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From Co-Operation to Confrontation: Japanese-American Relations in the 1920s*

by

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To promote international cooperation and peace, the Washington Conference (November 1921 - February 1922) was held, and the Five and the Nine Powers Treaties were signed. For all practical purposes the Treaties were intended to prevent any change of status quo by force in East Asia. But the Treaties were doomed to failure from the very moment of their ratification because of many inherent shortcomings. Of these powers which were to be most influential in the Asian situation in the 1920's, one, Soviet Russia, was excluded from any consideration, and another, China, was viewed only as an object of the agreements. Furthermore, the terms of the Treaty relating to Japanese special interests on the mainland, as opposed to the territorial

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integrity of China which America's Open Door Policy demanded, were left in a muddle of ambiguities, failing to express the true scope of the United States concept of Open Door and clouding the extent of Japanese ambitions in her sphere of special interest. One way to understand the events of the 1920s which culminated in the breakdown of the Washington Conference "system" and the eventual head-on clash of American and Japanese policies, is to review the relationship of each to the East Asian situation at the beginning of the decade.

Japan in 1920 was the outstanding success story of the century. In the two decades since 1900 the value of imported and exported commodities had increased almost ten-fold. The volume of foreign trade had spiraled up to some ¥ 4,280,000 by 1920 (1 ¥=U.S. 50¢ in 1920), and continued to increase during the early twenties despite the end of the war boom. The national budget had increased from about ¥ 296,000,000 to ¥ 1,396,000,000 over the same twenty-year period. Over 527,000,000 tons of shipping called at Japanese ports in 1920, about half of them were registered under Japanese flag. All in all it was a record the Japanese were proud of and eager to continue.¹

Yet Japan was weak in many ways. Her heavy indus-

tries were still in the infant stage and the economy was dependent upon textiles and consumer goods. Although foreign trade increased during and after the World War I, it still constituted a negative balance. For instance, in 1924, the value of imports was some ¥646,000,000 over the value of exports. One of the outstanding causes for this negative balance was the lack of natural resources for the growing industries.

The continued growth of Japan's economy, and conversely the threat of its failure, was intimately involved with the conditions in neighboring East Asian countries. Exports of about ¥1,000,000,000 in value, nearly one half of Japan's total were going to these countries annually. Imports valued at ¥943,000,000 came to Japan from Asia. China was buying ¥410,000,000 worth of Japanese commodities and Manchurian sales grossed nearly ¥114,000,000. In addition, Manchuria was providing more than ¥196,000,000 of resources and various other imports necessary for Japan's economic prosperity. Perhaps the most outstanding was the fact that, of all her trade areas in the world, only in Asia that Japan had a positive balance of trade. As the economic struggle in the postwar West eliminated Japan's opportunities for profitable trade with Europe or the United

States, the Asian markets began to take on a greater significance.

Despite Japan's meteoric rise the economic power of the United States was by far the more imposing of the two. American foreign trade for the year 1920 amounted to \$13,510,000,000. The balance of trade was positive with a profit of \$2,952,000,000, more than Japan's total volume of foreign trade. The national budget for fiscal year 1921 was in excess of \$5,500,000,000, more than eight times that of Japan. American trade with Asian countries in the 1920 fiscal year amounted to some \$2,492,000,000 and trade with Japan itself accounted for over half of that figure. Trade with China proper was of minimal importance, less than onetwelfth of the total Asian trade.²

From the economic view, the United States and Japan appeared to have great potential in a cooperative development of Asia, but many other factors, social, political, military, and diplomatic were to create a tense atmosphere and prevent such cooperation between the two nations. Many of these issues were initiated in the preceding half century when America was emerging as a Pacific power and Japan was accommodating the drastic changes demanded by her sudden emergence into the modern world. Long before 1920 basic

disputes had been crystallized and mutual suspicion had taken root.

Japan's early adventure in imperialism, from 1870 to 1890, met with little opposition from the Western powers. The primary motive for the expansion in this period was Japan's desire for security and autonomy. Oppressed by the unequal treaty system and the recognition of their own weaknesses in face of the modern Western nations, the Japanese were determined to demonstrate their national integrity. Chinese hegemony in Korea, an ancient rivalry, became the first target of penetration as Japan strove to establish her position in relation to the other East Asian countries. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 was the end result of this confrontation, and the stunning success of Japan was an announcement to the West that she could no longer be dealt with as a traditional Oriental kingdom. During the next few years the Western nations abandoned their claims to special rights in Japan and were generally willing to accept the rise of a new power in East Asian affairs.

Japan's objective in the second phase of expansion from 1890 to about 1910 was to gain admittance into the "power club" of world diplomacy. Other motives contributed greatly to continued expansion; the redefining of the strategic

defence line to include Manchuria and the need for protected areas for industrial and agricultural resources encouraged the drive for territorial annexation. But the nationalistic fever, inflamed by the gains in early experiments, was the decisive factor in Japan's bid for expanding her empire. The pattern of expansion was basically a continuation of the policies of the earlier period; Japan took over Taiwan in 1895, thus securing the southern approaches to her home waters, Korea came completely under Japanese control with its annexation in 1910 and penetration in Manchuria was increasing at a steady pace.³ In the meantime, Japan's diplomatic relations with the West became much more complex as her empire grew. Two developments in this period, in particular, had a profound effect on Japan's future struggle with the United States: the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5 and the Open Door notes of 1899 and 1900.

Certainly Great Britain and France did not support the Open Door Policy without reservations.⁴ It is doubtful that either country actually placed the ideology of the Open Door ahead of their rights in the spheres of influence; but both gave their consent in the interest of preserving liberal appearances in their imperialist policies. For Japan to oppose the Open Door she would have to assume the role of an

immoral villain in colonial diplomacy. Although Japan's purpose on the Asian continent was no more sinister than any other imperial power, her approval of the Open Door was soon to taint her expansion policy with hypocrisy and deception. One of the greatest tragedies of this fall from grace was the failure on the part of the Japanese to understand the significance of the Open Door to the United States.

Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War brought a sudden change of the relationship between The United States and Japan. Japan proved herself a formidable force even to the Western nations and, consequently, a potential challenger to American interests in East Asia. Exhausted by the War, Japan requested American mediation for a war settlement in May 1905. Roosevelt used the opportunity to procure a bilateral agreement defining the relative positions of the two nations in East Asia and the Western Pacific. The result was the Taft-Katsura Memorandum,⁵ where by the United States recognized Japanese suzerainty over Korea in exchange for Japan's guarantee that the Philippines would not be threatened by Japan's future expansion.

Japan's hope for the achievement of an autonomous empire was set back by Roosevelt during the peace settlement at Portsmouth. The Russian indemnity, which would have

helped relieve Japan's serious lack of capital, was lost and the territorial gains were cut back. Having given Japan the power status to develop her empire, Roosevelt made that development impossible by denying the Japanese their capability to invest in her territories, or at least it seemed so to Japan. Out of the disappointments of the war settlement, a wave of anti-American feeling arose among the Japanese, though the Japanese leaders themselves did realize that it would be impossible for Japan to collect war indemnity from Russia.⁶

Yet Japan had no reason to believe that her concept of the Open Door-Special Interest relationship was inconsistent with the American outlook. But while Asia's situation made no progress towards a friendly cooperative relationship, it at least stabilized itself under mutual respect of the Root-Takahira Agreement in 1908. Here again the United States recognized Japan's special position in Manchuria in Exchange for her declaration of support for the Open Door. Unfortunately, the terms of the agreement were so ambiguous that neither country had the cause to re-examine the nature of its policy.⁷

The World War I gave a fresh breath of life to Japanese imperialism. The Japanese made the most of the opportunity to overtake the influential position of the European govern-

ments. After seizing the German possessions in the name of the Allied cause, Japan pressed her diplomatic advantage by presenting the Twenty-One Demands to China in January 1915. The United States balked at the prospect of such extensive privileges in China and interceded to preserve the vitality of the Open Door. But although American investments in China were increasing, another agreement were sufficient to satisfy both parties and delay the head-on clash of their opposing Asian policies; still, the crux of the issue was again avoided. Japan's special interest and America's Open Door could not be conciliated; either side would have to yield its basic principles if both policies were to be pursued in China.

Equally damaging to their diplomatic relations was the Pacific Island Mandate controversy. The Japanese seizure of the German Pacific islands aggravated American fear of this new Asian power. The lines of attack in a possible conflict between the United States and Japan were thus moving much closer. United States Pacific possessions, once free from security threats, were now within easy striking range of the Japanese fleet; consequently, the United States was eager to negotiate a demilitarization of the Western Pacific islands. On the other hand, Japan was also alarmed by the

possible fortifications in Guam and the Philippines by the United States.⁸ Furthermore, rapid development of Japanese industries was halted after the War due to the shrinking of the market. Since 1919, the unfavorable imbalance between exports and imports had persisted. A reduction of military expenditure was earnestly sought by the Japanese government.⁹ Meanwhile, the internal development within Japan also favored a more liberal policy towards international cooperation. The wartime demands for Japanese goods and products by nearly every country cut off from European supplies stimulated the economy, and Japan had become more and more industrialized. The business circle not only organized themselves along more modern associational lines and demanded to participate in politics, they were also inclined to believe that economic expansion was less costly and more profitable than military conquest.¹⁰

The East Asian situation was not exclusively responsible for Hughes' decision to call a naval conference in July of 1921, but it was certainly the main objective of his negotiations.¹¹ The danger of the naval arms race, the cost of the ship building program, the pacifist movement at home, and the little need for a battle fleet certainly provided additional incentives for international disarmament; but, as the

terms of the treaties were to indicate, the naval powers with Pacific interests were the controllers of the conference. The interests of other nations in a naval armaments treaty were much the same as those of the United States: to obtain national security without competing in as expensive arms race.^{1 2} There was no multilateral system of international diplomacy to which disputes could be referred, and there was no balance of power either. The war had reduced Great Britain's ability to administer her affairs in Asia, and the protection afforded by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance became insufficient.^{1 3} Furthermore, the United States not only opposed to the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, but also rejected Japan's proposal to negotiate a triple alliance among the United States, Great Britain and Japan. Japan had little choice but to attend the conference. To abstain from doing so would almost certainly lead to an Anglo-American agreement which, under pressure from the British Dominions, might unify the divided oppositions to Japan's expansion in Asia. However, in the hope to limit the arms race and to maintain the status quo, the Pacific Powers came to Washington to settle the question of East Asia's future and were willing, if not anxious, to establish a cooperative and mutually beneficial system, both political and economic,

to harmonize their discordant policies.

The Nine Power Treaty, concerning the relation of China to the signatory nations, hinged on four main principles:¹⁶

“The Contracting Powers, other than China, agree:

1. To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China;
2. To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to China to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government;
3. To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China;
4. To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States.”

The rise of a temporary prominence of some liberal political party leaders, assisted by some liberal military elites,

led Japan to accept a conciliatory foreign policy at the Washington Conference.¹⁷ The forward-policy adopted by Japan during the war was now liquidated, and Japan seemed to tend to internationalism. Shidehara Kijuro,¹⁸ the principal Japanese delegate at the Conference, even announced that Japan would withdraw without delay from Shantung and that a Sino-Japanese agreement was to be signed later for the return to China the bulk of interests acquired in that province under the Twenty-One Demands.¹⁹ In the 1920s, except the Tanaka period, the Japanese government was following the principle of the Nine Power Treaty, namely the adoption of a friendly attitude towards China and cooperation with America and Great Britain.²⁰

The Washington Treaties envisioned a continuation of the existing situation in China: a government too weak to oppose to the exploitation of foreign powers but sufficiently strong to control internal affairs. With the outbreak of revolution in the early 1920s, however, this situation ceased to exist. The revolution posed some particularly difficult problems for Japan due to her geographic and economic situation. Manchuria and Korea had increased in value for Japan since 1920 and had absorbed a considerable amount of investment. About 82% of all Japanese investments went to China, and a

significant portion was invested in Manchuria.²¹

As an island country Japan was short of food supplies, deficient in natural resources and under the then existing world conditions, had nowhere to send her surplus population. Japan's military and political leaders throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had repeatedly formulated state policies in accordance with two basic principles; the enhancements of national security and the economic well-being of the state. The identification of national security and economic prosperity with a hegemonial position in East Asia became an article of faith for the Imperial government.²² By the 1920s, Japan had already included Manchuria and Mongolia into the defence fields of Japan's national security and as parts of the Japanese national economy. She was, therefore, very anxious to note the development of the Chinese revolutionary movement.

The Chinese, with a newly awakened sense of nationalism, were employing boycott tactics to fight with the foreign merchants whose governments they considered to be pursuing an aggressive policy against China.²³ As a matter of fact, Japan had been regarded by most of the Chinese as one of the most vicious imperialists and had been periodically boycotted by the Chinese since 1919. These nation-wide

boycotts had caused much damage to Japanese trade.²⁴ As the Nationalist movement grew in strength, the effectiveness of the boycotts increased. The rise of the Chinese revolutionary forces no doubt created a deep concern for the Japanese people as a whole. To what extent a new government would abide by the agreement expressed in the Washington treaties could not be predicted, but Chinese cooperation with archrival Japan was not to be expected in any event. At best Japan's property investments in China would be exposed to damage or seizure during the civil strife.

Even more detrimental to the life of the Treaties was the problem of Japan's struggle for economic security. The "principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations", which was acceptable to the Japanese in 1922, began to take on new meaning as the decade progressed. A key statement in the Nine Power Pact was constantly being evoked by the United States to destroy any actual equality of opportunity in China. Article III of The Treaty Between All Nine Powers Relating to Principle and Policies to be Followed in Matter Concerning China bluntly outlawed any foreign government measures which might upset the equal opportunity principle in China, but in the same Article there was included a paragraph stating that,

“It is understood that the foregoing stipulations of this Article are not to be so construed as to prohibit the acquisition of such properties or rights as may be necessary to the conduct of a particular commercial, industrial, or financial undertaking or to the encouragement of invention and research”.²⁵

Thus private investors from any foreign country could negotiate unequal terms with private businessmen in China without violating the Treaty stipulations — all within the American fair-play economic principle. The only difference was that American investors had almost unlimited capital while Japanese investors had very little.

Still the situation was not unsolvable. Japan could invest in her Asian interests with American capital, much as many European countries were doing, and still showed a reasonable economic prosperity. But American loans were not to go to Japan for any purpose but internal investment during the 1920s. The Dollar Diplomacy of the Republican era was to put a brake on Japanese growth. Herbert Feis lists a few examples of the unavailability of American loans to Japan throughout the 1920s in *The Diplomacy of the Dollar*. The general trend of the State Department's ban on loans included all those which were for the purpose of investment in areas

where the Japanese would be able to extend their economic control: Virtually anywhere outside the home islands of Japan. This trend came to be known as the "Third Country Loan Policy", which is best explained by a statement of Harrison, Second Assistant Secretary of State:

"..... in the opinion of the Department, it is as a matter of general policy not desirable that American credit be placed at the disposal of foreign interests for investments or enterprises in third countries in cases in which the use of such American credit would tend to prejudice or circumscribe the opportunities for American enterprise or to further the organization of competition therewith".²⁶

The plan behind this policy was to discourage Japan from involvement in economic activities. The United States seemed to adopt a policy to reduce Japan's influence in China with a view to maintain her "Open Door" principle. Here different interpretations of the Open Door had played an important role in deciding the Japanese-American relations.

Japan's interpretation of the Open Door policy in relation to Manchuria differed widely from the American conception.

In the past quarter-century Japan had fought two costly

wars to secure privileges in these areas and she now looked upon them as her own special fields of interest. Before 1922 the United States had made no attempt to establish a legal basis for economic penetration into Japanese Manchuria or Korea; on the contrary, America had reinforced Japan's position by recognizing Japan's "special rights" in the Root-Takaria, Taft-Katsura, and Lansing-Ishii agreements. Although, nominally, Japan liquidated her forward policy in China with the agreements at the Washington Conference and she even had agreed "not to support any agreement by their respective nationals with each other designated to create Sphere of Influence or to provide for the enjoyment of mutual exclusive opportunities designated parts of Chinese territory."²⁷ In fact, she did not really mean to give up her rights and interests in China, particularly in the areas of Manchuria and Mongolia. When Hughes brought about the abrogation of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement in April 1923, Ishii immediately announced that "Japan's special interests in China were inextinguishable." They were "realities deriving from nature and geography," he said, "and not benefits conferred on Japan by the United States".²⁸ Ishii even warned the United States that though the Agreement might have been cancelled, "Japan's special interests in China continued to

live in all their vigor".²⁹

Japan's different understanding of the Open Door and her insistence on a special interest in Manchuria are also clear from Tanaka's statement in 1928. When the Northern Expedition proceeded near Peking, Premier Tanaka assured Chang Hsueh-liang that Japan did not have any interest in making Manchuria a Japanese colony or protectorate but only wanted to make Manchuria safe for Japanese business activities according to the principles of the open door."³⁰ It seems that Tanaka did not consider the establishment of special rights in Manchuria incompatible with the American open door policy or impairing the territorial integrity of China.

For Japan, the revolution in China, combined with the pressing need for a solution to her economic problems, was perhaps a much more important issue in her actions than China's integrity per se. The United States and Japan could cooperate, or at least coexist, in their dealing with China as long as the country was internally stable and externally weak, but internal turmoil created a radical divergence between Japanese and American policy. The United States had no vital economic interests imperiled, no strategic area endangered, few investments threatened, and was on much better political terms with China than was Japan. America

could adhere to a policy of non-involvement, which had gained world support in more stable period, especially with the knowledge that the new government of China, whichever faction eventually gained control, would have to come to the United States for financial backing to develop the country. Japan, unlike the United States, had paramount interests in China, particularly in Manchuria, both economically and strategically. The rise of Chinese nationalism, led by the Kuomintang, appeared to be an immediate threat to her prosperity, if not also security, and would quite possibly make a major problem for Japan if a nationalist government came to power. The Kuomintang, with the communist flavor and the assistance of the Bolsheviks from Russia, had already declared war against all foreign dominations and sworn to abolish the unequal treaties. The KMT's Northern Expedition (1926-27) should have proceeded rapidly and successfully surely alarmed Japan. On their way northward, foreign rights had been trampled on and foreign communities disturbed. Under such circumstances Shidehara's diplomacy, which laid stress on trade and intended to carry on international cooperation while staying away from Chinese internal affairs even when Japanese communities were endangered, was naturally and violently criticized in Japan.³¹

In addition to such different attitudes towards the Chinese Revolution soon after the Washington Conference Japanese-American relations were also deteriorated by the racial bigotry in the United States. The famous California school laws which barred the Japanese immigrants from attending the white schools were a slap in the face to Japan's national pride.³² On November 13, 1922, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Japanese immigrants were ineligible for American citizenship. Less than two years later, in May 1924 Congress enacted the "quota system" laws which totally excluded those ineligible for citizenship. This in effect was closing the door to all oriental immigrants whosoever.³³ The exclusion laws that the Japanese and the United States Government had tried for thirty years to avoid had become a fact at last.³⁴ The 1924 Immigrants Act, was passed despite protest from the Japanese Government,³⁵ and the Exclusion Act created violent anti-American agitation in Japan.³⁶

Although the situation had not deteriorated to open confrontation, the danger of military conflict in East Asia certainly became much greater. To the United States, Japan's hegemony in the Western Pacific and her efficient navy would be a powerful challenge to American security. With Japan's modern cruisers controlling commerce movement along the

Chinese coast, the American laxity on ship construction during the past six years became painfully apparent. But to undertake a building program would be most distasteful to an economy-minded Congress; and it would in all probability initiate a world-wide naval rearmament. The United States did not want such an arms race, and Japan most certainly did not. The alternative was a naval armaments conference which would have many political overtones with regard to the East Asian confrontation. Accordingly, President Hoover, continuing the work of Coolidge, began planning in early 1929 for an international conference.³⁷

The central issue was cruisers. Since the conclusion of the Washington Conference, which virtually had placed no restrictions on cruiser construction, a world-wide debate over the role of the cruiser in modern sea warfare had been growing. Within the United States Navy, this debate eventually produced a relatively levelheaded evaluation of the problem, but outside the military a "cruiser panic" flared up. This panic was initiated by the Navy itself in its annual struggle with the Congress and the Bureau of the Budget to pass a naval construction bill. Inaccurate comparison of United States naval strength with that of Great Britain or Japan was employed to sway the minds of reluctant legislators.³⁸

Unfortunately, this tactics was to produce unintended results.

The Congress and the American public now assumed that a balance of cruiser strength could be determined by a direct comparison of the number of cruisers. Thus the clamor for naval parity had now passed out of the Navy's hands, however, and had fallen into the lap of President Coolidge and his Department of State. The problem had changed from one of military strategy to one of international diplomacy.

It was this change that Coolidge failed to grasp when he sent a delegation to Geneva in 1927. The Geneva conference failed because an Anglo-American agreement could not be reached. In order to ensure her control of the sea lanes Great Britain would not consent to a reduction of her armaments. American came away from the conference with some bitterness toward Great Britain's uncooperative attitude. Having limited her strength of battleship fleet under the terms of agreement in the Washington Conference, the United States expected Britain to follow suit by offering up her cruiser advantage at Geneva. But Britain was not about to gamble away her national security to relieve the anxieties and purse of America. Survival meant open sea lanes, and open sea lanes meant cruisers.³⁹ In effect, Coolidge had attempted to settle the question of cruiser strength without considering

the element of British national security.

The United States Navy General Board had decided that the 10,000-ton cruiser armed with 8-inch guns best suited America's needs. The weight of the cruiser was necessary to allow machinery for speed, the mounting of 8-inch gun turrets, armor, and fuel capacity to operate independently or with the Pacific Fleet in the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean".⁴⁰ The building of heavy cruisers by their very nature indicated a concern over the Western Pacific.

The shortcomings of the Geneva Conference were not overlooked by President Hoover when the London Conference was at the planning stage. A naval armaments race involving America, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy was reaching serious proportions in 1929, and the need for a workable limitation agreement was becoming apparent to all the naval powers. In contrast to the situation in 1927, this time Britain was most eager for a settlement, for she was faced with four growing threats to her control of the sea. Capitalizing on this situation, Hoover drew the British into pre-Conference discussions. From the American point of view, a rapprochement with great Britain was important in two respects: first, it would constitute an announcement of America's naval equality to Britain; second, it was a necessary

step towards establishing any settlement with Japan.⁴⁴

From the outset the London Conference was primarily a triangular negotiation among Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. Furthermore, the greatest emphasis was placed on the relationship of Japan to the Western powers. After an Anglo-American agreement had been reached, Stimson began to deal seriously with the Japanese demands. The first really significant meeting between the three powers was delayed until February 17th, only a few days before the Anglo-American agreement was finalized.

The drive for a 10:7 ratio in heavy cruisers had a far greater significance in the government and public opinion of Japan than did the 10:6 demand in the United States.⁴² The Japanese press had blown the issue up into a more violent "cruiser panic" than had ever existed in America. Anything less than a 10:7 ratio was regarded as a major threat to Japan's national security, and a denial of that demand would be regarded as a cooperating Western power conspiracy to subvert the growth and prosperity of Japan.

Even under the threat of a two-power treaty between the United States and the Great Britain, a treaty which would exclude Japan, the Japanese government still tried to convince the United States to grant Japan a ratio of 10:7 in order to

pacify the angry Japanese Naval General Staff and the general public. The head of the Japanese delegation even professed the willingness of his government to reduce its cruiser and submarine tonnage and to declare submarine warfare against commerce illegal, on the condition that the United States would accept a 10:7 ratio in heavy cruisers.⁴³ However, the United States rejected Japan's counter-proposal and presented the so-called Reed-Matsudria Compromise as the final proposal of the United States. The Compromise was later accepted as the formula of the London Treaty. The terms of the Treaty were entirely an American flavor.⁴⁴

	United States	Japan	Japan/US Ratio
Heavy Cruisers	180,000 tons	108,400 tons	60.2%
Light Cruisers	143,500	100,450	70.0
Destroyers	150,000	105,500	70.3
Submarines	52,700	52,700	100.0
	<u>526,200 tons</u>	<u>367,050 tons</u>	<u>69.75%</u>

A stipulation of the settlement was that the United States would not build up to the limit until 1936, thus giving Japan in actuality a 10:7 ratio.⁴⁵ Although the Secretary of State Stimson was to consider the settlement an improvement in the political relationship between America and Japan, it

seemed to have the opposite effect. To the patriotic Japanese, the London Treaty was an announcement that the suppression of Japan's influence in East Asia had become the goal of American policy.

The London Naval Conference, aiming for a peaceful settlement of international disputes, actually stimulated the development of militarism in Japan. Upon hearing that the Hamaguchi cabinet was formulating a new instruction to accept the Reed-Matsudaria Compromise, the Chief of Naval General Staff Admiral Kato demanded an imperial audience to obstruct the acceptance. Citing his legal rights under Article 11 of the Meiji Constitution, Kato could legally report directly to the Throne on matters affecting the "right of supreme command".⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff, Vice-Admiral Suetsugu held an informal press conference in Tokyo and released the substance of Kato's memorial to the Throne. His new conference did inspire a number of newspaper articles and editorials which championed to support the naval general staff.⁴⁷

According to the Constitution of 1889, which was a gracious gift of the Meiji Emperor to his Japanese subjects, the Emperor possessed ultimate authority over the general state affairs as well as the Army and the Navy. However,

since it was contrary to precedent for the Emperor to exercise his prerogatives, it was up to the Cabinet to carry out the will of the Emperor on all those matters which did not pertain to military secrets or functions of military command. And it was clearly laid down in Article XI of the Constitution that the Supreme Command was a matter apart from other general state matters. With regard to military affairs, the Cabinet had to consult and pass through the intermediary of Ministers for the Army and the Navy, who in turn represented the departments in control.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the Chief of the General Staff was empowered to report directly to the Emperor without having to go through the Cabinet on strictly military matters.⁴⁹ Since all the members of the armed forces were theoretically under the direct command of the Emperor, and the Emperor in fact did not exercise his command, the military advisers of the Emperor, such as the Chiefs of the General Staff and Ministers for the Army and the Navy, became the real masters of the armed forces. Although, with the support of the Ministry for the Navy the Cabinet was now able to overrule the views of the Naval General Staff, the Naval General Staff still considered that the Cabinet had interference with its Supreme Command on matters concerning national security, and the Supreme

Command thus remained a constitutional controversy in Japan. The split within the Imperial Navy enabled the Cabinet to win the battle and to reduce the naval force through an international agreement, but the Navy and the Army as a whole remained a vital threat to the existence of a Cabinet.⁵⁰ When suitable opportunities came, their independent position outside the civilian government would thus provide an alternative for the loyalty of the Japanese.

In retrospect, there were not serious conflicts between the United States and Japan in the 1920s. The essential conflicts of the two were not the real clash of their national interests or national security. Their conflicts were rather created by their different understanding of the meaning of the Open Door principles. When Japan declared that she would recognise the territorial integrity of China, she did not even dream that she should give up her special rights and privileges in China, particularly those in Manchuria. On the one hand, for the Japanese, Shidehara as well as Tanaka, Japan's rights and privileges in Manchuria, right or wrong, were the facts, and their existence did not affect the independence or territorial integrity of China. On the other hand, the United States took Japan's announcement of recognizing the Open Door at its face value, and thus expected Japan to give up her rights and

privileges in China. When Japan did not do so, she was blamed by the United States as deceitful and evil imperialistic. As long as the United States insisted on upholding her Open Door principles and expected Japan to play the game according to American rules the United States would force Japan into a corner of either changing her policy towards China or challenging the American authority. Without making compromise or reassessing their attitudes and policies towards China, the conflicts between them become inevitable.

Nevertheless, the discrepancy in their perceptions on the Open Door principles was not the only cause of the future head-clash between the United States and Japan. And the results of the London Conference were not the real factors for the rise of Japanese militarism. I would rather suggest that the outcome militarists to fan up the fanatic patriotism of the Japanese. The proponents of the Tanaka policy exploited Japan's yields to the United States in the London Conference to stimulate the development of militarism in Japan. Their efforts did gradually swing popular support from the civilian government to the military. Thus, America's insistence on winning the battle over the nominal issue of 10:6 ratio for heavy cruisers did provide the pretext for the active militarists to intensify their campaign for militarism in 1930s.

In a country like Japan with a dual political system and a long tradition of military rule, the people were given military rule as an alternative to a civilian government. It was in such a country that the militarists were able to develop the tactical naval ratio issue into a constitutional controversy to challenge civilian authorities. It might be quite possible that even if the United States had granted Japan a 10:7 ratio for heavy cruisers, the militarists would still have had grounds to usurp political power from the civilian government with other issues. Without the change of the more basic dimensions of social and political systems, the chances for traditionally-minded elites and ultra-patriots to destroy the party government and launch an unilateral action against the United States would always exist. A favorable external environment could only prolong the life of the liberal government. But its collapse would be inevitable in the social and political conditions existing in Japan at the time. The incompatible foreign policy between the United States and Japan in the 1920s only played a minor role in the rise of militarism in Japan. As long as the military rule was an alternative in Japanese political life, the possibility to have a clash with the United States was very great. The relations between the United States and Japan in the 1920s only reveal that misunderstand-

ings between two countries not only will stimulate distrust between them; it will even pave the way for armed clash over some insignificant disputes. Without mutual trust and understanding, negotiations and agreements on arms limitations will become meaningless.

FOOTNOTE

1. All figures from the Department of Finance, *Japan-Financial and Economics Annual* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918-1920, 1921-1923).
2. American trade with Asian countries was a negative balance of \$535,000,000 in 1923, see Bureau of the Budget, *The Budget of the U.S. Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1923* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923); all other figures from Department of Commerce, *Summary of the Foreign Commerce of the United States, 1920* (Washington: Government Printing Office).
3. For details see Carl Crow, *Japan's Dream for a World Empire* (New York: Harper, 1942).
4. A. Whitney Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 36-86; Daniel Smith, ed., *Major Problems in American Diplomatic History* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co.,

- 1964), pp. 317-325.
5. A. Whitney Griswold, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126; Chitoshi Yanaga, *Japan Since Perry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), P. 333, 335.
 6. A. Whitney Griswold, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.
 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-131.
 8. Some observers in the Far East even believed that Japan would have made the beginning of fortification work on the American bases in Guam and Manila a cause for war. See Daniel Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 467.
 9. Rekkishi Gaku Kenkyu Kai, ed., *Taihayo Sensoshi*, (History of the Pacific War) (Tokyo: Toyokeijai Shinposha, 1953), Vol. I, p. 18, 64.
 10. Edwin O. Reishauer, *Japan, Past and Present* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1973), p. 149.
 11. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), Vol. I, p. 38.
 12. Walter Millis, *Arms and Men* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1956), pp. 244-246.
 13. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *From Wilson to Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 155.
 14. The Naval Araments question or the Five Power Treaty will not be discussed in any detail. The naval settlement

is important only so far as it illustrates the nation's willingness to abide by the "rules" of the Washington system. Obviously a 5:5:3 ratio did not mean that the navies of Great Britain, United States, and Japan actually represented that proportional strength: eighteen battleships could not decide the outcome of a total war. By agreeing to the 5:3, Japan admitted that she did not exercise hegemony over Western Pacific waters, and consequently, was willing to meet with the political and economic terms of the treaties.

15. *U.S. Senate, Conference on the Limitation of Armament* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 454, 455, 895.
16. Daniel Smith, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 460.
17. Frank Langdon, *Japan* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), p. 260.
18. From June 1924 to December 1931, except in the Tanaka Cabinet (1927-28), Shidehara was the Foreign Minister throughout this period for various cabinets. However, in spite of the conflicting attitudes between Shidehara Diplomacy and Tanaka Diplomacy towards the Sino-Japanese relations, there was a consensus in Japan, namely, Japan's supremacy in Asia. For detailed

- discussion see James Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).
19. Richard Storry, *A History of Modern Japan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), p.164.
 20. Nihon Kolusai Seiji Gakkukai, ed., Taihayo Senso E no Michi, *The way to the Pacific War* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Sha, 1963), Vol. I p. 39.
 21. Gerald E. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.
 22. James Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. XV-XVIII.
 23. Edwin O. Reischauer, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
 24. A. Whitney Griswold, *op. cit.*, p. 405.
 25. U.S. Senate, *op. cit.*, p. 895.
 26. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1923*, Vol. II, p. 509.
 27. Mo Shen, *Japan in Manchuria* (Manila: Grace Trading Co., 1960), p. 40.
 28. A. Whitney Griswold, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 402.
 30. Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 64.
 31. The demand to adopt a more positive policy towards China was widely supported in Japan. The patriotic songs in the Chinese textbooks were regarded by some

- militant Japanese as insult and threats to Japan. For details see Gentoku Tsuda, *Manshu Jihen Hishi*, (The secret history of the Manchuria Incident) (Dairin: Manshu Bunka Kyokai, 1934), pp. 31-35. For the impacts of the Nanking Incident on Japanese public opinion towards Shidehara's China policy, see Akira Iriye, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-133.
32. Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America* (Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1964). pp. 482-486.
 33. A. Whitney Griswold, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
 35. Carl Wittke, *op. cit.*, p. 529.
 36. Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkukai, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-204.
 37. Gerald E. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-69.
 38. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-129.
 39. Raymond G. O'Connor, *Perilous Equilibrium* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1962), pp. 47-61.
 40. Gerald E. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
 41. Raymond G. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-61.
 42. As early as in August 1929, Matsudaira informed Stimson that his government regarded a ratio of 10:10:7 was essential. See Raymond G. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
 43. James Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.

44. For the details about the proposals and counter-proposals, see Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkukai, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-68.
45. At the time of the agreement, Stimson even doubted, on the counsel of Admiral Pratt, that U.S. Congress would allocate sufficient funds to build the projected ships, see Raymond G. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
46. James Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
48. Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London: Hutchinson, 1958), p. 50.
49. Chitoshi Yanaga, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
50. Military services with power to make or to break the cabinet at will by withdrawing or refusing to recommend candidates for the posts of Minister of Navy and War Minister. A good example is the downfall of the Sai-onji Cabinet was forced to resign due to the resignation of its War Minister and the refusal of the Army to recommend a new War Minister.

從合作到衝突： 一九二〇年代的美日外交關係

古鴻廷

華盛頓會議（一九二一～二二年）以後，日本在對外政策上，大體是依國際合作的原則，採取一種緩和與妥協的路線。美、日兩國間的關係也就顯得相當融洽，然而不到十年之間，日本改變政策，向中國一再實行侵略，美日間的關係也就日趨緊張。不少學者認為美日間的衝突乃因兩者在華利益不同的實質衝突。

本文旨在指出美日兩國的衝突，一方面固因兩國對「門戶開放」政策具有不同解釋，更重要的是因日本具有重武傳統，加上明治憲法賦予軍部特權，使其能藉一些外交上的小挫折為口實，迫使文人政府下台而宰制日本政局，對外改採強硬政策，導致日美間的武裝衝突。