the Asahi, which was forthright in criticizing the arrogance of the military, supported the Manchurian Affair on the basis that Japan had too long endured Chinese hostility and had acted in defense of important rights and interests which were being violated.⁵⁴¹ A police report on anti-war movements stated that the activities and propaganda of the Nihon Hantei Domei, an affiliate of the Japan Communist Party, "were extremely ineffectual."⁵⁴²

Even among the proletarian parties, the Zenkoku Rono Taishuto, which at the initial stage of the Manchurian

⁵⁴¹ Asahi Shimbun, "Keneki yogo wa genshuku" ("Protection of Rights and Interests is Grave Matter"), September 20, 1931.

⁵⁴² Ministry of Home Affairs, Security Section of the Police Bureau, Manshu jihen o chushin to suru hansen hangun undo no jokyo narabi sono torishimari jokyo (Conditions of Anti-war and Anti-military Activities Centered around Manchurian Affair and their Control), February, 1932. Microfilm in the possession of Diet Library.

Affair had condemned military action as "imperialist war,"⁵⁴³ could not maintain its original attitude and yielded considerable strength to the Nihon Kokumin Shakaito, the national socialist party organized under the initiative of Shimonaka Yasaburo. The Shakai Minshuto also broke up; one faction, under Akamatsu Katsumaro, formed the Nihon Kokka Shakaito. These national socialist parties called for the establishment of "a new Japan without exploitation" under the reign of the Emperor, and the creation of "a new world order on the principle of equality of races and equity of resources."⁵⁴⁴ The "nation" now replaced the "class" as the medium for unity, for only upon nationally securing the resources of Manchuria would there be any profits to distribute on the basis of equality.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ The Zenkoku Rono Taishuto declaration of September 18 still regarded the war in Manchuria as an enterprise of the Japanese capitalists and landlords to protect their interests, and expressed the intention of fighting against the "imperialist bourgeoisie and their collaborators." Kada Tetsuji, Nihon kokka shugi hihan (Criticism of Japanese Nationalism) (Tokyo: 1932), pp. 144f.

⁵⁴⁴ Kyochokai, Kokka shugi undo no gensei (Present State of Nationalist Movement) (Tokyo: 1932), pp. 23-27.

⁵⁴⁵ Tsukui Tatsuo states that "Manchuria-Mongolia is an absolutely necessary territory for the existence of the Japanese nation and the Japanese people, and transcends the problem of capitalism and socialism. . . . Socialism is not magic so it cannot produce something from nothing. Justice of distribution may be expected from socialism, but when the resources to be distributed themselves are so poor, whatever just distribution there is will be negligible. If we were to abandon Manchuria-Mongolia . . . as advocated by the Communist Party, and if the Japanese people were to be . . . in mainland Japan alone, they would probably have to accept"

Against the backdrop of surging nationalism that expressed itself in demands for favorable settlement in Manchuria, the cabinet could not afford to appear compromising lest it endanger its political survival. At the same time it could not arouse further international antipathy in order to protect the national interest. The Manchurian settlement policy Inukai conceived in this dilemma brought about army resentment, especially after his plans became known on the occasion of the dispatch of Kayano.⁵⁴⁶ And disagreement with Manchurian policy constituted only part of the army threat. The Inukai Cabinet was also subject to army attack precisely because it was a party government. As has already been shown, anti-party sentiment had been growing even prior to the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair, especially among the young army officers in alliance with such advocates of radical reform as Okawa, Kita, and Nishida. After the exposure of coup d'état plots in March and October of 1931,⁵⁴⁷ this sentiment came to exert increasing political impact.

the fate of starvation the moment they gained justice of distribution. Therefore Japan must augment her poor resources somewhere. This is a proper demand for the maintenance of her right of existence." (The omission occurs in the original due to inspection.) Tsukui Tatsuo, Nihonteki shakai shugi no teisho (Proposal for a Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo: 1932), p. 80.

⁵⁴⁶ Kojima, op. cit., p. 266.

⁵⁴⁷ For the March and October Incidents, see, respectively, Part I, Chapter 2, pp. 61f., and Part II, Chapter 6, pp. 183-186.

Radical reform movements within the army were disciplined after the October Incident and were considered "not likely to plunge into action unreasonably."⁵⁴⁸ However, while on one hand assuring the control of radicalism in the army, Nagata Tetsuzan on the other hand underlined the "fairly serious antagonism against the established political parties" that continued to exist.⁵⁴⁹ Minister of War Araki showed no reluctance in publicizing his sympathy for the young radical officers. He guaranteed that "so long as [he] was Minister, [he] would not allow the army to resort to violence and would take the responsibility of maintaining public order in the Imperial capital," but declared that he was dissatisfied with the present cabinet and "could not leave the young officers to their fate, when they were truly of pure intentions and were sincerely concerned for the nation."⁵⁵⁰ Rumors of an army coup d'état circulated from time to time as if to substantiate the explosive feelings against the political parties.⁵⁵¹ The assassinations of

⁵⁴⁸ Statement of Nagata Tetsuzan to Kido in Kido Diary, March 9, 1932.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 218.

⁵⁵¹ With regard to rumors of an army coup d'état, Kido Diary, January 31, 1932, records: "The so-called conspiracy of the military has not terminated at all. They have been meeting with the members of Shakai Minshuto . . . and devising schemes. . . . It is rumored that Mori is participating and Kuhara is also connected with this movement. It is said that the [plot] which is to be carried out around

former Minister of Finance Inoue Junnosuke on February 9 and of the leading industrialist of the Mitsui interests, Dan Takuma, on March 5 exposed the terrorist designs of the Ketsumeidan, an organization under the direction of Buddhist Priest Inoue Nissho which was pledged to eliminate leaders of the political parties and the court and industrial circles who were allegedly endangering the fate of the nation by their selfish exercise of power. The future seemed dark for party government in Japan.

The fatal weakness of the political parties was that they lacked the strength and integrity to fight back against forces determined to destroy them. Indeed, the coalition government movement of Adachi at the end of the Wakatsuki Cabinet had fraternized with the army in order to gain political power. In the Inukai Cabinet, it was Cabinet Secretary Mori who worked for the death of party government. Convinced of the need for drastic internal reform and external action, Mori had expected the Inukai Cabinet to carry out his program in coöperation with the army. Finding himself squarely opposed by Inukai, he began to maneuver for the formation of a cabinet under Hiranuma Kiichiro. Minister of War Araki, who had expressed support for the cause of the radical young

February 10, is to eliminate the present Prime Minister, and to form a cabinet headed by a military man. Araki is rumored." Harada Diary on February 18 and 24 also records the rumors of an imminent army coup d'état. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 217f., 220-227.

officers, stated that "only Hiranuma would be able to pacify them."⁵⁵² On the other hand, according to Obata Binashiro, director of the Strategy Section of the General Staff,⁵⁵³ and Suzuki Teiichi, of the Department of Military Affairs of the Ministry of War, the field-grade officers in contact with Okawa Shumei were pleased with having Araki in a cabinet post and were unlikely to resort to action so long as he remained in that position.⁵⁵⁴ There were also reports of an Araki Cabinet scheme in which the post of Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal would go to Hiranuma.⁵⁵⁵

The court circle were seriously disturbed not only to find the foundations of party government crumbling rapidly, but also to feel that those serving close to the Emperor were also targets of attack. Saionji was determined "not to allow Hiranuma to enter into the court circle" but conceded that some use of his influence was unavoidable in forestalling the execution of radical plots.⁵⁵⁶ As the elder statesman entrusted with the function of cabinet making, Saionji feared the approaching end of party government. To Konoe Ayamaro, who visited him on February 24, he expressed his desire "to decline

⁵⁵² Ibid., p. 218.

⁵⁵³ Obata replaced Imamura Hitoshi.

⁵⁵⁴ Kido Diary, February 19, 1932.

⁵⁵⁵ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 218.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 221.

the privileges and title of Genro [elder statesman]." "Recent political trends were gradually moving in a direction opposed to the Prince's [Saionji's] plans and expectations. For example, to recommend a military man to form the succeeding cabinet in case of a government change, was beyond [his] endurance."⁵⁵⁷ The young confidants of Saionji, such as Kido, Harada, and Konoe, tried to feel out the nature and strength of army demands. They were assured by Suzuki Teiichi that he represented the views of the majority of the field-grade officers, and that the army was not nominating any specific person for Prime Minister.⁵⁵⁸ Suzuki did state, however, that the army could not leave future political developments in the hands of the established political parties, and that "they desired and had considerable demands with regard to the purification and reform of political circles."⁵⁵⁹

Early in 1932, with the Manchurian Affair about to come to a successful end, the Kwantung Army also formally expressed its desire for the execution of internal reform. The question of priority between internal reform and external expansion had, as we have seen, been a point of contention among the radical reformers of the military; the Kwantung Army leadership had held that action in Manchuria should precede the execution of internal reform. Memoranda prepared

⁵⁵⁷Kido Diary, February 26, 1932.

⁵⁵⁸Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 228.

⁵⁵⁹Kido Diary, March 1, 1932.

on the occasion of Itagaki's and Ishiwara's returns to Tokyo respectively in January and February contained demands for major political reforms. "Subjugation of political parties" in Japan was considered indispensable to carrying out the operations in Manchuria.⁵⁶⁰ Henceforth Manchurian problems were to be "dealt with from the point of national interest," rejecting "party intervention" and safeguarding against "being used for party interests and politics."⁵⁶¹ In Itagaki's memorandum, major reforms in social administration were also outlined with a view to winning the people over, especially those who participated in military action, to the cause of Manchuria development. The following programs were presented as concrete examples: (1) group immigration to Manchuria-Mongolia, giving priority to soldiers who had served at the front; (2) purchase of various profitable shares of industries in Manchuria under state guarantee by community funds of areas from which many soldiers had been drafted, such as Tohoku (northeastern part of Japan); (3) import of inexpensive Manchurian coal to develop steam-power generation in Japan and thereby lower industrial costs for the benefit of the general public.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Instruction to Ishiwara. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 70.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 29.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

With party government generally regarded with serious misgivings and the Kwantung Army demanding the removal of Manchuria settlement from party politics, the question of replacement of the top officers of the South Manchuria Railway Company in April, 1932, brought the party leaders and the army into direct conflict. Traditionally, the heads of the South Manchuria Railway Company were political appointees. The Inukai Cabinet now wished to transfer President Uchida and Vice President Eguchi, who had been chosen by the Minseito Government. The army, however, pointed to the frequent changes of heads of colonial administration as typical abuses resulting from party politics. Army opinion rallied for the principle of the "permanency of the President of the South Manchuria Railway Company." President Uchida was entirely satisfactory to the Kwantung Army, but Vice President Eguchi was unpopular because he based his judgment and action upon the financial interests of the company.

It was the dissatisfaction of certain elements within the central army that led the Minister of Colonial Administration to request the resignation of Eguchi, which in turn so infuriated Uchida and the Kwantung Army that the Prime Minister was finally led to an attempt to pacify Uchida for the sake of saving the cabinet. Inukai himself was unfavorable to Uchida and insisted upon the appointment of Yamamoto Jotaro. He observed the case as one of "curing the obstacles which Yamamoto feared," namely, "the rampancy of the military

in Manchuria."⁵⁶³ However, since the Minister of War considered it impossible to control the dissatisfaction of the Kwantung Army should Uchida be allowed to resign,⁵⁶⁴ and since the weakening of Araki's authority might create serious problems of discipline within the army,⁵⁶⁵ Inukai was persuaded by various colleagues and upon the advice of the court circle to formally request Uchida to remain in office. The question of army discipline was becoming a major political lever.

Inukai seems, however, to have continued efforts at controlling the army, efforts which led, instead, to the intensification of army antagonism. The most direct measure Inukai had in mind was the elimination of what appeared to be the very root of indiscipline in the military--the insubordination of young officers. Again, the letter of Inukai to Marshal Uehara is revealing:

what is most worrisome is the fact that the will of the senior officers is not thoroughly observed by the subordinates. For example, the action in Manchuria seems to have been brought about by the united power of the field-grade officers, who made their superiors acquiesce automatically. . . . It is feared that it

⁵⁶³ Letter of Inukai Tsuyoshi to Ito Miyaji. Yamamoto Jotaro Denki Hensankai, Yamamoto Jotaro (Tokyo: 1942), p. 829.

⁵⁶⁴ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 268.

⁵⁶⁵ Statement of Suzuki Teiichi to Kido. Kido Diary, April 13, 1932.

might become customary to act single-mindedly upon the belief that should those who hold direct command over regiments unite and cause a disturbance, the superiors would finally give ex post facto approval to all matters, and that [such a trend] might create major change in military control and discipline. .

. . Therefore I wish the elders of the army to take remedial measures now, when the malady has not yet spread widely. The so-called coup d'état incident under the last cabinet has been caused by the above mentioned tendency and is its outward expression.⁵⁶⁶

Apparently, Inukai even went farther, however, considering taking the question of army discipline into his own hands. He pondered the idea of proposing to the Emperor "to dismiss about thirty young officers,"⁵⁶⁷ with the approval of the Chief of the General Staff, Prince Kanin. This severity was never imposed. In retrospect, it appears unlikely to have repressed the reform movement under the initiative of army officers. Indeed, such action might even have induced more unrestrained radicalism. However, since the course of military ascendancy following the Manchurian Affair was marked by a remarkable lack of strict disciplinary actions such as dismissals or penalties, Inukai's plan is significant. In fact, Inukai's determination to oppose the power of the military might have caused his own death at their hands.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ Letter of Inukai Tsuyoshi to Uehara Yusaku.

⁵⁶⁷ Kojima, op. cit., p. 270. Yoshizawa, op. cit., p. 145.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. It is said that Mori Kaku disclosed Inukai's planned disciplinary measure to the military.

It is unlikely that Inukai actually sought the direct intervention of the Emperor. Nevertheless, the military charged him on this ground and was bitterly aroused. The major complaint of Minister of War Araki against the Prime Minister was based on his "attitude of attempting to control the army by resorting to Imperial authority."⁵⁶⁹ What in fact took place under the Inukai Cabinet was an effort to request an Imperial warning to the military leaders against any aggrandizement of hostilities at the time of the Shanghai Affair.⁵⁷⁰

The military also suspected that Inukai's free recourse to personal channels in undertaking negotiations for a settlement with China, without the previous approval of the military, would be based upon his plan to call upon an Imperial fiat. The Harada Diary of March 3 records that the army was infuriated to learn that Inukai was personally conferring with the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires to create a neutral zone in Shanghai upon mutual withdrawal of troops, and thereupon to enter into direct negotiations. To the Chinese question of what he planned to do in the event that the army would not comply with the terms of agreement, Inukai was said to have replied that he was in possession of "a certain means." Again the army suspected that this certain means involved appealing

⁵⁶⁹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 218.

⁵⁷⁰ Kido Diary, February 4, 1932.

to the Imperial command.⁵⁷¹ It is important to note at this point that a strong force at the highest level of Japanese politics constantly endeavored to neutralize the political influence of the Emperor. It was the unswerving conviction of Saionji, the last and the only existing elder statesman, that the function of a constitutional monarch was to act in accordance with the advice of those in responsible posts, and not to override their decisions nor to take the initiative in formulating policy. For the prevention of Imperial despotism, and for the proper development of constitutional government, Saionji's concept was theoretically beyond reproach. However, in the context of the existing Japanese political structure in which the military could defy the civil government under the mantle of the "independence of the Supreme Command," and especially when the settlement of the Manchurian Affair depended upon the successful control of the army, the lack of Imperial intervention in fact meant the abrogation of the only available countervailing source of political authority. Nevertheless, Saionji consistently opposed the resort to Imperial admonition for he judged, for example, that "even if the Emperor spoke, the army would not possibly obey," and "should the Emperor express himself and the army disobey, it would seriously damage the Imperial character."⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 231.

⁵⁷² Ibid., pp. 420f.

Inukai also expected to control the military through revitalization of party government. He was well aware of "the demoralized and corrupt social conditions that enraged the high-spirited people,"⁵⁷³ and gave particular attention at the time of organizing his cabinet to excluding those whose records were not beyond reproach. Although he himself had once led the attack on the corruption of political parties, he publicly declared the importance of safeguarding parliamentary government during the short period of his cabinet. Inukai's radio speech on May 1, prepared in connection with a special week marking the achievement of one million radio listeners in Japan, was said to have seriously provoked the military.⁵⁷⁴ Inukai indicated that the cause of the existing ideological crisis came from both right and left extremism, which "seemed squarely opposed to each other in form: their difference in substance, however, was extremely negligible in that they both followed revolutionary lines." The solution to the spread of extremism was political reform, not through the rejection of parliamentary government, as recently held in some circles, but through the improvement of parliamentary government in terms of election laws and the elected rulers.⁵⁷⁵ Apparently he was optimistic that, unlike the time when he had fought in the Diet with some thirty men,

⁵⁷³ Letter of Inukai Tsuyoshi to Uehara Yusaku.

⁵⁷⁴ Statement of Suzuki Teiichi to Kido. Kido Diary, May 17, 1932. Yamaura, op. cit., p. 794.

⁵⁷⁵ Washio Yoshinao, op. cit., pp. 953f.

he now, with the great majority of the Seiyukai under his command, could "gain some effect."⁵⁷⁶ In short, in championing the cause of parliamentary government, Inukai attempted to mobilize the forces for moderation, however indirectly, and thus to prevent the growing power of the military.

Assassination of Inukai

The political power feud under the Inukai Cabinet came to an abrupt end on May 15 with the assassination of the Prime Minister. Modern Japanese history has witnessed many cases of murder of leading officials. What distinguished the assassination of Inukai was, in the words of the Fukuoka Nichi Nichi editorial which forthrightly condemned the action of the military, that

the present case was undertaken in midday, moreover by army and navy officers who openly broke into the Prime Minister's official residence and committed the crime as a group. Such an act should be regarded more as a massacre than an assassination, and more as a preparatory movement for revolution than a massacre.⁵⁷⁷

The editorial went even farther in analyzing the implications of the episode:

⁵⁷⁶ Letter of Inukai Tsuyoshi to Uehara Yusaku.

⁵⁷⁷ Fukuoka Nichi Nichi, "Aete kokumin no kakugo wo unagasu" ("A Bold Call for Resolution from the People"), May 17, 1932. The editorial invited violent attack from the military.

We have been hearing since last year that there are those in the military who discuss politics and mention revolutions, and that the situation is serious. However, we have absolutely refused to believe what we have heard. For the military units and military men to intervene in politics immediately signifies their destruction and corruption. . . . Once horizontal relations are established among young company-grade and non-commissioned officers, the tendency will spread over the soldiers at large, as was the case of Russia towards the end of the Imperial reign and during the revolution . . . and the fall of the Japanese army will inevitably take place.⁵⁷⁸

The assassins were a group of navy company-grade officers assisted by students from the Military Academy and members of Tachibana Kosaburo's Aikyo Juku.⁵⁷⁹ Radical army officers, who had been preparing for a coup d'état under the direction of Nishida Zei, did not comply with the navy demand for action because of a conflict between Nishida and Inoue Nissho, the leader of the navy officers. The navy officers were under the influence of Lt. Fujii Hitoshi, who in turn had been a close follower of Nishida Zei. Thus the May 15 action was in direct line with the radical reform movements that developed under the inspiration of Okawa and Kita, and particularly the latter, who was intimately connected with the company-grade officers through Nishida. Neither the navy nor

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ See Part I, Chapter 2, pp. 64-65.

army participants of the plot had worked in alliance with the higher ranking officers in drawing up reform programs. In fact, they had no concrete programs for reform. They were spurred by belief that their act would prompt further action by superior officers.⁵⁸⁰ They saw their task as one of clearing the grounds so that new construction, designed and supervised by their superiors, could get under way.

The reactions of political leaders, military as well as civil, are of primary importance. The predominant attitude of navy and army authorities was one of sympathy. While conceding that "the crime was indeed committed in violation of national law and therefore must be punished without mercy," the Minister of War in his statement issued immediately after the assassination laid emphasis on the purity of motive of the young officers, stressing that "they acted neither for the sake of fame nor gain nor treason. They had no intention of treason. They acted upon the genuine belief that this was for the interest of the Imperial country. Therefore, the present case should not be dealt with simply in a narrow-minded and business-like way."⁵⁸¹

The sympathetic attitude of the army leaders, notably Araki, was to affect the court proceedings of the following year. The accused were allowed so freely to express their

⁵⁸⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs, Security Section of the Police Bureau, Shuppan butsu o toshite mitaru go ichi go jiken, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p. 9.

anti-party, anti-capitalist, and anti-court circle sentiments that, in effect, they were given a chance to publicize their cause.⁵⁸² In contrast to the navy prosecutor's address openly denouncing the so-called purity of motive of the accused, the army prosecutor paid homage to their intentions. He concluded that the "final objective of the accused to arouse the people to their true mission should rather be considered pertinent to the times."⁵⁸³ Although the defendants were found guilty, sentences were extremely generous. The severest was the fifteen-year imprisonment of two navy officers, Koga and Mikami (the latter actually pulled the trigger). The army sentenced the eleven Military Academy students to three months' imprisonment. Shortly after the judgments were passed, Araki, who remained in the succeeding cabinet as Minister of War, pressed for promulgation of an amnesty decree to grant pardon to the convicts.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² Harada Diary of August 29, 1933, records: Minister of the Imperial Household Ichiki stated to Assistant-Chief of Naval General Staff that he felt that "what the young officers are stating at the May 15 Incident proceedings gives the impression of being endorsed by their superiors. Many people from the intellectual class criticize the process of the trial . . . which leaves them to state as much as they wish as if to publicize for their cause." Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 131f.

⁵⁸³ Ministry of Home Affairs, Security Section of the Police Bureau, Shuppan butsu o toshite mitaru go ichi go jiken, op. cit., pp. 74f.

⁵⁸⁴ Kido Diary, October 12, 1933.

Formation of the Saito Cabinet

The immediate problem confronting the political party leaders and court circle was to produce a new cabinet. The solution would have been simple if the regular course of parliamentary government were to be followed. The succeeding president of the Seiyukai would have been called upon to form a cabinet, as Wakatsuki had been after Prime Minister Hamaguchi was incapacitated.

But, rightly or not, the one lesson which the cabinet makers seemed to have learned from the assassination was that the political party was no longer eligible to form a government. Harada, who had often been engaged by Saionji in the preliminary tapping of cabinet organizers, immediately tried sounding out the attitude of the army, which was now seen as indispensable in determining political line-ups.

Suzuki Teiichi explained that the May 15 Incident was directly connected with the October Incident, that now that the radical action which the army leaders had attempted to forestall had taken place, "they could not let the consequences end in vain." He pointed out that the army young officers were "fundamentally in agreement with the principles held by [the assassins]. Should the cabinet again be handed over to a political party, second and third incidents would recur. The direct cause that stimulated [the assassins] to resort to the present Incident was considered to be the declaration on the protection of political parties. Many young

officers were extremely indignant over that declaration," i.e., Inukai's radio speech of May 1, 1932.⁵⁸⁵

Nagata Tetsuzan, who "characterized himself as possessing the weakest opinion in the army," stated that "a government by the existing political parties was absolutely rejected. If a single political party cabinet were to be formed, there would probably be nobody to take the post of the Minister of War, which would create difficulties in cabinet formation. He furthermore asked if it were difficult for party members to resign from their party in accepting cabinet posts."⁵⁸⁶ All in all, the army made its political weight known to the cabinet makers by threatening to exercise a veto over any party government.

The political parties, moreover, did not rise to demand the maintenance of party government. Within the Seiyukai, Mori immediately succeeded in installing as President Suzuki Kisaburo, who was generally considered a rightist leader of the party. But instead of pressing for the formation of a Suzuki Cabinet, Mori attempted to realize his former plan of a supra-party Hiranuma Cabinet based on coöperation of the Seiyukai and the army. Some members of the Minseito

⁵⁸⁵ Kido Diary, May 17, 1932.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Yamaura Kanichi, Mori Kaku wa ikiteiru (Mori Kaku Is Alive) (Tokyo: 1941), pp. 27f.

worked for the realization of a coalition government with Admiral Saito Makoto as Prime Minister.

The roots of dissatisfaction against the corruption and poor government of the political parties were general and deep. The parties themselves lacked the strength and foresight to stand up for their rights. However, that cabinet making was the responsibility of an extra-constitutional elder statesman with extra-constitutional sources of information and judgment like Harada and Kido, also helped the defeat of party government by premature default. Upon learning of the army's intended rejection of a party cabinet, Kido concluded in his diary entry of May 18 that "I consider it the most practical solution to make both [political party and army] withdraw for a while and bring out an impartial third person who is powerful, to take care of the situation. In other words, the third person is to supervise the reconstruction of the political parties, and simultaneously the military must trust this person in undertaking the restoration of military discipline. For the third person, [I think that] there exists no one but Viscount Saito."⁵⁸⁸

The Emperor, without specifying the type of government, requested that the succeeding Prime Minister "not have Fascist tendencies; that he not have a questionable personal record, that he possess a moderate ideology and that he not

⁵⁸⁸Kido Diary, May 19, 1932.

be militaristic.⁵⁸⁹ On May 22, Admiral Saito Makoto received the Imperial mandate to form a new cabinet. A viscount, former Governor of Korea, and a well-known moderate, he had been under consideration as a possible candidate for Prime Minister for some time, and was a tolerable choice to all concerned.⁵⁹⁰ He organized a coalition cabinet that included members from both the Seiyukai and Minseito. Because of the assurance of the army that he alone could keep the young officers under discipline, Araki remained in his post of War Minister.

The passing of the Inukai Cabinet is generally considered to have marked the end of party government in pre-World War II Japan, in the sense that no political party leader was to head the government for more than a decade. The main feature of the Inukai Cabinet does not lie in its party foundation, however, but in the shift of political power in favor of the military that took place during its six months in office, and decisively after May 15. The determining factor for the shift was the successful control of Manchuria, which the Kwantung Army attained through the establishment of Manchukuo.

⁵⁸⁹ Kido Diary, May 21, 1932.

⁵⁹⁰ Minister of War Araki stated that Saito was acceptable although there might be some difficulties within the army. Ibid. Admiral of the Fleet Togo stated to Saionji that although Hiranuma seemed the most appropriate, Saito was tolerable. Harada Diary, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 289.

That the Inukai Cabinet withheld recognition of Manchukuo in order to demonstrate the last vestige of traditional Japanese foreign policy, which considered coöperation with the Powers as vital to the execution of an expansionist program in the Asian Continent, has already been emphasized. No one hundred and eighty degree change in foreign policy took place under the Inukai Cabinet as a result of the Manchurian Affair. But in the political power struggle, success in Manchuria was the basis of military ascendancy for the military outdid the government in attaining the commonly held objective of not only safeguarding but also expanding Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria. Thus the government became increasingly sensitive to military demands. The military was armed with the additional weapon of threatening radicalism which it utilized to impress the government, the political parties, and the court circle with its growing power. If the Inukai Cabinet were to have fulfilled its assigned role of bringing about a moderate settlement of the Manchurian Affair through controlling the military, it would have had to initiate either drastic revision in the fundamental Manchuria policy, including concessions to Chinese nationalists, or an equally drastic measure in subjugating the military, including formal disciplinary action. The very success of the Manchurian Affair prevented the adoption of either course, and the Inukai Cabinet's untimely end registered the complete shift in political power alignment.

CHAPTER X

POLICY EFFECTS OF THE MANCHURIAN AFFAIR

The decisive increase in the political power of the military could not but exert itself in the realm of policy formulation. The Saito Cabinet, whose mission was to forestall the recurrence of a May 15th through the gradual adoption of social and economic reform measures, was designed to be accommodating to the military, especially with regard to Manchurian policy.

Recognition of Manchukuo

Formal Japanese relations with the newly born State of Manchukuo had to be clarified; the Inukai Cabinet had only announced a temporary decision to withhold recognition. Obviously Japan could not ignore Manchukuo forever. In addition to military pressure, popular demands were growing heavily in favor of granting formal recognition. The influential Asahi, which during the early part of the Manchurian Affair had advocated the need for government control of the military and had emphasized the importance of international considerations, started to urge formal recognition. It argued editorially that "what is most urgently required for Japan today is to recognize the new situation and to

rapidly establish her fundamental policy accordingly. At the same time [she is] to revise her hesitant attitude that has served to patch up [her position] internationally, and to frankly state the indivisible relationship between Manchukuo and Japan.⁵⁹¹ By the establishment of fundamental policy towards Manchuria was meant the recognition of Manchukuo.⁵⁹² From Manchuria the Manshu Seinen Renmei dispatched its fifth speaking team with the joint purpose of directly pressuring the government and mobilizing public opinion in favor of early recognition. In addition, the Diet on June 14 unanimously passed a resolution in favor of extending immediate recognition to Manchukuo, an expression with which the government could not remain unconcerned.

What kept the government from complying with the urgent demands for recognition was its consideration of international relations. The Manchurian Affair had been temporarily kept outside the direct scrutiny of the League since December 10, 1931, when the Council resolved to dispatch a commission of investigation to report on the situation. Headed by Victor A. G. R. Lytton of Great Britain, this commission spent more than four months in the Far East, conferring with

⁵⁹¹ Asahi Shimbun, "Manshukoku no kenkokushiki, Nihon no konponsaku o kettei seyo" ("The State Foundation Ceremony of Manchukuo, Decide Japan's Fundamental Policy"). March 9, 1932.

⁵⁹² Asahi Shimbun, "Manshukoku shonin ni tsuite" ("On the Recognition of Manchukuo"). May 5, 1932.

leaders and collecting evidence in Japan, China, and Manchuria. Since the League and the United States had made clear their policy not to recognize any situation brought about in violation of the multilateral peace treaties, and as long as the Lytton Commission had not completed its survey, Japanese recognition of Manchukuo would mean commitment to a course apart from and offensive to that of the world at large. The British and French, which made great efforts in mediating the case for Japan at the League, strongly discouraged such premature recognition.⁵⁹³

The appointment of Uchida Yasuya, President of the South Manchuria Railway Company, to the portfolio of Foreign Minister on July 6, turned the scale in favor of early recognition. Uchida was the choice of Prime Minister Saito, who expected him to have the support of the army.⁵⁹⁴ Holding that

⁵⁹³ Cable No. 1389 from Foreign Office to England, Geneva, Peking, Changchun, United States, China, Mukden. Sent June 23, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. X, I, pp. 252-254. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 313.

⁵⁹⁴ It is interesting to note that although the army supported Uchida, it did not necessarily wish him to become Foreign Minister. The following letter of Koiso Kuniaki, Vice Minister of War, to Uchida on June 10 indicates the importance the army attached to the post of President of South Manchuria Railway Company. "We wish sincerely that you would remain as President of Manchuria Railway. It goes without saying that your assumption of the post of Foreign Minister would be advantageous for the settlement of Manchuria-Mongolia problems, but upon considering whether we could obtain as the succeeding President another patriot who would work for the settlement of problems in perfect unison with the army like yourself, and moreover whether the present Cabinet that is jointly composed of Seiyukai and Minseito . . . could endure until the solution

the key to "the so-called settlement of Manchuria problem lay in the recognition of Manchukuo,"⁵⁹⁵ Uchida disclosed his policy of formal recognition when he conferred with Lytton on July 12. To Lytton's reference to the statement of former Foreign Minister Yoshizawa that "Japan is not greatly concerned with what government exists in Manchuria so long as Japanese interests are protected," Uchida replied that "the existence of Manchukuo is an actual fact, and this has completely changed the entire situation . . . this fact cannot be disregarded."⁵⁹⁶

Uchida disagreed with Lytton's contention that Japan should reach an understanding with the parties to the multi-lateral treaties concerned with the Far East in acting upon the recognition of Manchukuo. He stated that "the recognition of Manchukuo is regarded as not in conflict with the Nine Power Treaty, . . . and there is no longer any room left for direct negotiations [with China] after the independence of Manchukuo." As "Manchuria problems involved Japan's vital

of the important Manchuria-Mongolia problems in view of the existing internal and external situation, we feel that to lose you from the Manchuria Railway as well as from the Cabinet might bring about serious ill effects on the future of the nation. . . . If by any chance it becomes unavoidable to accept the post of Foreign Minister, we beg of you at least to seek and respect the opinion of the Minister of War with regard to the selection of the succeeding President. . . . I wish to add that the above-mentioned is not only my personal view but that the Minister and the young officers of the Ministry are of the same opinion." Aoki Shin and Aoki Keiji, op. cit.

595 Uchida's memorandum of May 18, 1932. Ibid.

596 Cable No. 1548 from Foreign Office to Geneva, China, Mukden, United States, Peking. Sent July 16, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. X, I, p. 295.

interests and right of self-defense, Japan might not always confer with the related Powers with regard to them." In Uchida's opinion, the main cause for the complications over the Sino-Japanese dispute lay in the fact that "China expects the intervention of the League and other third persons." Thus, he considered it advisable for the League to convince China that she "should not rely on the League for the settlement of the present case."⁵⁹⁷ Having clarified his views to Lytton, Uchida reported to the Emperor on July 14 that Japan was to grant recognition to Manchukuo.⁵⁹⁸ A major change in foreign policy was in the making. League relations, long treasured as symbolic of a coöperative policy with the Powers, were proclaimed secondary to Manchukuo, which was defined as "vital" to Japan.

The implications of the policy change were expressed correctly, if somewhat sensationaly, by Mori Kaku when he declared that the "recognition of Manchukuo was absolutely not a question of mere law or treaty."⁵⁹⁹ In his view, the object of the recognition was not in fact Manchukuo, but the Japanese people, as well as China and the Powers. Japan's recognition signified "a world-wide proclamation" that she

⁵⁹⁷ Cable No. 1549 from Foreign Office to Geneva, China, Mukden, United States, Peking. Sent July 16, 1932. Ibid., pp. 302f.

⁵⁹⁸ Kido Diary, July 14, 1932.

⁵⁹⁹ Question of Mori Kaku at the 63rd Session of the Diet, August 25, 1932. Yamaura, Mori Kaku, op. cit., p. 827.

"now defiantly rose from her traditional diplomacy characterized by servility" and was to embark upon "a voluntary independent diplomacy." Mori played up the policy change to signify "the return to the Japanese spirit" and "return to Asia" from a past of "sixty years of blind imitation of Western materialistic civilization."⁶⁰⁰

Manchukuo recognition became a rallying point for defiant nationalism. The Foreign Minister himself stated at the Diet on August 25 that, although an adverse international reaction was expected to follow the Japanese recognition of Manchukuo, the people were not perturbed because they were "solidly determined not to concede a foot even if the country turned into scorched land."⁶⁰¹ Uchida diplomacy, which became known as "scorched-land diplomacy", was simultaneously acclaimed for its defiance of world pressure and distrusted for its outlandish risks.

The changes in foreign policy that took place in the summer of 1932 were among the most drastic possible. The Inukai Cabinet had established the policy of "directing" Manchukuo towards "possessing the substance of a state"⁶⁰² and of repelling concrete intervention of the League by threatening

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Statement of Uchida Yasuya in answer to Mori Kaku at the 63rd Session of the Diet, August 25, 1932. Ibid., p. 831.

⁶⁰² "Manmo mondai shori hoshin yoko," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 204.

withdrawal of the Japanese delegation, but had avoided head-on collision with the Powers by withholding formal recognition of Manchukuo. With the decision to grant formal recognition, the Saito Cabinet made peace with popular and military demands, but now had to prepare Japan for an increasingly hostile world. August witnessed a series of reformulations of Japanese foreign policy. On the 27th, the cabinet passed a memorandum titled "Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshin an" ("Proposed Policy of Dealing with the Current Situation from the Point of View of International Relations"). The keynote was "independence"; "the axis of Imperial diplomacy" was to be "the execution of Manchuria-Mongolia operations from the independent standpoint of the Imperial state".⁶⁰³ The program for Manchuria-Mongolia operations was to be based upon "Manmo mondai shori hoshin yoko", which the previous cabinet had adopted on March 12.

The outstanding feature of the new document was that in contemplating the intensified international hostility that was expected as inevitable, it treated the possibility of armed conflict forthrightly. The government was "to take early measures with regard to the replenishment of armaments, and to give full consideration to emergency economy and national mobilization."⁶⁰⁴ But in order to forestall the most drastic

⁶⁰³"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshin" ("Proposed Policy of Dealing with the Current Situation from the Point of View of International Relations"), ibid., p. 206,

⁶⁰⁴Ibid.

possibility, the following three courses were outlined to guide Japanese foreign relations with regard to China proper, the League, and the Powers.

a) China Proper

The policy of the Imperial nation with regard to China proper should be distinguished from the policy of the Imperial nation with regard to Manchuria-Mongolia, and should aim at making China mainly prove her capacity as a market for trade and industry. Therefore, so long as no interference is extended to our Manchuria-Mongolia operations, efforts should be made through coöperation with the Powers to maintain peace in China proper, especially in the area that has important economic connections with the Powers, and at the same time to make her open her door.

b) League

The League should be made more than ever to recognize the great concern and just stand of the Imperial nation with regard to Manchuria-Mongolia, while any display of a provocative attitude from our side should be avoided. However, in the event that the League boldly chooses to exercise intervention that conflicts with the foundations of Manchuria-Mongolia operations of the Imperial nation, at present, measures would be adopted in pursuance of the policy of the March 25th Cabinet decision.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁵ Cabinet decision of March 25, 1932, with regard to the General Assembly of the League of Nations was as follows:
"2) With regard to the Manchurian Affair so long as the General Assembly continues to make resolutions in principle within the limits of the Council resolutions of September 30 and December 10, . . . we should hold reservation over the application of Article 15, while coöoperating sincerely with the League. . . . 3) In the event that the General Assembly exceeds the above-mentioned limits, and attempts to issue a

If, however, . . . the League should proceed to attempt at exerting actual pressure . . . and threaten the future of our national destiny, the Imperial nation would no longer be able to remain in the League. Even in such an event, steps should be taken to make public opinion fully understand that we were compelled to resort to the above-mentioned course due to the unjust action of the League.

c) Powers

In view of the fact that all the nations of the world, such as Great Britain, France and other member states of the League, not to speak of such non-members as the United States, and the Soviet Union, possess individual standpoints separate from those they possess as League members, efforts should be made regardless of the aforementioned League policy, to promote friendly relations with the Powers by utilizing their respective special circumstances, and to elevate the international position of the Imperial nation.⁶⁰⁶

In executing "independent" diplomacy with regard to Manchuria, the cabinet on August 8 appointed Special Ambassador to Manchukuo General Muto Nobuyoshi to negotiate the Japanese-Manchukuo Protocol. Formal recognition was to follow the

resolution that binds our activities even slightly in the concrete, we should not abstain, but should explain frankly and fully the reality of the situation and our position, and at the same time resolutely carry out the withdrawal of our delegate from the General Assembly which has serious political meaning. Thereafter, we are to advance towards what we ourselves believe to be just, while waiting for the League to return to the right track. . . ." Cable No. 124 from Foreign Office to Geneva. Sent March 28, 1932. "Nisshi Jihen," op. cit., Vol. IX, pp. 200f.

⁶⁰⁶"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshin," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 207.

conclusion of the Protocol, which was set for mid-September. In exchange for recognition, Manchukuo was to pledge respect for Japanese rights and interests based on Sino-Japanese treaties, and to allow the stationing of Japanese troops in her territory for the purpose of mutual defense.⁶⁰⁷ The various agreements concluded between the Commander of the Kwantung Army and the Regent of Manchukuo, including the stipulations of Pu Yi's letter to Honjo on March 10, were to be reaffirmed to form part of the Protocol.

The appointment of the Special Ambassador to Manchukuo was also designed to unify the Japanese civil and military organs in Manchuria. The Ambassador concurrently held the offices of Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army and Governor of Kwantung. As Ambassador, Muto was under the direction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but as Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army he was under no civilian authority but directly responsible to the Supreme Command. Kwantung Army staff members also served concurrently as ambassadorial aids. Indeed, in practice, diplomatic and military functions could not necessarily be distinguished, and the new institutional arrangements ensured continued domination of the Kwantung Army after the facade of interstate relations was established between Japan and Manchukuo. On September 15, the Japan-Manchukuo Protocol was signed, and recognition was extended to Manchukuo.

⁶⁰⁷ Japan-Manchukuo Protocol. Ibid., p. 215.

Policy towards the Powers

A new question arises at this juncture: Was Japan in the summer of 1932 by defiantly recognizing Manchukuo and knowingly inviting world opposition thinking, in fact, in terms of eventual war. Beyond what has already been discussed, the evidence confuses the picture. The Kwantung Army, which had plunged Japan into war in Manchuria, was now advocating restraint in external relations. The "1932 Situational Analysis" prepared by Itagaki concludes that:

Many years would be required for the completion of the development of Manchuria-Mongolia because it is a major undertaking in itself, and also because the means of the Imperial nation are not necessarily adequate. Thus the Imperial nation should concentrate her entire strength on the greatest work in the Imperial history, and at the same time externally should endeavor with patience and restraint to avoid creating situations which might serve as a drain on national power.⁶⁰⁸

In short, Itagaki was aware that limits in national power, financially and economically, would prevent Japan from pursuing a course of military action against every opponent.

That a similar realization of the need for restraint existed among the central military authorities is evident in the recorded visit of Harada with the Minister of Navy on August 1, when the latter disclosed that a secret understanding

⁶⁰⁸"Josei handan" ("Situational Analysis"), April or May, 1932. Draft written by Itagaki Seishiro.

had been reached between the Vice Chiefs of the Navy and Army General Staffs "to avoid as much as possible war with Russia and the United States, and not to withdraw from the League of Nations."⁶⁰⁹ If the estimate of the international and national state of affairs obliged even the military to a peaceful course, the seeming discrepancy of the defiant scorched-land diplomacy should somehow be accounted for.

The clue to the Japanese reading of international affairs lies in the distinction Japan made between the condemning action of the Great Powers as League members and their compromising attitudes as pursuers of individual national interests. In fact, Japan considered it possible to divorce the Manchurian case from the League, which was subject to the severe judgments of the smaller nations and settle it with the Great Powers, whose rights and interests in the Far East were similar to those of Japan. The policy delineated in the August 27 cabinet decision "to promote friendly relations with the Powers by utilizing their respective special circumstances"⁶¹⁰ was based precisely upon the judgment that room for understanding existed, and that international hostility would not necessarily mean war.

The above-mentioned cabinet document singles out Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union as the

⁶⁰⁹ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 340.

⁶¹⁰ "Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshin," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 207.

Powers that required special policy consideration. With regard to Great Britain, "restoration of Japanese-British coöperation concerning Chinese problems," was recognized as "extremely desirable," and "appropriate clues" were to be sought for this.⁶¹¹ An instance that was cited as encouraging was the proposal made by Great Britain in January of the same year to undertake joint negotiations with China concerning extraterritorial rights. The outbreak of hostilities in Shanghai prevented the execution of these negotiations, but Japan regarded the step, together with such outstandingly pro-Japanese gestures by Simon as the rejection of Stimson's request for Anglo-American declaration of the non-recognition doctrine, as assurance of latent British sympathy for the Japanese cause. Japan's trump card was "to respect the position of Great Britain," in the area of her special interests, namely, "Shanghai, Canton and other places along the Yangtze River and South China."⁶¹² In other words, it was upon the basis of common imperialistic interests that Japan expected to develop coöperation with Great Britain in China.

The army was also willing to endorse the pro-British orientation of the government. In a pamphlet entitled Manshu jihen ni taisuru rekkoku no taido (Attitude of

⁶¹¹ Ibid., p. 208

⁶¹² Ibid.

the Powers with Regard to the Manchurian Affair) published by the Ministry of War in July, 1932, the army emphasized the increasingly pro-Japanese attitude of the British after the Conservative victory in the general election of October, 1932, and the friendly action of Simon in particular, and concluded that "under the present circumstances of complete Conservative control, the anti-Japanese forces of the Liberals and Laborites are negligible and could almost be disregarded."⁶¹³ Moreover, the army pamphlet pointed out four factors arguing for the existence of a realistic basis for Japanese-British coöperation: traditional friendship, prevention of Russian southern expansion, necessity for strong policy towards China, and the peculiar problem involving Hongkong. Hongkong, which was considered to be of vital importance to Great Britain, would "face imminent danger once Japanese treaty rights in Manchuria were lost." It was also vulnerable to attacks from both Japan and the United States as a result of the agreement against the construction of naval fortifications in certain areas of the Pacific which was incorporated in the Washington Five Power Naval Treaty. Thus, the army judged that Great Britain would be compelled to follow a course of friendship towards Japan.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹³ Ministry of War, Research Section, Manshu jihen ni taisuru rekkyo no taido (Attitude of the Powers with Regard to the Manchurian Affair), July, 1932, pp. 25-27.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., p. 29

The Kwantung Army "Situational Analysis" of 1932 supported the general pro-British line and suggested not only that a policy of prior understanding with Great Britain be maintained with regard to China, but also that "consideration should be given to guarantee the security of India."⁶¹⁵

Similar attempts at winning French coöperation are proposed in the policy documents of both the government and the army, with perhaps even greater conviction and enthusiasm than those observed in the case of Great Britain. Coöperation was again considered possible in view of what appeared to be the common interests held by both states in the Far East. Whereas France had no direct interests in Manchuria, her possessions in Indo-China and the Kwangchow Bay region brought her into line with Japan's need to resort to strong measures in defending them against growing Chinese nationalist demands.⁶¹⁶ In addition to overlapping policy objectives in the Far East, the threat to French hegemony in Europe of the rise of Nazi Germany and moves towards German-Austrian unity, was believed to have created in France the desire for "political rapprochement between Japan and France."⁶¹⁷ The cabinet document of

⁶¹⁵"Josei handan," op. cit.

⁶¹⁶Ministry of War, Research Section, Manshu jihen ni taisuru rekkyo no taido, op. cit., p. 31.

⁶¹⁷"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshin an," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 209.

August 27 laid out the policy "of seizing the nearest opportunity to promote negotiations concerning a general understanding between Japan and France in the Far East."⁶¹⁸

The government envisaged as the final objective conclusion of a Japanese-French entente.⁶¹⁹ The prospects were regarded as promising, for aside from the reciprocity of overall national interests, the French position at the League with regard to the Manchurian Affair had been overtly sympathetic to Japan. The government was not, however, thinking in terms of a Japanese-French alliance as advocated by certain groups within the army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which sought in alliance a counterforce to Anglo-American pressure.⁶²⁰ The government was hoping, rather, that Japanese-French coöperation in the Far East would impel

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Cable No. 391 from Foreign Office to Nagaoka, France. Sent August 26, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. X, pp. 506-509.

⁶²⁰ According to the Harada Diary, a Japanese-French alliance had been advocated by Kita Ikki who succeeded in convincing, among others, Minister of War Araki, President of the Privy Council Hiranuma, and Director of the Information Bureau of the Foreign Office Shiratori Toshio to undertake negotiations. Kita attempted to persuade Ikeda Seihin of the Mitsui interests to open negotiations for Japanese-French economic coöperation which was to develop into an alliance. Kita's suggestion was refused by Ikeda, but Kita continued to spread rumors that Ikeda was to provide 10 million yen (\$5 million) from Mitsui funds to go to France and to prepare for the alliance negotiations. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 389-391.

Great Britain to turn to Japan to establish a joint policy towards China. It was thought that one of the practical channels through which to win French co-operation would be to invite French investment to Manchuria.⁶²¹ The Kwantung Army was willing to grant priority to French capital in Manchurian development, and to provide a guarantee of Indo-China security⁶²² as a token of friendly relations with France.

As the United States had taken the initiative during the course of the Manchurian Affair in condemning Japanese action in Manchuria, especially after the non-recognition doctrine, she was regarded as the most difficult Power with which to reach an understanding on Japanese policy in the Far East. A Japanese-American war prophecy of the Ishiwara brand was, to be sure, an exceptional argument, but suspicion was fairly widespread that the American policy of economic expansion under the banner of "equal opportunity" and "open door" would eventually become more and more incompatible with the Japanese policy of bringing Manchuria under complete economic control. In fact, the August 27 cabinet policy indicated the need for "various internal as well as external preparations to be rapidly made against the United States."⁶²³

⁶²¹"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshinan," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 209

⁶²²"Josei handan," op. cit.

⁶²³"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshinan," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 209.

In the summer of 1932, however, the government saw no immediate danger of war. Severe depression was an all-engrossing preoccupation in the United States, which, moreover, lacked naval power because of the naval disarmament treaties. Japan also felt that the United States' interest in China was not vital enough to warrant military action.

The Kwantung Army astutely argued in its "Situational Analysis" that Japan occupied a much greater proportion of American trade and investment in the Far East than did China. Since "American economic interests in China today cannot yet be considered great" and since "America tends to decide her national policy on the basis of calculating economic interests," the "Analysis" concluded that the United States was not likely to plunge into war with Japan.⁶²⁴ Thus, while on one hand the government called for national preparedness, on the other hand it counted on American pledged principles of "equal opportunity" and "open door" in order to alleviate American opposition to Japanese Manchuria-Mongolia operations.⁶²⁵ The cabinet policy document hopefully stated that "there seems to be gradually rising in the business circles of the United States the feeling that if the principles of 'open door' and 'equal opportunity' are maintained in reality,

⁶²⁴"Josei handan," op. cit.

⁶²⁵"Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshinan," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 209.

other problems could be left to take their own course." Therefore, the American attitude could be expected to soften naturally, "so long as [these] principles . . . are handled properly, and the United States adequately receive economic benefits in Manchukuo."⁶²⁶ Indeed, the Kwantung Army, which had held misgivings towards capitalism, now pressed for the introduction of American capital to Manchukuo as a means of cultivating close Japanese-American economic relations, which would stifle American opposition.⁶²⁷ Although the Kwantung Army warned against unlimited direct American investment that might lead to Japanese-American economic competition,⁶²⁸ what it was in fact proposing was the conversion of the United States to a colonial power with vested rights and interests in China and Manchuria. Rapprochement with Great Britain and/or France was also expected to help alleviate the American attitude of censure.⁶²⁹

Throughout the Manchurian Affair, the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union was marked by a mutual attempt to avoid entering into direct conflict. In the major dispute between the central military authorities and the Kwantung Army, the latter's adventurous designs in

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ "Josei handan," op. cit.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ "Kokusai kankei yori mitaru jikyoku shori hoshinan," Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., p. 209.

North Manchuria were emphatically prohibited in fear of provoking the Soviet Union. However, to the Japanese occupation of North Manchuria that in fact took place, the Soviet Union reacted with continuing restraint, and even proposed the conclusion of a non-aggression pact in December, 1931. The Soviet overture placed Japan in a dilemma.

In following a general policy of avoiding war with the Powers, an understanding with the Soviet Union would have been most desirable. The cabinet policy document of August 27 stated that "in view of present international relations it is extremely important to avoid entering into conflict with the Soviet Union, . . . and care should be taken not to resort intentionally to measures on our part that might stimulate the Soviet Union." When it came to the specific question of the conclusion of a non-aggression pact, however, the words of the document revealed other considerations that forestalled Japan from taking the course of friendship.

From the standpoint of aiming at the stabilization of Manchukuo, and at the same time keeping the position of the Imperial nation unrestrained, Japanese-Soviet relations should be eased . . . through the means of somehow mutually expressing intentions of non-aggression without resorting to the form of treaty between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union or that between the Imperial nation and the Soviet Union. ⁶³⁰

630 Ibid., p. 210.

The reservations referring to the maintenance of the "unrestrained" position of Japan and to the declaration of non-aggressive desires without entering into formal treaty relations are significant. The Kwantung Army "Situational Analysis" of 1932 reflected similar considerations when it stated that "with regard to the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty at present proposed by the Soviet Union, it is necessary to reserve the freedom of action of the Imperial nation by keeping relations noncommittal."⁶³¹

Several reasons can be found to account for the hesitation. First of all, the army feared the growing military power of the Soviet Union, a trend which made indefinite postponement of war between the two nations appear disadvantageous to Japan. Moreover, fear of the Soviet Union was "necessary" for the army, which had built up its forces on the possibility of war with Russia. The opposition to the conclusion of a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression pact came most strongly from the army which, through its outstandingly anti-Soviet Minister of War Araki, publicized its view in and out of the cabinet.⁶³²

⁶³¹"Josei handan," op. cit.

⁶³²Referred to in Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 367, 419, 429. Vol. III, pp. 38f. Araki is said to have explained that part of the reason for army opposition to the conclusion of a Japanese-Soviet pact was the effect on the military budget, which would immediately be slashed. Statement of Kamikawa Hikomatsu in Boei Kenshusho (Defense Research Institute), Meiji, Taisho, Showa ni okeru seiji to gunji ni kansuru rekishi-teki kosatsu (Historical Study of Political and Military Affairs in the Meiji, Taisho and Showa Eras), Kenshu shiryo bessatsu, No. 132.

The Kwantung Army stressed the need to refrain from provoking the Soviet Union because of its commitment to developing Manchuria. Nevertheless, the "1932 Situational Analysis" stated that "Japanese-Soviet war in the future is inevitable" and that preparations should be made to undertake immediate action in case "the Soviet Union positively obstructs our Manchuria-Mongolia operation or gives reign to its evil red influence."⁶³³ The red theme provided a second major cause for withholding formal commitment to Japanese-Soviet amity. That the penetration of communism from the Soviet Union and also from China was a genuine threat to Manchukuo cannot be denied. However, prohibition of communist propaganda could have been stipulated in the terms of the non-aggression pact.

The position of Communist Russia in world politics is also relevant to Japan's Soviet policy of the time. Still unrecognized by the United States and still not a member of the League of Nations, Soviet diplomatic isolation was a reflection of general hostility between the only existing communist state and the capitalist nations.⁶³⁴ Insofar as she could present her operations in Manchuria as preventive measure against the penetration of communism into the Far East,

⁶³³"Josei handan," op.cit.

⁶³⁴In the 1932 Comintern Thesis, the psychological cleavage between the Soviet Union and the capitalist states is reflected as follows: "The outstanding factor in the policy of world imperialism, is the fact of an increasingly violent attempt at creating a united front of imperialistic Powers for war with the Soviet Union. Military intervention of world

Japan achieved at least partial support of the non-communist Powers. The conclusion of a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union would undermine this appeal. The statement of the director of the Bureau of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tani Masayuki, well attests to this viewpoint. "In the final analysis, it is diplomatically more advantageous for Japan to keep Russia 'Red'. If she turns 'white', the sympathy of the European Powers will move over to Russia. After all, from the standpoint of Japan, it is advisable to keep Russia to a certain extent a black sheep. Our foreign policy should be on one hand to avoid getting into conflict with Russia as much as possible, and on the other hand to adopt pro-Americanism."⁶³⁵ From Paris, Ambassador Nagaoka Harukazu reported that, although the conclusion of the non-aggression pact was desirable from the standpoint of winning Soviet recognition of Manchukuo, it was necessary to include a prohibition of communist propaganda activities in Japan and Manchuria in order not to lose

imperialism towards the nation of the Proletariat Dictatorship has now become a direct and impending danger. The League of Nations itself is the instrument of this war." Nihon Kyosantoshi Shiryo Iinkai, ed., Nihon mondai ni kansuru hoshinsho, ketsugishu (Policy Statements and Resolutions Relating to Japanese Problems of the Comintern) (Tokyo: 1950), p. 75.

⁶³⁵ Statement of Tani Masayuki to Harada. Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 109.

the sympathy of Great Britain and France. The basis underlying whatever sympathy existed among the Powers with regard to Japanese action in Manchuria, he reported, was the hope of establishing Manchuria as a bulwark against communism.⁶³⁶ The Japanese-Soviet non-aggression pact was rejected by Japan on December 13, 1932, and the Soviet Union turned towards China to reestablish formal diplomatic relations shortly afterwards.

Japanese policy towards China in the summer of 1932, as stated in the cabinet policy document of August 27 and as demonstrated in the course of settling the Shanghai Affair, was to promote economic relations with China in coöperation with the Powers. However, in view of Chinese hostility toward the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, it could hardly be expected that China would become a willing trading partner with Japan. Indeed, anti-Japanese boycotts were intensive as well as extensive during the Manchurian Affair. These might grow even more serious as Japanese operations

⁶³⁶Cable No. 822 from Nagaoka to Foreign Office. Arrived October 25, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. X, 2, pp. 995-998. Comintern Agent Kawai Sadakichi analyzed the Japanese anti-communist foreign policy as follows: "In short, Japanese imperialism has no other way to solve its agony but through military means; this more and more sharpens the antagonism between the imperialism of the Powers. However, the economic and social structure of Japanese imperialism, which is full of contradictions, makes it hesitate to clearly confront the imperialism of the Powers. As a result, it is trying to win approval for continental aggression from the Powers, by undertaking the role of attacking the Soviet Union." Kawai, op. cit., p. 66.

in Manchuria became more pronounced. There are no indications in any of the Japanese literature of the period, however, that suggest concern for Chinese military retaliation. China, which had been and was still torn by civil war among rival factions of the Kuomintang and between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists, was no longer the "sleeping lion" with immense potential power that had haunted the Japanese leaders of the early Meiji period. Japan was concerned, rather, that the state of chaos in China might invite international partition. But with a strong footing in Manchuria, Japan was ready for a Chinese scramble.

The Kwantung Army felt that:

General political unrest and frequent internal strife on one hand, not only distract their [the Chinese] attention from Manchuria-Mongolia and reduce their interest, but also might lead them at times to seek the good will of the Imperial nation and to control anti-Japanese boycotts from their own selfish standpoint; on the other hand, they would obstruct the economic development of the Powers with regard to China and dissipate the good will and expectations. Therefore, . . . for China to remain disunified and politically restless could be said to favor the solution of the Manchuria-Mongolia problem. In the course of establishing peace in the Far East, it is also a good plan to foster these [general political unrest and frequent internal strife] if necessary as measures of expedience.⁶³⁷

637 "Josei handan," op. cit.

By fostering of "political unrest and frequent internal strife," the Kwantung Army was not thinking, however, in terms of large-scale intervention or conflict in China. It gave priority to the development of Manchuria, and for this, coöperation with the Powers was viewed as indispensable.

While the superior power of Japan enabled her to take advantage of a weakened China, the continued interest and vigilance of the Powers obliged her to solicit their approval in dealings with China. The argument that "China was not an organized state" was the major diplomatic weapon in answering the world accusation that Japan was, in bringing about the separation of Manchuria, violating her treaty obligations to uphold the administrative integrity of China. The formal declaration of Japanese judgment on Chinese status was made on February 23, 1932, in a statement of the Japanese Government to the League:

Finally it must be emphasized that the Japanese Government does not and cannot consider that China is an "organized people" within the meaning of the League of Nations Covenant. China has, it is true, been treated in the past, by common consent, as if the expression "China" connoted an organized people. But fiction cannot last forever, nor can it be tolerated when it becomes grave source of practical danger. . . . We must face the facts: and the fundamental fact is that there is no unified control in China, and no authority which is entitled to claim control of China.⁶³⁸

⁶³⁸Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Information, Manshu jihen oyobi Shanhai jihen kankei kohyoshu, op. cit., pp. 153-155.

The policy of challenging Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria in this fashion had been adopted by the Foreign Office as well as recommended by the delegates in Europe since the early stages of the League debate.⁶³⁹ The implication of this policy was imperialistic, and presents an ironic contrast to the lofty commitments to self-determination and autonomy expressed with regard to the people of Manchuria. After the Manchurian Affair, while promotion of friendly relations with the Powers was Japan's policy objective, hostile relations were expected to continue with China and Japanese policy showed no intentions of adopting alleviating measures.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ The argument that China is not a "well organized and coherent state" is found in a speech prepared by the Foreign Office to be delivered by Yoshizawa at the Council meeting on November 14, 1931. The speech was not given as the Council decided against granting opportunities for Chinese and Japanese representatives to give speeches. The Japanese delegate in Paris proposed on December 30, 1931, that materials to be presented to the Investigation Committee of the League of Nations should be selected to lead to the conclusion that China is not an "organized people." Asahi Shimbun editorial of October 21, 1931, also questioned whether China constituted an "organized people." These would support Basset's argument that the theory of China as "unorganized people" was "a familiar Japanese contention" and that Stimson could not have blamed the January 11, 1932, editorial of The Times for having given the Japanese a convenient diplomatic weapon. Basset, op. cit., pp. 91-94.

⁶⁴⁰ Kido Diary records that the Emperor was greatly concerned about the prospects for Japanese-Chinese amity and questioned the views of competent persons. Minister to China Shigemitsu Mamoru and Seiyukai M. P. Matsuoka Yosuke stated respectively on January 21 and February 8, 1932, that prospects for Japanese-Chinese amity were dark. Kido Diary, January 21 and February 8, 1932.

The Lytton Report

Despite the foreign policy adopted in the summer of 1932, it appears that the Saito Government had hardly expected, or desired, improvement of Japan's relations with the League. The members of the League, as well as the United States, had withheld final judgment on the situation in Manchuria, including the legitimacy of the state of Manchukuo. They were committed to abide by the findings of the Lytton Commission. Thus Japan's position in world opinion was to be determined largely by what the Commission was to report.

On October 2, the Lytton Report was published. The Commission concluded among other things that "the military operations of the Japanese troops" during the night of September 18-19, which started the Manchurian Affair, "cannot be regarded as measures of legitimate self-defense,"⁶⁴¹ and that the present regime in Manchuria "cannot be considered to have been called into existence by a genuine and spontaneous independence movement" since the two factors that contributed most to the creation of Manchukuo "were the presence of Japanese troops and the activities of Japanese officials, both civil and military."⁶⁴² These observations cut deeply into the contentions of Japan.

The last two chapters of the Report provided recommendations for settlement of the Sino-Japanese dispute over

⁶⁴¹ Lytton Report, op. cit., p. 142.

⁶⁴² Ibid., p. 198.

Manchuria based on principles the Commission considered essential. Though granting that "a mere restoration of the status quo ante would be no solution," the Report clearly stated that "the maintenance and recognition of the present regime in Manchuria would be equally unsatisfactory." The former would invite repeated troubles; the latter would be incompatible with the "fundamental principles of existing international obligations" and with the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations.⁶⁴³ The prescription the Commission offered was the "constitution of a special regime for the administration of the Three Eastern Provinces,"⁶⁴⁴ which would be consistent "with the sovereignty and administrative integrity of China" but would possess "a large measure of autonomy designed to meet the local conditions and special characteristics of the Three Provinces."⁶⁴⁵ The internal order of Manchuria was to be "secured by an effective local gendarmerie force and security against external aggression" was to be "provided by the withdrawal of all armed forces, including any special bodies of police or railway guards, whether Chinese or Japanese."⁶⁴⁶ Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria were to be assured by a Sino-Japanese treaty providing "free

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p. 266.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 278.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 273.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 282.

participation of Japan in the economic development of Manchuria, which would not carry with it a right to control the country either economically or politically.⁶⁴⁷

What Japan had meanwhile adopted as national policy with regard to Manchuria was directly opposed to the settlement outlined by the Lytton Commission. The full and formal commitment of the Japanese Government to the State of Manchukuo, explicit in the recognition granted September 15, 1932, allowed for no compromise on the issue of Chinese sovereignty. The Kwantung Army had held complete severance of Manchuria from China as essential to the settlement of Manchurian problems ever since October 2, 1931, and strongly persisted in that view. Step by step, the government had accommodated its policy to the changing political situation initiated by the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. In March, 1932, the government had decided to assist the new regime in Manchuria as the party with which to negotiate restoration and expansion of Japanese rights and interests. In August it had resolved to execute Manchurian policy "from the independent standpoint of the Imperial state" in defiance of world opposition. The Japanese rights and interests to be guaranteed by Manchukuo were no longer economic alone, but included such matters as stationing of Japanese troops, management of railways, harbors, and airways, and supervision

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 284.

of the Manchurian Government through the assignment of advisers. The objectives of Japanese policy towards Manchuria had gone far beyond the "free participation of Japan in the economic development of Manchuria," approved by the Lytton Commission,⁶⁴⁸ and aimed, indeed, at the complete control of the country, militarily, economically, and politically. The recommendations of the Lytton Commission might easily have been acceptable to Japan before the Manchurian Affair, but in the fall of 1932 they fell far short of what she had decided was her due.

Japan tried, however, to forestall a final clash with the League of Nations. She attempted to persuade the League to refrain from intervening in the settlement of the Manchurian Affair. With regard to the suggested terms of the Report, she questioned the competence of the Commission to make recommendations, and took an attitude of deliberate disregard. With regard to the League efforts to safeguard the principles of security embodied in the Covenant, Japan advanced the theory that the Manchurian problem was extremely complicated and "had no parallel in the world," so that its settlement would not become precedent for solving later disputes.⁶⁴⁹ In short, what Japan tried to do was to release

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Cable No. 103 from Foreign Office to Paris. Sent October 21, 1932. "Nisshi jihen," op. cit., Vol. X, 2, pp. 980f.

the League from its commitment to solving the Sino-Japanese dispute by rejecting the argument that this was the "acid test" for the postwar system of collective security. Japan was willing to let the League withhold endorsement of the new order in Manchuria, but she was not going to accept any League condemnation labeling Japan an aggressor or violator of the Covenant, nor any resolution that would control the effects of the relationship which Japan and Manchukuo had established through the Protocol.⁶⁵⁰

Withdrawal from the League

The final act of the Manchurian Affair at the League took place again in the Assembly, at the meeting on February 21. By then the efforts of the Committee of Nineteen⁶⁵¹ to mediate the Sino-Japanese dispute had failed, and the Committee presented a report "containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto," as required under Paragraph 4 of Article 15 in such an event. Three days later when the report was adopted over the sole dissenting vote of Japan, the Japanese delegation withdrew.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 980-982.

⁶⁵¹ On March 11, 1932, the Special Assembly of the League of Nations, which had been convened at China's request to consider the Shanghai Affair, appointed a committee of nineteen members consisting of Powers with interests at Shanghai to assist in the cessation of hostilities. On December 9, this committee was appointed to study the Lytton Report and the observations of the parties and to draw up proposals for settling the Sino-Japanese dispute.

The second report had adopted all but the last two chapters of the Lytton Report, which contained the Lytton Commission's recommendations. But, on its own right, the Committee of Nineteen had drawn conclusions and recommendations essentially along the same lines. It proposed the constitution of an autonomous Manchuria under the sovereignty of China, the evacuation of Japanese troops outside the railway zone, the initiation of Japanese-Chinese negotiations, and the observation of the policy of non-recognition of Manchukuo de jure or de facto by the members of the League.⁶⁵² On March 27, Japan formally notified the League of her withdrawal. She was to go her own way in dealing with her Far Eastern neighbors.

The Japanese decision to withdraw signified a final victory of the policy of placing priority on Manchuria operations over or at the expense of international co-operation. Within the cabinet, the main advocate of this policy was Minister of War Araki, who regarded the League as a restrictive body opposing free Japanese action in the Far East.⁶⁵³ That the radical reformers had long considered the postwar peace system more as fetters than crutches to Japan's development was brought out in the early part of this analysis.

⁶⁵² Report of the Assembly of the League of Nations, February 24, 1933. Nihon gaiko nenpyo, op. cit., pp. 262-264.

⁶⁵³ Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 14.

But the withdrawal was not the result of a hard-fought battle by its advocates. Indeed, none of the top government leadership--neither the cabinet, including the Prime Minister, nor the delegation at the League, including representative Matsuoka, who later turned into the hero of League withdrawal,⁶⁵⁴ nor the court circle, including Saionji--wished nor planned to take Japan out of the League. Opportunism, indecision, and passivity led them to open the way for the victory of the advocates of the strong policy, however.

Several statements quoted in the Harada Diary eloquently support this observation. Vice Minister Arita and Director of the Bureau of Asian Affairs Tani refer to the opportunism of Foreign Minister Uchida as follows:

Foreign Minister Uchida considers that national opinion always tends to be led by the strong views of a minority; . . . [that] there is a greater possibility of bringing about the consolidation of national power through strong views that are accompanied by action even if they are a bit extreme. He is handling various problems from such a standpoint.⁶⁵⁵

Uchida supported Araki at the cabinet in championing the argument in favor of withdrawal.

Lt. Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi prophesied that indecision

⁶⁵⁴ Saionji states that Matsuoka himself had intended to settle the Manchurian question within the League prior to his departure. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 366.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 15

would lead to undesired results when he commented in late January, 1933, that

if the government does not have the final determination to withdraw from the League, it should adopt a settlement under Paragraph 3 of Article 15.⁶⁵⁶ . . . However, if the government really has the determination to withdraw, it may certainly reject Paragraph 3 and wait for the application of Paragraph 4.⁶⁵⁷ I believe that the worst course would be to appear strong on the surface, and end up being obliged to take the decision to withdraw.⁶⁵⁸

When the outline of the Assembly report became known in mid-February and anti-League sentiments rose rapidly, Saionji observed that the general situation made him think that "withdrawal is inevitable. Since it seems that they will be led to withdraw eventually, [he] believed it would be better not to hold such a conference of elder statesmen [for the prevention of withdrawal from the League] at this time."⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁶"Article 15, Paragraph 3. The Council shall endeavor to effect a settlement of the dispute, and if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate."

⁶⁵⁷"Article 15, Paragraph 4. If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council either unanimously or by a majority shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto."

⁶⁵⁸Harada Diary, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 10

⁶⁵⁹Ibid., p. 26.

Withdrawal abruptly put an end to decades of Japanese coöperation with the international community. It was a logical result of the policy adopted in the summer of 1932 to give priority to operations of Manchuria, but not an end explicitly chosen by the nation's policy makers in general. They, by and large, had sought international coöperation, had looked to the major Great Powers as partners in imperialism. Indeed, to some international coöperation, albeit outside the League, was a growing objective.

But change in the balance of foreign policy objectives in favor of international coöperation required restoration of order within the army and between the army and the civil government. The Emperor himself perceived the nature of the Japanese crisis when he requested that the desire for world peace and the separation of civilian and military functions should be embodied in the Imperial edict issued at the time of Japanese withdrawal from the League.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁶⁰The Emperor specified that the following two points be included in the Imperial edict: "1. that it is indeed regrettable that withdrawal has become inevitable; 2. that international friendship would be promoted and coöperation would be maintained more and more in spite of the withdrawal." Kido Diary, March 8, 1933. "With regard to the Imperial edict to be issued at the time of withdrawal from the League, the Emperor stated that formerly great results have been brought about in enhancing the military, but at present it is necessary to express encouragement to the civil. Thus the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal showed him the draft which had been presented by the cabinet and stated that the clause in the latter section that 'the civil and military should respectively observe their functions faithfully' etc., seemed to have thoroughly transmitted the Imperial intentions. The Emperor approved with satisfaction." Kido Diary, March 24, 1933.

At the cabinet meeting that reviewed the Imperial edict,⁶⁶¹ the strong objection of the Minister of War forced rejection of the proposed clause requiring that "the orders of superior and inferior should be observed."⁶⁶² The Minister of War's objection is ironic, for it was the army that was most in need of restoration to discipline. Indeed, his rank dependence upon the support of his subordinates was clear evidence of this.

The Manchurian Affair, brought about in part by a desperate attempt to protect the Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria against the growing demands of Chinese Nationalism, in part by radical demands to reform political, social, and economic order in Japan, thus ended with a symbolic omission. Clearly, a new leadership had sprung to power by way of the war in Manchuria and had committed Japan to a new course in foreign policy. But could the new leadership guide Japan, along an internally disciplined course, to realize an advantageous external policy? The ideology and action of the promoters of the Manchurian Affair augured a dim future.

661 The Imperial edict was drafted by Director of the Asian Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tani Masayuki upon close consultation with the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Makino. The cabinet presented the final draft to the Emperor.

662 Kido Diary, March 27, 1933.

CHAPTER XI

**THE MANCHURIAN AFFAIR--IDEOLOGY, DECISION MAKING,
AND FOREIGN POLICY**

From the viewpoint of historical development, the Manchurian Affair can be observed as a current in the steady stream of Japanese expansion towards the Continent of Asia. It was a strong current, accelerating the expansionist flow and turning it in a direction later to disrupt other national interests. But it has been far from the purpose of this presentation to "prove" that the Manchurian Affair was a step in Japanese imperialism or that it contributed to the build-up towards the Second World War. To probe the former view is to argue the obvious. The latter contention could be treated meaningfully only in relation to worldwide policies and policy-making processes. This analysis has been concerned, rather, with evaluation of the nature of the turn in Japanese foreign policy, its underlying ideas, and the process through which the change occurred in the course of the Manchurian Affair.

The change in Japanese foreign policy that took place in the 1931-1932 period was drastic. It signified the breakdown of a balance between the two major objectives of continental expansion and international coöperation that was traditionally upheld as all but sacred. Continental expansion--chiefly in

the maintenance and development of Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria--was a national commitment which every successive government after the Russo-Japanese War had assiduously followed. And since Japanese advancement to Manchuria was constantly under the surveillance of the Powers, especially after the Washington Conference, and increasingly faced with the challenge of China, the task of foreign policy was to work out a formula assuring maximum expansion with minimum opposition. The Shidehara "soft" policy represented the attempt to promote Japanese rights and interests within the limits of international agreements concluded among the Powers as well as between Japan and China. It attached great importance to the alleviation of counteracting forces and to controlling the pace of expansionistic demands. The Tanaka "strong" policy seemingly gave priority to Manchurian expansion. But what Tanaka in fact endeavored to do was to devise a separation of Manchuria from China proper and to reach understanding with the rulers of both regions with regard to Japan's continental interests. If Shidehara relied upon coöperation with the Western Powers, Tanaka looked to China as the major party through whose assistance Japan was to engage in the development of Manchuria. Neither of them thought in terms of "independent" diplomacy in which Manchurian operations would be executed at the expense of intense international hostility.

During the Manchurian Affair, sensitivity to international repercussions was shown by both cabinet leaders and the central army authorities in their efforts to minimize the provocative effects of Japanese military and political activities in Manchuria. The most serious point of discord between the central army authorities and the Kwantung Army developed over the question of North Manchurian operations. The basis for Tokyo's opposition to the enlargement of military action was fear of inciting the Soviet Union to the use of force and of inviting organized pressure of the Powers against the entire Japanese venture in Manchuria. Both government and military leaders made efforts at preventing the spread of hostilities in Shanghai as well as soliciting the Powers in the settlement of the Shanghai Affair. These attempts proved their recognition of the need to offset international antagonism in an area with strong international interest in order to save Manchuria from world scrutiny.

With regard to the political maneuvers of the Kwantung Army to establish a new state in Manchuria severed from China proper, the opposition of the government and the central army authorities took different forms at different times. In the initial stage, involvement of army officers in the movement for a new regime in Manchuria was prohibited by the Chief of the General Staff and Minister of War. Gradually, however, when underground political activities were considered beyond official control, the main point of concern on the part of

all leaders in Tokyo was to conceal the fact of Japanese involvement from the world. International discovery and disapproval were always the main grounds for Tokyo's objections to the Kwantung Army program to instigate the Manchurian Chinese to establish a new government. When political developments in Manchuria reached the stage of erecting an all-Manchuria government independent of and severed from China proper, the central army authorities would not acquiesce, and instead insisted upon the creation of a new local regime with authority to negotiate settlement of Manchurian problems, but under the formal sovereignty of the Chinese National Government, a traditional arrangement.

This was the arrangement Inukai attempted to recreate. It was also the arrangement that the world at large was willing to accept. The Lytton Commission proposed the constitution of a special regime for the administration of Manchuria possessed of a large measure of autonomy but under Chinese jurisdiction. Finally, when the State of Manchukuo declared its independence, the Government of Japan withheld formal recognition and thereby attempted to avoid a head-on collision with the Powers, which by then had lined up behind the doctrine of non-recognition of changes caused by Japanese military action in Manchuria. The complete political reconstruction of Manchuria was achieved, then, at the hands of the Kwantung Army in defiance of the opposition of government and central military leaders. The delicate balance between Manchurian

development and international coöperation could not last forever when the pace of the former stepped up rapidly and irretrievably.

The choice between recognition of Manchukuo, which signified full national commitment to the new order in Manchuria, and allegiance to the world judgment, which denied this new order, was no longer one between two equally pressing alternatives. In the course of the Manchurian Affair, foreign policy decisions had already been made that helped to sway the balance in favor of the former. The most important of these decisions took place as early as November 12, 1931, under Foreign Minister Shidehara, when the Foreign Office adopted the policy of assisting the sprouting Committees to Maintain Peace and Order in Manchuria, with a view to entering into negotiations with the regime that was eventually to emerge from them. Thus the recognition of Manchukuo was by no means a sudden leap. Nevertheless, it marked an explicit turning point in Japanese foreign relations, for it was taken deliberately as the course preferred over international coöperation. As soon as the recognition policy was established, Foreign Minister Uchida was obliged to undertake a total reformulation of Japanese foreign policy to prepare Japan for a hostile world. Henceforth, Japanese relations with China proper, the Powers, and the League of Nations were to be secondary to the primary objective of expansion to Manchuria.

It is important to recall, however, that this change in the balance of Japanese foreign policy objectives had also been assisted by the working of existing international relations. In spite of the hostile world which Japan knowingly confronted after the Manchurian Affair, she considered the international opposition to be far less serious than might have been expected from the tone of the formal condemnation which caused her withdrawal from the League of Nations. In short, Japan saw no Power with interests in Manchuria vital sufficiently to justify military action in order to prevent Japanese continental operations. China reaffirmed her military weakness through her defeat in Manchuria. The Powers were primarily absorbed in internal economic reconstruction following the worldwide panic that began in 1929. The Soviet Union, which the central military authorities took great pains to keep unprovoked, not only remained restrained throughout the course of the Manchurian Affair but even proposed the conclusion of a non-aggression pact. The United States, whose attitude turned increasingly severe from the initial policy of "playing no favorites" to the championing of the Stimson non-recognition doctrine, never intended to advance troops to the Far East. Great Britain and France, though subscribing to the League resolutions, were sympathetic to Japan because of their identity of interests as colonial Powers. The League of Nations was not ready to go any farther than to pass judgment in principle.

The absence of international opposition with teeth was the overall factor that helped the Japanese military feel free to advance in Manchuria. It led the government to be less resolute than it might otherwise have been in resisting the rapid expansionistic flow. So long as international opposition contained elements of indecisiveness, ambiguity, or sympathy, Japan found herself possessed of a safe margin to consolidate and expand her control in the neighboring continent. The legacy of the Manchurian Affair was the discovery of this margin between nominal international disapproval and effective international opposition. A certain laxity came to prevail in Japan's consideration of international affairs, which in turn drove her foreign policy towards adventurism. The "independent" diplomacy that upheld the primacy of Manchurian operations was in part the product of the international context in which the Manchurian Affair was carried out.

If the commitment to independent diplomacy indicated Japan's determination to follow a course of expansion to Manchuria, what sort of future developments were suggested by the attitudes and ideas underlying the Manchurian Affair? As has been shown, although the Manchurian Affair was technically a foreign policy issue, it was closely connected with internal political and economic problems. As such, it fully reflected the social, economic, and political thoughts that germinated in Japan at that time. For the sake of convenience,

the attitudes and ideas that lay behind the Manchurian Affair will be examined in two categories: those relating to external affairs and those concerned with internal matters.

The recognition of Manchukuo, coupled with the withdrawal from the League of Nations, reflected and accelerated a change in the Japanese estimation of her own national power vis-à-vis the world. This is in marked contrast with the previous eight decades of Japan's deference to the Western Powers. Traditionally, Japanese nationalism was built upon the triangular power relationship that existed between Japan, China, and the Western Powers. To the nationalists of the Meiji era, who had been awakened by the threat to the national existence upon facing the overwhelming power of the European states at the end of the Tokugawa period, fear and/or deference were necessarily the primary psychological condition with respect to the major Powers. This being the case, they sought for an alliance with Great Britain or Russia. At the same time, they looked to China as a potential partner in protecting Asia against Western encroachment.

The advocates of strong action in Manchuria in the late 1920's clearly belonged to a different generation. None of them had experienced the Black Ships. The majority of the Isseki-kai members who constituted the most senior and earliest of the advocates of reform within the army were barely born at the time of the Triple Intervention nor had they participated in the Russo-Japanese War. The Isseki-kai consisted of graduates

of the 15th to 17th classes of the Military Academy. Nagata Tetsuzan, who was in the 16th class, was barely nineteen when he was graduated in 1903. Ishiwara Kanji, a member of the Daini Isseki-kai, was little over twenty when he was graduated from the Academy in 1909. By then, China was a defeated country and Japan was the victor of two major wars and on her way to continental expansion. That the defiance of Western Powers culminating in the decision to advance along the path of independent diplomacy in Manchuria was largely the expression of the late Meiji generation is hardly insignificant. Lacking any experience in having to comply with Western demands, the new generation saw sensitivity to international repercussion as a sign of weakness, if not of servility. To them, the success of the Manchurian Affair only confirmed the marked increase in Japan's power position.

With regard to China, however, the leap in Japan's estimation of her power position intensified the contradiction that had existed in the rationale of her China policy. As we know, Japanese leaders had traditionally considered co-operation with China as the necessary basis for the defense of Asia against the advancement of the West. As such, Sino-Japanese co-operation was ultimately conceived as a means of insuring Japan's national security. At the same time, however, Japan's rapid progress in modernization and her power position in contrast to China's turned her eyes to the Chinese Continent as an area for possible expansion. Moreover, China's undeveloped

resources and political weakness made her an inviting prey not only to Japan, but also to the Western nations that had been advancing eastward with their overwhelming military and economic power. Japan had to seek ways to assure her place in the competition in China.

Pan-Asianism advocating racial, cultural, and geographical propinquity was a means of standing up against the West by uniting with China, as well as of drawing China toward coöperating with Japan by calling upon the dangers of Western encroachment. The nationalists of the 1920's, ranging from Okawa, Kita, and the Sakurakai to the Nihon Kokka Shakaito and Nihon Kokumin Shakaito, stressed their Pan-Asian heritage when they insisted that it was Japan's mission to undertake the emancipation of the Asian races from Western domination. Ishiwara predicted that the last world war would be fought between Japan, as the champion of Asian civilization, and the United States, as champion of Western civilization. However, as Japan's resistance to Western expansion in China in fact took the form of her own expansion, and as China responded by way of growing nationalism directed against Japan, the contradiction inherent in Pan-Asianism was aggravated during the course of the Manchurian Affair.

The principle of racial harmony which was incorporated into the founding of Manchukuo was the flowering of the more purely fraternal aspect of Pan-Asianism. When it was conceived by the members of the Manshu Seinen Renmei, the idea of a

Manchuria-Mongolia Autonomous State based upon racial harmony was a defensive proposal that was to assure the Japanese in Manchuria of being able to continue to reside and gain their livelihood in the region. The proposers were even ready to abandon Japanese citizenship and join other Asians in the creation of the new state. Admittedly, the commitment of the Kwantung Army to racial harmony was qualified; it was adopted partly as an expedient to winning over the people in Manchuria to the Japanese adventure, as well as to appease the nationalist aspiration of the indigenous population. At the same time, the racial thinking of the Kwantung Army was such that it allowed fairly genuine adherence to the professed principle. The Kwantung Army pledged to "consider the Chinese populace in Manchuria as the primary objective" of administration,⁶⁶³ leaving wide discretion to the local self-governing Chinese bodies, and intended neither the disruption of the daily lives of the Manchurian people nor their assimilation to Japanese culture.⁶⁶⁴ In fact, no statement is to be found in the Kwantung Army memoranda and policy programs that propagated the idea of supremacy of the Japanese.

By contrast, the argument that "China was not an organized state" which theoretically denied the sovereignty of China, marked a break from the commitment to Pan-Asianism. Conceived primarily as a diplomatic weapon against the Powers to meet

⁶⁶³ Kantogun Sanboubu Chosahan, "Manshu Senryochi gyosei no kenkyu," op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

the charge of violating the Nine Power Treaty, it was reinforced by China's unattractiveness as a partner in the Asian cause now that Japan had achieved a new pinnacle of power. No document of the Foreign Office nor of the Kwantung Army during the Manchurian Affair stressed the need for gaining future Chinese cooperation for the sake of Japanese interests. The actual state of hostility between China and Japan and the growing threat of Chinese nationalism further decreased the prospects for any close alliance between the two countries. Yet Pan-Asianism continued to serve as a theme in Japanese thinking towards China, partly because of the propaganda effect but also because of the overall condition of Western predominance in Asia, which did not fundamentally remove the earlier Japanese tendency to tie her lot with the security of the entire region.

While Japan's elevated estimation of her national power towards China and the Western Powers expressed itself in the determination to pursue the development of Manchuria independently, as self-styled champion of the Asian cause, the radical reform movement which grew in Japan in the late 1920's strongly affected the tenor of the expansionism of the Manchurian Affair. Indeed, Manchuria entered the limelight of national policy not only because Japanese rights and interests in the region were seriously threatened by the challenge of Chinese nationalism, but also because Japan's internal crisis looked to Manchuria for salvation. Dissatisfaction with the existing leadership, which seemed capable neither of protecting Japan's continental interests

nor of alleviating economic and social unrest at home, created a program for reform that was adverse to the very foundations of the political and economic system of the time, party government and capitalism. Kita and Okawa advocated a form of socialism based upon the principle of direct union between the Emperor and the people, who were to be equal in their relations among themselves. Abolition of the peerage and excessive private wealth were suggested. The execution of socialism at home, however, was considered difficult without expanding the orbit of Japan's economic foundation. The control of Manchuria was thus a necessary condition for undertaking an equalization of wealth that would not result in the impoverishment of all.

That the Manchurian Affair belonged to the national-socialist reform movement that grew in the late 1920's is well attested by the political thought held by the promoters of the Manchurian Affair, and also in the principles adopted in the creation of the State of Manchukuo. The driving force in the Manchurian Affair was the Kwantung Army leadership, led particularly by Itagaki and Ishiwara and assisted by influential officers among the central army authorities. All had reacted to the cause of national reform with varying forms and degrees of enthusiasm. There was no refined planning nor definite agreement among the reform-minded army officers to proceed systematically from the control of Manchuria to the reform of Japan. What existed in common were general commitment to

the twofold objective of external expansion and internal reform and a mode of thinking critical of political party leadership and capitalists, sympathetic for the lot of the people, and reluctant to restrain Japanese power or position on the continent.

The entire sequence of the Manchurian settlement program of the Kwantung Army, from the "Manshu senryochi gyosei no kenkyu" prior to the outbreak of hostilities to the blueprints for the State of Manchukuo, reflected the political thinking of the Kwantung Army leadership and its opposition to the existing domestic situation. The Kwantung Army saw in the misery of the people of Manchuria, who suffered from civil war and misrule of the war lords and bureaucrats, a parallel to the misery of the Japanese people under party government and capitalism. Furthermore, the pressure of communism from the neighboring Soviet Union loomed large in the minds of the Kwantung Army leadership as national socialists. They were doubly determined to ensure Manchuria against capitalist abuses. Thus emphasis on the welfare of the indigenous population became a recurring theme in the Manchuria settlement programs of the Kwantung Army, and was expressed in the appealing concept of a "paradise" in which the people were to be protected from the traditional abuses of heavy taxation and bureaucratic corruption--and from the injustices of capitalism. Article 11 of the Guarantee Law of Civil Rights of the State of Manchukuo

in promising the protection of the people of Manchukuo from "usury, excessive profit and all other unjust economic pressure"⁶⁶ spoke for the anti-capitalistic attitude of the Kwantung Army.

Kwantung Army mistrust and disapproval of the existing leaders and institutions of Japan were not dissolved by the establishment of a paradise in Manchuria. The Kwantung Army set itself up as a guardian against any extension of undesirable Japanese influence over Manchukuo. Through the exchange of the Honjo-Pu Yi letters, Japan was assured the right to station troops there, to manage transportation systems, and to assign advisers to the Manchukuo Government. Command of the Japanese forces belonged by right to the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army. The right to recommend assignments as well as approve the dismissal of Japanese advisers was also specifically designated as belonging to the Kwantung Army Commander-in-Chief. Continued control over the largest transportation system in Manchuria, the South Manchuria Railway, was attempted through invoking the principle of the "permanency" of its presidency which, the Kwantung Army argued, had been abused as a spoil of party politics. Successful opposition to the transfer of President Uchida during the Inukai Cabinet had proved the actual power of the Kwantung Army with regard to the management of the Manchurian transportation systems.

What the Kwantung Army pursued and obtained was, in short, control of Manchukuo out of reach of the Japanese

⁶⁶⁵Guarantee Law of Civil Rights, Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 231.

Government. In other words, the Kwantung Army was far from willing to entrust the development of Manchukuo to the yet "unreformed" Japan of party politicians and capitalists. Thus, although the "open door" was promised and capital investment was expected from Japan and from the Powers, the Kwantung Army was determined not to allow the capitalists to participate in Manchurian development freely nor to permit them to monopolize profits. They planned to realize the maximum effect of the economic potential of Manchuria through integrating its development with that of Japan and the Japanese colonies.

Along with the establishment of Manchukuo and special position of the Kwantung Army through the exchange of the Honjo-Pu Yi letters, the Kwantung Army urged that its political views be incorporated by the government into national policy. The statement affirming that "the Japanese rights and interests in the region [of Manchuria] will not be left to the Monopoly of certain capitalists, but will be arranged so that the general public enjoy the benefits equally"⁶⁶⁶ in the draft agreement between the Ministries of War, Navy and Foreign Affairs, at the occasion of Itagaki's return to Tokyo, is evidence of the Kwantung Army's official anti-capitalist bias. Through Itagaki the Kwantung Army demanded the exclusion of Manchurian problems from considerations of "party interests

⁶⁶⁶"Shina mondai shori hoshin," ("China Problem Settlement Policy"), January 6, 1932. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 65f.

and politics."⁶⁶⁷ Furthermore, it proposed that major reforms in social administration be undertaken in order to provide widespread participation of the people in the benefits of Manchuria, especially of the soldiers who took part in the latest military action. It is interesting to note that, although the Kwantung Army leaders were committed to the cause of reform and, although they expressed their anti-party views, they did not think in terms of total destruction of the political parties or of establishment of military governments. The Kwantung Army leadership, notably Ishiwara, had reservations about the priority of internal reform and as such, distinguished themselves from the radical reformers at home. After the dazzling success of the Manchurian expedition, the Kwantung Army pressed internal reform goals upon the Government.

From the ideas and attitudes underlying the Manchurian Affair, how are we, then, to characterize the imperialism of the time? There is ample basis for defining the imperialism of the Manchurian Affair as "social imperialism." The observation of Professor Maruyama Masao is particularly pertinent: the reason why the people did not gain a hegemony in the Fascist movement of Japan is because "the strength of the element 'from below' in the process of a Fascist movement is determined by the strength of democracy of that country."⁶⁶⁸ The relative

⁶⁶⁷ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 29.

⁶⁶⁸ Maruyama Masao, "Nihon fasshizumu no shiso to undo" ("Ideas and Movement of Japanese Fascism") in Gendai seiji no

weight of the "people" in the Fascist movement of Japan was unsubstantial; their influence existed more as shadows in the minds of the self-styled leaders.

Nevertheless, it seems significant to note that the people affected the imperialism of the early 1930's in one major respect. The national-socialist doctrine elevated the masses to the position of beneficiaries of national enterprises, and defended their demand for just and increasingly greater distribution of national wealth. The basis for the popularity of the Manchurian Affair was its promise of expansion of the national economy. The Kwantung Army proposal to the Japanese Government at the end of the Manchurian Affair to undertake reform in social administration that would enable the people to participate in the fruits of the Manchurian development is a clear plea for the elevation of the masses in connection with imperialistic adventures. Their elevation was not only compatible with, but could even accelerate expansion.

The question of the "people" became more complicated when observed in relation with the other "peoples" whom imperialistic enterprises necessarily involved. In the case of the Manchurian Affair, that the attitude of the Kwantung Army towards the masses of Manchuria was primarily a projection of its views towards the people of Japan made its commitment to the cause of the Manchurians fairly genuine. The added factor

of Chinese nationalism further obliged the Kwantung Army to follow a course of upholding the interests of the Manchurian people. In so far as the Kwantung Army adhered to the recognition of the masses of Japan and Manchuria as beneficiaries of national enterprises, a limit had to be drawn to the Japanese control of Manchuria. The ideals and arrangements established by the Kwantung Army attested to the recognition of such a limit. Most certainly, in the final analysis the interest of the Japanese people superseded that of the Manchurians. This became most clear when demands on Manchuria as a strategic base and supply source no longer allowed the support of subtle distinctions.

Though torn and weakened by contradictory demands, the racial and political thinking of the Kwantung Army proved to be a significant limiting factor to the expansionism that inspired the Manchurian Affair. That the main safeguard to the preservation of the limit rested upon the attitudes and ideas of the Kwantung Army leaders, in view of the institutional arrangements that assured their complete control over Manchukuo, denied any assurance of continued moderation. Besides, the actual possession of power did not contribute to the self-restraint of the supporters of the ideals of racial harmony and paradise, not to speak of the uninfected majority of civilian and military administrators who succeeded to the task of Manchurian development.

Lastly, in order to arrive at a full appraisal of the Manchurian Affair we must examine the decision-making process. In a word, the notable characteristic of decision making was defiance of official authorities. The final source of policy control always rested in the staff officers of the Kwantung Army who both coerced their Commander-in-Chief and pressured the central army authorities into complying with their policy objectives.

The decision to expand the Mukden Incident to a major offensive was first taken by Itagaki and then forced upon the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army while Itagaki tried to forestall any possibility of having to comply with preventive orders from the central army authorities. The Kirin expedition was a more flagrant case of defiance; it was decided upon deliberately against the orders issued by the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War in accordance with cabinet policy, to prohibit the expansion of hostilities in Manchuria. The report to the central army authorities on the Kirin expedition was intentionally delayed in order to allow time for the creation of a fait accompli. The decision was reached only upon exercise of great pressure on the Commander-in-Chief, including the threat of resignation by the staff officers of the Kwantung Army. The Kirin expedition led, moreover, to the arbitrary dispatch of the Korean Army and brought the problem of army discipline to the forefront.

Both the anti-Chang statement of October 4 and the Chinchow bombing of the 8th were planned by the Kwantung Army staff in order to coerce the central army authorities to approve occupation of all Manchuria and reconstruction of a new regime. The independence of Manchukuo was a program strictly of Kwantung Army origin and in opposition to the central army authorities to approve occupation of all Manchuria and reconstruction of a new regime. The independence of Manchukuo was a program strictly of Kwantung Army origin and in opposition to the central army authorities and the government, both of which sought settlement on a much more limited scale.

In addition to the fact that policy control of the Manchurian Affair came from local and subordinate officers, the frequent reference to "resignation" or "independence" on the part of the Kwantung Army provides revealing insight into the nature of their control. Distrust and disrespect of the existing army leadership was basic, as is clearly indicated in the Katakura Diary report of the great indignation of the Kwantung Army staff with regard to the lack of policy and resolution of the central army authorities. The Kwantung Army judged that the "Minister of War had no guts"⁶⁶⁹ and that [it] alone had something of an established program for settlement of Manchurian problems.⁶⁷⁰ When the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army resisted the decision to undertake

⁶⁶⁹ Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 44.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

the expedition to Kirin, the staff asserted determination to resign en masse unless their proposal was adopted. Upon presenting the Kwantung Army Manchurian settlement program of October 2, the staff resolved that "if by any chance the government does not accept our policy, those volunteers among the army in Manchuria would be required to abandon Japanese citizenship temporarily and to dash on in order to realize our objectives."⁶⁷¹ The circulation of the Kwantung Army's very convincing independence rumor was a reflection of the climate of rebellious assertiveness that prevailed.

Such assertive defiance of existing leadership is closely related to the generally critical mood dominating the radical reform movement of the late 1920's. At its inception, the demand for reform within the army was caused by dissatisfaction with leadership seen as lacking the competence to deal with the requirements of modern war and relying for power on outdated hanbatsu forces. The army reform movement originated as an anti-Choshu movement. Gradually, as the execution of disarmament "proved" the inability and the insincerity of the military leaders to fight back against "the poisonous sword of the demoralized and covetous party politicians,"⁶⁷² dissatisfaction with the leadership developed into defiance of their command, and into attempts at destroying the party government

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁷² "Sakurakai Prospectus." Tanaka Kiyoshi, op. cit., p. 192.

and capitalist domination. Reform ventures undertaken by the Sakurakai and the young officers of the Kita-Nishida school resorted to the radical means of coups d'état. In all, the reform movement among the military was definitely "from below." The arrogant decision making of the Kwantung Army officers in the course of the Manchurian Affair was in line with this tendency of upward pressure. Thus, in terms of action patterns as well as thought content, the Manchurian Affair was part of the national-socialist movement.

More refined examination of the nature of the upward action pattern offers further insight into the inner relationships of the army. References to "resignation" and/or "independence" by the Kwantung Army are of telling significance. Both concepts imply continued preservation of the existing order. The former signifies withdrawal from assigned posts, leaving the established military organization intact. The latter, more radical in nature, implies not only liberation from the obligations of loyalty to the existing Imperial system, but also liberation of that system from disruptive pressures. The idea of independence is closely connected with the possible abandonment of Japanese citizenship which the Kwantung Army considered as a necessary condition preceding any act of revolt. In other words, since loyalty to the existing order was inviolable, revolt became possible only upon liquidation of the basis of loyalty, Japanese citizenship. Herein lay the limits of the upward pressure of the Kwantung Army and of the reform movement at

large. The source of the movement may have been from below, and its effect may have been revolutionary, but revolution as such--an attempt to take over the leadership upon destruction of the Imperial system--was outside the intended scope of the radicalism of the time.

In the case of the report of Kwantung Army independence, it is significant that the preventive order of the Minister and Vice Minister of War and the denial of the Kwantung Army staff were made with reference to the preservation of the army as an established organization. The cables from Tokyo in fact pleaded that the central army authorities be given absolute trust in exchange for a pledge to carry out the policy objectives upheld by the Kwantung Army. Categorically denying the charge of planning independence, the Kwantung Army staff demanded reproachfully that "those machinators who destroy the dignity of the Imperial Army and utilize it should be severely punished whether they are on active duty or not, in order not to allow any insult to the honor of the Imperial Army."⁶⁷³ The Commander-in-Chief, who admitted to the Vice Minister of War that the Kwantung Army "tended to act too positively and arbitrarily," affirmed that the Army "was unitedly making efforts for the country with

⁶⁷³Cable from Kwantung Army Staff to Vice-Chief of General Staff, Vice Minister of War, Director of General Affairs Department, Director of Military Affairs Department, Tatekawa, Director of Military Affairs Section. Sent October 19, 1931.

the devotion to return the Imperial favors."⁶⁷⁴ The central army authorities, whose serious misgivings were evidenced through the dispatch of General Shirakawa Yoshinori and Colonel Imamura Hitoshi, did not speak in the harsh terms of punishment or of replacement of responsible officers. Even in the case of the October Incident in which the plotters were arrested, the army authorities were eager to make peace internally through lenient treatment and laudatory comment on the motives of the radicals. The maintenance of the unity and prestige of the army was the primary concern.

Here was a situation indicating the duality of the structure of decision making. The actual sources of power were the middle and lower ranking officers. The legal authorities could no longer enforce their decisions. At the same time, as neither the actual nor the legal decision makers overtly proposed to claim leadership over the other, but were committed to the preservation of the existing military organization, no new responsible decision-making structure could evolve. Moreover, unquestioned sanctity and supremacy of the Imperial authority precluded this development. The entire military realized that it's link with this source of authority depended on its integrity as an organized body. Any fundamental change in the structure of decision making that involved

⁶⁷⁴Cable from Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army to Vice Minister of War. Katakura Diary, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 148.

reevaluation of the concepts of authority and responsibility would have required the complete reconstruction of the Imperial value system. Only a movement based upon broad support of self-awakened individuals could have undertaken this.⁶⁷⁵

Aside from the important factor of the Imperial system, other causes also contributed to the unresolved problem of the decision-making power within the army. The "independence of the Supreme Command" assured that no external pressure could force the liquidation of the dual power structure. On the other hand, the army could transfer and release the internal tensions to external fronts. And indeed, despite conflicts within the central army, within the Kwantung Army, and between the Kwantung Army and the central army authorities with regard to political, policy, and operational objectives, the army did act externally as a unified body. This was demonstrated in the handling of the two outbursts of political radicalism of the junior officers, the October Incident and the May 15 Incident. All top military authorities publicly championed the cause of the radicals. Subsequently, through capitalizing on threatening radicalism, the military set about enlarging the sphere of their influence, and the power to formulate foreign policy and to choose succeeding cabinets increasingly

675 See Maruyama Masao, "Cho kokka shugi no ronri to shinri" ("Logic and Psychology of Ultra Nationalism"), in op. cit., pp. 7-24, especially the discussion on the psychological basis that provides the sense of dignity to the Japanese military profession.

fell under their control. Given the basic allegiance to the military as an organization and the absence of effective outside pressure, any compelling need to fight out the leadership issue diminished, while the overall influence of the military continued to expand.

Manchuria was another factor that weakened the issue of leadership within the army. This is not to suggest that the war entirely dissipated the pent-up tensions of the military. But the process of decision making in the course of the Manchurian Affair provided a vast domain in which the Kwantung Army could operate outside the control of the central army authorities. Tokyo asserted effective control over the Kwantung Army exclusively in the domain of military operation. The extensive treatment here of the dispute that developed between the Kwantung Army and the central army authorities over the question of North Manchurian operations has demonstrated the extent of division and distrust that existed within the army during the expedition. The taking over of the right of decision making and ordering of the corps under the command of the Kwantung Army Commander-in-Chief by the Chief of the General Staff was an exceptional case in which the authority of the official leader was confirmed in formal terms. In at least three major operations--the advance to Harbin in September, the occupation of Tsitsihar, and the attack on Chinchow--the preventive orders of the central Army authorities prevailed over the express opposition of the Kwantung Army.

The effective and determined control of the central army authorities in military operations was in marked contrast to the extremely ineffective control they exercised over the political activities of the Kwantung Army. In this respect, the role of so-called political maneuvering is of central importance. Roughly speaking, political maneuvering refers to undercover activities employed to create unrest or to win over enemy elements. It requires secretive and dubious means that necessarily must be left to the discretion of the few. Political maneuvering was very much the established practice of the Japanese military in view of the instability of the Asian scene. The series of activities that led to the creation of the State of Manchukuo was based upon the decision of the Kwantung Army staff to establish a pro-Japanese regime in South Manchuria through means of political maneuvering. To a certain extent the central army authorities approved the resort to political maneuvering in exchange for restraint in military action. Once the Kwantung Army had a free hand in undercover activities, it could attain the objective of substantial control over Manchuria without undertaking military action. The central army authorities could prohibit the participation of the Kwantung Army in political activities, but only at the overt and exposed level. During the Manchurian Affair, declaration after declaration of independence was made by local Manchurian leaders, whom the central army authorities as well as the Japanese Government might at best ignore but

could not remove from the scene. The final fait accompli was the creation of Manchukuo, a situation with which Japan had to officially come to terms.

No effective and responsible decision making can be exercised when political maneuvering is sanctioned. Even if Japan were to have overcome the "independence of the Supreme Command" and enforce civilian control over the military, neither the government nor the official military leaders could have claimed complete control of decision making and execution when a vast area remained outside official supervision. In short, the Japanese military had not brought the entire sphere of action into the realm of rational control. From the standpoint of the development of a unified decision-making structure, the existence of such a twilight zone diminished the compulsion on contending groups to clarify their claims to power.

What remained after the Manchurian Affair was a system of irresponsibility that could neither formulate nor enforce consistent policy.

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Ishikawa Shingo
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Suzuki Teiichi
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Yamaura Kanichi
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