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STUDY OF ANGLO-AMERICAN FAR EASTERN DIPLOMACY
DURING THE MANCHURIAN AND SHANGHAI CRISES.

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BRITAIN AND AMERICA FACE JAPAN, 1931-1933

**A Study of Anglo-American Far Eastern Diplomacy
During the Manchurian and Shanghai Crises**

by

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**A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in History in
partial fulfillment of the re-
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Chapter I

Introduction

When elements of the Japanese military started their drive to dominate portions of the Far East in September, 1931, their first assault came against the Chinese Army stationed in the three northeastern provinces comprising Manchuria. Japanese motives for launching the attack were partly real and partly psychological. Belief that their main islands were overpopulated, a desire for dependable sources of raw materials, a drive for greater military security, and a spirit of aggressive nationalism all combined to inspire the initial Japanese thrust against China. But previous decades of control over Korea and Formosa had not relieved the overcrowding on Japan's islands, despite governmental encouragement of Japanese to migrate to these possessions. Raw materials in sufficient quantity could be purchased from abroad, as demonstrated by the great success of Japanese industry after the Second World War. And aggressive nationalism, while difficult to define and interpret, is usually a state of mind. Any of Japan's problems could have been solved by patience and self-restraint. Instead, Japan chose the short cut of war.

Faced with Japan's Far Eastern aggression in the 1930's, the major powers showed no inclination to confront force with force. This was especially true after 1935, when Germany and Italy seemed a greater danger to western security than Japan. Between 1931 and 1933, however, the fascist menace had not

crystallized. In those years the western states, and especially the United States and Great Britain, whose combined resources far exceeded those of Japan, by working together could have blocked the Japanese thrust into Manchuria and northern China. A united front, however, despite attempts to form one, never materialized, as this study will demonstrate.

After the fighting between Japan and China broke out, the United States, Great Britain, and the League of Nations, acting during brief periods in unison, at other times separately, made the most serious efforts to moderate and settle the dispute between the two oriental states. The other nations with Far Eastern interests at best gave only token and occasional support to these efforts, even though one of them, the Soviet Union, was profoundly disturbed at Japanese encroachments into the Soviet sphere of influence in northern Manchuria. Russia, however, still something of an international pariah during this period, was given little opportunity to cooperate with anyone. Unwilling to go to war with Japan over the issue, the Russians tacitly accepted the Japanese expansion to the southern borders of eastern Siberia.

Since no country, or coalition of countries, was willing to take a strong stand against the Japanese, by 1933 Japan had demonstrated that a powerful nation could defy the League of Nations and the great powers with impunity. To what extent this demonstration encouraged Germany and Italy

in their own aggressions later on in the decade is difficult to determine, but that these countries were encouraged by Japan's success seems probable. A parallel can be drawn between the failure to stop Japan in the Far East early in the 1930's, and the appeasement of Germany and Italy in Europe after 1935. Those who argue that the appeasement policy led to the Second World War can point to Manchuria as the first example of that policy in operation; for the western powers, and especially Great Britain, were consciously trying to avoid war with Japan by not effectively opposing her attack on China.

Although Britain and America protested Japan's use of force in Manchuria, their protests served only to irritate the Japanese, who used them to arouse Japanese nationalism in support of the military operations. Neither Washington nor London ever seriously contemplated military action or economic sanctions against Japan, a fact that was well known to the Japanese. Since there was no teeth behind them, therefore, Tokyo could safely ignore the diplomatic protests made by these two countries.

The Japanese also knew that Great Britain and the United States, while striving to work together in solving the Far Eastern problem, were finding that their national self-interests precluded close cooperation. Despite their good intentions London and Washington could not work out a policy satisfactory to both governments. At no time during the Manchurian crisis,

therefore, did Japan have to face the strong, joint diplomatic action of Britain and America, a fact which contributed to the Japanese success in detaching Manchuria from China.

British and American efforts at diplomatic cooperation against Japan, and the subsequent failure of these efforts, form the subject of this study, which covers the period from September, 1931, to the spring of 1933. During this time the Japanese military launched two major assaults against Chinese territory; the first in Manchuria in September, 1931, and the second in Shanghai in late January, 1932. British and American reaction to these crises, both joint and unilateral, will be examined with the goal of discovering what motivated and influenced their Far Eastern policies, and why they were unable to work closely together in finding solutions to the Sino-Japanese dispute. Because so many of the diplomatic negotiations and actions took place in Geneva, a large part of the story necessarily involves the League of Nations and other countries that took part in the diplomatic maneuvers. But at all times the focus will be on British and American diplomacy, an emphasis which is not historically illogical since, aside from China and Japan, these two democracies played the major diplomatic roles in the Far Eastern crisis of 1930-1933.

As stated above, the Far Eastern dispute of this period stemmed from Japanese efforts to expand territorially and politically into China by acquiring complete control over

Manchuria; which many Japanese hoped would help to solve Japan's problems of overpopulation and a lack of raw materials on the home islands. Japan's special interest in Manchuria, however, actually dated back at least to the Russo-Japanese War that ended in 1905. Victory in that war gave Japan the right of succession to Russia's railway interests in south Manchuria, and from 1905 to 1931 Japan built up an increasingly tight sphere of influence in that area. Based partly on treaties with China (some disputed by the Chinese), and partly on her position as the strongest power in the Far East, Japan more and more regarded Manchuria as necessary to her own political, economic, and military well-being.

An upsurge of Chinese nationalism in the 1920's, however, threatened the Japanese position in Manchuria. During the decade many Chinese had poured into the provinces, and by 1930 there were approximately twenty-nine million Chinese to only 250,000 Japanese and 800,000 Koreans. This disparity in population, in combination with a growing Chinese firmness, frightened the Japanese Army commanders, who saw their rights in Manchuria jeopardized. Rather than sit back and quietly accept an erosion of their authority, sometime during the summer of 1931 certain aggressive Japanese Army officers decided to act.¹

¹. For a detailed background of Japanese Army goals in Manchuria, and plots to put these goals into effect, see Takehiko Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963).

A series of controversies, culminating in the execution of a Japanese officer, gave the Kwantung Army, under the command of its firebrand General Shigeru Honjo, the opportunity it sought. In June, 1931, a Captain Nakamura Shintaro, and three of his companions, were killed by Chinese soldiers in a remote region of Manchuria. Nakamura, a Japanese officer on active duty, had been traveling in civilian dress while claiming to be an agricultural expert. Japanese and Chinese reports conflicted on the exact circumstances of his death. The Chinese called him a spy who had been shot by a sentry while trying to escape. The Japanese termed his death a murder, an insult to the Japanese Army and nation, and demanded a full investigation.

Regardless of just how or why Nakamura died, the incident aroused Japanese public opinion and helped the Japanese militants secure support for the events beginning on September 18-19, 1931. Added to other grievances, all involving increasing Chinese plans for regaining as full control of Manchuria as possible, the Nakamura case made it possible for Japan to capitalize fully on a bomb explosion (at that time of mysterious origin, but later revealed to have been probably set off by the Japanese themselves) that destroyed, as a later investigation showed, thirty-one inches of South Manchurian Railway track.²

2. Robert H. Ferrell, "The Mukden Incident, September 18-19, 1931," Journal of Modern History, XXVII (March, 1955), 66-72, wrote that the whole Mukden incident, including the

Immediately following the explosion, which occurred on the evening of September 18, fighting broke out near the city of Mukden between troops of the Kwantung Army, who were entitled by treaty with China to guard and patrol the railway zone, and elements of Marshal Chiang Hsueh-liang's Feng-tien Army. The Japanese claimed that the Marshal's troops, some 350 in number, had blown up the railway three miles north of Mukden. To protect the railway the Japanese pursued the Chinese soldiers, surrounded their barracks, then captured and disarmed many of them. Without stopping to ascertain responsibility, or to accept arbitration of the dispute, over the next three and one half months the Japanese Army spread out over Manchuria, capturing Chinchow, the last major city still in Chinese hands, on January 2, 1932. As of that date all effective Chinese authority in the three Manchurian provinces came to an end.

The fighting in Manchuria created a major world diplomatic crisis. Between September 18-19, 1931, when the incident at Mukden occurred, and January 2, 1932, when the Japanese captured Chinchow, the United States and Great Britain, as well as the League of Nations and individual member states of the League, tried to stop the hostilities and arrange for a set-

bomb explosion, was manufactured by the Japanese "young officer" clique of the Kwantung Army. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, agrees that the bomb was planted by the Japanese to provide an excuse for launching their attack. See pp. 159-169.

tlement of the dispute.

Apart from simply appealing to both sides to settle their differences, which was tried ineffectively by Great Britain, the United States, and the League Council all during the crisis, there were also available to most of the nations concerned with the dispute three relatively new international instruments of peace--- the League of Nations Covenant, the Nine-Power Treaty, and the Kellogg-Briand pact. While none of these treaties could be effective without strong and resolute implementation by the nations that adhered to them, they were conveniently at hand when the crisis erupted.

The League of Nations, through various articles of the Covenant, provided machinery for dealing forcefully with aggression. Articles 10 through 16 of the League Covenant defined aggression and acts of violence on the part of one state against another, either actual or threatened, and prescribed what response the League members might take against such behavior. The theory behind the League of Nations was that through collective action troublemaking states could be ostracized from the world community, or even punished by the world community for their transgressions. Prior to 1931, however, the League had not yet faced a major test of the collective security principle. The Manchurian crisis, therefore, in which one state was clearly using aggressive force against another, presented the League with this first major test.

One of the most glaring weaknesses of the League, apart from the reluctance of the major powers to provide the muscle for enforcing the articles of the Covenant, was the fact that the United States was not a member. While participating in various nonpolitical organs of the League, the United States had carefully avoided during the 1920's any association with the collective action principles of the Covenant. Although the degree of American isolationism in the 1920's has probably been exaggerated, it still appears probable that most Americans during that decade preferred to see the United States remain outside the League of Nations. This meant that the richest, and potentially most powerful country in the world, could not be relied upon to approve or support any actions taken by the League to punish an aggressor. Both psychologically and physically, therefore, the League was weakened by the lack of American membership. How this lack of American membership was partially overcome during the Manchurian crisis will be described in the following chapters.

The Nine-Power Treaty, signed in 1922 in Washington by Great Britain, the United States, Japan, and six other nations with Far Eastern interests, pledged its signatories to "respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China." Under Article 7 the contracting powers agreed to "full and frank com-

munication² with each other when application of the terms of the treaty seemed necessary. Although carefully avoiding any mention of the use of force in protecting China, the treaty could have been used to rally support for the Chinese when they were attacked by Japan in 1931. Any reasonable interpretation of Article 7 gave any signatory the right to call a conference of treaty members when the peace in China was threatened. At such a conference China might have been able to present more dramatically her complaints against Japan (and to a smaller and possibly more responsive body than the League of Nations), and win support from the other states. While confined to only nine countries the Nine-Power Treaty, unlike the League of Nations, had the great potential advantage of American membership. During the Manchurian crisis, and especially after January 2, 1932, the treaty was constantly in the background of discussions on Far Eastern problems between Washington and London. Although never formally invoked by either country, due primarily to the reluctance of Great Britain, the Nine-Power Treaty could have been a useful legal instrument in organizing international resistance to Japanese encroachments on China. As with the League Covenant, however, the great weakness of the Nine-Power Treaty lay not in its provisions, but in the failure of the major powers to enforce them.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact, signed in Paris on August 27,

1928 by 15 leading nations, and subsequently adhered to by 48 other states, obliged its signatories to renounce war as an instrument of national policy. This remarkable treaty, perhaps the most naive effort in history to prevent war, had been co-sponsored by Frank B. Kellogg, the American secretary of state, and Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister. The pact suffered from the same restrictions as the Nine-Power Treaty--- it required the will, determination, and physical support of its members to enforce its terms. As a member nation, however, Japan morally bound herself not to use force in achieving her international goals. China quickly called the attention of the world to this fact in 1931.

While none of these treaties provided automatic peace-keeping machinery, either individually or in combination they offered the western democracies all the legal excuses necessary to oppose Japanese aggression in China. The failure of these treaties lay in the reluctance of countries like Great Britain and the United States to use them to their limits. In 1919 Georges Clemenceau told his countrymen that the Versailles Treaty gave France all the safeguards she needed to maintain her security. But only, Clemenceau insisted, if they used it. "The Treaty will be what you make it," he told them.³

³ Quoted in J. Hampden Jackson, Clemenceau and the Third Republic (New York: Colliers Books, 1962), 150-51.

The elaborate instruments drawn up to keep the peace between 1919 and 1926 faced their first big test in 1931. If used effectively against Japan, it is arguable, they might have prevented the Second World War. They were not used effectively.

Chapter II

The Manchurian Crisis: The First Phase

The initial phase of the Manchurian crisis, from the attack near Mukden to the League Council session starting October 16, 1931, inspired only a minimum of Anglo-American cooperation. British and American reactions to the incident, however, were similar, although stemming from somewhat dissimilar motives.

On the American side the Department of State's policy, restrained and conciliatory, came from a desire to support the Japanese civilian government in its efforts to curb the Japanese military. But Henry L. Stimson, the American secretary of state, and most of his State Department advisers, initially took harsher personal views of the Japanese aggression than did Lord Reading, British secretary of state for foreign affairs, and the British Foreign Office.

During the early 1930's the British strove to make their Far Eastern policy practical and realistic, resting it on a foundation of sympathy toward Japan's problems in Manchuria (which the British considered similar to their problems in India), a strong reliance on the League of Nations to bring about a settlement between Japan and China in the dispute, and a firm desire to avoid stirring up Japanese ill will against Great Britain. Occasional voices, such as those of Lord Robert Cecil, British representative on the League Council at Geneva, and Sir Miles Lampson, British minister

in China, spoke up against Japan. But in the first few weeks after the outbreak of fighting their opinions were submerged in the general mood of caution that characterized British policy.

Lampson and Nelson Trusler Johnson, the American minister to China, blamed the Japanese Army for planning the operation, capitalizing on the incident of the South Manchurian Railway explosion. In a cable to Washington on September 21, two days after the fighting began, Johnson dismissed the Japanese claim that the destruction of a short section of railway track justified the occupation of Manchuria. On the same day Lampson reported to London that "a carefully worked scheme and plot seems obvious."¹

Less critical views of the Japanese action, however, came from the American and British diplomats in Tokyo. W. Cameron Forbes, the American ambassador, in a brief report to Washington simply repeated the Japanese point of view, which played down the seriousness of the incident and expressed

¹ Johnson to Stimson, Sept. 21, 1931, in Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941 (2 vols., Washington, 1943), I, 3. (Hereinafter cited as F.R. followed by relevant year and volume number); Lampson to Reading, Sept. 21, 1931, in Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 (Second Series, 9 vols., London, 1960), VIII, 689. (Hereinafter cited as D.B.F.P. followed by relevant volume number). The initial assessments of these two ministers came remarkably close to the conclusion arrived at after months of research by the Lytton Commission, established by the League of Nations in December, 1931 to investigate the dispute between Japan and China.

determination to end the dispute quickly and by peaceful means. Nothing in the ambassador's cable conveyed a sense of crisis. With passage booked home on the Empress of Japan leaving the afternoon of September 19, Forbes thought it unwise to cancel the voyage. Since the Japanese had assured him that they had no aggressive designs on Manchuria, the ambassador feared that they might take offense at a delay in his departure.² Accordingly he sailed on schedule, not returning to Tokyo for six weeks, leaving the post in the meantime in charge of Edwin Neville, the capable counselor of embassy.³

Sir Francis Lindley, British ambassador to Tokyo, nearly always outspoken and far-ranging in his dispatches, assessed the event in terms of background causes, present status, and implications for the future. At no point did he see any particular danger for Great Britain. China, Lindley assured London, had brought on the crisis through her exasperating tactics in Manchuria. Among other things the Chinese were trying

2. Forbes to Stimson, Sept. 19, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 11.

3. In general Ambassador Forbes was not very sympathetic to Secretary Stimson's Japanese policy. See W. Cameron Forbes, "American Policies in the Far East," Proceedings of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, 73 (January, 1939), 5-26. For a recent article on Forbes's tenure as ambassador to Japan see George Alexander Lensen, "Japan and Manchuria: Ambassador Forbes's Appraisal of American Policy toward Japan in the Years 1931-32," Monumenta Nipponica, XXIII, 1-2, (1968), 66-89.

to deprive Japan of her legitimate treaty rights in those provinces. The Japanese Army, alert to opportunities to assume greater control of critical areas, seized upon the railway explosion to justify occupation of as many strategic points as possible before orders to halt came from Tokyo. Great Britain, he concluded, would probably benefit from the greater stability brought about by Japanese control of Manchuria.⁴

At the start of the controversy the Foreign Office supported Lindley's assessment. The situation appeared to London as a clear cut assault by Japan on a China which had, by ineptly governing the Manchurian provinces, brought the whole trouble on herself. British economic interests in Manchuria did not seem immediately threatened, and would probably be served by the increased political and military stabilization of the area that Japan would provide.⁵ Anticipating possible Chinese retaliation against Japan, one Foreign Office adviser even speculated that a Chinese boycott of Japanese goods would aid the ailing British textile industry by diverting Chinese purchases from Japan to Great Britain.⁶

⁴Lindley to Reading, Sept. 20, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 667.

⁵For a detailed study of British and American investments in China see Charles F. Remer, Foreign Investments in China (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933).

⁶Minute by Douglas MacKillop on Lindley's cable No. 156,

Britain and America could not discount economic problems or advantages during this period. Depression, hitting the world with especial severity in 1931, the year called by Arnold Toynbee the annus terribilis,⁷ played a large role in the formation of their diplomatic responses to the Manchurian crisis. Great Britain, anxious to maintain and even improve her markets in the Far East, hesitated to antagonize the Japanese unless British investments were threatened.⁸

Sept. 24, 1931, British Foreign Office, Vol. 15489, No. F5050/1391/10. (Hereinafter cited as B.F.O., followed by volume and document numbers. These unpublished records are deposited in the Public Record Office, London.) As the crisis in Manchuria continued there is evidence that the British textile industry was in fact aided by a Chinese boycott of Japanese goods. A New York Times article on Nov. 13, 1931 reported: "The conflict between Japan and China in Manchuria has eased the plight of Lancashire textile workers. It has been the largest factor in providing jobs for 40,000 mill workers and in putting 500,000 others on full time instead of part time.

"These benefits have resulted from the fact that the Chinese boycott has virtually stopped importations of cotton into China from Japan."

⁷ Arnold J. Toynbee (ed.), Survey of International Affairs (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), Part I.

⁸ For a detailed description of Britain's economic problems in 1931 see Survey of International Affairs, 1931. Charles G. Dawes, American ambassador to Britain at the time of the Manchurian crisis, made the following notation in his Journal on Sept. 16, 1931: "An ominous thing happened yesterday. The sailors of the British Atlantic fleet--- 16 ships --- including the Hood, Nelson, and Rodney being involved, 'ceased work' or, in other words, mutinied at their proposed reduction in pay. This took place near Invergordon, Scotland, in Cromarty Firth.... The situation, financial, industrial, and political, daily grows more acute, and were it elsewhere but in Britain one would feel that it was very dangerous." Charles G. Dawes, Journal as Ambassador to Great Britain (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939), 389.

In the United States President Herbert Hoover and Secretary Stimson, although disturbed by the Japanese attack on Manchuria, found that economic problems similar to those confronting the British limited them to moral preachments against aggression, which were generally received by Japan with complaisant tolerance.

The Japanese move against Manchuria, therefore, came at a time when economic conditions inhibited world action against them. This was especially true in the case of Great Britain which depended so heavily on a high level of world trade. Despite Japan's false pretext for attacking the Chinese in Manchuria, as revealed in the dispatches of Lampson, London scrupulously avoided taking sides.

To appreciate the British attitude, it is necessary to understand Britain's overriding concern during the whole Manchurian crisis. Britain valued her relations with Japan above those with China, fearing that the Japanese could do far more damage to British economic interests in the Far East than the Chinese. American sympathy for China during the early 1930's occasionally modified, but did not fundamentally change, this British policy. No amount of moral revulsion by the British public or leadership over Japan's manifest aggression in Manchuria could induce Britain to so far oppose Japanese ambitions as to seriously risk damaging relations between the two countries. As late as December 22,

1931, less than two weeks before the last Chinese city in Manchuria fell to Japanese forces, Sir Victor Wellesley, British deputy under secretary of state for foreign affairs, declared in a memorandum circulated within the Foreign Office: "His Majesty's Government's interest in the territorial status of Manchuria is infinitely less than their interest in maintaining cordial relations with Japan...."⁹ Although Lord Reading, and his successor in the Foreign Office Sir John Simon, occasionally seemed to go against this dictum, the sentiments expressed by Wellesley generally prevailed throughout the Far Eastern crisis.

It did not appear at the start of the dispute, however, that a test of British Far Eastern policy, a policy of favoring Japan over China, was imminent. Both Britain and the United States failed to recognize immediately the great threat to world peace presented by the outbreak of fighting in Manchuria. For the first weeks after September 18, the Foreign Office treated the situation as a local one that did not call for a strong British reaction. Neither did it call for any unusual cooperation with other countries having Far Eastern involvements, including the United States. Reading initially avoided any action that might exaggerate the problem or unnecessarily irritate the Japanese over a minor disturbance.

⁹Memo by Wellesley, Dec. 22, 1931, D.B.F.P., IX, 31.

Lord Reading had succeeded Arthur Henderson as secretary of state for foreign affairs in the new National Coalition government on August 26, 1931, remaining in that post only until November 9, when Sir John Simon took over. Reading had previously served as ambassador to Washington during the World War.¹⁰ At the start of the crisis his policy was simply to try to get China and Japan to stop fighting and negotiate with each other. He accordingly endorsed a proposal urging withdrawal of all troops to previously held positions, and the dispatch of neutral observers to Manchuria to help prepare the way for talks between the two parties. In line with the British effort to minimize the conflict, at least for the moment, Reading was unenthusiastic about possible American participation in these maneuvers, fearing that too much great-power interest might impede Sino-Japanese negotiations. He saw no reason, therefore, to solicit American assistance, although it could not easily be rejected if offered. Reading proposed keeping the State Department informed of British actions, but leaving it entirely up to the United States "to decide whether or not to urge moderation on both sides."¹¹

In trying to prevent the incident from developing into an international episode, however, the British had not con-

¹⁰For a recent biography about Lord Reading see H. Montgomery Hyde, Lord Reading, The Life of Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading (London: Heineman, 1967).

¹¹Reading to Cadogan, Sept. 21, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15489, No. F5040/1391/10.

sidered possible Chinese action. The Chinese quickly brought their plight to the attention of the world on September 21, 1931, by appealing to the Council of the League of Nations under Article 11 of the Covenant. By the provisions of this article any member state could call for an emergency meeting of the Council in the event that war, or the threat of war, existed anywhere. In Chinese opinion the Japanese action in Manchuria definitely came under the terms of Article 11.

Nor did China waste any time in bringing the United States into the dispute. On the same day that his country invoked the Covenant in Geneva, the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Washington, Yung Kwai, called the attention of the State Department to the fact that Japan had deliberately violated the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The Chinese government asked that the United States government, as a signatory to that pact, "take such steps as will insure the preservation of peace in the Far East and the upholding of the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes."¹² On the following day Lord Robert Cecil made a statement before the League Council clearly implying that the United States, through its adherence to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, as well as the Nine-Power Treaty of 1922, should be deeply interested in the latest Far Eastern developments. Cecil suggested that all proceedings and discussions in the Council be transmitted to the

¹² Yung Kwai to Stimson, Sept. 21, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 24.

United States government. As a result of this suggestion a mass of information about the Council debates over Manchuria poured into the State Department over the next few months.¹³

Initially, then, China took the action which elevated the Manchurian incident from local to world involvement, from a problem that could be dealt with by the major powers in isolation from each other, to one that now seemed to call for an international solution. To assist them in making their responses to the crisis, the State Department and the Foreign Office had to devise policy guidelines. The British wanted to avoid any action which might cause bad feelings between themselves and the Japanese, or which would inflame Japanese public opinion. Both Reading and Stimson hoped that the League, now that it had the dispute to handle, would not exaggerate its seriousness. On September 25, Stimson noted in his diary that he had "got word that Lord Reading, the Foreign Minister of Great Britain, is taking very much the same policy that I am and not getting excited the way they did down in Geneva."¹⁴

¹³ Gilbert (consul at Geneva) to Stimson, Sept. 22, 1931, ibid., 27-28.

¹⁴ Henry L. Stimson, Diary, Sept. 25, 1931. (This diary, in manuscript form, is on deposit at the Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.)

Washington and London also agreed on the need for a careful consideration of "oriental psychology" when dealing with the disputants. By this phrase they meant avoiding words or actions that would insult and inflame the peculiarly sensitive public opinions in both China and Japan, but especially in the latter country. They also meant leaving the Japanese, in the event of League action against them, a "face saving" escape hatch through which they could withdraw without suffering national humiliation. Several times Stimson spoke of leaving the Japanese a "ladder to climb down on."¹⁵ On the other hand, some in Washington feared, Lord Robert Cecil did not pay enough attention to oriental psychology. American Under Secretary of State William R. Castle, disturbed by Cecil's proposal to form a League committee of investigation, which was premature at this stage but actually created a few months later, suggested instead that China and Japan try to work out their differences in direct negotiations. Only if this failed should further steps be taken. The Foreign Office found it could "cordially agree" with Castle's views.¹⁶

¹⁵ See, for example, memo by Stimson of conversation with French ambassador on October 29, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 342-43.

¹⁶ Memo by Castle of conversation with British charge' on September 24, 1931, ibid., 63; Osborne to Reading, September 24, 1931, D.B.F.F., VIII, 679-80; Minute by MacKillop on Osborne cable No. 590, September 24, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15489, No. F5132/1391/10.

The concern for "oriental psychology" applied especially to Japan, a nation considered highly sensitive to outside criticism. Immediately following the Mukden assault, Neville and Lindley in Tokyo warned their governments not to subject Japan to humiliating inquiries and suggestions. There must be no "taking sides" or "sitting in judgment," they emphasized, as this would only destroy the moderate Japanese leadership and put the military in complete control.¹⁷ Neville, however, partially broke his own stricture not to take sides by cautiously suggesting that China bore some responsibility for the crisis. Lindley, always more unrestrained than his American colleagues in Tokyo in criticizing China, condemned Chinese perfidy and excused the Japanese action as "intended solely to force [the] Chinese government to settle many long-standing disputes in Manchuria."¹⁸

London agreed with Lindley that the causes of the conflict lay in China's attack on Japanese rights and privileges in Manchuria, and that any settlement would have to include firmer guarantees of Japanese interests. Perhaps, the Foreign Office conceded, Japan's position rested on

¹⁷ Neville to Stimson, Sept. 28, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 82-84; Lindley to Reading, Sept. 25, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 684-85.

¹⁸ Lindley to Reading, Sept. 23, 1931, ibid., 678.

weak moral foundations. But the privileges she had acquired in Manchuria, however unfairly, could not be easily taken away. On the question of recognizing Japan's power in Manchuria, London prided itself on its realistic attitude. Japan was there and could not easily be dislodged. "They have the moral and physical strength," read a Foreign Office report. "They have a weak and inefficient and troublesome neighbor. Manchuria is next door to Japan and touches her vital interests. Anything but the most tactful outside interference may encourage her to do something rash."¹⁹

Unlike London, Washington tended to view the dispute more from the Chinese point of view. In the State Department Stanley K. Hornbeck, chief of the Far Eastern Department, while reluctant to involve the United States in the dispute, recognized the great difficulties China faced in protecting her interests. Hornbeck thought that any settlement arrived at between China and Japan alone would still contain the seeds of future trouble. "Sources of irritation," he wrote, "which would tend to lead sooner or later to a real war on a large scale would be left inherent in the situation." In Hornbeck's judgment any lasting settlement would have to be guaranteed by other powers or agencies.²⁰

¹⁹ Minute by N. Charles, Oct. 12, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15492, No. 5611/1391/10.

²⁰ Hornbeck to Stimson, Sept. 23, 1931, State Depart-

Both London and Washington, therefore, concluded that in any settlement between China and Japan, the rights and privileges which Japan held in Manchuria would have to be spelled out more precisely. While the British leaned toward a generous interpretation of Japanese claims, however, the Americans were inclined to sympathize with China's efforts to regain a greater measure of sovereignty in the provinces. But neither country showed any desire to champion the cause of either disputant. This reluctance to intervene, while modified by events over the next few months, ultimately ensured China's loss of Manchuria.

When the Chinese government tried to define the conflict as a violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, condemning war as an instrument of national policy, Nelson Johnson and Sir Miles Lampson supported its effort. Johnson agreed with China that Japanese action in Manchuria plainly fell within any definition of war. To the American minister it seemed necessary "that the powers signatory to the Kellogg Treaty owe it to themselves and to the world to pronounce themselves in regard to this Japanese act of aggression which I consider to have been deliberately accomplished in utter and cynical disregard of the obligations which Japan as a

ment File No. 793.94/1917. (Hereinafter cited as S.D. with file number. These unpublished State Department documents are deposited in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

nation shares with the other signatories of that pact."²¹ For his part, Lampson considered the Japanese action a "brutal application of ruthless force against a weaker neighbor." His report to London, while not specifically saying so, implied that Japan had violated the Kellogg-Briand Pact. If she were allowed to trample on China with impunity, Lampson declared, all nations eventually stood to suffer.²²

But neither Great Britain nor the United States wished to invoke the pact immediately, fearing that this might lead to direct confrontation with Japan and work against the maintenance of the Japanese civilian leadership in Tokyo. Each government preferred that the League take the first steps in resolving the dispute. By allowing and encouraging the League to handle the conflict, instead of any single power or group of powers, Britain hoped to preserve her diplomatic anonymity. Playing the role of neutral, despite mounting evidence of Japanese aggression, came easier for Britain than for the United States. As a member of the League of Nations Britain could take shelter behind League decisions. But the United States enjoyed no such diplomatic shelter. During the early months of the

²¹ Johnson to Stimson, Sept. 22, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 5.

²² Lampson to Reading, Sept. 23, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 678-79.

Sino-Japanese crisis, however, the United States resorted to a makeshift cooperation with the League, given somewhat reluctantly and with deep concern for American public opinion. This cooperation included seating an American delegate with the League Council in October, 1931, and aiding and abetting the Council's efforts to win support for its December 10, 1931 resolution, which established the Lytton Commission to investigate the dispute.

Following China's appeal under Article 11 of the Covenant, the League Council met on September 22 and proposed sending a committee of observers to Manchuria. The Chinese representative, Dr. Alfred Sze, consented immediately, but the Japanese delegate, Kenkichi Yoshizawa, objected, although agreeing to contact his government for further instructions. At the same time Sir Eric Drummond, secretary general of the League of Nations, sent word to Stimson through Hugh Wilson, American minister in Geneva, that the League might even go further than the sending of observers if it could count on cooperation from the United States.²³ Wilson, a very capable and discerning diplomat, concluded this message from Drummond with his own personal observation that never had he "seen here a situation so tense or in which American cooperation is desired so earnestly."²⁴

²³ For Wilson's own account of his activities in Geneva see Hugh R. Wilson, Diplomat Between Wars (New York; 1941), 260-63, 274-77, 280-85.

²⁴ Wilson to Stimson, Sept. 22, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 37.

More appeals to Washington from the League followed the next day, with Drummond going so far as to suggest that an American sit in on the Council debates.²⁵ Stimson, however, politely refused, considering the suggestion premature. Late in the afternoon of September 23, he telephoned Wilson and outlined his own plan of procedure. The "surest road to peace," he told Wilson, was through diplomacy that would bring about direct negotiations between Japan and China. The League could help by urging this step on both parties. If negotiations failed, then the League machinery, under Article 11, could start to function. Of course, the United States could not participate in any League action, but Stimson made it clear that the League had American moral support. He would suggest invoking the Kellogg-Briand Pact or the Nine-Power Treaty only if direct negotiations, followed by League action, failed to resolve the dispute. In case the conflict reached that point, then the United States would "not flinch" from its duty, but the secretary very much hoped that it would not go that far.²⁶

In a follow-up message the next day, Stimson firmly stated his refusal of American membership on the proposed committee of observers. Such participation, he feared, would be used

²⁵ Wilson to Stimson, Sept. 23, 1931, ibid., 39-40.

²⁶ Memo of telephone conversation between Wilson and Stimson, Sept. 23, 1931, ibid., 49-52.

by the League as a threat to Japan, destroying any chance of the Japanese civilian elements winning control over the military. Through his knowledge of "oriental psychology," he again emphasized his belief that Japan and China should work out their differences between themselves, without any outside interference.²⁷

During its September session the League of Nations Council passed two resolutions designed to end the conflict. On September 22, the Council, in response to the Chinese appeal under Article 11, authorized its president, Alejandro Lerroux of Spain:

First, to address an urgent appeal to the Governments of China and Japan to abstain from any act which might aggravate the situation or prejudice the peaceful settlement of the problem;

Second, to seek in consultation with the representatives of China and Japan, adequate means whereby the two countries may proceed immediately to the withdrawal of their respective troops without compromising the security of life of their nationals or the protection of the property belonging to them.²⁸

Although the September 22, 1931 resolution was useless in stopping the fighting in Manchuria, it led to some spontaneous, although futile, Anglo-American cooperation in Tokyo. On September 25, in following up the sense of the

²⁷ Stimson to Wilson, Sept. 24, 1931, *ibid.*, 60-61. In regard to an American participating with a League investigating commission, or sitting in on Council meetings, Stimson was initially adamantly opposed, which is interesting in light of his subsequent approval of both suggestions. See *Stimson Diary* entry of Sept. 23, 1931, in which he called such suggestions "wild propositions."

²⁸ For an official English text of this resolution see Senate Document No. 55, 72nd Congress, 1st sess.

League appeal, Ambassador Lindley and Counselor Neville presented notes to the Japanese Foreign Ministry calling on Japan to limit the conflict. The British note dealt vaguely with the dispute in terms of the League resolution, while the American message voiced the hope that Japan and China would "dispose respectively of their armed forces as to satisfy the requirements of international law and international agreements, and will refrain from activities which may prejudice the attainment of amicable methods of an adjustment of their differences."²⁹

Neither the British nor the American expressions of concern suggested that Japan bore any special responsibility for the conflict. Lindley made his representations, according to his own explanation, only to keep in line with Neville, who had been ordered to contact the Japanese Foreign Ministry by Washington. He would have personally preferred to wait until his German, Italian, and French colleagues had received their instructions to deliver notes, which the British believed would soon be forthcoming, but Neville's action forced his hand. Unwilling to expose himself to possible Japanese irritation at being reminded of League principles, but realizing the importance his government attached to the League resolution, Lindley took what he considered

²⁹ Lindley to Reading, Sept. 25, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 683-84; Stimson to Neville, Sept. 24, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 9.

the "better of two evils," and joined Neville in leaving a note for the Japanese foreign minister.³⁰

Unfortunately for Lindley, none of the major powers in the League followed up the League resolution with a separate appeal to Japan to act according to its terms. London apparently thought that at least France would send a similar note, but by September 29 no instructions to do so had been given the French ambassador in Tokyo. Lindley declared that the whole episode had been embarrassing for him, but that "no great harm" had been done. The Japanese made little of the British and American representations. Lindley took the opportunity, however, to lecture the Foreign Office on the "lack of coordination between the resolutions taken at Geneva by the representatives of the various Governments and the instructions issued by those Governments in order to carry out the terms of the resolution."³¹

Save for this brief episode in Tokyo, the September 22 resolution had little effect on the crisis. On September 30 the Council passed a second resolution, echoing the appeal of the first, and postponing until October 14, 1931 any further consideration of the dispute.³² This second resolution

³⁰ Reading to Lindley, Sept. 29, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 688-89.

³¹ Lindley to Reading, Sept. 30, 1931, ibid., 693-94.

³² A copy of this resolution can be found in F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 13-14.

had no more effect on the Japanese than the first. Japanese troops continued to advance beyond the railway zone in Manchuria, and China continued to retreat. None of the major powers, including Great Britain and the United States, made any effort to intervene. During the second week of October, however, an incident occurred which pushed the Manchurian dispute into a new phase, leading to a closer working relationship between Britain and the United States.

Before October 8, 1931, evidence of Anglo-American cooperation over the Manchurian crisis is scant. Neither country, before this date, because of a mutual desire to minimize the conflict, was willing to go much beyond exchanges of information with the other on its diplomatic actions in Tokyo and Nanking. As far as Manchuria was concerned, the British were convinced that the United States was not ready to "butt in yet."³³ But on October 8 a Japanese air attack against the southwestern Manchurian city of Chinchow, a few miles from the northern Chinese province of Jehol, raised the level of hostilities between China and Japan, and impressed Lord Reading with the increased gravity of the crisis. Still unwilling that Britain take a strong stand against Japan herself, Reading now wished to involve the United States

³³ Minute by Charles, Oct. 9, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15491, No. F5446/1391/10.

more definitely with the League. Consequently during the following weeks arrangements were made, with considerable British support, for the United States to seat an observer at the League Council meeting that opened in Geneva on October 16, 1931.

This unprecedented development stemmed from an American decision to utilize the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Stimson had held this measure in reserve, preferring to go as far as possible in seeking direct negotiations between Japan and China, and if that failed to use the machinery of the League under Article 11. As late as October 5 he still insisted that his government, acting independently through its diplomatic representatives abroad, would work to reinforce League action, but that the time for invoking the pact had not yet come.³⁴ The bombing of Chinchow three days later, however, changed his mind.³⁵ On October 5 he privately informed Sir Eric Drummond of his readiness to resort to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, in order to "remind the disputants formally of their obligations under the Treaty for the Renunciation of War."³⁶

³⁴Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 5, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 116-17.

³⁵Stimson, Diary, October 8 and 9, 1931.

³⁶Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 10, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 154.

But Stimson wanted initial invocation of the pact to come from the League rather than the United States.³⁷ His reluctance stemmed from an unfortunate experience with the pact in 1929 which made him wary of using it again. At that time a dispute had broken out between China and Russia over the Chinese Eastern Railway in northern Manchuria, a Russian sphere of influence. When Stimson had reminded the two countries of their obligations to seek peaceful settlement of all disputes under the Kellogg-Briand Pact, he received a rebuff from Russia and only a lukewarm response from China. In addition to invoking the pact, Stimson had also suggested that the two countries accept a neutral commission of inquiry to investigate their quarrel. Not only had China and Russia spurned the suggestion, Russia in especially harsh language, but Japan had opposed it as well, fearing to establish a precedent for her own dealings with China. The result of the whole affair had been a personal humiliation for Stimson.³⁸

After Mukden the memory of this recent rebuff over the Kellogg-Briand Pact restrained the secretary from risking a second embarrassment.³⁹ The British rightly suspected that

³⁷ Stimson, Diary, Oct. 10, 1931.

³⁸ For a detailed analysis of this incident see Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957), Chap. IV.

³⁹ Stimson to Wilson, Sept. 23, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 48-49.

this was the case.⁴⁰ But Stimson considered the Chinchow bombing so serious that some action had to be taken. Accordingly on October 10 he instructed Prentiss Gilbert, the American consul at Geneva, to suggest to Drummond that the League of Nations invoke the pact. Gilbert was furthermore authorized, if invited, to sit in on Council meetings in the event that the pact came under discussion.⁴¹ When Gilbert suggested to Drummond on October 12, however, that the League invoke the pact, the secretary-general seemed reluctant, fearing that such an invocation "might bring up other issues which would make settlement of the Manchurian problem more difficult."⁴²

Drummond's initial fear of having the League invoke the pact disappeared abruptly on the following day, when he gave the plan his complete approval. His change of heart came about when all the Council members, except Japan, enthusiastically endorsed the suggestion. The French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, co-sponsor of the pact, offered personally to bring it forward while at the same

⁴⁰ Minute by Charles, Oct. 9, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15491, No. F5413/1391/10. Charles wrote in this minute: "The United States Government has decided to back the League of Nations instead of bringing forward the Kellogg Pact. The reason for this may be their failure to do anything at the time of the Chinese-Soviet dispute over the Chinese Eastern Railway."

⁴¹ Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 10, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 154.

⁴² Memo by Castle of conversation with French ambassador, Oct. 12, 1931, ibid., 164-65.

time inviting the United States to take part in the discussions. Lord Reading was prepared himself to suggest the invitation to the United States, if this seemed better strategy, instead of Briand.⁴³

A request by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald that Reading attend the October Council meeting as Britain's chief representative emphasized British concern over the latest developments. MacDonald wanted Britain to take a leading part in devising a "well thought out" League policy on Manchuria.⁴⁴ As the brief Council session proceeded (it ran only from October 16 to October 24, 1931), Reading unwisely attempted to use Gilbert's presence to bring the United States into closer cooperation with the League, probably as part of the British effort to develop a "well thought out" League policy. Unfortunately for Reading this effort failed (as will be described in the following chapter) because the United States did not want to align itself closely with the League, and resented the attempts of those who tried to force such an alignment on her.

Having made the bold decision to allow an American to sit with the League Council, however, Stimson quickly

⁴³ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Gilbert, October 13, 1931, ibid., 178-183.

⁴⁴ MacDonald to Reading, Oct. 9, 1931, D.E.F.P., VIII, 738.

hedged by issuing a battery of second-thought instructions to Gilbert on his behavior and his support of any steps that might be taken by the Council. Stimson's initial enthusiasm for invoking the pact had come from an emotional reaction to the Chinchow bombing. As the emotion wore off he could ponder more deeply the possible consequences of such an action on American relations with Japan. The secretary had no intention of provoking Japan against the United States by unilaterally invoking the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or even by letting it seem that he had urged such a step on the League. He strongly denied a charge by Neville from Tokyo that the United States was trying to "force a settlement" on China and Japan by invoking the pact, and told him that he must have mistaken the Department's attitude.⁴⁵ Within an hour of authorizing him to sit with the Council, Stimson told Gilbert that, while the United States thought mobilizing world opinion against a breach of the peace might prove successful in settling the Manchurian problem, he did not want to push the pact unawfully. He would be happier, in fact, if a peaceful solution could be found without resorting to the pact at all.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Stimson to Neville, Oct. 14, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 194-95.

⁴⁶ Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 13, 1931, ibid., 184-85.

On October 14 Briand informally petitioned his colleagues on the Council to invite the United States to send a representative to Geneva. The only objection came from Japan, which gave what she termed a purely "legal" argument why the United States could not participate. On the 15th, after protracted discussion, the Council voted that the question of American participation in the debates over Manchuria was one solely of procedure and not subject to a veto. Lord Reading made a long statement in support of this contention.⁴⁷ The Council then passed a motion, with only Japan dissenting, to invite the United States to engage in Council discussions involving application of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to the Manchurian dispute.⁴⁸

The Japanese representative, Kenkichi Yoshizawa, told Gilbert that Japan had only juridical objections to an American sitting with the Council. Stimson, not deceived, dismissed the Japanese claim as so much "nonsense" and "eyewash," but he recognized that lack of unanimity among the major Council powers on the question of an American presence would restrict the American role in the debates.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See Westel W. Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 101.

⁴⁸ Gilbert to Stimson, Oct. 14, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 195; Gilbert to Stimson, Oct. 15, 1931, ibid., 199.

⁴⁹ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Gilbert, Oct. 16, 1931, ibid., 203-07.

The Japanese objections increased Stimson's determination not to allow the League to push responsibility for invoking the pact onto the United States. Just a few hours before Gilbert took his seat at the Council table, Stimson used that relatively new instrument of diplomatic communication, the trans-Atlantic telephone, to give him his final instructions. He told Gilbert to confer immediately with Briand and Reading, and to emphasize how strongly the United States would object to any attempts by the League to have the pact invoked by Washington. Stimson spoke plainly, telling Gilbert that if such an attempt were made, "we would feel that it was better to give up the invocation of the pact altogether. It would destroy the whole purpose and would produce an issue with Japan which would make difficult the whole settlement."⁵⁰

On the eve of the historic Council meeting, therefore, the emphasis still remained on getting Japan and China to resolve the dispute between themselves. Neither the League, nor any individual power, was showing any inclination to tangle with Japan over Manchuria, despite the provocation of the Chinchow bombing. Edwin Neville in Tokyo, nervous over the latest developments, which he feared would pit his country and the League against Japan, urged Stimson in the strongest terms to avoid any entanglement with the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

League. Bringing Japan and China together should be the only American concern, he insisted. At that moment, he declared, the Japanese did not suspect the motives of the American government. They had, in fact, "been sensible all along of the disinterested friendliness of the United States." But American participation in League action, he warned, would destroy the trust Japan felt for America.⁵¹

Neville's cable preaching against participation with the League reached Washington early on the morning of October 16. It added to Stimson's growing fear that perhaps he had made a mistake in allowing an American to sit on the Council. Having made the commitment he felt that he had to see it through, but not without keeping the tightest of reins on Gilbert, and letting the other powers know the limits of Gilbert's cooperation.

Wary of Britain's enthusiasm for including the United States in the debates, Stimson made it especially clear to Francis Osborne, British counselor in Washington, that his main purpose was to present a united front against war, not against Japan. Osborne, sympathetic to the secretary's problems with American public opinion, wired London that Stimson had displayed "great determination and courage" in going as far as he had. He was "already being attacked in the press for involving the United States in

⁵¹ Ibid.

the League of Nations activities and foreign controversies. If the result is that initiative is unloaded on him and the United States I fear his critics may work up an agitation that would deprive Washington of all power for further action."⁵²

As Gilbert prepared to take his seat at the Geneva Council table, therefore, Lord Reading had sufficient warning that the American representative probably would not assume a very active role in the session, nor would he support any action that associated the United States with a united front against Japan. It should have been clear to London that Stimson was already beginning to regret having agreed to send Gilbert at all. Reading, however, as will be shown, did not abide by Osborne's warning. As a result the October session, in which Reading played a prominent role, ended somewhat dismally from the British point of view, and helped to increase American alienation from the League of Nations.

⁵² Osborne to Reading, Oct. 16, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 776-77.

Chapter III

The October 24 Resolution

The October 1931 session of the League of Nations Council witnessed, for the first time in League history, the presence of an American, Prentiss Gilbert, who sat at the Council table and occasionally spoke when action under the Kellogg-Briand Pact came under discussion. Although the session had drama, thanks to the presence of Gilbert, and seemed to produce a step toward ending the crisis in the October 24 resolution, the end results were meager, if not negative, since both the United States and Great Britain retreated from their determination to end the conflict that they carried with them into the first meeting. This determination, springing from a vigorous public reaction in both countries against the Chinchow bombing, subsided quickly when Japan opposed the October 24 resolution, and made it clear to the world that she had no intention of carrying out its terms.

During the brief session Lord Reading, seeking a closer alignment with the United States on the Far East, worked hard to discover and support Stimson's ideas on solving the Manchurian dispute. Following the first meeting of the Council on October 16, which produced only routine, cautious speeches by several delegates, Gilbert informed the British foreign secretary of Stimson's surprise and regret that

the Kellogg-Briand Pact had not been invoked immediately.¹ Reading, unaware that Stimson wanted the pact brought up so early in the session, told Gilbert that he wanted "to do anything that might meet Mr. Stimson's wishes." In relating his conversation with Gilbert to London, Reading emphasized the "necessity of doing everything possible to secure the wholehearted collaboration of United States Government and I therefore asked the United States representative to tell Mr. Stimson at once that I would do all in my power to assist."²

To demonstrate how cooperative he could be, Reading even agreed to go beyond Council action, if necessary, to carry out Stimson's wishes on the pact. If the Council should hesitate, Reading promised that Britain would invoke the pact unilaterally. While preferring to act in unison with the other Council members, he attached so much importance to Stimson's request that he was "ready to act alone."³

¹ In urging quick invocation of the pact Stimson either ignored, or was unaware, that his chief State Department adviser on the Far East saw no reason for such hasty action. Hornbeck wrote on Oct. 19, 1931: "There was no need for precipitate action with regard to discussion of the question of invoking the Pact of Paris. There was, as has been concluded in our discussions here, less of urgent need for invoking the pact last week than there had been toward the end of the preceding week." Memo by Hornbeck, Oct. 19, 1931, S.D., No. 793.94/2202.

² Reading to Vansittart, Oct. 17, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 781-82.

³ Ibid.

At a private Council meeting the next morning, October 17, Reading followed up his promise to seek immediate action under the Kellogg-Briand Pact. In the absence of the Chinese and Japanese representatives, but with Gilbert seated at the table, Reading announced his intention to refer Tokyo and Nanking to Article 2 of the pact, calling upon the signatories to settle their disputes by peaceful means.⁴ The other Council members agreed to do the same. Telegrams subsequently went out that afternoon from the four foreign ministers present at Geneva--- British, French, Italian, and Norwegian--- and from the German delegate. Gilbert asked that the United States be officially informed of the step taken, but only as one of the many signatories of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, so that she could follow up the Council's action.⁵ He made this request because Stimson wanted to play down the American role in invoking the pact. In referring to the Council's action of October 17 Stimson noted with satisfaction in his diary; "We are simply one of the forty-five nations to whom the action is suggested by those five."⁶

Thanks to Reading's prompt and vigorous support, Stimson's goal of getting the League to invoke the Kellogg-Briand Pact had been quickly accomplished. The American secretary, working

⁴ Reading to Vansittart, Oct. 18, 1931, ibid., 785-86.

⁵ Ibid., 788.

⁶ Stimson, Diary, Oct. 18, 1931.

dexterously behind the scenes, had neatly, if somewhat nervously, maneuvered the pact into first place in the thinking of the major powers on the Council. His anxiety to have the pact brought up early in the session clearly came from a desire to withdraw Gilbert from the Council table as soon as possible. When invoking the pact himself a few days later, Stimson could pretend that he simply followed the Council's lead, when in fact the Council had acted on Stimson's promptings.

On October 20, 1931, the American government sent notes to Japan and China reminding them of their obligations under the Kellogg-Briand pact to settle "by pacific means" all disputes between them.⁷ Baron Shidehara, the Japanese foreign minister, received the note calmly from Neville on October 21. Glancing at its contents he remarked that "its tone was sympathetic and he desired once again to express his appreciation of the considerate attitude [of] the United States." Neville warned Stimson, however, that Shidehara, well known in the west for his efforts to steer Japan along the road of moderation in her foreign policy, labored under the double strain of demonstrating Japan's peaceful intentions in Manchuria, while at the same time convincing the Japanese people that their rights there would not be jeopardized. Neville clearly implied that the United States

⁷ Stimson to Neville, Oct. 20, 1931, F.R. Japan, 1931-1941, I, 27-28.

must not obstruct Shidehara's efforts to pursue his policy of moderation, which could be destroyed by any undue pressure from the outside.⁸

Before receiving Neville's warning, Stimson had already acted to withdraw the American representative from the Council table. With the major powers invoking the pact on October 17, Stimson prepared to back off quickly from this unprecedented American cooperation with the League of Nations by ordering Gilbert's withdrawal. Stimson feared that if the Manchurian situation failed to improve, following invocation of the pact, the Council, under pressure from China, might resort to other articles of the Covenant, particularly those calling for possible sanctions or even military force against an aggressor, in which case Gilbert must not be present.⁹

An opportunity to repair the recent strain in Japanese-American relations, however, resulting from Tokyo's objections to seating an American with the Council, made Stimson hesitate to withdraw Gilbert immediately. On the 19th Gilbert telephoned Stimson that Briand and Reading, to relieve the tension with Japan over his presence at the Council table, had persuaded Yoshizawa to make a statement favorable to the United States, which would be read by the Japa-

⁸ Neville to Stimson, Oct. 21, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 279-80.

⁹ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Gilbert, Oct. 19, 1931, ibid., 241-248.

nese representative at the next open Council meeting. Gilbert suggested to Stimson that he remain seated until Yoshizawa spoke and until he could make a proper response. Stimson reluctantly accepted the suggestion, "provided it is done right off."¹⁰

Although Yoshizawa did not get a chance to read his statement until the 22nd, the Japanese ambassador in Washington, Katsuji Debuchi, told Stimson three days earlier what it would contain. While still considering the Council's action in seating an American at the conference table illegal, Yoshizawa would withdraw Japan's objections to his presence as a gesture of good will.¹¹ Sensitive to Japanese opinion, and not completely reassured that Japan did not still harbor resentment against the United States over the episode, Stimson decided to go ahead and order Gilbert's withdrawal as soon as Yoshizawa addressed the Council. His decision, however, brought a sharp reaction from Lord Reading, who immediately telephoned Stimson from Geneva.

Reading's distress over Gilbert's imminent departure from the Council table resulted from the new, though very temporary, British attitude toward Japan and the Manchurian crisis. For some three weeks following the Chinchow bombing on Octo-

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Memo by Stimson of conversation with Japanese ambassador, October 19, 1931, ibid., 240-41.

ber 8, the British press, British public opinion, and British leadership, briefly united in their resentment of Japan, attacked the Japanese aggression and sought ways to force a settlement in Manchuria. On October 18 the London Times, nearly always strongly pro-Japanese, termed Japan's objection to American participation on the Council "intolerable." On that same day the New York Times reported from London; "The Japanese attitude is being denounced with a unanimity that is startling in view of the close Anglo-Japanese Alliance which ended only ten years ago."¹²

The foreign secretary's hasty and worried phone call to Stimson on the afternoon of the 19th, after learning of Stimson's decision on Gilbert, marked an effort by Reading to restrain Japan by continuing a build up of world opinion against her, which he feared might collapse if Gilbert withdrew from the Council. Acknowledging that Stimson had envisioned American participation only while the Kellogg-Briand Pact came under discussion, Reading warned that Gilbert's departure would imply American disapproval of subsequent League decisions. He listed for Stimson the serious effects of such an implication, warning that Briand, who had played such a large part in getting the Council to invite an American, might lose his post as French foreign minister. The

¹²London Times, Oct. 18, 1931; New York Times, Oct. 18, 1931.

success of the world disarmament conference, scheduled to open in Geneva early the next year with American membership, would be jeopardized in advance. Finally, Reading declared, a precipitate American departure would affect "the world's financial and political situation."¹³

Reluctantly accepting Reading's argument, Stimson agreed not to pull Gilbert out immediately, but to allow his participation in one more closed session and in one public session. After that Gilbert must withdraw to one side of the room and act only as an observer for the remainder of the session.¹⁴ This concession did not satisfy Briand or Drummond. On hearing of Stimson's decision to order Gilbert away from the table after two more meetings Drummond, in Gilbert's words, "almost broke down." Briand was equally upset.¹⁵

At this point, however, an unforeseen condition helped to thwart Stimson's plans. Because there were no seats for observers in the Council chamber, if Gilbert continued to attend, he would have to sit at the same horseshoe table as the rest of the delegates. Faced with the pressures from Reading, Briand, and Drummond, and now with the difficulty

¹³ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Reading, Oct. 19, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 248-258; Reading to Lindsay, Oct. 19, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 793-95.

¹⁴ Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 19, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 259-60.

¹⁵ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Gilbert, Oct. 20, 1931, ibid., 266-75.

of seating Gilbert as an observer, Stimson ordered Gilbert to keep his seat at the Council table for the remainder of the session.

Stimson's patience with what he considered a ludicrous situation, however, had begun to wear thin. On the 20th he wrote of the episode in his diary:

There came a telephone call from Geneva from Gilbert bringing up again this infernal question of his seat at the table. Briand seemed to think that if we moved his seat from the table it would upset the whole stability of Europe, and then Gilbert read me a terrible long message from Briand on the subject.... finally I decided that so long as Gilbert kept out of secret meetings... I would let him go on sitting at the damned table. He is, however, to keep his mouth shut.¹⁶

While Stimson wished to play an effective role in bringing the Sino-Japanese dispute to an end, his fear that American public opinion would erupt over too close an association with the League kept him on edge.¹⁷ He confessed to Ambassador Lindsay in Washington on the 20th that the initial Japanese opposition to seating Gilbert had led to "great difficulty in keeping [the] American press quiet." The partial withdrawal of Japanese objections on the 19th had calmed the press somewhat, but the incident left Stimson with a renewed determination to avoid antagonizing either American or Japanese public opinion by appearing to cooperate too closely

¹⁶ Stimson, Diary, Oct. 20, 1931.

¹⁷ Ibid., Oct. 15, 1931.

with the League. He cautioned Reading that, while the difficulties surrounding the seating of Gilbert seemed to be over for the moment, he feared that if they recurred his efforts to work with the League would be injured.¹⁸ His message put Reading on notice that American participation with the Council, or cooperation with the League in general, or even cooperation with Great Britain on the Sino-Japanese dispute, could terminate very suddenly.

Reading's failure to enlist full and active American support in molding a "well thought out"¹⁹ League policy toward Manchuria should have been expected by London. Judging from more than a decade of American opposition to membership in the League, and from the violent objections in Congress and the American press to working with the world organization, the British should not have placed much hope in Stimson's ability to reverse the trend of American opinion. That they did have such hope is more a tribute to their optimism than their good judgment.

The British believed, at least for the duration of the October Council session, that American cooperation was essential if the League were to succeed in its peacemaking mission in Manchuria. Lord Cecil, one of Britain's most extreme internationalists, was convinced that any actions

¹⁸ Lindsay to Reading, Oct. 20, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 805-06.

¹⁹ See Chap. II, p. 37.

of the League under Articles 10, 11, 15, or 16 of the Covenant would not be effective without the "active participation of America," and that the American position on such action should be ascertained in advance.²⁰ But the only certain cooperation Reading could expect was in the invocation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. His discussions with Stimson over Gilbert's continued presence, once invocation had been accomplished, should have made it clear to him that the American secretary would go no further; indeed, could go no further. Throughout the remainder of the October Council session, however, Reading rather unrealistically seemed to take comfort from the continuing presence at the Council table of Prentiss Gilbert.²¹

The invocation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, accepted with equanimity by Japan, had no effect on ending the Manchurian dispute. With Gilbert remaining in his seat, but not taking an active part in the debates, the League Council, led by Reading, Cecil, and Briand, strove to discover what might induce Japan and China to stop the fighting and start negotiating with each other. On this question the

²⁰ Memo by Cecil, Oct. 19, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 797-800.

²¹ Reading was quite aware, as early as Oct. 19, that Stimson's agreement to let Gilbert continue sitting at the Council table had been given "most reluctantly." Reading to Lindsay, Oct. 19, 1931, ibid., 793-95.

delegates failed to find a workable formula, a failure which produced great pessimism among the powers, and opened a rift between the United States and the League. The problem stemmed not only from Japan's definition of her goals in Manchuria, and China's refusal to accept these goals as legitimate, but also from an ill-conceived Council resolution calling for Japanese evacuation to the railway zone by November 16, 1931.

During the first months of the crisis Japan had given little indication of her specific objectives in Manchuria. While it was generally believed that she wanted to strengthen her legal position there, repeated Japanese denials of plans to permanently occupy areas outside of the railway zone left their ultimate intentions unclear. During the October session, when the Council asked when talks could begin between Japan and China, the Japanese finally showed their hand. Negotiations could start at any time, they affirmed. Withdrawal of troops, however, had to wait until the "Chinese Government should give [an] undertaking to fulfill engagements due to Japan under international treaties concerning [the] railway situation in Manchuria."²² This meant confirmation by China of all the railway treaties with Japan over Manchuria, including the disputed ones resulting from the "Twenty-One

²² Reading to Vansittart, Oct. 22, 1931, ibid., 810-11.

Demands" in 1915 and the "secret protocol" of 1905.²³ If China accepted these conditions for evacuation, her hopes of maintaining sovereignty over Manchuria would disappear.

Aware of the danger, the Chinese refused to fall into the trap laid for them by Japan. They rejected the Japanese conditions for the withdrawal of their troops. In taking this attitude the Chinese had the support of Reading, Cecil, Drummond, and Briand, all of whom urged the Japanese not to make confirmation of the treaties with China a condition for withdrawal.

On the evening of October 22, Drummond and Yoshizawa went over the whole question of Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria and the legal guarantees Japan expected from China in exchange for evacuation of Japanese troops. Following this meeting there could be no further doubt that Japan meant to have her way in China, peacefully if possible, by force if necessary. Yoshizawa's definition of Japan's goals raised for the League and the United States the fundamental issue of the Sino-Japanese dispute--- whether or not Japan would be allowed to violate solemnly drawn treaties and covenants with impunity. Anglo-American cooperation on Manchuria ultimately foundered on this question.

Yoshizawa told Drummond at this private meeting between

²³ For a discussion of these treaties see Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations, Chap. I.

them on the 22nd that Japan was principally concerned with the Peking Protocol, a secret provision of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1905. By the terms of this secret provision the Chinese promised not to build railways in Manchuria parallel to, near, or competitive with, the South Manchurian Railway. China subsequently refused to accept this provision as a binding agreement, or as anything more than an informal understanding.²⁴ Yoshizawa acknowledged the dispute over this treaty between his country and China, but asserted that it was of the greatest importance to his country that China confirm the treaty's validity. In order to bring about evacuation of Japanese troops, he told Drummond, China must agree to the last point of a five-point proposal being offered to the Council by Japan.²⁵ This fifth point read; "An undertaking by the Chinese Government to fulfil the obligations which China owes to Japan under the existing treaty provisions between the two countries relating to the railways in Manchuria."²⁶

Evacuation could begin, Yoshizawa affirmed, when China accepted negotiations on the basis of the fifth point. Drum-

²⁴ It was Chinese construction of a line parallel to the South Manchurian Railway that helped to arouse the Japanese military to action on Sept. 18-19, 1931.

²⁵ The first four points of the Japanese proposal were not irreconcilable with a proposal being drawn up by the Council.

²⁶ Drummond to Cadogan, Oct. 22, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 818-20.

mond bluntly replied that neither he nor Briand could recommend direct negotiations between the two countries until after evacuation of Japanese troops. He suggested that Japan, instead of demanding confirmation from China of the disputed treaties, take the case before the Hague Court for adjudication. Yoshizawa doubted that his government would accept such a procedure.²⁷

Japanese insistence on the fifth point of their proposal made unanimous agreement among the Council members impossible. Reading and Cecil, along with Drummond and Briand, took the position that Japanese troops had to be withdrawn before talks could begin between Japan and China. When Reading left Geneva for London on October 22, Cecil continued to maintain this stand at the Council meetings. Prentiss Gilbert, although present at the Council table, did little more than listen to the debates and report them to Washington. He conversed regularly with Drummond and Briand in private, but merely passed on to the State Department the information given him by the secretary general and the French foreign minister. Although the Americans considered the Japanese demands on the confirmation of treaties unreasonable, no mention of the American attitude was conveyed to the Council members during the October session.

The critical moment in the session came late on the afternoon of October 24, when both Japan and the Council of-

²⁷ Ibid.

ferred separate proposals for the resolving of the dispute. The Japanese draft resolution made evacuation of their troops dependent on settlement of certain "fundamental principles," obviously those dealing with Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria, but so ill-defined by Japan that Briand found them impossible for the Council to discuss.²⁸ Only Yoshizawa voted for the Japanese resolution. The Council's resolution received the votes of all the members except Japan. Since Japan voted against it, the Council resolution lacked legal force. It did, however, clearly express the sense of the great majority and fell into the category of a document of moral suasion. The resolution called upon Japan to evacuate the territory outside the railway zone. During and after this evacuation, the Council would ask China to protect the lives and property of all Japanese subjects in Manchuria. Upon completion of evacuation the two sides would begin talks on a permanent settlement. The major point of the resolution called upon Japan to complete evacuation by November 16, 1931, the proposed date for the convening of the next Council session.²⁹

Acceptance of the resolution by all the Council members

²⁸ Gilbert to Stimson, Oct. 24, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 307-11.

²⁹ The Council's October 24 resolution is printed in F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 29-30.

except Japan gave a victory of sorts to Reading and Briand, since they had fought hard for its adoption. Their victory, however, had little effect on the dispute. Both men had gone ahead of their respective foreign offices, which were inclined to sympathize with Japan rather than China, and both were soon indirectly repudiated by their own governments, who accepted without serious protest the Japanese failure to evacuate by November 16. They had also gone beyond State Department wishes, whose sole object in sending Gilbert to Geneva was to secure invocation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. American support for any action except invocation of the pact was highly uncertain, which Reading failed to realize in his eagerness to gain support for a resolution restraining Japan.

Reading's maneuvers, and the sharp Japanese reaction to them, led to a reappraisal in the Foreign Office of Anglo-League and Anglo-American policy in the Far East. The October session in Geneva marked the high point of British action in conjunction with the League against Japan over Manchuria, and British efforts to involve the United States in that action, at least until League adoption of the Lytton Report early in 1933. Reading and Cecil had pushed strenuously for adoption of the October 24 resolution, including the November 16 deadline for evacuation. When Japan rejected the deadline, however, and blamed Great Britain for forcing

it through the Council, the British government reacted swiftly to Reading's policy, since that policy threatened good relations with Japan.

On October 24 Hugh Byas, New York Times correspondent in Tokyo, reported on Japanese feeling against Great Britain. "Japanese irritation," he wrote, "at the isolation in which she finds herself at Geneva finds expression in an extension of anti-British agitation in the press.... anger at Viscount Cecil's and the Marquess of Reading's attitude at Geneva is accentuated by the knowledge which has leaked out that Sir Miles Lampson used forcible language" in advising Mr. Shigemitsu, the Japanese minister to China, that Japan withdraw her troops to the railway zone. The Japanese, Byas wrote, were asking the question, and quite bluntly, how could Britain expect to preserve and safeguard her position in South China without Japanese assistance? ³⁰

The British government asked itself the same question. At the end of October several minutes and memoranda written by Foreign Office Far Eastern advisers reassessed the situation following the recently completed Council session. ³¹ The feeling prevailed that Britain had gone too far in supporting China against Japan. All agreed that the powers must

³⁰ New York Times, Oct. 25, 1931.

³¹ See minutes by MacKillop and Orde on cable from Cecil to Reading, Oct. 24, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 821-22, and memo by Pratt, Oct. 27, 1931, ibid., 826-29.

allow Japan a compromise of something less than the extreme Council demand of evacuation before negotiation. The alternatives to compromise, either the imposition of economic sanctions against Japan or a confession of complete helplessness on the part of the League, could not be considered. Without the United States, sanctions were "probably impossible."³² As for the prestige of the League, complete collapse in the face of great power aggression would have "widespread and dangerous repercussions."³³ The only sensible course for Great Britain and the League to follow, considering the intransigence of Japan and the unwillingness of America to consider economic or military action, was a backing away from the Council resolution, even if this meant supporting Japan against China on the matter of negotiations before evacuation.

Reading himself, destined to remain as foreign secretary for only a few weeks after the end of the October session, also had second thoughts on the wisdom of the resolution he had helped to draft. Japan, he believed, must be given some face-saving device, allowing retreat from her inflexible position of refusing to evacuate before confirmation of all treaties on Manchuria. He now spoke sympathetically of Japan's problems with China, which for some years past had "embarked

³² Ibid., 823.

³³ Ibid., 828.

on a deliberate policy of strangling the South Manchurian Railway," and which had adopted "dilatatory tactics that prevented the negotiation of any agreement." Reading hoped that some way might be found to allow negotiations and evacuation to proceed concurrently.³⁴

While Reading, back in London, retreated from the position he held during the October session, Briand and Drummond at Geneva put pressure on Washington to publicly support the Council resolution. By the end of October the State Department had still given no definite indication as to what action, if any, it planned to take. Several reasons caused this hesitation. Although Stimson objected to the Japanese stand on treaty rights, in that Japan was using force to pursue national policies, thus violating the Kellogg-Briand Pact, he felt that setting a time limit for evacuation had been a mistake.³⁵ For one thing the Japanese would probably reject this limit. For another, too much anarchy existed in Manchuria for Japanese troops to withdraw safely to the railway zone. Stimson believed, however, that he had "these matters under careful consideration and was trying to determine what sort of an answer I could send which would make clear my general support

³⁴ Reading to Lord Tyrrell (British ambassador to France), Oct. 29, 1931, ibid., 842-44.

³⁵ Stimson blamed this mistake on the Council's total ignorance of the oriental mind, and to the zeal of Lord Cecil. Stimson to Elihu Root, Dec. 14, 1931, Stimson Papers, Yale University Library, Box 27, letters sent.

of the League position and yet possibly leave a ladder by which Japan could climb down."³⁶

Another restraint on American action stemmed from the intensity of the Japanese press attacks on Reading and Cecil. The British experience gave the State Department material for reflection. Under Secretary of State William R. Castle, himself a former ambassador to Japan, was concerned with the state of Japanese public opinion. He advised Stimson, in framing his message on the resolution in Tokyo, to avoid antagonizing Japan. On October 28 Debuchi told Castle of the violent outbreaks in Japan against Great Britain.³⁷ Castle was impressed by Debuchi's report. In a memorandum to Stimson he pointed out the great irritation in Japan against both Great Britain and France for the parts they had played in framing the resolution, and how the Japanese "deeply appreciated the neutrality of this country." While recognizing that some note had to be sent Japan in light of the League resolution, Castle hoped it could be phrased in such a way as to continue the good feeling in Japan toward the United States. If properly handled, Castle believed the problems of Britain and France with Japan could be turned to America's advantage.³⁸

³⁶ Memo of conversation between Stimson and French ambassador, Oct. 29, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 342-43.

³⁷ Memo of conversation between Castle and Debuchi, Oct. 28, 1931, ibid., 333-34.

³⁸ Memo by Castle, Oct. 30, 1931, S.D. 793.94/2509.

But the British did not intend letting anyone profit with Japan at their expense. By the end of October they had revised the policy that Reading, Cecil, Drummond, and Briand had successfully urged on the League Council. Drummond and Cecil, however, unaware of the gulf that had suddenly opened up between Geneva and London, believed that Britain still favored the resolution, and wanted American support for it. Drummond complained to London on the 30th that no action on the resolution had yet been taken by Washington.³⁹ By this time, however, the British had abandoned the resolution and hoped that Washington would do the same.

A Foreign Office minute on Drummond's letter attacked the Council's demand for evacuation by November 16, and considered how "well advised" Britain had been to retreat from the extreme demands of the October 24 resolution. The new policy, which London believed to be "in complete harmony with American views," was to "discover some peaceable means of solving the difficulty." To implement this policy two guidelines were to be followed: to try to find a formula "which would enable both sides to begin direct negotiations before evacuation had been effected," and to "refrain from supporting

³⁹ Drummond to Cadogan, Oct. 30, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 862-63. Cecil and Drummond were both criticized in the Foreign Office for their pro-Chinese positions. Orde wrote on Oct. 26, 1931, that Cecil was not helping to effect a compromise by making proposals "strengthening the Chinese technical position." ibid., 822-23.

M. Briand's precipitate attempt to obtain formal American approval of the Council resolution." In British opinion "any attempt to drag America along with the League with a view to vindicating League principles would be fatal."⁴⁰ The British clearly felt that some fence-mending in their relations with Japan was in order, and that the United States, which appeared to be less than enthusiastic about the October 24 resolution, would not prove an embarrassing obstacle to the process.

London correctly predicted Washington's response to the October 24 resolution. Stimson's note to Tokyo on November 3, 1931, although still critical of Japan's use of force against China, was moderate in tone and carefully avoided any mention of the November 16 deadline. Stimson hoped that Japan would not make settlement of the treaty issue between herself and China a condition for evacuation of the positions occupied by Japanese troops since the fighting began. By withdrawing her troops Japan could demonstrate to the world that "exertion of military pressure" was not "in any way intended to effect the process of arriving at a settlement of the points at issue."⁴¹ The Kellogg-Briand Pact, still uppermost in Stimson's thinking, precluded the use of force in extracting from China verification of the railway treaties. To

⁴⁰ Minute composed on Oct. 30, 1931, signature unclear, B.F.O., Vol. 15495, No. F6258/1391/10.

⁴¹ Stimson to Neville, Nov. 3, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 34-35.

this extent he echoed the League, but his note to Tokyo lacked the urgency of the Council resolution, and by omission of any date for evacuation agreed that the November 16 deadline had been a mistake.

Ambassador Forbes returned to Tokyo from home leave on November 4, and on the following day, despite his personal misgivings and those of his staff, he delivered Stimson's note concerning the October 24 resolution to the Japanese Foreign Office. Although Neville had received the note for delivery on November 3, he had taken it upon himself to hold it up pending answer to his request to Washington that a passage referring to the League resolution be omitted. Washington denied the request. According to Forbes, on the morning of the 5th a "peremptory order" came from Stimson to deliver the note to the Japanese foreign minister.⁴² With great concern that the note would excite Japanese emotions against the United States, Forbes reluctantly but obediently delivered it to the foreign minister on the afternoon of November 5.

⁴² Stimson to Neville, Nov. 4, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 371. When Forbes returned to Tokyo on November 4, he found Neville in a bad way. He reported the counselor to be "in a highly nervous state, completely used up, his face twitching, and... absolutely in need of a rest." Both Neville and Forbes probably exaggerated the ultimate response of Japan to American actions in support of the League. But, it must be remembered, they usually had the unpleasant experience of physically facing aroused Japanese public opinion, which easily became inflamed at what it considered slights to Japanese national honor. See Lensen, "Japan and Manchuria," 70-71.

Contrary to the fears of Forbes and Neville, Shidehara graciously accepted the note, at the same time reaffirming Japan's insistence that all of her treaty rights in Manchuria had to be confirmed by China before evacuation of Japanese troops.⁴³ On November 9 Debuchi left the official Japanese reply with Stimson in Washington. It briefly traced the history of the Sino-Japanese dispute and raised once again the point of "fundamental principles." In effect these principles had to be recognized by China before evacuation could proceed.⁴⁴

Forbes's fears were partially born out, however, after November 5 when Hugh Byas, piecing together from various sources the note on the resolution sent by Stimson to Shidehara, published a version of it in the New York Times.⁴⁵ When the Japanese public heard the details of the note tempers erupted in Tokyo so badly that for a while the American embassy staff, fearful of injury, moved about the city under guard.⁴⁶ Highly critical of the League resolution, and and afraid of its effect on the Japanese, Forbes strongly urged on Washington that "nothing be done by the United States

⁴³ Forbes to Stimson, Nov. 6, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 38-39.

⁴⁴ Japanese embassy to the Department of State, Nov. 9, 1931, ibid., 39-41.

⁴⁵ New York Times, Nov. 6 and 7, 1931.

⁴⁶ Lensen, "Japan and Manchuria," 71.

to associate it with the League's action.⁴⁷ Although Stimson did not take Forbes's advice in his note to Japan on the League resolution, the ambassador's warning took on special meaning after the outburst of Japanese public opinion following publication of the New York Times article.⁴⁸ If the United States wanted to play a significant role in bringing about peace in Manchuria, American public criticism of Japan and the appearance of close American alignment with the League in an anti-Japanese policy could not continue.

In addition to the account in the New York Times, accurate reports circulated among the Tokyo diplomatic corps of both Stimson's note and the official Japanese reply. Ambassador Lindley wired London on November 9 that the American note associated the United States with the majority of the League Council. Lindley pointed out, however, Japan's conviction over the justice of her cause. Japan would not "heed any threat even if the United States joined the Council in making one." Furthermore, the British ambassador had learned on "unimpeachable authority" that Stimson had recently declared that under no circumstances would the United States join in any pressures or sanctions against Japan.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Neville to Stimson, Nov. 4, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 366-67.

⁴⁸ Byas wrote that American and League pressures would only induce the Japanese to fight harder. "After all," he noted, "Manchuria is a question of supreme importance to them." New York Times, Nov. 6, 1931.

⁴⁹ Lindley to Simon, Nov. 9, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 880.

In London Sir John Simon, who had taken over from Reading as foreign secretary early in November, sought clarification on this matter of possible American sanctions against Japan. With a continuation of the Council's October session scheduled to begin on November 16, he wanted full knowledge of just how far the United States would go in support of any further League action. On November 10 he asked Lindsay to seek out discreetly Washington's attitude on sanctions.⁵⁰ Lindsay immediately replied that the subject of sanctions had never arisen in his conversations at the State Department, but that in his opinion they would be "entirely abhorrent to the United States Government and that if others had recourse to them the United States Government would formally dissociate itself."⁵¹

Lindsay's assessment was correct. A negative attitude on sanctions marked no shift in American policy. While Stimson himself might on occasion have entertained the notion of sanctions,⁵² American public opinion, not to mention the almost pacifist convictions of President Herbert Hoover, precluded such a step, at least during the period of the Man-

⁵⁰ Simon to Lindsay, Nov. 10, 1931, ibid., 883.

⁵¹ Lindsay to Simon, Nov. 10, 1931, ibid., 884.

⁵² For recent opinions on Stimson's feelings about sanctions see Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression, 148, and Elting Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 315.

churian crisis. Utterances of such prominent Congressional leaders as Senator William E. Borah, who equated sanctions with war, did not go unnoticed in the Foreign Office, which frequently justified British inaction against Japan by referring to the American position.⁵³

By early November Great Britain and the United States, following similar reactions to the Council resolution, again found themselves in fairly close agreement on Manchuria policy, after having briefly separated on the deadline for evacuation of Japanese troops. While Stimson partially supported the Council's resolution in Tokyo, more from a sense of obligation to the League than from a conviction that it provided a sound basis for settlement of the dispute, he returned to the belief that he had held earlier that Japan and China must negotiate their differences with each other. Acknowledging the great difficulties involved in a direct diplomatic confrontation of those two powers, however, he proposed that the negotiating be done in the presence of intermediaries.

Stimson planned to suggest to the League that it advocate a course similar to one taken in 1922 during the Sino-Japanese dispute over the Shantung Peninsula, a former German sphere of influence in China. After Japan entered the First World War, Japanese troops took over Shantung and continued occupation after the armistice in 1918. Following

⁵³ Minute by Orde, Oct. 26, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 823.

the end of the war China sought Japanese evacuation of the peninsula. After considerable wrangling, the two countries arranged to negotiate withdrawal with each other in the presence of neutral observers from Great Britain and the United States, Lord Balfour and Charles Evans Hughes. Stimson hoped that a similar procedure might be followed in Manchuria with equal success.⁵⁴

The next League Council session, technically a continuation of the October session, opened in Paris instead of Geneva on November 16, 1931. The Paris meetings gave Stimson and Simon an opportunity to return to a more evenhanded policy toward the contenders in the Manchurian dispute. Both British and American policies during the session were characterized by restraint of the League and pressure on the Chinese to accept a compromise resolution, aimed at reducing tension in the Far East and affecting a settlement regardless of the political and territorial consequences for China. British opinion had been aroused briefly against Japan after the Chinchow bombing. But in the face of Japanese recalcitrance over the October 24 resolution, it reverted to a convenient, if rather cynical sympathy for Japan's problems with China in Manchuria. "The ruinous competition of the Chinese railways," a Foreign Office minute on November 11

⁵⁴ Stimson to Forbes, Nov. 5, 1931, F.R. Japan, 1931-1941, I, 36-37; Stimson to French ambassador, Nov. 4, 1931, F.R. 1931, I, 369-70.

read, "is the real cause of the whole trouble. A declaration which did not cover this point would be of no use to the Japanese."⁵⁵ This sentiment endorsed the Japanese demand for confirmation of the railway treaties. While the Japanese methods of obtaining this goal continued to be criticized, the goal itself seemed reasonable to the British.

Secretary Stimson had also taken a step back from his immediate post-Chinchow position, if not technically then at least in spirit. On November 10 he instructed the American ambassador in London, former United States vice-president Charles Gates Dawes, to be present in Paris for the first meeting on November 16. His initial instructions to Dawes, via the trans-Atlantic telephone, were to keep his "hand on the shoulder and coat collar of Briand and not let him go too fast," and to work hard to get negotiations started between Japan and China, preferably on the model of the Shantung settlement of 1922. He preferred that Dawes not sit in on the Council meetings as Gilbert had done, but work quietly in the background talking to principals and attempting to bring both sides together. Stimson told him that America's only interest in Manchuria was to "prevent war," and that he did not care "what solution is reached between China and Japan so long as it is done by pacific means."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Foreign Office minute; Nov. 11, 1931; signature unclear, B.F.O., Vol. 15497, No. F6495/1931/10.

⁵⁶ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Dawes, Nov. 10, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 407-14.

At the beginning of the November Council session, therefore, the inclination of the State Department and the Foreign Office was to conciliate Japan, despite the belief of several leaders in both countries, including Stimson and Simon, that Japanese methods were morally wrong. The seating of an American representative at the Council table, and the invocation of the Kellogg-Briand pact, had produced nothing in the way of progress toward resolving the dispute. Neither had passage of the October 24 resolution, so strongly supported by Reading and Cecil, made any difference to the Japanese. All these failures would be reflected in the more conciliatory atmosphere of the November session. Although the Chinese did not immediately realize it, they were about to suffer a considerable diplomatic defeat at the Paris Council session.

Chapter IV

The December 10 Resolution

Between October 24 and November 16, 1931, the Sino-Japanese controversy worsened steadily, with the Kwantung Army pushing further into Manchuria, and the Chinese forces retiring before it with only token displays of resistance. The November Council session, therefore, seemed certain to witness a crisis in League history, one that might well decide the future of the world organization. For if a major state belonging to the League could violate the Covenant with impunity, by aggressive assaults against a weaker neighbor, then the cause of world peace would receive a severe blow, and the League of Nations might conceivably collapse. The League, as well as Japan, was on trial in Paris in November, 1931.¹

Painfully aware of the League's inability to punish Japan and thwart her ambitions in Manchuria without the full cooperation of the United States, Great Britain, one of the leading proponents of the October 24 resolution, changed direction sharply in November. Instead of insisting that the terms

¹ Many contemporary observers viewed the Sino-Japanese dispute as a crisis in international diplomacy. Walter Lippmann and William O. Scroggs in the United States in World Affairs, 1931 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1932), saw the League and the Kellogg-Briand Pact being put to the "severest kind of test" during the Manchurian crisis. p. 272. In a speech made in the House of Commons on November 25, 1931, George Lansbury, leader of the Labor Party, saw the whole future of the League at stake. New York Times, Nov. 26, 1931.

of the resolution be obeyed, the British favored a compromise that would supersede the October action and restore the ambiguous, mild resolution of September 30, 1931. In this effort Britain had the support of the United States. While advocates of collective action such as Aristide Briand and Lord Robert Cecil found this a bitter decision to accept, they could not overrule their own governments. Rather than see the League exposed in its impotence they worked with Simon, Drummond, and Dawes to devise a new resolution that Japan and China could both accept, even though this meant abandoning the time limit for the evacuation of Japanese troops.

To emphasize the importance of the November Council session in Paris, Great Britain and the United States sent as representatives two of their most important statesmen, Sir John Simon for Britain and Charles Gates Dawes for America. Simon, the new British foreign secretary, attended the meetings in person, temporarily replacing Cecil as chief delegate. Assessments of Simon's performance as foreign secretary have been generally unfavorable.² A shrewd and talented lawyer,

² Winston Churchill was cautiously critical of Simon's foreign secretaryship. He wrote that, "Sir John Simon's conduct of foreign affairs was not in 1935 viewed with favor by either the opposition or in influential circles of the Conservative Party." Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), 132. Vansittart wrote about Simon that, "He had an immensely powerful but not--- in a strange trade--- a particularly quick brain. Things took a while to sink in and could sink too far." Robert Vansittart, The Mist Procession (London: 1958), 428.

his ambition to become prime minister was well known, and some suspected that he merely used the foreign secretaryship as a vehicle for advancing to the higher position.³ In connection with the Far Eastern crisis this was not an unfair estimate of Simon's aspirations. To remain in the good graces of the Conservative party, which dominated British politics in the 1930's, a politician had to pursue a conciliatory policy toward Japan. This was part of the Conservative credo, voiced in the highest governing circles, echoed in the Conservative press, and reechoed within the Foreign Office. While Simon personally deplored the Japanese aggression against China, and on occasion openly criticized it, he never initiated or supported action that might lead to war, sanctions, or a diplomatic rupture between his country and Japan. Cecil later wrote of Simon that, soon after he came to office, "It quickly became clear that he was not prepared to take any steps to compel Japan to leave China--- not even to urge that a diplomatic protest should be made by withdrawing the envoys of the League Powers from

³ The State Department assessed Simon in the following terms: "Sir John Simon's controlling ambition is to become Prime Minister, which is of course a fairly large order for one who is still a Liberal in name at least. He proposes, as I see it, to reach this end by being the great conciliator, a role which permits him to employ to advantage his temperament and his unquestioned talents in this direction, and to gain at the same time the approval of the Tory back-benchers." Memo by Eugene H. Dooman, first secretary of embassy in Great Britain, Nov. 12, 1932, S. D. 793.94/5624. This whole memo, giving Dooman's assessments of the various British diplomats and politicians responsible for Far Eastern diplomacy, is reproduced in the Appendix.

Tokyo.⁴

Simon's attitude toward the Manchurian controversy is summed up in a memorandum he composed one week after the opening of the Paris session.⁵ While he believed that Japan was acting "in a way contrary to the principles of the Covenant by taking the law into her own hands," the Japanese had genuine grievences against China which put their actions in a more justifiable light. Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria, entitling her to post guards along the South Manchurian Railway, in combination with the lawlessness that prevailed in the Manchurian provinces, leading to attacks on Japanese citizens and the railway itself, "compelled" Japan to occupy points beyond the railway zone.⁶ Simon suspected, however, that Japan contemplated something more than temporary occupation, and was in fact putting pressure on China to verify the disputed treaties, thus ending China's "cut-throat competition with the South Manchurian Railway."⁷

⁴ Robert Cecil, A Great Experiment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 227.

⁵ Memo by Simon, Nov. 23, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 943-47.

⁶ In a Foreign Office minute on Nov. 17, 1931, MacKillop, in referring to a Japanese defense of their actions in Manchuria, stated that, "The Japanese case is well put here. We ourselves contemplated the use of force in preventive measures (if practicable) where there is wanton destruction of British property." B.F.O., Vol. 15499, No. F6557/1391/10.

⁷ Memo by Simon, Nov. 23, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 943-47.

But while sympathizing with the Japanese problems and grievances, Simon did not entirely approve their methods of solving them. Japanese military occupation of Chinese territory, no matter how justified, jeopardized the fundamental League principle that a "State may not, without prior recourse to the recognised means of peaceful settlement, take the law into its own hands." Simon thought the Council should publicly restate this doctrine. Rather than gloss over the Japanese aggression, which the League could not prevent, it should make an "honest confession of weakness," instead of cynically abandoning the "fundamental principle, upon which it has been attempting to build during these last 12 years an organisation for the preservation of peace."⁸ Cecil, in a private Council session on November 9, had raised this same point.⁹ Neither Simon nor Cecil, however, pursued this argument beyond the first week of the session. As a result the Council's December 10 resolution did not include an "honest confession of weakness," nor did it accuse Japan of aggression against China.

The American representative in Paris during the Council's November session was Charles Gates Dawes, ambassador to Great Britain. Before becoming a diplomat Dawes had been

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cadogan memo of private meeting of the Council, Nov. 19, 1931, ibid., 931-34.

a successful mid-western businessman, a brigadier general in the United States Army, author of the Dawes Plan in 1924 for scaling down German reparations payments, and finally Calvin Coolidge's vice-president. When Stimson gave Dawes the assignment to go to Paris for the November Council meetings, he told him that he wanted someone to do "a really he-mans job," someone who had the necessary "personality to give effect to our views in conferences which will be held with people like Briand."¹⁰ Stimson noted in his diary that Dawes "would not have to sit with the Council but they would come to him; also that his personality would swing to him much more weight in this country in persuading the country that it was necessary for us to do this than if we would have any smaller man there."¹¹ The appointment of Dawes, therefore, stemmed more from his national and international reputation than from his qualifications as a diplomat.

Dawes's lack of diplomatic training did not prepare him for the delicate, behind-the-scenes negotiations that characterized the November Council session. Soon after his arrival in Paris he was reported to have told Dr. Sze, the Chinese representative on the League Council; "I know absolutely nothing about this business, or about diplomacy either. So sit down and tell me all about it."¹² He addressed

¹⁰ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Dawes, Nov. 10, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 407-14.

¹¹ Stimson, Diary, Nov. 19, 1931.

¹² Drew Pearson and Constantine Brown, The American

Yoshizawa, the Japanese representative as Yoshiwara, oblivious that this was the name of the Tokyo brothel district.¹³ Despite his numerous and well documented faux pas, however, Dawes accurately reported events to Stimson, and probably performed a more competent job of diplomacy than he has generally been credited with.¹⁴

After receiving the assignment from Stimson, before leaving for Paris, Dawes arranged for a meeting with Simon and Matsudaira since they "all seemed to be united in purpose with about the same views as to the procedure the situation required."¹⁵ In his Journal Dawes referred to Matsudaira as "my friend," and spoke of Sir John Simon as a man with whom he "had for some time the most friendly relations."¹⁶ Although he may have stretched diplomatic neutrality by showing great intimacy with Matsudaira, and none with the Chinese, Dawes should not be censured. For he was not a professional diplomat, but rather an extrovert by nature, whose hustling,

Diplomatic Game (Garden City: 1935), 321.

¹³ Robert Ferrell, The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy: Frank B. Kellogg-Henry L. Stimson (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), 231.

¹⁴ Armin Rappaport, Henry L. Stimson and Japan, 1931-33 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), credits Dawes with having obtained Chinese approval of the December 10 resolution. p. 72.

¹⁵ Dawes, Journal, 411.

¹⁶ Ibid.

pragmatic approach to problems reflected an honest desire to utilize all means available to solve them. If he could capitalize on his friendship with Matsudaira, Dawes saw no reason to hesitate. This did not, in itself, indicate that he favored Japan over China in the Manchurian dispute.

In his London meetings with Simon and Matsudaira, Dawes discovered that the three of them had "independently formed" the same opinions about the controversy. The setting of a deadline for evacuation had been a mistake, which Dawes hoped the League would acknowledge when the Paris session opened. As to the date for withdrawing the Japanese Army, Dawes and Simon felt it more important first to cease hostilities, "without suggesting any change at present in the location of Japanese troops."¹⁷ They believed that a final settlement between Japan and China could be arranged later. The two major points of the October 24 resolution, the time limit and evacuation before negotiation, had therefore been abandoned by the British and American representatives in advance of the November Council session.

Upon arriving in Paris on November 13, Dawes settled down in a suite at the Ritz Hotel, from which he seldom strayed during the four weeks that he remained in the French capital. His first contribution to the proceedings came on the morning of November 16, when Drummond came to his hotel

¹⁷ Ibid., 412.

to discuss the initial meeting of the Council session scheduled to begin that afternoon. Drummond had received word that the opening speeches of the Chinese and Japanese delegates would be sharp recitals of grievances against each other. The secretary general thought it wise not to have these speeches read at the first public meeting, but simply to have a short address by Briand, the president of the Council, and then an adjournment subject to the president's recall.¹⁸

Dawes agreed that Chinese and Japanese diatribes would not serve the purpose of conciliation and that they would probably create an immediate impasse. He approved Drummond's suggestion that all differences be ironed out in private discussions, either directly through the disputants or through intermediaries before returning to public meetings. Dawes and Drummond, together with Simon and Briand, all favored secret diplomacy at this point. These four men, according to Dawes, "arranged" that the first public meeting on the 16th would be brief and non-controversial.¹⁹

¹⁸ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 16, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 457-58.

¹⁹ Dawes, Journal, 419. Dawes dictated his recollections of the Paris session upon returning to London on December 11, 1931. It is obvious from State Department and Foreign Office dispatches that the details of his recitation are not entirely accurate, probably a result of his composing them a few weeks after they occurred. A reader of the Journal should also be cautious in accepting Dawes's implication that he was the prime mover in the negotiations during the Paris session. With these reservations in mind, however, it is still clear from the documents that Dawes did play a very influential role in the proceedings, and was called upon to convince the Japanese of the inadvisability of public meetings.

The debate on the advantages of private over public meetings confirmed Dawes's belief that his most effective role would be that of backstairs mediator. It was better that he announce now, therefore, rather than later in the session, that he did not plan to attend any Council meetings.²⁰ Accordingly, in a "friendly discussion" with Briand on the 20th, he explained to the Council president his position on cooperation with the League. Dawes spoke of "coordinated acts" and "independence of judgment and action" as the American technique, rather than direct participation in League debates, and he indicated that a public statement of this policy would soon be forthcoming.²¹ Briand did not have long to wait. On that same afternoon Dawes issued a statement to the press which seemed to preclude his attendance at any of the Council meetings.²²

With Dawes's primary role as mediator more clearly defined, after the first few days of the session Simon, Dawes, Drummond, and Briand worked closely together to formulate another resolution, the fourth since the start of the controversy, which both China and Japan would accept. As approved by all members of the Council on December 10, 1931, this res-

²⁰ Ibid., 419.

²¹ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 20, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 512-13.

²² Stimson to Dawes, Nov. 19, 1931, ibid., 505-06.

olution established a commission of five to investigate the dispute between Japan and China, and to report its findings back to the League Council.

The first suggestion for a League commission of investigation came from Matsudaira, who advanced the idea in a meeting with Dawes on November 17. The Japanese ambassador to Great Britain tentatively outlined a proposal calling for direct Sino-Japanese negotiations on matters of security for Japanese citizens in Manchuria, and the appointment of a League fact-finding body to investigate conditions in Manchuria and China proper. Matsudaira told Dawes that he planned to discuss his proposal with Simon that same evening.²³

In the meantime Simon, committing to paper his own ideas on the crisis, sent Dawes a "confidential resumé" on the dispute as viewed by the British delegation in Paris. Noting the illegal occupation of Chinese soil by Japanese troops, and the Japanese refusal to withdraw these troops based solely on China's undertaking to respect Japanese treaty rights, Simon thought a way out of the impasse might be found by substituting the League and the United States for the Chinese government. "Suppose," he explained to Dawes, "that China at present delivered a note giving such under-

²³ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 17, 1931, ibid., 467-68.

takings to the other states and to the United States of America, the result would be that if China disregarded her undertakings in the future she would be disregarding a promise to the Council of the League and to America...."²⁴

Presumably a guarantee of her treaty rights by the Council and the United States would mean more to Japan than simply a guarantee by China. In any case, Simon declared, some agreement had to be reached quickly or the League's prestige would suffer greatly.

The flaw in Simon's argument, pointed out independently of each other by Dawes and Stimson, was that it yielded "the central point for which the League of Nations and the United States have both been contending; that is, that Japan shall not be permitted to extort by force a ratification of these treaty rights." Stimson still believed that the best approach was negotiation in the presence of neutrals, as in the Shantung settlement, which Japan would accept if pressed hard enough by the Council and the United States.²⁵ Stimson agreed with the basic soundness of Simon's idea of substituting the greater moral authority of the League and the United States for that of the Chinese government, but the British secretary had failed to realize the vital distinction between treaties accepted by China and those she still con-

²⁴ Ibid., 469-70.

²⁵ Stimson to Dawes, Nov. 17, 1931, ibid., 470-71.

sidered invalid.²⁶ Japanese use of force to extract Chinese concessions, no matter how it might be disguised, was still a fundamental violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and as such could not be condoned by the United States.

Simon probably did not realize that his scheme contained a possible violation of the pact until Dawes pointed it out to him. In any case, once the United States rejected his proposal he did not put it forward again. Without American support it could hardly have worked. After November 18, Council and American discussion centered around Matsudaira's plan of an investigating commission. As the fighting in Manchuria continued to spread in mid-November, the tentative Japanese offer of a commission, a proposal that could delay not only League action for months, but also any supporting action by the United States, soon became more popular with the delegates in Paris. With China hinting strongly that a call would be made for League action under more forceful articles of the Covenant, if a solution were not soon reached, the Council members and the United States supported the plan more eagerly.

Discouraging reports from Paris during the first few days of the session had produced widespread concern in both British and American diplomatic circles that the session would end in failure. There seemed no common ground on which

²⁶ Stimson to Dawes, Nov. 18, 1931, *ibid.*, 473.

China and Japan could agree to a cessation of hostilities. On November 18 Simon expressed serious doubt to Dawes that a solution to the problem could be found. If it could not, he feared, and China appealed to the Council under other articles of the Covenant, stronger action on the part of the powers might be required. In that case he felt that the League "should go the limit" in condemning Japan, even if success seemed doubtful. This would, in Simon's words, "tend at least to mobilize the world's moral forces in a strong way in condemnation of Japan's procedure, always provided the same attitude is concurrently and independently assumed by the United States Government."²⁷ But Simon's suggestion was vague and somewhat emotional, and Dawes should have realized the improbability of the League's "going the limit," or of full British support for any extreme League action against Japan.²⁸

When Dawes reported this conversation to Stimson, however, Simon's words came over stronger than they had been intended.

²⁷ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 18, 1931, ibid., 484-85; Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Dawes, Nov. 19, 1931, ibid., 488-98.

²⁸ While conveying this apparently strong attitude to Dawes, it is doubtful if Simon thought the matter would ever be brought to the point of sanctions. A dialogue between MacKillop and Orde in the Foreign Office on November 24 is revealing. Commenting on a dispatch from Geneva mentioning sanctions MacKillop noted: "Apparently we are prepared to resort to sanctions against Japan if other members of the League favor that course." To which Orde responded: "It is a big 'if'," B.F.O., Vol. 15500, No. F6820/1391/10.

They led Stimson to believe that Simon was "anxious to go to the limit," and that the Council "would probably take up the question of sanctions and would put an embargo on their trade with Japan."²⁹ Stimson seemed suddenly to be faced with a critical decision. His response clearly revealed his reluctance to lend strong American support to such an action, which would force the United States to choose between the League and Japan. Such a decision Stimson did not wish to make. He told Dawes on the telephone on the 19th, however, that if the League did impose sanctions on Japan, the United States fleet would probably not "interfere" with its action.³⁰ Henry Stimson could be just as vague as Sir John.

The mood of impending disaster faded suddenly on November 20 when word arrived in Washington that all parties, including the Chinese, had agreed to an armistice and the appointment of a commission to investigate the dispute. Stimson, highly elated, called this "most wonderful news," and a wonderful "change in front" by the Japanese who had "always opposed and resented any intrusion by the outside world in their relations with Manchuria."³¹ To demonstrate his pleas-

²⁹ Stimson, Diary, Nov. 24, 1931.

³⁰ Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Dawes, Nov. 19, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 488-98.

³¹ Stimson, Diary, Nov. 20 and 21, 1931.

ure, Stimson immediately cabled Dawes that since both China and Japan had accepted the commission plan, he withdrew previous American objections to having an American serve as one of the commissioners. He and President Hoover now felt that "American membership might be very desirable."³²

London received the news of the proposal for a commission with less enthusiasm than Washington, although there is no reason to doubt that the British supported the idea from its inception. British cynicism, however, probably derived from a more realistic appraisal of Japanese intentions in Manchuria, prevented the Foreign Office from becoming too hopeful over the latest development. Charles Orde, on November 23, expressed succinctly his opinion of what the Japanese proposal meant: "The Japanese," he wrote, "no doubt expect the commission to discover that there is no security under Chinese rule and that the Chinese systematically break their treaty obligations. Meanwhile," he asked rhetorically, "the Japanese occupation of Manchuria will continue?"³³

Although the British considered creation of a League investigating commission an imperfect solution to the problem, neither Simon nor Cecil offered serious opposition

³² Stimson to Dawes, Nov. 20, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 514.

³³ Minute by Orde, Nov. 23, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15500, No. F6805/1391/10.

and worked for its acceptance by Japan and China. The question immediately arose in British minds, of course, what attitude the United States would take to the proposal, as this attitude would weigh so heavily with the Council. For several days it appeared to Geneva and London that the Americans did not favor the plan, and were ready to take further action of their own against Japan in the event of its passage by the Council.

British confusion over the American attitude came in a very roundabout way, and probably would not have occurred had Simon not temporarily returned to London on November 19. He and Dawes were out of contact with each other until late in the evening of the 22nd.³⁴ During this time a rumor reached the Foreign Office that the United States thought the commission proposal too weak, and that America might be ready to take unilateral action against Japan.³⁵ This British misunderstanding of American intentions originated in China. In the process of clearing up the confusion,

³⁴ In his Journal Dawes wrote that Simon left on the 19th and did not return to Paris during the remainder of the session, p. 419. His memory was obviously faulty here since he and Simon spoke to each other in Paris on Nov. 22. See Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 22, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 535-37. Simon attended a Council meeting on Nov. 23.

³⁵ The confusion among foreign diplomats as to the real American attitude toward the commission plan is discussed by Rappaport, Henry L. Stimson and Japan, 1931-33, p. 74.

however, London got a clearer picture of Washington's attitude toward the commission proposal, and the amount of support it was willing to give China in the dispute. On both counts the British found a close alignment between themselves and Washington.

On November 21, when it seemed that the Council had devised a formula acceptable to both China and Japan, Lampson cabled a disturbing report from Nanking indicating American opposition to the commission plan. A member of the League secretariat, a certain M. Rajchman, described by Lord Cecil as a "Polish Jew of quite extraordinary ability,"³⁶ told Lampson that the American delegation in Paris, including Dawes, "are saying that M. Briand (I.E. Council) is working for a special armistice and appointment of a League Commission of Enquiry whereas America would have been prepared to go much further." Lampson explained that he usually had reservations about what Rajchman told him, because of his pro-League bias, but that this time the Pole seemed to be well informed.³⁷

On the following day Simon told Lindsay to obtain clarification of Lampson's information from the State Department. In reply to Lindsay's question, Stimson immediately told him that the rumor had no substance and that the

³⁶ Cecil to Simon, Nov. 26, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 960-61.

³⁷ Lampson to Simon, Nov. 21, 1931, ibid., 940.

United States supported the Council's proposal.³⁸ As a follow up, and to halt the false report at its source, the secretary cabled Johnson in Nanking that the commission plan, "in its possibilities for future good... transcends any proposal which I have seen thus far, not only during these protracted negotiations but also in any similar problem of the Far East." He instructed Johnson to pass this message on to the Chinese government.³⁹

London expressed great satisfaction over the American denial of Rajchman's information. On November 22 MacKillop had speculated that Rajchman's judgment of American intentions might be "clouded by partisan passions." He hoped that this was true, "for the denial that this message will in that case provoke should have a salutary effect."⁴⁰ Two days later, when Johnson assured Lampson in Nanking that his government favored the Council resolution, MacKillop noted with satisfaction on the British minister's cable; "This should dispose of the Chinese Government's (and Dr. Rajch-

³⁸ Stimson, Diary, Nov. 23, 1931. Stimson wrote: "The British Ambassador came in with a message that the Chinese were spreading around rumors that they had received word through Johnson, our Minister at Peking, that we really were more favorable to China than the League was. And so it goes. The rumors are flying thick and fast."

³⁹ Stimson to Dawes, Nov. 23, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 547-49. Stimson to Johnson, Nov. 23, 1931, ibid., 549.

⁴⁰ Minute by MacKillop, Nov. 22, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15500, No. F6827/1391/10.

man's) suggestion that the United States Government thought the proposed resolution did not go far enough."⁴¹ The "salutary effect" mentioned by MacKillop obviously applied to China, who hoped that more support could be obtained from America than from the League. With the United States, the League, and Great Britain all united in support of the commission proposal, the Chinese scheme to divide the powers would be frustrated. London was clearly pleased that a solid front, including America, could be erected against Chinese efforts to obtain stronger action against Japan.⁴²

From November 20 through to December 10, 1931, the League and the United States concentrated their major efforts on winning Chinese and Japanese acceptance of a commission plan. Although Japan suggested the idea of a commission as early as November 17, China insisted on alterations in the original proposal which the Japanese resisted. The problem, compounded in difficulty by continuing Japanese assaults in Manchuria, seemed at times to defy solution, and occasionally evoked bitter recriminations and threats from the parties to the

⁴¹ Minute by MacKillop, Nov. 24, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15501, No. F6934/1391/10.

⁴² Minute by MacKillop, Nov. 23, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15500, No. F6853/1391/10. MacKillop wrote: "What Dr. Rajehman says is not evidence; and even if it is true it possibly reflects nothing more than another instance of the ancient Chinese game of trying to induce A to move by alleging B is moving, and vice versa."

dispute and the principle Council members. The Chinese complaint that Japan would continue to occupy Manchuria while the commissioners pursued their investigation could not be easily answered. China based her resistance to the proposal primarily on this objection.⁴³ As for the Japanese, their moderate civilian government had advanced the commission idea with a view to pacifying both the League and their own military. During the last two weeks of the session the Japanese government walked a tightrope, fearing that the Army would withdraw its lukewarm approval of the plan if it seemed in any way to tie its hands in Manchuria.

Stimson, however, withheld official public endorsement of the commission plan until November 24. His eager private approval, and assurances to Ambassador Lindsay, contrasted sharply with his public silence. This tactic stemmed, at least in part, from an effort to extract concessions from Japan in exchange for American approval. The Chinese, at the same time, were made to understand that the United States wholeheartedly supported the commission plan, thus heading off possible Chinese recalcitrance at the Council table. Above all Stimson wanted a cessation of hostilities in Manchuria, and his minor diplomatic double dealing at this point had this goal as its motivation.

⁴³ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 23, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 538-39.

Before throwing his public support behind the proposal, Stimson admonished the Japanese that such a plan could not work unless the Japanese Army halted its operations in Manchuria. For there were two areas which seemed especially sensitive and likely to produce trouble if the Army continued to advance: the city of Tsitsihar, far to the north of Mukden in Heilungkiang province, and Chinchow, a town to the southwest of Mukden very close to the border of China proper. When the Japanese occupied Tsitsihar on the 19th on the excuse that Chinese troops first attacked them,⁴⁴ Stimson immediately called in Ambassador Debuchi and told him that he regarded this event as a violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty. He threatened to publish all the correspondence between Japan and the United States on the subject on Manchuria over the past two months. He had been holding back this correspondence, he told Debuchi, to avoid inflaming public opinion in both countries, but that he must now "reserve full liberty of action to make public the whole matter."⁴⁵

On November 21 Debuchi brought Stimson an urgent message from Shidehara that plans were already being made to withdraw from Tsitsihar, and that Tokyo was holding General Honjo

⁴⁴ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Debuchi, Nov. 19, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 44-46.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

and the Kwantung Army in close rein.⁴⁶ For the moment this message temporarily relaxed the tension between Tokyo and Washington and assured Stimson of Japan's cooperation in finding a solution to the crisis. On November 27, however, news came that Honjo had resumed the advance against Chinchow. Stimson, infuriated, immediately voiced his astonishment to Shidehara, and followed up the next day with a press release expressing his "apprehension" over the latest developments.⁴⁷ That same day Debuchi came back to Stimson with the information that the troops in Tsitsihar were being withdrawn and that the Japanese move on Chinchow, he had every reason to believe, had been halted.⁴⁸

Despite some acrimony between Stimson and the Tokyo press over these events involving Tsitsihar and Chinchow,⁴⁹ by November 30 moderation seemed to be once more prevailing on

⁴⁶ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Debuchi, Nov. 21, 1931, ibid., 46-48.

⁴⁷ Stimson to Forbes, Nov. 28, 1931, ibid., 53-54.

⁴⁸ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Debuchi, Nov. 28, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 579.

⁴⁹ The Japanese public did not like the tone of Stimson's press release of Nov. 28. In addition, the Japanese press misquoted part of the release which reported Stimson as saying "the Japanese Army is running amuck." Tension, however, eased when Stimson denied having made the remark. For a copy of Stimson's press release see ibid., 578. For Stimson's denial of the remarks on the Japanese Army see Stimson to Forbes, Nov. 30, 1931, ibid., 595-96.

all sides. For the next ten days Dawes and his British colleagues in Paris worked to help put through the commission resolution. The Japanese move on Chinchow had not disturbed the Foreign Office to nearly the same degree that it had upset Stimson. Lindley had optimistically wired assurances from Tokyo that the Japanese government appeared "to be firmly determined not to allow [an] attack on Chinchow."⁵⁰ By the 30th Lindley's prediction seemed correct, although Japan rejected a proposal put forward by the Council for creation of a neutral zone around Chinchow.⁵¹ The British carefully avoided associating themselves with Stimson over any protests to Tokyo concerning Japanese Army moves. Lindley deplored Stimson's press release of November 28 because of the encouragement it might give China. "If it stiffens Chinese," he wired London on the 29th, "it will do great harm as Japanese attitude will harden rather than otherwise under American or other pressure."⁵²

But the American protest over Chinchow did not disturb relations between London and Washington. The form of cooperation between Britain and America, in working to put through

⁵⁰ Lindley to Drummond, Nov. 28, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 971.

⁵¹ Cadogan to Simon, Nov. 29, 1931, ibid., 974.

⁵² Lindley to Simon, Nov. 29, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15502, No. F7992/1391/10.

the Council's commission plan, was shaped in large measure by their tacit understanding that in the event of failure to obtain agreement between Japan and China, neither would resort to any forceful action, which could be translated to mean war, sanctions, or boycott. While Simon, in an angry, frustrated mood, initially discussed the possibility of League sanctions, he really had no support for such action from his advisers, from his government, or from British public opinion. As for the United States, it became increasingly obvious after the opening of the Paris session that she contemplated no thought of sanctions or the ~~use of force~~ against a recalcitrant Japan either.

Although Stimson made it clear to Dawes, as the November session progressed, that the United States would go no further than moral sanctions against Japan, which he loosely defined as the "sanction of moral opinion,"⁵³ he tried for a time to conceal this information from the other powers. Stimson wanted especially to keep the Japanese guessing about the action his country might take against them, thus using the unvoiced threat of force or sanctions as pressure on Japan to make a reasonable settlement with China.

Upon assuming office in early November, Simon had quickly sounded out Ambassador Lindsay in Washington as to the American position on sanctions. At that time Lindsay thought the

⁵³ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Dawes, Nov. 9, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 499-502.

possibility of American sanctions against Japan very remote.⁵⁴ Later in November when the New York Herald-Tribune⁵⁵ reported that "the American government would refuse to follow the League of Nations either in a proposed economic boycott of Japanese exports, withdrawal of diplomatic representatives from Tokyo, or insistence upon the withdrawal of Japanese troops from occupied Manchuria" by November 16, Lindsay asked Stimson about the accuracy of this report. He was told that "no such statement had ever been made and to have spoken so would have most unfortunate results." When Lindsay, however, further pressed the American secretary about sanctions, he received a "non-committal" reply. Nevertheless the ambassador gave Simon his view that sanctions continued to be "entirely abhorrent to the United States Government."⁵⁶

While trying to keep Japan ignorant of possible American action against her, Stimson had to let the League know, if only in a roundabout fashion, that the United States would not resort to war or sanctions. He could not allow the League to impose penalties on Japan on the mistaken assumption that the United States would approve or support them. This meant

⁵⁴ See Chap. III, pp.69-70.

⁵⁵ New York Herald-Tribune, Nov. 16, 1931.

⁵⁶ Lindsay to Vansittart, Nov. 18, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 923.

that Briand, who as president of the Council bore chief responsibility for initiating proposals to end the crisis, would have to be informed of the American position. Although a strong advocate of collective moral suasion against an aggressor, Briand personally objected to the use of force or sanctions, since this could lead to war. Simon noted on the first day of the November session that "Briand was very strongly against Article 15 being raised on the ground that it would bring us nearer to Article 16 and raise the question of sanctions which, he observed, would make difficulties for Britain in particular as well as for other Powers."⁵⁷ Dawes told Briand on the 20th that the Council could not depend on duplicate action from the United States if the League went beyond the Kellogg-Briand Pact. In addressing the Council the following day, without the presence of the Chinese or Japanese representatives, Briand told the members that they should not have "too great expectations regarding the United States," since the American government "contemplated no sanctions."⁵⁸

With the United States and the League Council generally agreeing, at least tacitly, that the use of force against Japan could not be seriously considered, the major powers turned their efforts to pressuring China into accepting the

⁵⁷ Simon to London, Nov. 16, 1931, ibid., 910-11.

⁵⁸ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 20, 1931, F. R., 1931, III, 512-13; Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 21, 1931, ibid., 523-26.

commission plan. As early as November 22 Lampson and Johnson in Nanking, normally more sympathetic to China than Japan, agreed that China should hesitate before rejecting the Council proposal. Dr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese foreign minister, declared the proposal unacceptable because of its vagueness and failure to provide for quick evacuation of Japanese troops. Despite Koo's arguments, the British and American ministers believed Chinese rejection of the plan would put China at a "serious tactical disadvantage" in her dispute with Japan.⁵⁹ Two days later Lampson elaborated further on the danger to China if she turned the proposal down, by telling Koo that such action might turn world opinion against her.⁶⁰ On the 26th Stimson continued the pressure, suggesting that China, to ease the tense situation around Chinchow, withdraw her troops from that city to a point further south.⁶¹ Stimson's suggestion, although violating the spirit of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, indicated his willingness at this point to forego principle for agreement on the resolution establishing the investigating commission.

While as anxious as Stimson to get the resolution passed, which would postpone indefinitely any further action on Man-

⁵⁹ Lampson to Simon, Nov. 22, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 941-42.

⁶⁰ Lampson to Simon, Nov. 24, 1931, ibid., 950.

⁶¹ Stimson to Johnson, Nov. 25, 1931, F.R., 1931, III, 564-65; Johnson to Stimson, Nov. 26, 1931, ibid., 570.

churia, the British foreign secretary attempted to have written into the Council proposal on the investigating commission some statement, however vague, on the evacuation of Japanese troops. Although Simon worked as hard as any Council member to get China to accept the commission plan, he personally sympathized with Chinese objections on the question of evacuation of Japanese troops. In a private meeting of the Council on the 23rd, again with China and Japan excluded, he told the members that the resolution must make it clear that Japan was expected to evacuate "prior to and not at the close of the commission's labors." Otherwise, he doubted that China would accept the resolution.⁶² In a much watered down version a stipulation on evacuation was included in paragraph 1 of the tentative Council resolution presented to Dr. Sze in private the following afternoon by Drummond, who personally urged Chinese acceptance. No time limit, however, even one as long as the duration of the "commission's labors," was specified. Briand and Simon, who separately followed Drummond in private talks with Sze, also argued that China should accept the proposal. Sze, however, remained adamant, insisting that China would not accept unless the resolution fixed a more definite time limit for evacuation of Japanese troops.⁶³

⁶² Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 23, 1931, ibid., 545-47.

⁶³ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 24, 1931, ibid., 551-52.

To clarify the American position on the resolution, and to assist the Council in securing Chinese acceptance, Stimson instructed Dawes to allow Briand to make use of the following statement:

The United States Government approves the general plan of settlement embodied in the proposed resolution of the Council and has so informed both China and Japan. It has urged upon them acquiescence in the general plan embodied in the proposed Resolution.

Dawes gave the statement to Drummond for presentation to Briand on the 25th, and later that afternoon gave it out to the press.⁶⁴ But that same afternoon Sze in effect rejected the Council plan by offering a formal Chinese counterproposal demanding complete Japanese withdrawal to the railway zone within two weeks.⁶⁵ By the next day, however, he had received more favorable instructions from Nanking, indicating Chinese willingness to accept the proposal with some reservations. Although her final decision remained in doubt until December 10, during the next two weeks China moved closer to acceptance of the Council's resolution on the commission. Both Briand and Cecil gave much credit for this shift in China's position to American influence.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 24, 1931, ibid., 561; Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 25, 1931, ibid., 568.

⁶⁵ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 25, 1931, ibid., 563-64.

⁶⁶ Dawes to Stimson, Nov. 27, 1931, ibid., 576-77; Cecil to Simon, Nov. 26, 1931, D.B.F.P., VIII, 960-61.

On December 10, 1931, the League of Nations Council unan-
 imously adopted a resolution setting up a five-member commis-
 sion to investigate "and report to the Council on any cir-
 cumstances which, affecting international relations, threat-
 ens to disturb the peace between China and Japan, or the good
 understanding between them, upon which peace depends." On the
 matter of Japanese troop withdrawal the resolution was vague,
 simply referring to the September 30 resolution as a basis for
 action. The Chinese did not obtain a time limit for evacua-
 tion, and found that the Council and the United States, while
 privately deploring Japanese aggression against their coun-
 try, had no intention of using force to stop it.

In the United States and Great Britain, public and official
 reaction to the December 10 resolution was favorable. The
 United States government declared itself "gratified" at its
 passage, and considered it a "definite step of progress....
 towards an ultimate and fair solution of the intricate prob-
 lem presented in Manchuria."⁶⁷ As for the British, Simon
 predicted that the League of Nations would vindicate itself
 despite the long delay in reaching a settlement,⁶⁸ while
 Viscount Grey of Falladon paid tribute to the United States
 for helping the League by its parallel action with the Council.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Stimson press release, Dec. 11, 1931, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 60-62.

⁶⁸ New York Times, Dec. 11, 1931.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Dec. 12, 1931.

For the commission plan to work, however, more was needed than self congratulations. Japan had to cooperate by ceasing military movements in Manchuria and withdrawing her troops to the railway zone. The powers fervently hoped that she would do so. Unfortunately, within two weeks of December 10, the Japanese resumed their march on Chinchow, thereby demonstrating their intention of disregarding the resolution. At this point, near the end of December, 1931, British and American policies toward the Manchurian crisis sharply diverged.

Chapter V

The Stimson Note

On December 11, 1931, the day after the adoption of the resolution establishing the Lytton Commission (named after Lord Lytton, who was later appointed as chairman of the investigating commission), the Wakatsuki-Shidehara government fell, due to economic rather than political difficulties, and Yoshizawa moved from the Paris embassy to become foreign minister of Japan. As far as events in Manchuria were concerned this change in leadership had little effect on Japanese foreign policy, save in so far as it brought in a cabinet more sympathetic to the Army than the previous one. The course of events prior to December 10 had demonstrated that the conquest of Manchuria would have occurred regardless of who governed at Tokyo.

The Kwantung Army, partially restrained both by the government and by itself during the November Council session, broke loose again immediately after passage of the December 10 resolution. Following this renewal of Japanese aggression in Manchuria, the British briefly continued their effort of trying to discourage Japan from any further attacks against the Chinese. By the last week of December, however, the Foreign Office resigned itself to the fall of Chinchow and total Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Under heavy pressure from his advisers, Simon reluctantly decided by early January,

1932, to cease further protests at Tokyo, and to tacitly acknowledge that China had lost Manchuria.

This decision did not come easily in light of strong American reaction to the fall of Chinchow, but the British concluded that good Anglo-Japanese relations meant more than the fate of Chinchow or continued close cooperation with the United States over the Manchurian question. Until fighting flared up in and around Shanghai at the end of January, 1932, introducing a new Far Eastern crisis, the British patiently watched and waited while the Kwantung Army consolidated its conquest. At Shanghai, however, British investments were much greater than those in Manchuria, and any threat to these investments evoked an equivalently greater British response. Following the Japanese attack on the Chinese in Shanghai the British, in an effort to restore peace and protect their properties, strove once again to coordinate their Far Eastern policy with that of the United States. This change was in marked contrast to the previous five week period when Britain allowed the Americans to voice the only major protest to the final collapse of Chinese rule in Manchuria.

This major American protest took the form of duplicate notes sent on January 7, 1932, to Japan and China protesting the recent military operations in Manchuria, which had des-

troyed Chinese authority there. Referring directly to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and inferentially to the Nine-Power Treaty, the American government stated its intention not to recognize political or territorial changes in China made in violation of those agreements. Stimson invited the governments of Great Britain and France, and the nations that had signed the Nine-Power Treaty, to send similar notes to Japan and China.¹

The dispatch of a formal protest to China and Japan climaxed several weeks of debate within the State Department, with the results ultimately requiring President Hoover's approval. The theory contained within the January 7 message quickly acquired the title of the Stimson nonrecognition doctrine,² although a similar protest, containing the same theory, had been sent Japan in 1915 by Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, who was then protesting Japan's Twenty-One Demands on China. Both the Stimson and Bryan policies had been foreshadowed in Woodrow Wilson's refusal to recognize the Huerta regime in Mexico in 1913-14, although the elements of foreign conquest and violation of specific

¹ Stimson to Forbes, Jan. 7, 1932, E. R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 76.

² For a lengthy exposition on the nonrecognition note questioning the correctness of calling it the Stimson Doctrine, see Richard H. Current, "The Stimson Doctrine and the Hoover Doctrine," American Historical Review, LIX (April, 1954), 513-542.

treaties did not exist in the Mexican episode. In each of these instances the United States had objected to political changes being made as the result of illegal force, or the threat of illegal force.

The nonrecognition note of January 7 reflected the restraints on American foreign policy imposed by domestic conditions in the United States during the Manchurian crisis. Even before the convening of the Paris Council session President Hoover made it clear to Stimson that any forceful action against Japan had to be ruled out. Two notations in Stimson's diary in early November, 1931, define the limits of Hoover's policy toward Japan in the event that the Japanese continued their aggression in Manchuria. Although on November 7 Hoover indicated his possible willingness to withdraw Forbes from Tokyo as a measure of protest, by the 9th he had ruled out even this step. On this date Hoover, ~~Stimson~~ wrote, was "beginning to swing against the idea of withdrawing the Ambassador and thinks his main weapon is to give an announcement that if the treaty is made under military pressure we will not recognize it or avow it."³ Two months later Stimson framed his notes to Japan and China around Hoover's original suggestion.

On November 21, 1931, Stanley K. Hornbeck, who had not thought much of Hoover's idea when first offered on November

³ Stimson, Diary, Nov. 7 and 9, 1931.

9, concluded a memorandum on the Manchurian situation with a suggestion that the powers, including the United States, rebuke Japan by refusing to recognize treaties made with China in violation of the Kellogg-Briand pact. Hornbeck believed that "such a step would show that the powers 'mean business.' It would give the Pact of Paris 'teeth.' It would answer the charge that the League and the various governments are impotent."⁴ By including the other powers Hornbeck extended the scope of Hoover's original idea, which had probably contemplated this action only on the part of the United States.

The enthusiasm generated during the November Council session for the League commission plan temporarily pushed the nonrecognition action to one side. Events following adoption of the December 10 resolution, however, quickly convinced the State Department that Japan had no intention of halting her attacks against the Chinese in Manchuria. By January 2, 1932, practically all Chinese authority in Manchuria had ended. On January 7 Stimson, who had fully endorsed the nonrecognition principle, sent his notes to Tokyo and Nanking. Two days earlier he had given the substance of the note to Ambassador Lindsay in Washington, and invited the British to send a similar note of their own. According to the secretary, Lindsay was "apparently favorable and said

⁴ Memo by Hornbeck, Nov. 21, 1931, S.D., 793.94/2888.

that he would report it at once."⁵

Much has been written over the past three decades on the Stimson nonrecognition note of January 7, 1932, and of British reluctance to support America's effort at curbing Japan by moral admonition. Public controversy began in 1936 with Stimson's publication of the Far Eastern Crisis, in which the secretary voiced unhappiness of the British failure to echo his policy in January, 1932.⁶ On November 30, 1938, Sir John Pratt, China expert in the Foreign Office during the Manchurian crisis, replied to Stimson's attack in a letter to the London Times. Pratt argued that supporting Stimson in 1932 would not have fitted in with British policy, but admitted that perhaps the Foreign Office had blundered in not recognizing the importance placed on the note by the State Department.⁷ In his 1938 letter to the London Times, and in a book published during the Second World War, Pratt viewed the British action as a matter of poor timing and hasty response. He claimed that the reply to Stimson, drawn up quickly on a Saturday afternoon just before the permanent officials left for their weekend holidays, did not sufficiently consider American sensibilities. Had more

⁵ Stimson, Diary, Jan. 5, 1932.

⁶ Henry L. Stimson, The Far Eastern Crisis (New York: Harper and Bros., 1936), 100-105.

⁷ London Times, Nov. 30, 1938.

care been taken such a mistake would not have occurred.⁸ Regardless of how rapidly or casually the response to Stimson was drawn up, however, there is no doubt that it honestly reflected British policy toward Japan during the first week of January, 1932.

Notice of the American intention to send the nonrecognition notes to Japan and China, with a request that Britain take similar action, reached the Foreign Office early in the morning of January 6, in a message from Ambassador Lindsay.⁹ Lindsay's dispatch initiated discussion, but very little argument, among the British Far Eastern experts. The Foreign Office personnel, who recorded their views in various minutes and memoranda, unanimously advised rejecting the American invitation.

The immediate occasion for the issuance of the Stimson note was the Japanese occupation of Chinchow, the last major Manchurian city still in Chinese hands, on January 2, 1932. Assessment of this event, in Washington and London, showed that the thinking of the Americans differed substantially from that of the British, a difference that accounted for their divergent reactions. Stimson, fully aroused over this latest Japanese perfidy, decided to close his temporizing

⁸ Sir John T. Pratt, War and Politics in China (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), 226.

⁹ Lindsay to Simon, Jan. 5, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 81-82.

diplomacy over Manchuria "with a snap," and after several days of drafting and consultation issued the note that now bears his name.¹⁰ The British, taking a different view, considered that the Japanese move against Chinchow actually lessened the tension now that the last Chinese troops had been ousted from Manchuria.¹¹ The Foreign Office had feared that a strong Chinese defense of the city might have delayed settlement of the dispute, with all the dangers to British interests that a prolongation of hostilities might present.

Concern among the British over Chinchow had increased steadily during the last weeks of December, 1931. Lord Cecil expressed "great perturbation" over the imminent Japanese attack on the city, while Sir Eric Drummond suggested a formal British protest to Tokyo.¹² Simon briefly contemplated a strongly worded message to Japan, criticizing the impending action against Chinchow, but high ranking colleagues in the Foreign Office, men such as Pratt and Wellesley, would support only the most innocuous phrasing.

¹⁰ Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 92.

¹¹ Minute by MacKillop, Jan. 1, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16140, No. F1/1/10.

¹² Minute by MacKillop, Dec. 21, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15506, No. F7602/1391/10.

Pratt feared that a sharp protest to Tokyo would only encourage China to resist the Japanese advance, thus keeping the crisis alive. "The chief danger," he wrote on December 21, "is that if the Chinese believe that the powers are stepping in to protect them against Japan they may elect to refuse to evacuate Chinchow whereas if they are face to face with Japan an arrangement will probably be reached under which the Chinese troops will quietly march away to Jehol before December 31." Although Pratt approved sending a mild protest to Tokyo, he insisted that the Chinese be kept uninformed of the Foreign Office action.¹³

Wellesley used the occasion of the discussion of the note to Tokyo to impress upon Simon the realities of diplomatic life in the Far East. In a minute to the foreign secretary on December 21, he pointed out that while the League of Nations might find it in its interest to bring Japan to reason over Manchuria, the British had their own natural interests to safeguard. These interests were not centered in Manchuria but in the entire Far East, and the success of British diplomacy and economic investment depended on Japanese cooperation and good will. "No other nation," Wellesley pointed out, "stands to lose as much as we do from a hostile Japan which is in a position to do us untold mischief."¹⁴

¹³ Minute by Pratt, Dec. 21, 1931, Ibid.

¹⁴ Minute by Wellesley, Dec. 21, 1931, Ibid.

Simon heeded the warnings of his advisers. His message to Tokyo, asking Japan to avoid any "precipitate action" against Chinchow, reflected the now generally held belief that Japan must not be antagonized. The representations made by Lindley on December 23 caused only the slightest diplomatic ripple in the Japanese capital.¹⁵

Less than three weeks later Simon once more faced the question of a protest to Tokyo, this time initiated by the American government. By then Chinchow had fallen and the Chinese had been driven out of Manchuria. Save for the added element of American interest, the situation had not changed greatly since December. The Foreign Office had anticipated the fall of Chinchow by its representations in Tokyo on December 23. Nothing further needed to be said on that matter. Stimson's invitation to follow the American lead on nonrecognition, however, forced Simon to react again.

Two days before the full drafting of the American note of January 7, Stimson informed Lindsay in Washington of his intention to invoke the Kellogg-Briand Pact, expressing at the same time "strong hope that His Majesty's Government would take similar action...." The French, Stimson added, were being sent the same request. Lindsay, approving the American response, passed on this message to London with

¹⁵ Simon to Lindley, Dec. 22, 1931, D.B.F.P., IX, 28-29; Lindley to Simon, Dec. 27, 1931, Ibid., 53.

his own request that he "should be glad to learn as soon as possible whether you can see your way to join this action."¹⁶

Receipt of Lindsay's cable led to a far-ranging review of the Manchurian crisis in the Foreign Office. Douglas MacKillop, one of the Far Eastern advisers, saw the American action, if seconded by Britain, implicitly dangerous to Anglo-Japanese relations, an example of "gratuitous discourtesy" to Japan, properly deserving her resentment. The question raised by the Stimson note, he advised Simon, dealt with foreign rights in Manchuria under the first article of the Nine-Power Treaty, pledging the signatories to guarantee Chinese sovereignty and maintain the open door in China. Should Britain, MacKillop wondered, warn Japan that she was expected to honor this article? Or, he continued, "should we expect her to do so, but refrain from telling her so until there is good prima facie evidence that she intends to disregard the Article? I cannot think there is serious doubt of the latter being the right course."¹⁷ Wellesley, agreeing with MacKillop, felt that following America's lead "would be premature and might cause considerable and unnecessary irritation."¹⁸

¹⁶ Lindsay to Simon, Jan. 5, 1932, ibid., 81-82.

¹⁷ Minute by MacKillop, Jan. 6, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16140, No. F97/1/10.

¹⁸ Wellesley to French ambassador, Jan. 7, 1932, ibid., No. F145/1/10.

A word commonly used in the Foreign Office at this time, one occurring repeatedly in memoranda and minutes, was "odium." Fear of incurring "odium" in Japan, if Britain went along with the United States in proclaiming nonrecognition of the Japanese conquest, was the major reason for rejecting the Stimson proposal.¹⁹ In the view of the Foreign Office, British influence with Japan might someday be useful in curbing Japan's Far Eastern ambitions. To voluntarily reduce this influence by insulting Japan, before she had actually interfered with British rights in Manchuria, seemed unreasonable to London, if not stupid. The British placed great hopes on Japan not abridging the treaty rights of other powers, especially while preparing to take her case before the League commission established to investigate the Manchurian dispute. Some in the Foreign Office even held that Japanese sovereignty over all of Manchuria might in fact increase the protection of foreign interests, the Chinese being notoriously inept in controlling banditry and

¹⁹ The initial draft of Simon's reply to Stimson (not actually sent to Washington) concluded with a confidential message to Lindsay that Britain had already incurred "odium" at Tokyo in connection with the Manchurian dispute, and did not want to incur more without necessity. There is no date assigned to this draft, but judging from its position in the file it was probably composed on Jan. 6 or 7, 1932. Ibid., No. F97/1/10.

other forms of disorder in the remote areas of the provinces.²⁰

As far as the results of the Stimson note for the United States were concerned, the British predicted that it would have a harmful effect on American-Japanese relations. The Foreign Office, however, was not greatly disturbed at this prospect, foreseeing a corresponding improvement in their own relations with Japan. Charles Orde, counselor and head of the Far Eastern Department, thought Washington's action a "rather severe step," although he conceded that it was "all to the good that the United States, who had the best excuse for giving this warning, should have done so."²¹ Charles Whitmore, another Far Eastern adviser, considered the message distinctly terse, one that would cause much bitter feeling in Japan against the United States.²² MacKillop, one of the strongest advocates in the Foreign Office of good relations with Japan, believed that Stimson had helped improve Anglo-Japanese relations by shifting the major burden of Japanese irritation against foreigners from British shoulders onto those of the United States.²³ The damage done to

²⁰ Minute by Orde, Jan. 6, 1932, ibid.

²¹ Minute by Orde, Jan. 8, 1932, ibid., No. F139/1/10.

²² Minute by Whitmore, Jan. 8, 1932, ibid.

²³ Minute by MacKillop, Jan. 19, 1932, ibid., No. F366/1/10.

Anglo-Japanese relations by the October 24 resolution, which the Japanese blamed on Reading and Briand, might now be totally repaired. That more odium would now fall on America because of the nonrecognition note clearly pleased the British.

For a different reason Orde found some satisfaction that an abstract international instrument, the Kellogg-Briand pact, might be put to a practical use after all. Through a strict application of the pact, as in the Stimson nonrecognition note, Orde recognized that Japan could be denied the fruits of her aggression in Manchuria.²⁴ Even Sir Francis Lindley, one of the most consistent and dedicated opponents of strong British words and actions against Japan, acknowledged that the American note made an impression on Japan, one that might induce her to follow a more conciliatory policy toward foreign interests in Manchuria. However, Lindley also foresaw damage to relations between Japan and the United States over issuance of the note.²⁵

Convinced that following America's lead would injure Anglo-Japanese relations, the British faced a problem in answering Stimson. While Simon's policy in the Far East involved placating Japan to protect British interests, it also included

²⁴ Minute by Orde, Jan. 8, 1932, ibid., No. F139/1/10.

²⁵ Lindley to Simon, Jan. 11, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 102.

careful attention to fostering good Anglo-American relations. The Stimson note presented Sir John with an unenviable dilemma. To support the United States would incur "odium" in Tokyo, but to refuse help might irritate Washington. Simon earnestly wished to avoid either alternative.

The American invitation, therefore, required a tactful and logical rejection. Simon could not simply tell Stimson that because Britain feared Japanese wrath, she could not follow America's lead. Some other excuse, if only a technical one, had to be found. This Simon found in asking Japan to repeat previously made assurances that she had no territorial ambitions in Manchuria, and would continue to uphold the principle of the "open door" in China.

On the afternoon of January 8 Ambassador Matsudaira called on Simon in the Foreign Office, who informed him that a copy of the American note to Tokyo had been received by the British government. This note, Simon observed to Matsudaira, stressed the obligations assumed by the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty to maintain the open door in China. Recent Japanese movements in Manchuria, Simon told the ambassador, might disturb certain members of the House of Commons. Should the government be questioned on this matter when Parliament reassembled, Simon wished to be prepared with a satisfactory answer. If Matsudaira would communicate to his government a

British request for a repetition of assurances on Manchuria previously made by Japan to the League Council on October 13, 1931, and these assurances were received in London, the foreign secretary could give a proper reply in Parliament. Since the Manchurian question was on the agenda for the next Council meeting scheduled for January 25, Simon went on, perhaps the Japanese would also at that time make a "satisfactory declaration... of their determination to respect the provisions of the Nine-Power Treaty."

All this discussion with Matsudaira led neatly, if not very subtly, to Simon's last and critical point. Almost as an afterthought he told the Japanese ambassador: "It would be helpful to me if I could be told that they [the Japanese] intended to make such a declaration, as this... would enable the British Government to deal with the American request that we associate ourselves with them in their recent Note in a way which we should regard as most consistent with our friendly relations with Japan."²⁶ In this interview Sir John made it clear to Matsudaira that the nonrecognition note had been entirely an American initiative, that Britain had no wish to duplicate the American action, and that the foreign secretary sought Japanese assistance in framing a proper and reasonable refusal to the State Department.

On the following day, in repeating Simon's conversation

²⁶ Simon to Lindley, Jan. 8, 1932, ibid., 90-91.

with Matsudaira to the French ambassador, Wellesley explained frankly that Japanese reassurances on the "open door" would strengthen the British government's hand in dealing with Parliamentary criticism. He had little doubt that these reassurances would be given, in which case, he emphasized, "we can tell the United States Government that we see no valid reason for associating ourselves with the American protest at Tokyo."²⁷

Simon's reply to Washington followed the lines prepared for it by his conversation with the Japanese ambassador. On January 11, the British counselor left an aide-mémoire at the State Department spelling out the reasons for Britain's failure to duplicate the American nonrecognition note. Simon fully understood the American action, and in substance agreed with it, but as a League power Great Britain's responsibilities differed from those of the United States. Since Japan had not actually violated the "open door" pledge in Manchuria, Britain had to accept at face value the Japanese assurances made before the League Council. Japan, Simon concluded, had been asked to confirm the October 13 statement, and to make a "satisfactory declaration" regarding respect of the Nine-Power Treaty when the Council met on January 25.²⁸

²⁷ Wellesley to French ambassador, Jan. 9, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16140, No. F145/1/10.

²⁸ British embassy to State Department, Jan. 11, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 22-23.

Although Simon considered the request for Japanese reassurances restrained and unprovocative, he did not entirely escape criticism from his ambassador in Tokyo. Informed of Simon's appeal to Matsudaira that Japan restate her commitment to the "open door" in China, Lindley wired back a tart reply. "Assurances regarding open door already given," he told Sir John, "will hardly be made more binding by anything Japanese Ambassador may say and it is a pity that they were not considered sufficient for Parliamentary purposes. Had we relied on them effect produced here would have been excellent."²⁹ The British ambassador apparently missed the point that Simon needed the Japanese reassurances more to answer America than to satisfy parliament.

Sir Francis's reprimand received some attention in the Foreign Office, but none of the officials thought Simon's action incorrect. Orde's minute on the Lindley cable, made on January 12, temporarily closed debate on the whole issue of the Stimson note. Orde doubted whether the British action, "so much milder than that of the United States Government, can have done any harm, as Sir F. Lindley seems to think. The Japanese will probably realize that it would not have been too easy for us to reject the United States initiative altogether."³⁰

²⁹ Lindley to Simon, Jan. 11, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 102.

³⁰ Minute by Orde, Jan. 12, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16140, No. F169/1/10.

The Foreign Office correctly assumed that it had not offended Japan. On January 15, and again on January 20, Matsudaira told London that Tokyo, far from annoyed at the British request, was actually very pleased with Simon's handling of the matter. In his second visit, on the 20th, Matsudaira explained that the phrase, "the friendly attitude of the British Government," included near the beginning of the message left with the Foreign Office on the 15th, "referred to the fact that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had not followed the example of the United States Government in addressing a formal note to Japan."³¹

While the rejection of Stimson's invitation found no critics within the Foreign Office, and was handled in a manner that seemed to please the Japanese, some evidence indicates that Ambassador Lindsay in Washington, and his counselor of embassy, Francis Osborne, were disappointed at London's failure to go along with America. On January 5, 1932, when Stimson read him the first draft of the message, Lindsay had assured the secretary that British rights in Manchuria were similar to those of the United States, and that his government "would be interested in taking the same steps."³² His

³¹ Simon to Lindsay, Jan. 15, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 127; Simon to Lindley, Jan. 20, 1932, ibid., 154-55.

³² Memo of conversation between Stimson and Lindsay, Jan. 5, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 6.

reaction to Simon's negative reply, however, was not recorded. On January 11, while delivering the aide-mémoire from Simon, Osborne told Under Secretary of State William R. Castle, that he was "very much surprised and deeply disappointed," that Britain had not followed the American lead.³³ But aside from Cecil in Geneva, Simon's decision does not appear to have been seriously opposed. And even Cecil's remarks, while showing antipathy to Japan, do not reveal that he advocated going along with the American note at the time of its issuance.³⁴

The best overall justification of the British failure to respond favorably to Stimson is found in an unpublished State Department memorandum by Hornbeck on January 12, 1932. While being somewhat sarcastic at the way Britain had gotten behind, "a very long way behind," the United States, Hornbeck acknowledged "extenuating circumstances" and explained the Brit-

³³ Memo by Castle of conversation with Osborne, Jan. 11, 1932, S.D. , No. 793.94/3488.

³⁴ It is doubtful if Lord Cecil was consulted before Simon made his reply to Stimson. Liaison between London and Geneva was always uncertain. Cecil was at times considered something of a well meaning but impractical crank. For his part, Cecil did not have the highest opinion of the Foreign Office. Of Simon, Cecil wrote: "It quickly became clear that he was not prepared to take any steps to compel Japan to leave China...." Robert Cecil, A Great Experiment, 227. For Cecil's attitude toward Japan, and on the subject of cooperation with the United States, see brief message from him to Simon, D.B.F.P., IX, 106, and a long memo in B.F.O., Vol. 16141, No. F356/1/10, Feb. 6, 1932.

ish position in understanding terms.³⁵

For Britain immediately to send a similar note of her own, Hornbeck reasoned, without taking careful thought of its contents, would mean adopting the substance of the American note, thus putting Britain in a role subservient to the United States. A weaker note would have lessened the effect of Stimson's criticism and embarrassed the British government in its relations with America. Simon followed the safest course by sending no note at all.

In any case, wrote Hornbeck, Sir John Simon and the Foreign Office did not have the same freedom of maneuver as Henry L. Stimson and the State Department. Faced with great problems in India, threatened with losing more materially in China than any other power, restricted by the need to consult the Dominions, and tied to the League of Nations, Britain could not afford to antagonize Japan. The British leaders and the British public remembered with fondness the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, abrogated due to Canadian and American pressure in 1921. Many in Britain still looked upon Japan as potentially their country's best friend in the Far East. All these points, Hornbeck concluded, made Simon very wary of duplicating the American action.

While every item listed by Hornbeck probably went into

³⁵ Hornbeck to Stimson, Jan. 12, 1932, S.D. 793.94/3610 3/4.

forming the British response, no contemporary Foreign Office document has been uncovered presenting them with such concise clarity. All the discussions in the Foreign Office over the Stimson note came back to a single maxim. As of January 12, 1932, and for three weeks afterward, Japanese aggression in Manchuria, including even the capture of Chinchow, signalling the end of Chinese authority in Manchuria, did not warrant action that might jeopardize Anglo-Japanese relations. The arguments contained in the communiques to Washington and Tokyo, a Foreign Office press release of January 9, 1932, and the explanations found in subsequent articles, letters, and memoirs should not obscure the primary reason for Simon's rejection of Stimson's invitation. The British foreign secretary simply believed that he could not afford, at that particular juncture, for political, strategic, and economic reasons, to offend Japan.

Although the nonrecognition episode produced some bitterness between Stimson and the British in the later 1930's,³⁶ it is clear that the initial American reaction to Simon's rejection of the *démarche* did not upset relations between the two countries; the Hornbeck memorandum was generally sympathetic with Britain's problems, and Stimson himself seemed to harbor no ill will in the days immediately following January 7, 1932. On the same day that he sent the

³⁶ See pages 111 and 112 of this chapter.

notes, Stimson received word through the French ambassador that Britain would not be sending a similar note of her own. The secretary took this information calmly, almost philosophically, noting in his diary: "So, therefore, No. 1 is backing out. But poor old England is having so many troubles with India making a row now and her financial troubles at home that I don't wonder that she does not feel very enterprising."³⁷

The nonrecognition note, unsupported by Great Britain or any other major power, ended temporarily any discussions between London and Washington on Manchuria. When the problem arose again later on in 1932, it was over Japanese organization of the Manchurian provinces into the independent state of Manchukuo, a state entirely dependent for its existence on the Japanese Army. In the meantime another event, an outbreak of fighting between the Chinese and Japanese in Shanghai, replaced Manchuria as the major diplomatic problem in the Far East.

³⁷ Stimson, Diary, Jan. 7, 1932.

Chapter VI

Shanghai

Following extension of Japanese control over all of Manchuria in early January, 1932, diplomatic tension in the Far East briefly subsided. Stimson had sent his nonrecognition note, the Japanese had received it calmly, and Great Britain and the other members of the League awaited the Lytton report, not expected until the end of the year.

Another crisis, however, soon broke in upon this relative calm. China, unable to prevent the Japanese conquest of Manchuria, fell back upon her only effective weapon--- boycott. Practiced in several major Chinese cities, such as Canton and Tientsin, the boycott proved especially destructive to Japanese interests in Shanghai, the largest and commercially the most important Chinese city. In combination with anti-Japanese riots, the boycott led to a major Japanese military intervention in Shanghai at the end of January, 1932.

Diplomatically and economically Shanghai proved a different problem than Manchuria, both for Japan and the western powers. While Great Britain and the United States together had no more than \$40,000,000 invested in Manchuria, Britain alone had direct business investments in Shanghai of \$737,400,000, and the United States of \$97,500,000.¹ British and American interest in Shanghai, therefore, rested on a firm

¹For figures on foreign investments in Shanghai and Manchuria during this period see C. F. Remer, Foreign Investments in China, 97-98.

base of financial investments. As a result, the Japanese intervention in Shanghai evoked a sharper and more sustained western response than had followed the outbreak of fighting in Manchuria.

Shanghai in 1932 displayed all the characteristics of a Chinese city dominated politically and economically by Japan and the western imperialist powers. While China retained technical sovereignty over Shanghai, the major powers actually governed much of the city. Administratively there were two principle areas of nearly total foreign control called, respectively, the "French Concession" and the "International Settlement;" the latter governed by a consolidation of American, British, Italian, and Japanese citizens. A Municipal Council, composed of foreigners and some Chinese, but dominated numerically and politically by British nationals, ran the International Settlement. To the north of the Settlement was Chapei, one of the Chinese quarters of the city, and further north additional Chinese areas; the whole area, including the foreign concessions, being known as the Greater City of Shanghai.² Some fifteen miles to the north of the International Settlement, at the juncture of the Yangtse and Whangpoo Rivers, were the Woosung forts, where China maintained garrisons of soldiers.

² For a detailed study of Shanghai in the early 1930's see William Crane Johnstone, Jr., The Shanghai Problem (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937).

Japan had no specific concession of her own in Shanghai. Many of her nationals, however, resided in the foreign areas and in Chapei. Japan also had a hand in governing and protecting the International Settlement, with Japanese serving on the Municipal Council and Japanese troops occupying the eastern end of the Settlement. Great Britain, the United States, and Italy also maintained troops in their respective areas of the Settlement, as did the French in their concession. Warships of these nations, including Japan, patrolled the waters of the Yangtse and Whangpoo, or rested at anchor in Shanghai harbor.

In 1932 Shanghai did not have a recent history of serenity. Fighting among the Chinese themselves in 1924, 1925, and 1927, during the Chinese civil war period, had caused considerable concern among the foreign powers in Shanghai. In 1927 Britain, which normally kept about 2,000 to 3,000 troops in the city, temporarily raised this number to 20,000 in response to anti-foreign activity in China. The United States also dispatched additional troops and ships in that year, but most of these additional forces, British and American, were withdrawn by 1928.

Chinese physical and economic assaults against the Japanese in January, 1932 inspired a similar, though much more severe, Japanese reaction. The immediate events that led to the Shanghai crisis in 1932 are briefly summarized in

a report made to the League of Nations on February 6, 1932 by the newly formed Committee of Foreign Consuls at Shanghai:³

January 18, five Japanese, some of them being Buddhist monks, whilst passing in front of San Yeh Towel Factory in Chapei were attacked by Chinese, some of assailants being probably members of recently organized anti-Japanese Volunteer Corps. Chinese police arrived too late to arrest culpables. Two Japanese seriously wounded, one of them, Buddhist monk, dying subsequently from wounds.

On January 20, about 50 members of Japanese Youth Protection Society with knives and clubs, proceeded to San Yeh Towel Factory, set building on fire and on way home clashed with Settlement Municipal Police. Three Chinese seriously wounded one of them dying subsequently, three Japanese shot by police, one dying subsequently.

These events of January 18 and 20 were not the first incidents of fighting between Chinese and Japanese. Disturbances had occurred in Shanghai throughout the period of the Council debates on Manchuria. World attention, however, did not focus on the city until the end of January, 1932.

On of the first hints to the State Department of serious trouble ahead in Shanghai came in a cable on January 20 from Edwin S. Cunningham, American consul general in that city. Cunningham reported on the recent clashes between Chinese and Japanese citizens, including the Chinese attack near the towel factory in Chapei. While not anticipating an

³ Westel W. Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 312.

immediate crisis, since a Japanese member of the Municipal Council blamed the Japanese for the incident, Cunningham warned that "irresponsible elements among both Chinese and Japanese might easily provoke much more serious disobedience in the future."⁴

A continuation of the clashes between the Chinese and Japanese over the next few days, followed by charges and counter-charges of aggression from both sides, gave substance to Cunningham's warning. On January 24 the Japanese began pouring reinforcements into the city. On that date an aircraft carrier, a cruiser, and four destroyers, together with 1300 Japanese marines arrived. Four days later another Japanese cruiser, twelve more destroyers, and 1300 more marines docked at the port. On January 28 Great Britain and the United States, aroused over the threats to their interests if large scale fighting erupted in Shanghai, took steps, both unilaterally and in cooperation with each other, to protect those interests.

Washington had recognized more quickly than London the seriousness of the crisis. On January 25 Stimson told Lindsay of his concern that the Japanese, using the excuse of recent attacks on their nationals and property in Shanghai, planned to break the Chinese boycott by force. This could

⁴ Cunningham to Stimson, Jan. 20, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 39.

lead to great violence in the area, and possibly even war between China and Japan. If the Japanese, to prosecute this war, blockaded the principal Chinese ports, British and American trade with China would suffer grievously.

The boycott, Stimson argued, was China's only effective weapon against an enemy like Japan. Deprived of this weapon China would have to do one of two things: either arm herself and become a military state, or fall into total subservience to Japan. Either outcome, he asserted, "would be extremely injurious to the peace of the world and to the freedom of commerce which Britain and we have been striving for in the Far East."

Stimson suggested to Lindsay two actions that their countries might take to meet the situation. The first should be a strong statement to Japan that local authorities could handle any violence against Japanese nationals or their properties in Shanghai. More Japanese troops were not needed. As a second step, Stimson contemplated the dispatch of additional British and American war vessels to Shanghai, not to threaten Japan but to convince Tokyo that the two countries took seriously any threats to their interests arising out of a Sino-Japanese conflict. This action, Stimson added, would also "have a very wholesome influence on the Chinese themselves in proving that Chiang Kai-Shek was right and

that the powers were interested in China and what happened to her."⁵

Stimson's interest in lending encouragement to China inspired no sympathy in the Foreign Office, which during the last weeks of the Manchurian crisis took pains to convince China that she stood alone in her dispute with Japan.⁶ The British, rejecting at this point Stimson's contention that a crisis existed in Shanghai, showed little enthusiasm for his suggested actions. Orde noted on Lindsay's cable of the 25th; "In the first place the American appreciation of the situation is absurdly wide of the mark. There is not the slightest chance either of China becoming a military power or of her potential strength... falling under the control of a foreign power. China is very unlikely to declare war for the simple reason that she is too frightened of Japan to do so; even if she did declare war the results would be nil: nothing would happen, least of all a blockade by Japan."

Orde believed that the trouble had arisen in Shanghai because of the murderous Chinese attack on five Japanese in an area under Chinese control. He noted that in 1927 Britain and America had intervened in Shanghai, both countries sending large numbers of troops into the International Settlement to

⁵ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Lindsay, Jan. 25, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 61-63.

⁶ See Chap. V.

protect their citizens when the Chinese began making trouble. The Japanese, he argued, could justify their current intervention on the same grounds. Orde concluded that since the distinction was so fine between what Britain and the United States had done in 1927, and what Japan was doing in 1932, he advised against Britain encouraging the Americans to lodge a protest at Tokyo, or with Britain joining with them in such a protest if made. "Moreover it does no good," he observed, "but on the contrary a great deal of harm, to adopt an overbearing attitude towards Japan as America unfortunately is only too prone to do."⁷

Sir John Pratt, however, saw a possibility in the Shanghai situation for a joint Anglo-American policy, "provided only that it is a policy of reason and moderation." But he agreed with Orde that the 1927 action made it difficult to criticize Japan for landing more troops in the city. Better results might be obtained from a joint action, he believed, if Britain and the United States made "friendly representations" not only to Japan, but to China as well. The Chinese should be advised to suppress the boycott and eliminate practices that caused such annoyance to the Japanese. Japan, in her turn, should be informed of the Anglo-American action, "explaining that their sole object is to bring moderating

⁷ Minute by Orde, Jan. 26, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16142, No. F490/1/10.

influences to bear with a view to composing the present differences between the two nations, and express the hope that the Japanese Government and naval and military authorities will support these efforts by themselves exercising patience and moderation in dealing with the difficulties that have arisen in Shanghai and the Yangtse Valley, where such vast foreign interests are concentrated." On Stimson's second suggested action, the reinforcement of British and American naval forces in Shanghai, Pratt offered no objection if Britain could spare the ships.⁸

Sir John delayed his reply to Stimson. There is a cancelled draft telegram to Washington in the Foreign Office files, probably composed late on the 26th or early on the 27th, incorporating most of the suggestions made by Pratt. This message began by disagreeing with Stimson's assessment of the situation. "While sharing Mr. Stimson's anxiety as to the possible consequences of Japanese action at Shanghai," it began, "I do not altogether agree with his appreciation of the present situation...." Simon asked if the United States would bring its influence to bear on both China and Japan. On the matter of naval reinforcements Simon promised a definite answer to Washington in a day or two, probably since he first had to check with the Admiralty on the avail-

⁸ Minute by Pratt, Jan. 26, 1932, ibid.

ability of ships in the area.⁹ The tenor of this unsent telegram reflected the British belief that the Americans had an exaggerated view of the crisis and should be restrained from hasty action.

It is not clear why this draft telegram was not immediately dispatched to Washington. Simon might have felt it too critical of the American interpretation of events. There is also evidence that the British wished to wait another day or so to see if the Shanghai problem would improve by itself. By not answering Washington right away they pursued the twofold purpose of delaying American action, since Stimson wished to make any protest to Japan a joint Anglo-American affair, and consequently of removing the necessity of any British response to such action.¹⁰

The Americans, however, took a much more serious view of the fighting than the British. Unwilling to wait any longer for a British reply to his request for cooperation, Stimson sent a brief, politely worded protest to Tokyo on the 27th. Pointing out that contemplated Japanese military action in Shanghai threatened American interests, he called this a matter of "deep concern" to the American government. He hoped, however, that his information on such Japanese action was incorrect, an obvious effort to soften the tone of the protest,

¹⁰ Minute by Pratt, Jan. 28, 1932, B.F.C., Vol. 16142, No. F566/1/10.

yet make it clear to the Japanese how serious the United States considered their military buildup in Shanghai.¹¹

On that same day Stimson called in Lindsay again, told him of the firm yet courteous message he had sent Tokyo, and reminded him of his anxiety to hear from Britain on the proposed demarche. The British, however, persisted in their belief that a crisis did not exist. Pratt, in fact, displayed some impatience with Stimson, noting that: "The picture which Mr. Stimson has in his mind of the situation in Shanghai is almost entirely an imaginary one, and he has done his utmost to rush us into hasty and ill considered action which would have gravely aggravated the situation in the Far East...." Pratt hoped that the cable drafted on the 27th, in which Simon took issue with the American assessment of the situation, would slow Stimson down somewhat. In the meantime, he optimistically speculated, the Chinese would mend their ways in Shanghai and the "crisis will have passed away."¹²

Stimson's persistence, however, prompted a British reply to Washington late on the evening of the 27th. This message, a revision of the previous draft reply, was obviously

¹¹ Stimson to Forbes, Jan. 27, 1932, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 163.

¹² Minute by Pratt, Jan. 28, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16142, No. F566/1/10.

aimed at not disturbing Stimson's now familiar sensibilities. It expressed British concern over the problem in Shanghai, but advised delay in any action until further information could be obtained; it did not contradict Stimson's argument that a serious crisis existed. Simon reviewed the point, thoroughly gone over in the Foreign Office during the past two days, that the 1927 precedent could be used by Japan to justify her current action, and suggested that the United States and Great Britain make efforts to calm down both Japan and China. The British hoped that "the Japanese Government will support our efforts in the cause of peace by securing that the utmost patience and moderation are exercised"--- a somewhat naive hope in light of the recent Manchurian experience. Nothing in Sir John's message to Stimson suggested that Japan bore major responsibility for the events in Shanghai. On the contrary, Simon strongly implied that responsibility had yet to be determined.¹³

Within twenty-four hours, however, the British changed their attitude. The first clear sign that serious fighting might break out momentarily in Shanghai came to the Foreign Office late in the afternoon of January 28, in the form of a message from the Japanese embassy in London. Because of the menacing activities of the Chinese in Shanghai, the Japanese note declared, Japan feared it might be obliged to take

¹³ Simon to Lindsay, Jan. 27, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 194-95.

"drastic measures." Simon immediately called in the first secretary of the Japanese embassy and asked for clarification of what these drastic measures might be, and was told that the first step would be forceful suppression of the headquarters of the anti-Japanese movement in the International Settlement. Simon expressed "grave concern" at such a step, since other powers in the Settlement might become involved, and suggested that if such action proved necessary all the powers with interests in Shanghai should act jointly. That same evening he instructed Lindley to make representations in Tokyo along this line, and to inform his colleagues of his action, "particularly and in the first instance" his American colleagues.¹⁴

One hour after sending the cable to Lindley, Simon asked Washington to follow up the British action with similar American action in Tokyo, an indication of how seriously the British were now taking the situation.¹⁵ British equanimity had derived from a belief that Japan planned no major action in Shanghai, especially action that would involve the International Settlement. The message from the Japanese embassy quickly destroyed this belief, leading to an immediate and strong British desire to work closely with the United States

¹⁴ Simon to Lindley, Jan. 28, 1932, ibid., 201-02, 203-05.

¹⁵ Simon to Lindsay, Jan. 28, 1932, ibid., 202-03.

in lodging protests at Tokyo.

London's wish for action at Tokyo, however, was tempered by the usual British concerns with Japan and the United States. Despite his anxiety for British interests in Shanghai, Simon hesitated to take action that would arouse the fury of Japan; and the old question of how much Britain could depend on American support in a showdown continued to influence the decisions of the British policymakers. Simon raised both of these questions in a letter to Prime Minister MacDonald on January 29, seeing Britain in "grave danger of falling between two stools--- offending Japan without completely satisfying America." If Britain did step forward boldly with the United States in joint action against the Japanese, Simon feared that at the crucial moment the Americans might drop out, leaving Britain with the "brunt of the work and the blame."¹⁶

Simon recited this argument before the cabinet on the 29th. So critical had the Shanghai situation become, however, that he overrode his own argument, telling the cabinet that Britain would cooperate closely with America in protesting against the Japanese troop buildup in Shanghai and Japanese threats to use force in the International Settlement.¹⁷ Early

¹⁶ Simon to MacDonald, Jan. 29, 1932, *ibid.*, 215-17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

that same afternoon he instructed Lindley to "protest strongly against the action of the Japanese forces which has already gravely endangered foreign life and property and request that the Japanese Government will take steps effectively to control those forces with a view to restoring normal conditions in Shanghai at the earliest possible moment."¹⁸ Fifteen minutes later a cable went out to Washington instructing Lindsay to ask whether the United States would "urgently instruct" their ambassador in Tokyo to deliver a similar message.¹⁹ To emphasize the deep British concern Lindsay was also told to "let the United States Government know that H.M.S. Kent is under orders to proceed to Shanghai."²⁰ Simon was now vigorously endorsing both of the Anglo-American actions called for by Stimson on January 25.

The Shanghai crisis worsened when Japanese marines occupied Chapei, the Chinese quarter just north of the International Settlement, shortly after midnight on the 29th. Washington heard of the occupation at just about the same time as Simon's cables arrived outlining the latest British actions and proposals. Stimson gave full support to the British measures, applauding Sir John's conversion to a be-

¹⁸ Simon to Lindley, Jan. 29, 1932, ibid., 217-18.

¹⁹ Simon to Lindsay, Jan. 29, 1932, ibid., 218.

²⁰ Ibid., 219.

lief that Japanese military action threatened foreign interests in Shanghai. At a cabinet meeting that afternoon, Stimson remarked that while the British "certainly would not send their fleet from the Channel around to the Pacific ... if we waited a little while and they saw what the Japanese were now doing... they would get warmer and warmer." He told Hoover that "it was most important, as everybody had agreed, not only that we should act with the British and they with us, but that the Japanese should know it...."²¹

A break in the crisis suddenly appeared imminent on January 31 when Japan asked Britain and the United States to persuade China to stop bringing up reinforcements to Shanghai, and to withdraw the Chinese troops already in and near the city. Japan seemed ready to make a serious effort to stop the fighting. Stimson gladly accepted the role of mediator, but went far beyond Japanese intentions. He immediately telephoned Simon and persuaded him to endorse a five-point American proposal, which would be presented concurrently to Japan by Lindley and Forbes in Tokyo. The French would also be invited to co-sponsor the proposal. The first four points of Stimson's plan involved the cessation of hostilities in Shanghai and protection for the International Settlement. The fifth, presented in several different wordings to the Japanese over the next few weeks, called upon Japan and China to

²¹ Stimson, Diary, Jan. 29, 1932.

negotiate "all outstanding controversies" between them.²²

The Japanese correctly assumed that Stimson considered Manchuria one of the differences between themselves and China, a subject that Japan by this time definitely considered closed. When Forbes, Lindley, and the French ambassador jointly presented the proposals on February 2, Yoshizawa told them that the fifth point was unacceptable.²³ He officially confirmed this in a formal note of rejection a few days later.²⁴

By February 6, with the fighting in Shanghai intensifying as the Japanese moved north of the city with ships and troops to attack the Woosung forts, Britain and the United States seemed to have reached the end of their diplomatic resources. Japan had ignored the Anglo-American appeals to reduce hostilities and negotiate a settlement with China, and were now in the process of preparing for an all-out offensive against the last Chinese outposts around Shanghai. Stimson still believed in his ability to restrain Japan, however, by working out some effective joint action with Britain. Tokyo's rejection of the five-point proposal did not discourage him. "This

²² Memo of telephone conversation between Stimson and Simon, Feb. 1, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 159-65.

²³ Lindley to Simon, Feb. 2, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 308-09.

²⁴ Forbes to Stimson, Feb. 6, 1932, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 182-83.

morning," he noted on the evening of February 6, "I confronted the problem of straightening out the alignment between Great Britain and ourselves as to the answer we should make to the Japanese reply."²⁵

But the British were already seeking another avenue of approach to the crisis, an avenue that would not lead to conflict with Japan. The League of Nations once again proved a refuge for British diplomacy and a substitute for direct British action in the Far East.²⁶ During the remainder of the Shanghai crisis the British, though occasionally seeming to take an independent line or to follow an American lead, essentially worked through the League Council, subtly using the Council to support and excuse their own policy of moderation and conciliation toward Japan. When the debate switched to the League Assembly, where the smaller nations had an equal voice with the larger ones, Simon moved over to the Assembly chambers and continued to exercise great influence on the debates and their results. So well did the British contrive their machinations with the League that the State Department had only occasional insights into the real workings of British diplo-

²⁵ Stimson, Diary, Feb. 6, 1932.

²⁶ Orde rationalized this policy in a long memo on Feb. 5, 1932, concluding that; "We have unfortunately not only a desperately complicated situation to deal with but a great tangle of procedure. Our action must somehow be merged or at least dovetailed in what is done by the Council and the whole question can only be properly tackled at Geneva." Wellesley succinctly minuted this memo: "I agree." Memo by Orde, Feb. 5, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16146, No. F941/1/10.

macy during this period.

The League Council, which assembled in Geneva for its sixty-sixth session on January 25, 1932, was meeting when the Shanghai crisis broke. Almost immediately the Council established a Committee of Enquiry consisting of the six consular representatives residing in Shanghai. The secretary-general requested Cunningham, the American consul in Shanghai, to cooperate with this committee. During February and March the Council worked through this Committee of Enquiry to arrange a cease fire and truce between Japanese and Chinese forces. Early in March the League Assembly established a separate Committee of Nineteen to work toward the same goal. The United States had no representation on this committee but Nelson T. Johnson, the American minister to China, worked closely with his British, French, and Italian colleagues in an unofficial group of four to bring about a settlement.

With the League involved in Shanghai as heavily as it had been in Manchuria, and with the major avenues of diplomatic activity running primarily between Shanghai and Geneva rather than London and Tokyo, the Foreign Office after February 6 tried to avoid or moderate any cooperative action with the United States that might lead to a strain in Anglo-Japanese relations. Two major incidents in February, 1932, abundantly illustrate this British policy--- Stimson's attempt to win

British support for joint invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty during the second week of February; and the famous Borah letter of February 23, the result of his failure to get that support.

Following the official Japanese rejection of the five-point proposal on February 6, 1932, Stimson turned to the idea of an international conference based on the Nine-Power Treaty. Article 7 of this treaty called for "full and frank communication" between the signatories when any situation arose that involved the treaty's application. While this provision did not specifically call for a conference in the event of a dispute, Stimson believed that such a procedure was implied. He did not, however, wish to send out the call alone. He wanted Great Britain and the United States jointly to present Japan with a summons to the conference. If the Japanese rejected the invitation, then Stimson believed the other nations of the world would cooperate in imposing sanctions on Japan, an action which Stimson claims he viewed as a distinct possibility during the second week of February, 1932.²⁷

The State Department worked up a draft for invoking the Nine-Power Treaty, hopefully in conjunction with Great Britain, on February 9. Remembering his disappointment when Britain failed to support him on the nonrecognition note, this

²⁷ Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 160-61.

time Stimson prepared the ground more carefully. The secretary meant to have British support before making his move, not after. As a first step toward gaining this support he spoke to Lindsay on the 9th, mentioning to him that the recent Japanese attacks on the Chinese Woosung forts, attacks that he considered entirely illegal and unnecessary, might justify invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty. While not calling for immediate action under the treaty, he felt that any new crisis in Shanghai might suddenly warrant drastic measures. Lindsay asked if the United States, in the event that it invoked the treaty, would seek the cooperation of other powers. Stimson replied that "if absolutely necessary," the United States might invoke it unilaterally. He was very anxious, however, to secure the cooperation of Great Britain.²⁸

Two days later Stimson took the second step toward winning British support. Telephoning Simon in Geneva he reviewed with him the latest series of Japanese attacks in Shanghai, affirmed the American belief that these attacks violated the terms of the Nine-Power Treaty, and asked "whether the time hasn't come for your nation and mine... to make a record of these facts and make a frank statement in the language of Article 7 of that Treaty...."²⁹

²⁸ Memo by Stimson of conversation with Lindsay, Feb. 9, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 261; Lindsay to Simon, Feb. 9, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 423-24.

²⁹ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Simon, Feb. 11, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 278-84.

This was not yet a call for a general conference of the Nine-Power signatories, and Stimson later acknowledged that his proposals in February, 1932, did not go that far.³⁰ At this point he was simply trying to arouse international support for the principles of the Nine-Power Treaty; a full fledged conference might come later when this support had been won. In his conversation with Simon on February 11, the British secretary encouraged him in the belief that in this matter Britain would "stand side by side" with the United States.³¹

Despite his assurances to Stimson, Simon did not really want to support any American invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty, fearing that this would arouse Japanese public opinion against Great Britain. Simon, however, had also experienced some unpleasantness with Stimson over his abrupt rejection of the January 7 demarche. He wished, in the present instance, to avoid any friction with the United States. His refusal of Stimson's invitation, therefore, had to be more carefully and subtly arranged than in the case of the non-recognition note.

During four trans-Atlantic telephone conversations over

³⁰ Stimson to Lord Lothian, Mar. 15, 1935, quoted in Ferrell, The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, 251-52.

³¹ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Simon, Feb. 11, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 441-44.

the next week the two secretaries debated the details of a joint declaration, with Simon offering one objection after another.³² Though initially optimistic that Simon was "with him," after their first conversation on February 11, Stimson by the next day had begun to doubt the British secretary's sincerity and enthusiasm. In speaking before a private gathering of British and American reporters in Geneva on the 12th, Simon referred to China as a "geographical expression." Stimson described himself as a "little startled" at this remark, and determined to make sure that Sir John would not "go off half-cocked."³³ On the 13th Stimson, having further doubts about Simon, recalled that Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald had described Sir John to him the previous summer as "being rather voluble, apt to change...."³⁴

Despite considerable evidence to the contrary Sir John Pratt, in his War and Politics in China, insisted that Simon had every intention of helping Stimson get the Nine-Power Treaty invoked. Stimson's impatience to get it done with quickly, however, and Simon's inability to go so fast due to resistance against such a move in the British cabinet,

³² For British and American records of these conversations see D.B.F.P., IX, 441-44, 460-63, 487-88, 489-91; F.R.U.S., 1932, III, 278-84, 294-98, 335-40, 341-45.

³³ Stimson, Diary, Feb. 12, 1932.

³⁴ Ibid., Feb. 13, 1932.

made it impossible for Britain to support the American action at that time. According to Pratt the only major obstacle to joint British and American invocation of the treaty was the lack of patience on the part of Secretary Stimson.³⁵

British documents relating to the episode disclose that Pratt was either deceived in his understanding of Simon's position, or deceiving in his later explanation of that position. Nothing significant in the Foreign Office files, either in the published or unpublished documentation, supports Pratt's contention that British thinking leaned toward approval of Stimson's proposed cooperative action. On the contrary, nearly all the evidence indicates strong British determination to reject Stimson's proposal from its inception, and a feeling of relief when that rejection was finally communicated to Washington.

Lindsay's cable on Stimson's suggestion that Britain and the United States consider invoking the Nine-Power Treaty reached the Foreign Office on February 10 at 9:00 a.m. Before sending it on to the foreign secretary, Whitmore, Orde, Wellesley, and Vansittart each commented strongly on its contents. Their minutes, reproduced below in the order that they appear on the cable in the Foreign Office files, sum up the British reaction to the proposal and lay out the framework of their response. All these minutes were composed on Feb-

³⁵ Pratt, War and Politics in China, 270-74, 281-86.

bruary 10, 1932:³⁶

Whitamore:

The Japanese have shown clearly that they are not going to be deflected from their purposes (whatever they may be) in China by notes however strongly worded. In the present temper of the people, as seen from Sir F. Lindley's reports, a note such as Mr. Stimson advocates sending might well sting Japan into going further than she otherwise would.

Orde:

However desirable it may be to work with the United States Government it is very difficult for a member of the Council of the League to make a strong indictment of Japan while the Council is still considering the matter. It is one thing to take emergency action outside the League to stop further fighting and quite another to adopt the attitude of a judge and pronounce judgment without waiting to confer with one's colleagues on the same bench. I submit that we should reply that our position as a member of the Council makes it impossible for us to prejudge the issue in this way.

Wellesley:

I agree. A thoroughly ill-advised and impulsive proposal. Typically American and intended for home consumption.

Vansittart:

We should certainly advise the Secretary of State against joining in "a very strong indictment" of Japan at this juncture, whatever may be done later. The chief reason given should be that in Mr. Whitamore's minute because it is easier to give it as the first reason to Mr. Stimson. It may serve to dissuade him, and that, just now, is in the common interest. Indictments must wait till the danger is less acute. We have been trying to keep the League from going off the deep end. The same tactic should be followed in regard to Mr. Stimson. And a propos of the League add, as a second but--- any-

³⁶ Minutes by Whitamore, Orde, Wellesley, and Vansittart, Feb. 10, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16147, No. F1156/1/10.

how to Mr. Stimson--- subsidiary reason comment in the sense of the marked part of Mr. Orde's minute. [Vansittart here referring to first two sentences of Orde's minute.]

As in the case of the nonrecognition note Simon needed some plausible excuse to reject Stimson's invitation. His problem in the case of Shanghai, however, was more difficult. On January 7, 1932, when Stimson unilaterally registered disapproval of Japanese actions in Manchuria, the Foreign Office could base its own response on the assumption that the crisis had diplomatically run its course, at least for the moment. While the British certainly continued to concern themselves with the future of Manchuria, after the fall of Chinchow there seemed little they could do to alter its fate. As shown by the Foreign Office debate over the nonrecognition note, many British leaders and advisers even found satisfaction at the end of Chinese authority in Manchuria, since this reduced the possibility of serious conflict in the area.³⁷ But in Shanghai, where the very size of British interests precluded a simple retreat, Simon had no intention of backing off from the dispute.

The British did not question American objectives in Shanghai, really the same as theirs, but rather their methods, which seemed to them dangerous and unnecessary. By invoking the Nine-Power Treaty Stimson, in London's opinion, ran the

³⁷ See Chap. V, p. 113.

risk of raising a diplomatic storm in Tokyo. At that moment, with their Shanghai investments possibly hanging in the balance, the British wanted no trouble with Japan. They did, however, need and want American support in achieving a Shanghai settlement. Simon's problem, therefore, was how to retain the United States as an active participant in any Shanghai negotiations, while at the same time moderating American diplomacy with Japan.

On February 11 Washington informed London that it did not believe Japan had any plans for peace in Shanghai. On the contrary, the latest Japanese demand that Chinese troops withdraw at least 20 miles from the city before negotiations could begin foreshadowed more Japanese aggression. Acting on this belief the State Department determined to withdraw its representative from the Shanghai parleys among the two contending powers and the Shanghai diplomatic corps. Stimson had given up trying to influence the developments in Shanghai through American mediation between Japan and China, and was ready to invoke the Nine-Power Treaty in Tokyo. The United States, of course, wanted British support.³⁸

Simon was in Geneva attending the Council session when this cable arrived in London. It was immediately forwarded to him, the Foreign Office considering the American position

³⁸ Stimson to Cunningham, Feb. 10, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 272-73; Stimson to Atherton, Feb. 10, 1932, ibid., 272.

serious and wrong. "The United States Government," Orde noted on the cable, "consider that the negotiations at Shanghai are at an end and that no further approach to the Japanese would be of any use. We want them to continue.... But we also want the United States representative in Shanghai to take part."³⁹

Simon now set about the difficult task of appeasing both Japan and the United States. During his trans-Atlantic conversations of February 11 and 12 he urged Stimson, if only to encourage the League, to keep an American representative sitting in on the talks in Shanghai.⁴⁰ Stimson obliged him by not withdrawing the American representative from the Committee of Enquiry. Nelson Johnson arrived in Shanghai on February 12, and together with Lampson worked as chief mediators between the disputants during the remainder of the crisis. On February 14 Lampson could report to London; "United States Minister has since received instructions to keep in closest touch with me and he is now being most helpful in attempt to find common ground on which we can bring the two sides together. We are working in greatest harmony."⁴¹

After extracting the promise from Stimson to keep an Amer-

³⁹ Minute by Orde, Feb. 11, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16148, No. F1285/1/10.

⁴⁰ Memos of conversation between Stimson and Simon, Feb. 11, 1932, F. R., 1932, III, 278-84, 294-98.

⁴¹ Lampson to Stimson, Feb. 14, 1932, D.B.F.P. IX, 480.

ican active in the peace talks in Shanghai, Simon next turned his attention to the troublesome matter of the Nine-Power Treaty. While ostensibly discussing the details of invocation on the telephone with Stimson, Simon at the same time worked hard on the Council over the next few days to come up with some protest against Japan strong enough to take the place of a joint Anglo-American declaration. Success came on February 16 when the Council, voting without Japan or China, passed a resolution reminding Japan of her obligations to settle disputes peacefully under the Kellogg-Briand Pact, Article 10 of the League Covenant, and the Nine-Power Treaty. The Council appealed to "Japan's high sense of honor to recognize the obligations of her special position and of the confidence which the nations have placed in her as a partner in the organization and maintenance of peace." While not openly condemning Japan for her aggression in China, the Council's action went further than any previously taken in the Far Eastern crisis by that body. The Council addressed the resolution solely to the Japanese, implying that they bore the chief responsibility for the crisis.⁴²

With this resolution on the record, the British could now tell Stimson that because of the Council action they could not join the United States in any joint invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty, since their membership in the League

⁴² The text of this resolution can be found in F.R., 1932, III, 363-64.

precluded any such separate action. Stimson knew as early as February 15 that Britain had "let us down."⁴³ Vansittart confirmed the British position to Atherton in London the following day, when he told the American charge that Britain "did not contemplate any such action at the present juncture, and indeed did not think that it would be wise."⁴⁴ Later that same evening Atherton returned to the Foreign Office where he told Vansittart that the United States, because of the British position, would now confront a "serious situation" if it had to consider unilateral invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty. Vansittart correctly gathered from Atherton's remarks that, "Mr. Stimson obviously meant that there may be no American note." Whatever the United States decided to do, Vansittart warned Simon, the British could not make another representation to Japan, even if this meant frustrating American plans. "The League action should suffice us for the nonce," he declared. "Of course," he added, "I did not say this to Mr. Atherton."⁴⁵

Stimson was bitterly disappointed at this British failure to support his effort at invoking the Nine-Power Treaty.

⁴³ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Atherton, February 16, 1932, ibid., 352-56.

⁴⁴ Memo of conversation between Vansittart and Atherton, Feb. 16, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 503-04.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 511-12.

Although he sent a revised draft of another proposal on the treaty to London on the 18th, instructing Atherton to hold it in reserve in case the subject arose again, he had little hope that anything further could be done.⁴⁶ For this failure he blamed Great Britain, although not openly at the time or with any great severity in later accounts.⁴⁷ Stimson revealed in his diary, however, how he really felt about Britain in this matter of the invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty. He wrote on February 19:⁴⁸

It is very evident... that Great Britain will not back us up upon this immediate appeal and will consider that she has done her stint by playing with the League and getting the League to adopt the last article in the recent resolution in which the League calls attention to the Nine Power Treaty and also adopts my doctrine rather feebly of not recognizing future situations which are produced by a break of treaty.

And on February 21:⁴⁹

The British have pocketed me on the note method of doing it. I do not dare send a note on the Nine Power Treaty for fear of the yellow-bellied responses that I will get from the different countries.

While blaming the British, however, Stimson did not en-

⁴⁶ Stimson to Atherton, Feb. 18, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 383-85.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Stimson's rather moderate remarks in the Far Eastern Crisis, 164.

⁴⁸ Stimson, Diary, Feb. 19, 1932.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Feb. 21, 1932.

tirely blame Sir John. Information from Atherton in London indicated that British rejection of the American proposal to invoke jointly the Nine-Power Treaty rested on a cabinet decision, in which Simon had only a single voice.⁵⁰ Stimson looked upon Simon, in fact, as one of his hopes for greater Anglo-American cooperation for the future. A diary entry on February 24 is revealing of Stimson's impressions of Simon and the formation of British policy:⁵¹

In the afternoon Sir John Simon called me up from Geneva. I have let him severely alone since the last time I called him, when he refused to go along with us in a protest to Tokyo.... He sounded a little bit apologetic about Great Britain's attitude, and I think he feels keenly the division in the Cabinet which prevents more thorough cooperation with us. Our policy of letting them do the walking now is beginning to bear fruit, and I think we will end up by smoking out the group of Tories who have blocked Simon and MacDonald.

The Council resolution of February 16, followed by British coolness on jointly invoking the Nine-Power Treaty, destroyed Stimson's plan for an Anglo-American protest at Tokyo. Since the crisis in Shanghai continued unabated, however, he felt compelled to make another diplomatic move. Stimson explained the reasoning behind this decision in the Far Eastern Crisis: "It seemed to me that in future years I should not like to face a verdict of history to the effect that a

⁵⁰ Atherton to Stimson, Feb. 16, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 362-63.

⁵¹ Stimson, Diary, Feb. 24, 1932.

government to which I belonged had failed to express itself adequately upon such a situation."⁵² Invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty together with Great Britain would have kept the "verdict of history" from going against him. Or at least so Stimson believed. Prevented from taking this action by British failure to respond to his overtures, he now had to consider a substitute action that would serve the same purpose, yet not embarrass the United States by being rejected by the other nations of the world.

The need for some expression of the American attitude on the Sino-Japanese crisis became especially pressing after February 20, when the Japanese launched a new major assault against Chinese forces around Shanghai. On the following day, Stimson later declared, he hit upon the idea of getting his points across to Japan and to the world, not by joining in any *démarche* with a foreign power, but by writing a private letter that would immediately become public. He recalled that Theodore Roosevelt, when president, resorted to such a tactic when he wanted "to get off an announcement of major policy without contradiction or discussion." Stimson decided to address his letter to William E. Borah, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate. The letter was dated February 23, 1932, and on the following morning copies

⁵² Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 157.

were handed out to the press.⁵³

The Borah letter affirmed several major points of American foreign policy. The Nine-Power Treaty, Stimson declared, formed the legal basis of the open door policy in China, a policy first enunciated by Secretary of State John Hay in 1899, and reconfirmed by the powers who signed the treaty in Washington in 1922. In addition to promising respect for the integrity and sovereignty of China, the treaty also assured that China would have an opportunity to raise herself to the level of a modern state without foreign interference or molestation. "The treaty," Stimson wrote in the Borah letter, "was thus a covenant of self-denial among the signatory powers in deliberate renunciation of any policy of aggression which might tend to interfere with that development."⁵³

Following this background account of the Nine-Power Treaty, Stimson went on to emphasize in the letter that the other agreements signed in Washington in 1921 and 1922, especially the naval limitations agreement, were dependent on fulfillment of the terms of the Nine-Power Treaty. "The willingness of the American Government to surrender its then commanding lead in battleship construction and to leave its positions at Guam and in the Philippines without any further fortifications, was predicated upon, among other things, the self-

⁵³ For Stimson's account of the origins of the Borah letter, see Far Eastern Crisis, 164-66.

denying covenants contained in the Nine-Power Treaty, which assured the nations of the world not only of equal opportunity for their Eastern trade but also against the military aggrandizement of any other power at the expense of China." Stimson implied that the United States might have to reconsider its promises to limit capital ship construction, and not to increase its fortifications on Guam and in the Philippines, as a result of the latest developments in China. The Borah letter, in other words, contained a not too carefully veiled threat to Japan that the United States might add to its fleet and fortify its western Pacific islands. Stimson concluded the letter with a restatement of the non-recognition doctrine of January 7, 1932, and a hope that the other nations would adopt this same doctrine.⁵⁴

Lindsay expressed concern to Stimson on the 25th that the American newspapers were interpreting the letter as primarily addressed to Great Britain. Stimson denied this interpretation, but at the same time admitted that he would be glad if the letter influenced certain sections of British public opinion, especially those who kept "harping on the old alliance with Japan." He criticized the League for not taking stronger action, and restated his belief that a more severe moral condemnation of Japan, which Lindsay assumed

⁵⁴ The Borah letter is reprinted in many places. One convenient source is Far Eastern Crisis, 166-75.

meant withdrawal of heads of mission from Tokyo, would influence the Japanese in the right direction. Stimson also made it clear, however, that at the moment there was no thought of imposing sanctions on Japan.⁵⁵ Lindsay's own opinion to the Foreign Office was that the United States would not resort to sanctions, even though Stimson, "an emotional man," could not be counted on to take the logical action. The mood of President Hoover, the American Congress, and the American people, however, precluded the immediate possibility of sanctions.⁵⁶ As for endorsing the principles of the Borah letter, Lindsay suggested that Britain do so, since the "effect of its acceptance by the other chief powers would be to facilitate future American cooperation with the League in all matters threatening peace and at any rate to ensure Anglo-American cooperation in such questions."⁵⁷

The Foreign Office advisers disagreed with each other on acceptance of the major point of the Borah letter. MacKillop thought that the main conclusion of the letter, that Japan was violating the Nine-Power Treaty, was debatable. "Indeed," he wrote, "I think it follows from what has been said in Parliament by the Secretary of State and Mr. Eden that His

⁵⁵ Lindsay to Simon, Feb. 25, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 616-17.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 620-21.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 623.

Majesty's Government do not consider that anything that Japan has yet done constitutes an infringement of the Nine-Power Treaty."⁵⁸ Orde, however, wrote in at this point on MacKillop's minute; "At least that we cannot yet say so."⁵⁹ E. Fitzmaurice, another Far Eastern adviser, went further than Orde in stating that a "pretty strong case" could be made for showing that Japan's actions had not been consistent with the terms of the treaty. Regarding Stimson's suggestion that the Kellogg-Briand Pact had been violated by Japan, Fitzmaurice stated simply; "I must say I agree with him."⁶⁰

Despite general Foreign Office agreement with Stimson's assumption of Japanese lawlessness, the British had no intention of altering their policy towards Japan and China. Fear of Japan, plus a great desire to put an end to the Shanghai problem peacefully, prevented any public British support for the arguments in the Borah letter. Vansittart advised Simon, since Stimson obviously expected some British response to the letter, to approve its contents in private conversation with him on the telephone. "No doubt," he told Simon, "a little flattery of this kind would fall on

⁵⁸ Minute by MacKillop, Feb. 25, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16152, No. F1719/1/10.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Minute by Fitzmaurice, Feb. 26, 1932, Ibid.

appreciative ears." Since the Borah letter implied Japan's guilt, however, and since Britain still suspended judgment between Japan and China, Vansittart thoroughly disapproved of any official support. Any further action against Japan at this point, he warned, might drive her to "extreme exasperation."⁶¹

Beyond these points raised by Stimson in regard to Japanese aggression against China, London also speculated on how to react to the American threats implied in the Borah letter to ignore the provisions of the naval limitations treaty. Since this treaty affected Britain, whose ratio in capital ships allotted by the treaty equaled that of the United States, the British would certainly have to be consulted on any contemplated American changes. The Foreign Office, however, quickly discounted such a threat. The United States in 1932, deeply involved in the world depression, could spare no funds for rearmament. Orde felt that "the hint about the Washington naval treaty is probably not meant very seriously; if it were we should I imagine have something to say."⁶² The British made no protest to Washington on this point.

The net result of the Foreign Office debate over the Borah

⁶¹ Vansittart to Simon, Feb. 26, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 633-34.

⁶² Minute by Orde, Feb. 26, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16152, No. F1719/1/10.

letter was a cable to Lindsay on February 27 instructing him to tell Stimson that, since his letter had been addressed primarily to the League, Britain would have to respond through that body. In the meantime, Lindsay was told for his own information, London would try to inspire some favorable, "though noncommittal," press comment in Great Britain.⁶³

Lindsay objected to these instructions from Simon. He retorted somewhat vigorously that "within a few days His Majesty's Government will be faced with the necessity for deciding whether their policy in the Far East is to be inclined towards Japan or towards America." While acknowledging the difficulty of obtaining firm commitments from the United States, he insisted that Japanese activity in China threatened the "open-door principles which His Majesty's Government cannot wish to abandon." Britain might well be advised, he believed, to accept some of the American invitations for joint action against Tokyo.⁶⁴

Lindsay's protest pointed up once again the dilemma of Britain's Far Eastern policy. Wellesley pinpointed this dilemma by commenting briefly on Lindsay's cable; "If by leaning towards America we gain more and lose less than by leaning

⁶³ Vansittart to Simon, Feb. 27, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 640.

⁶⁴ Lindsay to Simon, Feb. 28, 1932, ibid., 649-50.

to Japan then by all means let us do so. But do we? That is the question."⁶⁵

If the situation had worsened in Shanghai the British might well have had to ponder such a choice. Fortunately, however, in the last days of February Japanese policy agreeably shifted to acceptance of serious negotiations with the Chinese. While this shift stemmed more from Japan's inability to assert her will in Shanghai, because of unexpectedly strong Chinese resistance, than from any British or American diplomatic efforts, the British were tempted to credit their own policy for the new Japanese reasonableness. Vansittart used the change in the Japanese attitude to justify British refusal to publicly subscribe to the principles of the Borah letter.⁶⁶ Thanks to this refusal, he believed, the British had not lost their position as an important neutral in Japanese eyes, and could now serve as one of the prime mediators in bringing about a settlement.

The turn in Japanese policy toward serious negotiations began on February 28, when Japanese and Chinese representatives met on the British cruiser Kent in Shanghai harbor. Each side agreed on the principle of mutual and simultaneous evacuation of troops from the fighting zone, but they were

⁶⁵ Minute by Wellesley, Feb. 29, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16153, No. F1832/1/10.

⁶⁶ Vansittart to Lindsay, Feb. 29, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 659.

initially far apart on the details of how this evacuation could be accomplished. Before leaving the ship, however, they scheduled a new meeting at the same place for March 2.⁶⁷

The meeting on the Kent was followed up immediately in Geneva by Simon, who on March 1 had talks with Matsudaira and Dr. Yen, the current Chinese representative on the League Council. All agreed on the need to begin a round table conference in Shanghai, composed of representatives of China, Japan, Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States. Stimson had already authorized Simon to inform the Council of American cooperation in this conference. In Simon's words his statement to the Council of American support for the conference made a "great impression."⁶⁸

Simon's optimism, however, proved premature, since the meetings on the Kent and in Geneva did not immediately lead to a conference. To further complicate matters, the Chinese, on February 12, had requested transfer of the dispute from the Council to the Assembly, which held its first meeting on March 3. China naturally expected greater support from the smaller countries in the Assembly, who feared the same type of aggression from the large powers that China was suffering from Japan. Before the Assembly even held its first meeting,

⁶⁷ Johnson to Stimson, Feb. 29, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 474.

⁶⁸ Simon to Vansittart, March 1, 1932, D.B.F.P., IX, 666-67.

rumors circulated in Geneva that one of its first actions would be a resolution based on Stimson's January 7 nonrecognition note.

The possibility of Assembly support for the nonrecognition doctrine gratified Stimson, but reports quickly followed that Great Britain would attempt to block such action. If this happened, Stimson determined, the United States would not support the round table conference in Shanghai. Stimson assured the American secretary that he personally approved such Assembly action, but on March 3 Hugh Wilson, the American minister in Switzerland, telephoned Washington that "influential members of the British Government" were saying that Britain would not support the nonrecognition doctrine in the Assembly. Stimson considered that he had been "slapped in the face," especially in light of the attitude that Stimson had been taking in favor of the doctrine. "If they are going to take that attitude," he testily recorded in his diary, "I am not going to be in any hurry to play their game at Shanghai." He told Wilson to make sure that Stimson understood the American position. Wilson thought Stimson "very wise" in taking such a stand, and promised to see Stimson right away.⁶⁹

Stimson's warning on Shanghai evoked further protests of support from Sir John, who now had no choice but to risk a

⁶⁹ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Wilson, March 3, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 501-04; Stimson, Diary, March 3, 1932.

certain amount of Japanese ire in exchange for American participation in the Shanghai negotiations. Wilson called Washington the next day to report that "Simon was very emphatic that he would support the nonrecognition policy and that it would pass the Assembly." Simon also went on to say that if for some reason the nonrecognition doctrine did not win the approval of the Assembly, "he, on behalf of Great Britain, would make a declaration in favor all by itself."⁷⁰ Stimson noted this declaration of British support for his doctrine with a mixture of satisfaction and skepticism: "So he is pretty well smoked out," he wrote of Simon on March 4. "I only hope he stands by it."⁷¹

Having somewhat mollified the United States, Simon now had to satisfy Japan, a task that in truth he did not always relish. While trying to keep something of an even-handed position between China and Japan on the other side, and between Japan and America on the other, Simon could not always conceal from himself his basic distaste for Japan's actions in China. Regardless of their personal feelings, however, the British leaders had no intention of initiating or supporting action that might damage Anglo-Japanese relations. Foreign Office files for this period are filled

⁷⁰ Wilson to Stimson, Mar. 4, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 508-09.

⁷¹ Stimson, Diary, Mar. 4, 1932.

with assertions that Japanese friendship meant more to Britain than the sovereignty of China, and from Tokyo Sir Francis Lindley constantly reminded London that Japan could easily destroy British interests and commerce in the Far East.

It proved possible in March, 1932, however, for Simon to reconcile this basic British policy toward Japan with British support for the League of Nations and the United States. Simon summed up his policy in a confidential communiqué circulated to his diplomats in Washington, Shanghai, Geneva, and Tokyo on March 4, 1932:⁷²

I would much sooner that the League boldly asserted the principles for which it stands even though in a given case it could not completely enforce their observance rather than that we should lose all our influence for the future by approving action contrary to the covenant.

It seems to me that on these lines it ought to be possible to deserve and I hope obtain American cooperation in supporting moral principles, while at the same time paying full regard, as we are bound to do, to our own necessities and to the warnings of Sir F. Lindley, which British policy will not dream of disregarding.

British action during the next week fell completely within Sir John's policy framework as laid out in this circulated memorandum. On March 3 the Japanese ordered a ceasefire in Shanghai, and from that date hostilities generally came to a halt, although two more months would elapse before the two

⁷² Memo from Simon to Washington, Shanghai, Geneva, and Tokyo, Mar. 4, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16155, No. F2164/1/10.

sides could agree on truce terms. In the meanwhile Japanese demands for security and protection of their nationals, including a demand for a demilitarized zone around the city, delayed final agreement. On March 7, Simon, fulfilling his promise to Stimson to work for a League resolution on the nonrecognition doctrine, addressed the Assembly in rather vague terms on the subject of "fundamental principles" which involved the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.⁷³ When requested to be more specific by Hugh Wilson and other diplomats in Geneva, he revealed a draft text of what he had in mind, concluding with the sentence: "The Assembly resolves that it is incumbent upon all states members of the League to refuse to recognize any solutions of international differences brought about by force in violation of the Covenant of the League and the Kellogg Pact."⁷⁴ With some changes in wording the League Assembly included this sentiment in its resolution of March 11, 1932.⁷⁵

Despite Simon's role in securing Assembly passage of the March 11 resolution, tacitly endorsing the Stimson nonrecog-

⁷³ Gilbert to Stimson, Mar. 7, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 524-25.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 528.

⁷⁵ This is reprinted in F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 210-12.

niton doctrine, Anglo-Japanese relations were not seriously disturbed. The Japanese accepted the resolution without protest, and seemed relieved that it went no further. Matsudaira wrote Simon thanking him for his "tactful handling of the matter," which had prevented inclusion in the resolution of points objectionable to Japan.⁷⁶ On March 17 Lindley, who had initially deplored the Assembly action,⁷⁷ cabled from Tokyo: "The Geneva resolution has not been badly received in the press as a whole and came as a great relief to the Japanese Government whose gratitude to yourself is shared by leading Japanese."⁷⁸

Simon's action also won the approval of the British and American governments. The British cabinet "warmly approved" his March 7 speech, which raised the issue of nonrecognition, but advised him to do nothing further that might arouse Japan. The cabinet warned him always to keep in mind that "sanctions against Japan are out of the question and would not be supported in this country."⁷⁹ Such a warning to Sir John was

⁷⁶ Letter from Matsudaira to Simon, Mar. 11, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16159, No. F2799/1/10.

⁷⁷ Lindley to Simon, Mar. 14, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16157, No. F2473/1/10.

⁷⁸ Lindley to Simon, Mar. 17, 1932, *ibid.*, Vol. 16158, No. F2602/1/10.

⁷⁹ Simon to Vansittart, Mar. 8, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16157, No. F2453/1/10.

unnecessary. He knew the limits of British Far Eastern diplomacy and kept within them.

Stimson registered approval of the resolution by declaring that the action would go far "toward developing into terms of international law the principles of order and justice" found in the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.⁸⁰ American support for the resolution helped to serve a major British objective--- keeping Nelson Johnson and Sir Miles Lampson cooperating in Shanghai to bring about a settlement. Until May 5, 1932, when Japan and China signed a formal armistice, these two ministers worked together closely and harmoniously to effect an agreement. Though there is little doubt that Japan came to terms mainly because of an inability to exercise her will in Shanghai, as she had done in Manchuria, the Anglo-American effort probably facilitated matters. For this short term success Simon, and not Stimson, deserves a major share of the credit.

As for the longer range goal, that of preserving the Far Eastern peace and retaining Japanese support for the League of Nations, the British policy of appeasing Japan ultimately failed. While it may be valid to criticize the British for this failure, it is invalid to assume that the American policy, a policy of moral injunction, would have been any more

⁸⁰ Far Eastern Crisis, 179. Also Lindsay to Simon, Mar. 30, 1932, reporting favorable reception of resolution in the United States. B.F.O., Vol. 16161, No. F2983/1/10.

successful. No country in 1932 was prepared to use force against Japan to save China. That part of the story is clear. Both Simon and Stimson had to work within a definite and limited diplomatic framework. Given these limitations, almost the same for each secretary, Simon must get the nod for the wiser use of his faculties and facilities. Greater moral criticism of Japan during the Shanghai crisis, without the possibility of force to back up this criticism, might have made it more difficult for the Japanese to bow out of the fracas gracefully. Simon followed one of the cardinal rules of good diplomacy--- he tailored his diplomacy to his country's resources and determination.

This is not to say, however, that Stimson's efforts should be condemned out of hand. For the American secretary, through the Borah letter, put on record America's fundamental, if somewhat altruistic, opposition to aggression. While having little effect on stopping Japan during this period, such a stand should not be considered pure hypocrisy. Simon himself, on several occasions, had advised a statement of League principles against aggression, even if these principles could not be enforced. But it was Stimson, not Sir John, who acted upon this philosophy in the nonrecognition note and in the Borah letter. In any final appraisal of British and American responses to Japan's actions in China during these years, it

must be said that while Stimson perhaps acted against the best interests of his country, he nevertheless accomplished part of what he set out to do in the Borah letter--- he raised his own and America's standing a notch or two in the "verdict of history."⁸¹

⁸¹ See this chapter, p. 160.

Chapter VII

Manchukuo: Japan Leaves the League

The end of Chinese resistance in Manchuria in early 1932 naturally raised the question of what Japan would do with the provinces now that she had conquered them. Simple annexation seemed too blatant, even for the Japanese. If they were to be controlled from Tokyo, and there appeared little doubt that this would be their fate, Japan would have to devise some political subterfuge giving her control of Manchuria yet not openly violating the League Covenant, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or the Nine-Power Treaty.

While Manchuria was being overrun in the fall of 1931, both the British and the Americans suspected that Japan contemplated permanent occupation. At a cabinet meeting on November 17, Stimson predicted that Japan would eventually establish a puppet government in Manchuria.¹ On November 20 Charles Orde in the Foreign Office voiced a suspicion that Japan planned the erection of "subservient" governments in the three provinces.² These British and American predictions, made before the complete occupation of Manchuria by Japanese forces, proved accurate. Even before the fall of Chinchow on January 2, 1932, the process of

¹ Far Eastern Crisis, 193.

² Minute by Orde, Nov. 20, 1931, B.F.O., Vol. 15500, No. F6757/1391/10.

establishing a break-away Chinese government in Manchuria, one that Japan could direct and control, had begun.

As they swept over Manchuria at the end of 1931, the Japanese established separatist governments in the large cities and principal departments. Upon completion of the conquest they merged these various governments, staffed largely with Chinese officials loyal to Japan, into an all-Manchurian organization. This central government declared itself independent of China on February 18, 1932, and on the following day announced the formation of a new republic. Henry Pu Yi, deposed emperor of the former Manchu dynasty in China, became its chief executive. Pu Yi was installed as regent of the new state, henceforth called Manchukuo, on March 9, 1932. On March 12, Hsieh Chieh-Shih, the first foreign minister of Manchukuo, requested diplomatic recognition of his country from Great Britain, the United States, and some fifty other nations.

The State Department made no formal reply to the Manchukuan request. The implication of the Department's silence, however, was clear: there would be no diplomatic recognition of Manchukuo. The American press, sifting information from various State Department sources, reported that the United States had no intention of recognizing the new nation.³ Based on the non-recognition doctrine alone, the American response could hardly

³ New York Times, Mar. 15, 1932.

have been different.

British reaction, however, was not so predictable, despite their support of the March 11 resolution incorporating the nonrecognition principle of the Stimson note. During the last week of February, 1932, Anthony Eden, undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, made some ambiguous remarks in the House of Commons concerning the legality of the new state. On the 24th he referred to its establishment by Chinese authorities, not mentioning any role that Japan might have played in its formation, and on the 29th he declared that it was not the first time since the signing of the Nine-Power Treaty that an independent state had been created in China.⁴ Washington, therefore, had reason to suspect that Great Britain might grant diplomatic recognition to Manchukuo.

Foreign Secretary Simon, however, was in no hurry to comply with the Manchukuan request. On March 14 he answered a Parliamentary question on Manchukuan recognition by saying that "our present information would make it premature to take any such action." The Foreign Office told Ray Atherton, who sought clarification of Simon's remark, that "the matter was still under consideration by the legal department in view of the many attendant complications."⁵

⁴ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 262, 359-62, 913-20.

⁵ Atherton to Stimson, Mar. 16, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 588-89.

London did not exaggerate the existence of "many attendant complications" arising over the question of Manchukuan recognition. For one thing, Japan herself had given no indication of her response to the Manchukuan request.⁶ If Japan did not immediately recognize Manchukuo, there seemed little reason for Britain to take that step. In the meantime, the Foreign Office thought that British consular representatives in Manchuria could "carry on the day-to-day dealings with the local authorities which are usual in such circumstances."⁷

A potentially major problem stemming from Manchukuan independence, one that arose even before the formal request for recognition, concerned the Manchurian maritime customs. These customs duties, collected at various Manchurian ports, serviced a substantial part of China's foreign debt, a large portion of which was owed to British and American creditors. Word reached Washington on March 10 that the new government in Manchuria intended to collect the customs itself, although as yet giving no indication what it intended to do with these funds.⁸ The disposition of the customs collections was actually of greater immediate concern to Britain and America than

⁶ Minute by Orde, Mar. 14, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16157, No. F2457/1391/10.

⁷ Minute by Sir W. Macklin, Ibid.

⁸ Stimson to Atherton, Mar. 11, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 562-67.

the problem of Manchukuan recognition. The Foreign Office, reflecting this concern, noted on March 14; "While recognition was clearly out of the question for the time being, the obvious problem was to be that of the customs which were the security on the loans."⁹ British and American creditors of China stood to suffer if these funds were no longer forwarded to the central Chinese government, and China could not make the payments on her foreign indebtedness.

The maritime customs became intimately connected with the question of Manchukuan recognition after March 12, 1932. British and American failure to recognize Manchukuo made it difficult for these two countries to protest any diversion of the funds collected--- diversions made in the name of the independent state of Manchukuo. For London and Washington to address the Manchukuan government on the issue implied at least tacit recognition of that government. Not to protest only increased the probability that China would lose all of these funds. The British and American governments tried to solve the dilemma later on in 1932 by registering their complaints with Tokyo, but the Japanese consistently disclaimed responsibility, usually advising them to take the matter up with Manchukuan authorities.

Manchukuan recognition also hinged in part on the findings

⁹ Minute by Macklin, Mar. 14, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16157, No. F2457/1391/10.

of the Lytton Commission, established by the Assembly resolution of December 10, 1931.¹⁰ The report of this commission, not anticipated until the fall of 1932, was expected to go deeply into the whole question of Manchuria, including the establishment of Manchukuo, the role played by the Japanese in its creation, and the attitude toward the new state of the Chinese people in Manchuria. The report was also expected to make suggestions on how to resolve the dispute between Japan and China. Until completion of the investigation, therefore, any action taken by any League member would be premature. Even the Japanese were hopefully expected to wait until completion of the investigation before making their own decision on recognition. As for the United States, the presence of the American General McCoy on the Lytton Commission, although he served only as a private citizen in the service of the League, gave the Americans more than an abstract interest in the commission's findings.

In Washington's view, however, the overriding impediments to recognition were the self denying clauses of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty. The Kellogg-Briand Pact precluded the use of force as an "instrument of national

¹⁰ Minute by Orde, Mar. 14, 1932. Orde wrote: "We shall have to consider whether recognition can in any event ... be given pending the report of the Lytton Commission." B.F.O., Vol. 16158, No. F2533/1/10.

policy." The Japanese had clearly violated that pact by their use of military force in Manchuria, and Stimson had called this to the world's attention in the nonrecognition note. The terms of the Nine-Power Treaty, guaranteeing the political and territorial integrity of China, had also been implicitly incorporated in the note of January 7, 1932. The British, since that date, and especially following Stimson's effort to invoke it in February during the Shanghai crisis, fully understood the importance placed on the Nine-Power Treaty by the United States. The Foreign Office never lost sight of this treaty nor of the American attitude toward it, during the debate over Manchukuan recognition.

Without any prodding from London, Sir Francis Lindley on his own initiative referred to the Nine-Power Treaty in Tokyo on March 17, warning the Japanese of "the folly of attempting to set up an independent Manchurian state which no foreign Power will recognise and which will be regarded as a breach of the Nine Power Treaty."¹¹ Orde thought that Lindley, in

¹¹ Lindley to Simon, Mar. 17, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16158, No. F2602/1/10. Lindley, however, was not really sympathetic with the terms of the Nine-Power Treaty in regard to Manchuria, or with American policy toward Manchuria. Four days after making reference to the treaty at Tokyo he sent a message to London censuring Stimson's attitude on nonrecognition. After criticizing American Far Eastern policy in general, Lindley noted that the nonrecognition doctrine precluded recognition of any state which came into being as the result of force. A strict interpretation of this doctrine would forbid recognition of many of the modern states of the world.

While agreeing with much of Lindley's criticism of American

delivering this caution to Tokyo, was "sowing good seed."¹² On the following day Lindsay cabled from Washington that the State Department was "considering the desirability of pointing out to the other signatories of the Nine Power Treaty that recognition of the new state would constitute an infringement of the provisions of that treaty."¹³ All the early indications, therefore, pointed to possible British and American invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty if Japan supported Manchukuan independence.

Washington, however, never asked for formal invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty in regard to Manchukuan independence, although the existence of the treaty always remained in the background of Anglo-American discussions on the question. While London did not place the same emphasis on the treaty as Washington, Simon paid close attention to it in his desire to cooperate with the United States in the Far East. A brief drawn up in the Foreign Office on March 22,

policy, the British did not feel he was being fair to Stimson on this point. Philip Broad, a Far Eastern adviser, minuted on Lindley's cable: "In reality Mr. Stimson's statement in fact only amounts to a statement that no recognition can be given to any situation arrived at in clear violation of the Nine Power Treaty." Broad's minute dated April 26, 1932.

¹² Minute by Broad, Mar. 17, 1932, ibid.

¹³ Lindsay to Simon, Mar. 18, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16160, No. F2886/1/10.

1932, dealing with the general problem of Manchukuan recognition, concluded with a statement on the restraining effects on British policy of the Nine-Power Treaty:¹⁴

According to the principles which we have always pursued in the past, it would not be proper to recognise the new state until we are satisfied that it has definitely and permanently established its independence of China and has a responsible government which is in a position to provide for the administration of the territories which it claims to control, and to enter into relations with foreign states. It is particularly necessary to be cautious in the present case because of the existence of the Nine Power Treaty, since any premature recognition might constitute a violation of China's territorial and administrative integrity within the meaning of the treaty.

The British respect for the Nine-Power Treaty was derived in part from Simon's anxiety to cooperate with the United States in the Far East. While this desire for Anglo-American cooperation was a goal of British foreign policy in general, it seems to have been even more especially a goal of Sir John Simon's policy. Although he consistently failed to support any American actions that might jeopardize Anglo-Japanese relations, Simon usually went out of his way to try to convince Stimson that Britain and America faced the Far Eastern crisis together.

Simon maintained this posture of friendship and cooperation toward Stimson despite the increasingly low estimate of the American secretary held by many members of the Foreign

¹⁴ Foreign Office brief, Mar. 22, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16161, No. F3119/1/10.

Office and the British government, who considered Stimson incompetent, overemotional, and on Far Eastern matters enjoying neither the confidence of his own advisers nor of President Hoover.¹⁵ At the beginning of the Far Eastern crisis, British opinion of Stimson had not been unfavorable. By the early spring of 1932, however, expressions of contempt for Stimson are found fairly often in private British correspondence. Stimson sensed this growing lack of British confidence in himself, and attributed at least part of the failure of his Far Eastern policy to the fact that the British did not believe he could commit the United States to any strong action against Japan.¹⁶

The sharp limits on Stimson's Far Eastern policy, however, did not distress the Foreign Office. The British predicated their own Far Eastern policy on appeasement of Japan, even though Simon and some other British leaders occasionally de-

¹⁵ Ambassador Lindsay wrote on Mar. 23, 1932: "It is not easy to report a conversation with Mr. Stimson and to give the correct value to what he says. He speaks indistinctly, and in disjointed phrases; his command of language is not good and he frequently descends into vernacular expressions which are apt to give to his words a quality of violence that is not always intended...." Wellesley commented on this cable: "I have for a long time suspected that Mr. Stimson's make-up is very poor quality and this only serves to confirm this suspicion." Lindsay to Simon, Mar. 23, 1932, with minute by Wellesley, April 9, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16162, No. F3153/1/10.

¹⁶ Stimson, Diary, Mar. 29, 1932.

plored Japanese attacks on China. During 1932 London felt that it could predict with reasonable certainty that no American response to any Japanese action in Manchuria would go beyond diplomatic protest. Since this perfectly suited their own policy toward Japan, the British believed they could freely seek American support in the Far East, knowing that this support would not drag them further against Japan than they wished to go.¹⁷ This is why Sir John could have no qualms in telling Pratt on May 23, 1932, that it was British policy "to keep as far as possible in line with America."¹⁸

While trying to keep in line with the United States, however, the British practiced some deception on Stimson. Although he had been disappointed by British failure to support him on the nonrecognition note and in his later attempt to invoke the Nine-Power Treaty in February, 1932, Stimson continued to believe, at least until near the end of 1932, that the British sincerely wished to see Manchuria eventually returned to China. Great Britain, however, had really abandoned such a goal as early as December, 1931. After that date the major British objective in Manchuria was to see the area kept

¹⁷ There is an extraordinary letter in the Foreign Office files that points up just how much the British knew, or thought they knew, about American Far Eastern policy. For excerpts from this letter see Appendix I.

¹⁸ Simon to Pratt, May 23, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16170, No. F4384/1/10.

as peaceful as possible, regardless of who controlled it, in order to avoid any quarrel with Japan. The knowledge that Stimson lacked the power to obtain strong American support for any action aimed at frustrating Japanese ambitions in Manchuria gave the Foreign Office a sense of comfort. Pratt reported with some satisfaction on May 30, 1932:¹⁹

We need not allow ourselves to be dragged too far by Mr. Stimson. It is for the good of the world at large that Japan should succeed in her Manchurian programme--- now that she has definitely embarked on it--- and our aim should be to protect our own interests but to avoid exasperating Japan by a policy of pin pricks.

Unaware, however, that Britain had abandoned Manchuria to Japan by the end of 1931, Stimson tried during the spring and summer of 1932 to work out an Anglo-American policy that would deprive Japan of the fruits of her conquest, or perhaps even the conquest itself. Stimson's policies and tactics were vague since he could not go beyond whatever actions Hoover would approve. But within the severe limitations imposed by an almost pacifist president concerned mainly with fighting the depression, State Department advisers who consistently advocated caution in dealing with Japan, and an unaroused American public, Stimson strove to find some effective measures that Britain and the United States could take together. With this objective in mind he traveled to Europe in April, 1932.

¹⁹ Minute by Pratt, May 30, 1932, ibid., No. F4432/1/10.

While the ostensible reason for his European trip was to attend the General Disarmament Conference in Geneva as chairman of the American delegation, Stimson went primarily to confer with the British and to come to a meeting of the minds with them on the Far East. "The main object in going," he wrote on March 29, "would be to see whether I can have a meeting with the Englishmen and try to get a joint policy in regard to the Far East understood between us."²⁰ Stimson landed in Havre on April 15, spent the day at Paris conferring with French leaders, and traveled on to Geneva that same evening. There on the 16th he had a long talk with Simon on the Sino-Japanese situation.

Whatever Simon told him Stimson was convinced that the British leader agreed with American views on the Far East. It is difficult to determine from the available records, however, precisely what views Stimson gave the British secretary and what recommendations he made for joint action. Practically no information on the Far Eastern discussion was given to the press during the time that Stimson was in Geneva. At the conclusion of his first meeting with Simon, Stimson noted that Sir John "can hardly have had any doubt as to any part of my position and he gave me every ground for encouragement and none for discouragement as to his being in accord with

²⁰ Stimson, Diary, Mar. 29, 1932.

mine."²¹

While not revealing exactly what they said to each other about Japan and China, it is probable that Stimson urged Simon to stand by the principles of the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. In his book On Active Service in Peace and War, written with McGeorge Bundy, Stimson wrote that he "set himself at Geneva and through the remainder of his service as Secretary of State to the purpose of obtaining and maintaining a world judgment against Japan," which he hoped would ultimately induce the Japanese to leave Manchuria.²² This was a policy Simon could easily support since it involved no direct confrontation with Japan. Neither, at the same time, did it hold much likelihood of rolling back Japan in Manchuria. The American approach allowed Simon to please Stimson by affirming British support for his moral position against aggression, yet not offend the Japanese by directly opposing their conquest of Manchuria. It is little wonder that Simon gave his American colleague "every ground for encouragement and none for discouragement."²³

Although Stimson initially felt he had reached a good un-

²¹ Stimson, Diary, April 16, 1932.

²² Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Bros.), 258.

²³ Stimson also believed he had made a strong and favorable impression on MacDonald. Stimson, Diary, April 21, 1932.

derstanding with the British at Geneva, a feeling that soon evaporated, his European trip led indirectly to a severe discrediting of his efforts to build up world opposition to Japan in Manchuria. During his absence from Washington in May, President Hoover suddenly panicked at the thought that some people might believe that the United States was ready to impose sanctions on Japan. On April 7, 1932, Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas actually introduced a resolution in the Senate calling for a sanctions article to be added to the Kellogg-Briand pact.²⁴ The American Boycott Association and the Twentieth Century Fund, two organizations engaged in the study of international affairs, were agitating at the same time for an American boycott of Japanese goods. With Stimson unavailable for consultation, Hoover instructed Under Secretary of State Castle to make it clear to the world that the United States contemplated no such action. In two speeches, one delivered in New York on May 4, and one in Atlantic City on May 6, Castle declared that the United States government opposed any official boycott since this would certainly lead to war. Non-recognition, Castle affirmed, was the only administration policy in the present Sino-Japanese controversy.²⁵

²⁴ S.J. Res. 140, 72nd Cong., 1st session, April 7, 1932.

²⁵ New York Times, May 5 and 7, 1932.

When Stimson returned to Washington on May 16 he had some strong words with Castle about these two speeches.²⁶ He also spoke to Hoover, who justified his having ordered Castle to make the statement on the boycott because of his fear that Japan might fight the United States.²⁷ Stimson did not object to Hoover's refusal to approve a boycott or sanctions, understanding that such extreme action was out of the question. But he was disturbed because Japan could now be certain that her activities in China would not be met by anything more than a protest from the United States. He wrote Walter Lippmann in this vein on May 19; "A word unspoken is a sword in your scabbard, while a word spoken is a sword in the hands of your adversary."²⁸ Castle's speeches also probably removed any lingering doubts that might have remained in British minds as to the limits of American Far Eastern policy. Such a flat statement coming from such an important source as the American under secretary of state had to be taken as official.

Stimson's trip to Geneva, therefore, a journey he began

²⁶ Stimson, Diary, May 16, 1932.

²⁷ On May 19, Stimson spoke to Hoover about a boycott. Hoover told him that "he had gotten very nervous about the feeling excited in Japan while I was away and afraid that it might lead to some attack on us and thought that the best way to prevent it was to come out and say that we were not going to boycott them." Ibid., May 19, 1932.

²⁸ Quoted in Rappaport, Henry L. Stimson and Japan, 1931-33, 160.

with great optimism, had ended in frustration. This frustration, and the knowledge that the world knew of it, led him to refuse to take any diplomatic initiatives against Japan during the remaining months of his office as secretary of state. He had discovered, while in Europe, that no major power would oppose Japan in China. He complained that his own country "was opposed to sanctions; the President was opposed to sanctions; the major European nations... were opposed to sanctions. Only the power of moral judgment remained."²⁹ While not abandoning his efforts to win world opinion to his view that Japan was morally at fault in the Sino-Japanese dispute, Stimson's actions during the remainder of 1932 lacked the conviction and aggressiveness that marked his diplomacy up to the writing of the Borah letter on February 23, 1932.³⁰

While in Geneva Stimson had not been able to get the British to accept openly Japan's obvious responsibility for the creation of Manchukuo, a failure which belied his confidence

²⁹ Stimson and Bundy, On Active Service, 258.

³⁰ On Aug. 8, 1932, Stimson spoke before the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. In his speech he attacked aggression. When two states fight, he said, "we no longer draw a circle around them and treat them with the punctilio of the dueller's code. We denounce them as lawbreakers." He referred to Japan, though not using her name, as a "nation which sought to mask its imperialistic policy under the guise of defense of its nationals...." New York Times, Aug. 9, 1932.

that Simon and he saw eye to eye on the Far Eastern crisis. Without concrete evidence that Japan was behind the creation of independent Manchukuo, the British doubted that any protests to Tokyo on Manchukuo's activities would be acknowledged by the Japanese government. In Geneva Stimson had objected to the British position, and he continued to argue against it after his return to Washington. On May 27 he sent London a document, entitled "Evidence of Japanese initiative in the creation and practical control of the new administration of the 'independent State of Manchukuo.'" In line with his wish to remain in the background of events, however, Stimson cautioned Ambassador Andrew Mellon, who had recently taken over the London embassy from Dawes: "In handing this document to Sir John Simon please request him to keep in confidence the fact that the Department has furnished him and the British Foreign Office with this information."³¹ This warning to Mellon emphasized Stimson's reluctance, because of the opposition of Hoover and the American public in general, to take any further initiative against Japan, even to the extent of letting it be known that Washington was passing on documents concerning the creation of Manchukuo to London. Stimson hoped that the British would respond favorably and positively to the information, but he made no attempt to lead any world movement against recognition of Manchukuo.

³¹ Stimson to Mellon, May 27, 1932, F.R., 1932, III, 44.

Simon did not receive the State Department report on Manchukuo until June 8, when Atherton dropped it off at the Foreign Office. While recognizing the cogency of much of the information contained in the report, Sir John still maintained that even though "there could be no question that Japanese citizens had been very largely concerned in the matter, ... that it had seemed to me that it would be more difficult to establish the complicity of the Japanese Government."³² Simon was refusing, in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, to admit Japanese connivance in the creation of independent Manchukuo.

It is likely that the British would have continued to maintain this posture for some weeks or months longer had the problem of the Manchurian customs not suddenly become critical near the end of June. In the last week of June the Manchukuan government, under the authority of the Japanese commissioner of customs at Dairen, ceased forwarding any portion of that city's customs collection to the Chinese in Shanghai, where these funds had customarily been used to pay the amounts due on certain foreign loans.

The action moved the British to register a relatively strong, although as it developed, futile protest to Tokyo in which London took the position that Japan could no longer disavow re-

³² Memo of conversation between Simon and Atherton, June 8, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16171, No. F4720/1/10.

sponsibility for the new state. Lindley, on the 27th, expressed the "surprise and concern" of the British government over the Dairen incident. He told the Japanese that Great Britain would not countenance any action prejudicial to the integrity of the Chinese customs, for these funds were the security for China's foreign loans. Finally, he "expressed the viewpoint that the action of the Chinese authorities at Dairen is not calculated to promote the solution of a problem which all the interested powers are anxious to have settled."³³

Stimson was pleased that the British had finally awakened to the political realities in Manchukuo, but he feared that their action was too late. Stimson asked the United States government to make a similar protest at Tokyo, which Stimson agreed to do only reluctantly, for he wished to save his next protest to Japan for the time when the Japanese recognized Manchukuo. He found it encouraging, however, "to find the British waking up to a situation which we have been hammering them about ever since I was at Geneva and even before."³⁴ On the following day, after receiving the full details of Ambassador Lindley's protest in the Japanese capital, Stimson noted that the British were "now pushing ahead against Japan

³³ Memo of conversation between Atherton and Castle, June 27, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 115.

³⁴ Stimson, Diary, June 27, 1932.

harder than we are."³⁵

Stimson cooperated with Simon to the extent of instructing Ambassador Joseph C. Grew, who had replaced Forbes on June 6, on the 28th to follow the same line as his British colleague in making an official American protest on the customs question.³⁶ Tokyo declared its innocence in the matter, but promised to use its influence with the Manchukuan government to have the customary portion of the revenue forwarded to Shanghai for the use of the Chinese government.³⁷ Stimson's prediction that the protests had come too late, however, proved correct. The British continued to badger Tokyo over the next few weeks, and the Japanese continued to advance the "same time worn replies,"³⁸ until by mid-summer of 1932 the situation from the Anglo-American point of view had become hopeless. Manchukuo was using the customs duty for her own purposes. Rather than press the issue further, to the possible irritation of Japan, Britain simply ceased making further protests at Tokyo and accepted the matter as a fait accompli, while the United States, whose support of the pro-

³⁵ Ibid., June 28, 1932.

³⁶ Stimson to Grew, June 28, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 118.

³⁷ Memo of conversation between Stimson and Debuchi, June 29, 1932, F.R. Japan, 1931-1941, I, 91-92.

³⁸ Grew to Stimson, July 16, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV,

test had been lukewarm to begin with, also backed away from any further diplomatic action.

The British were also coming around, by the summer of 1932, to the belief that their recognition of Manchukuo as a sovereign state was inevitable, although still somewhat in the future. Their main efforts during July, August, and September were directed at persuading Japan to hold off recognition of Manchukuo, at least until completion of the Lytton Report. The Foreign Office inclined toward accepting Manchukuo as an independent, sovereign state. But concern over offending China and respect for the nonrecognition doctrine incorporated in the League's March 11 resolution, restrained this inclination. London believed, however, that recognition could not be held off forever, providing Manchukuo could demonstrate its political stability.³⁹

The source of the British attitude toward Manchukuo, an attitude shared by nearly all the Foreign Office advisers on the Far East, and by Simon himself, derived basically from the feeling that the Japanese were really justified in their complaints against China. Even in the most critical days of the Manchurian and Shanghai crises, when the Japanese military

³⁹ A minute by Orde on Sept. 20, 1932, noted a loophole in the Nine-Power Treaty. "The Washington Treaty," he wrote, does not forbid recognition as an independent state of a part of China which spontaneously breaks away...." B.F.O., Vol. 16177, No. F6877/1/10.

was running amuck, the British objected only to Japanese methods. They rarely criticized Japanese goals, even when these goals conflicted with the Nine-Power Treaty. With relative peace restored in the Shanghai area after May, 1932, and the Manchukuan customs collection question dying a natural death after July, London could more calmly reappraise the Far Eastern crisis in the absence of any outstanding conflicts in Anglo-Japanese relations. This reappraisal showed considerable sympathy for the Japanese position. A private letter written in August by a Reuters press agency correspondent in China, Captain M. D. Kennedy, a copy of which was forwarded to the Foreign Office, briefly traced the crisis from the Japanese point of view, a view that the British felt was frequently misunderstood by critics of Japan. The letter stated in part:⁴⁰

Without in any way condoning Japan's actions "in toto," I frankly hold Geneva and the Powers to blame for much that has happened. Japan by her actions has undoubtedly done much to damage her own case; but if only the League and America had a better understanding of both Japanese and Chinese psychology, they would never have acted in the way they have done, but would have insisted at the very outset that the two countries settle their troubles by direct negotiation. Instead of this, of course, China was led to realize that she could escape the consequences of her own misdeeds and follies by getting others to fight her battles for her, while the Japanese, who are always seen to their worst advantage when they think---rightly or wrongly--- that they are being misjudged and mistreated, were led into believing that they could expect no real justice or understanding from the Western Powers.

⁴⁰ Ingram at Peking to Simon, Aug. 5, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16178, No. F6949/1/10.

Kennedy's sentiments were well received in the Foreign Office, Pratt noting that "Captain Kennedy expresses a view that is very generally held,"⁴¹ With few deviations, and none of great consequence, the British for the remainder of the year attempted to demonstrate to the Japanese that they could obtain "justice" from the western powers, or at least from Great Britain. Atherton reported to Washington at the end of August that "during the last five days the Publicity Department of the Foreign Office had laid stress on the difficulty of the Japanese position in Manchuria, adding that her special interests there had in reality been recognized by the world since the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, although this fact seems to have been overlooked by many critics of Japan in the train of events since September 18 of last year."⁴²

A major test of British friendship for Japan began developing at the end of August, when the Japanese took the first step toward recognizing Manchukuo, an action that the British had tried to get them to postpone until release of the Lytton Report. On August 25 Count Uchida, the Japanese foreign minister, declared before the Japanese Diet in Tokyo that the only way to solve the Manchurian problem was for Japan to recognize Manchukuo.

⁴¹ Minute by Pratt, Sept. 26, 1932, ibid.

⁴² Atherton to Stimson, Aug. 25, 1932, F. R., 1932, IV, 200-07.

American reaction to the speech, though moderate, came quickly. While not formally protesting the action, the State Department expressed its "sorrow" to the Japanese embassy in Washington. Castle told the Japanese charge that it was very difficult to believe that an independent Manchukuo expressed the will of the Manchurian people, and that "everyone admitted that if the Japanese Army should leave Manchukuo now the state would not last a moment."⁴³

On the following day Atherton sought London's reaction to Uchida's speech. Wellesley, in charge of the Foreign Office during Simon's absence from London, gave Atherton a vague answer to his question about what the British thought of Uchida's statement that no treaty obligations prevented the Manchurian people from seceding from China. Wellesley pointed out that for years Manchuria "had in fact been a separate entity in all but name from China, and that the Chinese Government had made no attempt to maintain order there, and it would be difficult to disprove that the Manchukuo Government was set up in conformity with the wishes of the Manchurian people, as alleged by Tokyo." In any case, Wellesley stated flatly, Britain would take "no attitude" on the matter until the Lytton Report had been released.⁴⁴

⁴³ Memo of conversation between Castle and the Japanese charge, Aug. 24, 1932, ibid., 206.

⁴⁴ Atherton to Stimson, Aug. 25, 1932, ibid., 206-09.

In accord with their policy of not antagonizing Japan by "pin pricks," the British neatly avoided making any statement on Japanese recognition of Manchukuo by marking time until presentation of the Lytton Report. This, naturally, fitted in well with Japanese designs, although it is doubtful that Japan would have acted otherwise had the British reaction been firmer. Their haste to recognize Manchukuo sprang from the knowledge that the Lytton Report would not condone their Manchurian venture, and would probably make suggestions which, if carried out, would return Manchuria to Chinese sovereignty. As Wellesley acknowledged to Atherton, Japan wished to present a fait accompli to the League of Nations before the report could even be discussed.⁴⁵

The League commissioners put their signatures to the Lytton Report at Peking on September 4, 1932. Formal presentation to the League Assembly was scheduled for October 1, after which it would be made public. On September 15, however, Japan and Manchukuo signed a treaty by which Japan gave diplomatic recognition to the new state.⁴⁶ Since Japan did not formally notify any other nations of this treaty, there was no need for the United States or Great Britain to take cognizance of the action. The State Department decided, for the present at least, to neither recognize nor make public any comment on

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ A copy of this treaty can be found in ibid., 253-54.

the incident.⁴⁷ The British were similarly reticent, Simon merely remarking that the Foreign Office was uncertain what reply, if any, would be made in the event that Japan sent formal notification of the treaty to London.⁴⁸

The imminent release of the Lytton Report superseded in importance and interest even the Japanese action in recognizing Manchukuo. Stimson was delighted that the report was expected to find against Japan in the dispute. "It seems to me," he wrote, "to be an epoch making document. It is unanimous. It finds against the Japanese on all the important issues"⁴⁹ Despite his pleasure at the anticipated results, however, Stimson hesitated to involve the United States in any action that the League might take on the report. During the next several weeks Washington made no attempt to influence either Geneva or London, preferring to stay very much out of the forefront of events.

The British, for their part, were also content to remain diplomatically inactive on Manchukuo until the League debated the report. When the question arose in the Foreign Office over notifying Washington of British intentions to work exclusively

⁴⁷Stimson to Atherton, Sept. 17, 1932, ibid., 262.

⁴⁸Atherton to Stimson, Sept. 16, 1932, ibid., 249-50.

⁴⁹Stimson, Diary, Sept. 26, 1932.

through the League when the report came in, rather than trying to work out a joint response with the United States, Orde strongly advised against volunteering any information "unless Stimson asked for British views." He further advised; "In so far as blame must be expressed either by the League or by the Nine Powers at Washington, we should not take the lead against Japan and should use our influence in favor of a moderate and dignified expression of sorrow rather than a strong reproof or demands which Japan cannot accept." Simon and Wellesley strongly supported Orde's recommendations.⁵⁰

Sir Francis Lindley also warned against any strong British action that might stem from the findings of the report. Arrival of the report in Geneva coincided with receipt in London of a long dispatch from the British ambassador emphasizing, in alarming detail, the danger presented to British Far Eastern interests by an aroused Japan. Lindley's dispatches were usually well received in the Foreign Office and sometimes considerably influenced British decisions. While the information contained in this particular dispatch said very little that was new, it prompted much Foreign Office discussion for it came at the same time that the Lytton Report was being released in Geneva. Lindley's dispatch, received in London on

⁵⁰ Minute by Orde, Sept. 13, 1932, including additional comments by Wellesley, Sept. 13, 1932, and Simon, Sept. 17, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16177, No. F7103/1/10.

October 1, offered the following assessment of the crisis:⁵¹

The task before Geneva is bound to be most difficult and complicated. The Council of the Assembly must deal with it as they can; and my duty lies only in advising to the best of my ability His Majesty's Government whose stake and influence in the Far East outweigh those of any other European country. And I would earnestly beg them to consider the effects on the British position of alienating the most powerful nation in the Far East, with whom our interests harmonized so closely in the immediate past as to give rise to an alliance beneficial to both countries; and, before that position is endangered, I would ask them to examine in the light of past experience the relative value of the good-will of Japan and of that of a handful of Chinese politicians who are here today and gone tomorrow; and to examine critically the advantages likely to be gained by following a line laid down by America which, like England in the days of Palmerston, is so invulnerable that she can with perfect impunity indulge in the loftiest sentiments of humanity when her own interests are not involved. I should be doing less than my duty did I conceal from you my conviction that, by a sympathetic handling of this problem, we now have the chance of gaining the friendship of the only nation in the Far East whose future is, as far as we can judge, reasonably assured and whose power to injure us is almost unbounded. This seems to me a tangible asset worth more than any nebulous advantages we are likely to gain elsewhere.

Pratt minuted this dispatch on October 3:⁵²

Few people will deny that the handling of the Sino-Japanese dispute by the League during their October session of last year was neither wise nor statesman-like.... A summary of the Lytton Report is published in today's press and copies should reach us in a day or two. In this timely dispatch Sir F. Lindley recalls the mistakes of last October and urges that in our action on this report we should be guided by the realities of the situation in the Far East and not solely by judicial considerations. This is sound advice. It is fair however to remember that it is the senselessly provocative actions of the Japanese themselves that are the chief obstacles to the adoption of a just and conciliatory policy towards them. Just as last year the bombing

⁵¹ Lindley to Simon, Aug. 30, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16178, No. F7103/1/10.

⁵² Minute by Pratt, ibid.

of Chinchow in the last week of October, in defiance of all promises, inflamed League opinion against Japan, so now Japan has chosen by her hasty recognition of Manchukuo to cut the ground from under the Lytton Report. Nevertheless the aim of our policy should be to avoid the mistakes of October 1931.

Orde considered Pratt's advice "unquestionably the right course."⁵³ Simon also signified his approval of the policy outlined by Pratt, but added that Britain should "try to keep in touch and in line with the United States while pursuing the policy indicated."⁵⁴

Simon carefully followed his own recommendation of keeping "in touch" with the United States during the debate over the Lytton Report. In view of Stimson's later criticism of Simon's role in the League debates on the report,⁵⁵ during which the British foreign minister displayed a very understanding attitude toward Japan, it is instructive to point out that London kept no secrets from Washington on its basic approach toward the Lytton Report. As early as September 15 Ambassador Mellon reported that the British intended to help Japan get an extension of time to consider the report, and that they would use "their influence to prevent an abrupt judgment against Japan if such action should be urged by the small nations." The

⁵³ Minute by Orde, ibid.

⁵⁴ Minute by Simon, Oct. 7, 1932, ibid.

⁵⁵ Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 223-24.

British felt they could justify taking this position since Japan had overextended herself militarily and economically in Manchuria, and would soon be forced to compromise with China, "unless Japanese sentiment is excited by undue severity shown her at Geneva."⁵⁶ Simon repeated much this same argument on October 24 in the presence of Norman Davis and Ray Atherton stipulating, however, that Great Britain would eventually recommend League adoption of the report.⁵⁷

During this same conversation on the 24th, Simon also raised the question whether or not the United States contemplated taking action against Japan under the Nine-Power Treaty. Davis responded that since the League was handling the conflict, it should continue to do so. As for the Nine-Power Treaty and possible action under it, Davis replied that the question had not "arisen up to the present moment."⁵⁸ Nothing in these conversations indicated that the Americans misunderstood the British position, or that the United States urged any particular action on Great Britain during the coming League debate on the Lytton Report.

⁵⁶ Mellon to Stimson, Sept. 14, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 244-45.

⁵⁷ Memo by Foreign Office of meeting among Simon, Eden, Orde, Pratt, Davis, Atherton, Lytton, Oct. 26, 1932, ibid., 326-33.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Also see minute of conversation between Simon and Davis, Oct. 26, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16180, No. F7724/1/10.

After granting Japan, at British urging, a six weeks postponement in order to study the report more closely, the League Assembly began discussions on December 6, 1932. The small nations, as the British had feared might happen, initially took the lead in supporting the conclusions of the Lytton Report and recommending that the League refuse to recognize the independence of Manchukuo. Japan's operations in Manchuria and Shanghai, several of the smaller states maintained, could not be considered as legitimate acts of self defense, clearly implying that they were acts of aggression. Judging from the speeches made during the first day of the Assembly debate, it seemed as if Japan would be resoundingly condemned for her aggression against China. ⁵⁹

On the following day, however, Simon took the floor and tried to inspire some sympathy and support for Japan. He emphasized, in his speech to the Assembly, those portions of the Lytton Report that were critical of China, such as her anti-foreign propoganda and the boycott, and avoided mentioning any of the conclusions of the report critical of Japan. Simon suggested that conciliation between the two sides, rather than a mutual exchange of emotional accusations, should be vigorously encouraged by the Assembly members. He proposed that to foster this conciliation the Committee of Nineteen, established by the Assembly's March 11 resolution, be given the report to study. This committee should try to work out

⁵⁹ Gilbert to Stimson, Dec. 7, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 393-94.

a solution to the Manchurian problem before the Assembly voted either to adopt the report or to make a decision on Manchukuan recognition. He also proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union, as interested parties, be invited to join this Committee of Nineteen in its deliberations.⁶⁰

Simon's speech delighted the Japanese delegation. Matsuoko declared that the British foreign secretary had made a "wonderful speech... putting into excellent English what he, himself, had been trying to say here for the past three weeks."⁶¹ The next day Simon met with both the Chinese and Japanese representatives at Geneva, holding "the same language with both of them." He assured them that Britain was devoting herself "first and foremost to providing an atmosphere of conciliation." The British "did not wish to take sides but to promote agreement." At the same time, however, Simon did not want it to be thought that Britain was "indifferent to the breach of the Covenant which had occurred." Britain staunchly supported the League and the Covenant and "had not withdrawn from this position and no mistake could be greater than to suppose that we should do so."⁶²

⁶⁰ Wilson to Stimson, Dec. 8, 1932, *ibid.*, 403-04

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Simon to Foreign Office, Dec. 8, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16183, No. F8521/1/10.

Simon's suggestion that an American join the Committee of Nineteen for discussions on the Lytton Report was in keeping with his policy of conciliation. He urged the Japanese to assent to the proposal because it seemed to him "much better to associate the United States with work of conciliation than to leave American critics to comment from the outside."⁶³

Simon had not reckoned, however, on the adverse effect of his Assembly speech on Washington. Stimson was furious at Sir John's attempt to play an even hand between Japan and China, instead of immediately making a declaration supporting the Lytton Report and condemning the Japanese recognition of Manchukuo. He noted angrily in his diary on December 12; "Simon has made a rotten speech and has upset the whole thing on the part of Great Britain, and it looks as if Japan is likely to get away with very easy treatment. I am trying to stiffen it all I can."⁶⁴ And on the 15th he wrote; "The whole question is whether or not the League will do its duty as to principles before they start conciliation. Simon has taken a very weak position, as it seems to me, on this and he has influenced the others."⁶⁵

Stimson tried to "stiffen" Simon by refusing to join the

⁶³ Ibid., Dec. 9, 1932, Vol. 16183, No. F8573/1/10.

⁶⁴ Stimson, Diary, Dec. 12, 1932.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Dec. 15, 1932.

Committee of Nineteen until Britain declared explicitly that she did not recognize the new state of Manchukuo. Simon refused to accept this condition for American membership, but he assured Norman Davis that Britain had no immediate intention of granting such recognition. Since Manchukuo did not fulfil the requirements for an independent state it would be "academic" even to discuss the question, although no British administration could bind its successors forever on such a matter. The immediate object, Simon emphasized to Davis, was to promote "conciliation."⁶⁶

The fundamental difference between Washington and London on the Lytton Report, therefore, came down to a question of whether conciliation between Japan and China should be attempted before or after acceptance of the report, and before or after Britain and the League had voted nonrecognition of Manchukuo. Once committed to trying conciliation first, however, the British felt they could not turn back, in spite of American objections. Simon believed that one last hard effort should be made to resolve the dispute before forcing a showdown with Japan in the League of Nations.

Unfortunately for Simon's plan, however, neither Japan nor China cooperated in any efforts at conciliation. The Chinese wholly condemned his December 7 speech, rightly charging him with "having cited all points in the Lytton Report favorable

⁶⁶ Simon to Foreign Office, Dec. 8, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16183, No. F8524/1/10; Wilson to Stimson, Dec. 8, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 403-04.

to Japan and omitted all those favorable to the Chinese." The Chinese were also uttering "veiled threats... regarding unwisdom of Great Britain in antagonizing China where she has such big commercial interests."⁶⁷

Despite Matsuoka's enthusiastic comments in Geneva, Simon's speech did not get a much better reception in Japan than in China. The Japanese would not consider any further League mediation or conciliation on Manchuria. Lindley believed that only the initial portion of the Lytton Report, the chapters without the sharp criticism of Japan contained in the last two chapters, should be approved by the League. He advised Simon to abandon his proposals for conciliation before the Japanese became exasperated. "My recommendation," he concluded, "is based on the supposition that the British Empire is not prepared to face war."⁶⁸

The Foreign Office felt, however, that to abandon the conciliation effort would be to invite greater disaster with the League. "We have ourselves so strongly advocated conciliation," Orde declared, "in order to avert a more anti-Japanese procedure that we, in particular, could hardly propose to abandon it without looking foolish and incurring a much stronger charge of being pro-Japanese than has already been brought against us,

⁶⁷ Ingram (Nanking) to Simon, Dec. 13, 1932, B.F.O., Vol. 16184, No. F8612/1/10.

⁶⁸ Lindley to Simon, Dec. 18, 1932, Ibid., No. F8687/1/10.

and the result would probably be a return to a more violent procedure by the Assembly." Besides, Orde added, Ambassador Lindley was "running rather ahead of the worst possibilities."⁶⁹ The British decided to keep working, at least for a while longer, for conciliation through the Committee of Nineteen. They did not wish to offend Japan needlessly, but neither did they believe that Lindley had properly assessed Japanese opinion.

After his initial opposition to American participation on the Committee of Nineteen, unless Britain first publicly declared against Manchukuan recognition, Stimson gradually lessened his resistance to the idea. Simon tried to persuade him that nothing but confusion would arise if conciliation were attempted in an atmosphere of mutual denunciation. He insisted that no difference in principle existed between the British and American positions, since each upheld the moral doctrines of the League, although a slight difference might exist over procedure. That procedure, in Sir John's opinion, called for at least one more try at conciliation before the Assembly considered the Lytton Report. He hoped for American participation in this effort.⁷⁰

While gaining Stimson's reluctant approval of American membership on the Committee of Nineteen, however, Simon could not

⁶⁹ Minute by Orde, Dec. 19, 1932, ibid.

⁷⁰ Edge to Stimson, Dec. 14, 1932, F.R., 1932, IV, 420-22.

get the Japanese to agree. Without Japanese approval Stimson refused to join in. In all probability, Tokyo's rejection of American membership did not displease the American secretary, who was really far from eager to assign an American to the Committee of Nineteen, but who felt he could not honorably withhold this assistance from the League of Nations. As it developed, the Japanese never consented to admitting either the United States or the Soviet Union to the committee, which meant that the League made its last serious effort to mediate the Sino-Japanese dispute over Manchuria without direct American assistance.⁷¹

It is doubtful, however, if American membership on the Committee of Nineteen would have altered the outcome of the League's final deliberations. But British efforts to involve the United States illustrate the change in American policy since the ambitious attempt by Stimson in October 1931 to push the League in the direction favored by the United States. During the first months of the crisis the United States had played an active and positive part in winning world support for censuring Japanese aggression in China. Failure of this policy led to a reaction in Washington against taking any further diplomatic leads; either with the League, with Great Britain, or unilaterally. During the last months of the Assembly debate on the dispute, while the League considered the Lytton Report, it was

⁷¹ For Stimson's views on the conciliation efforts of the Committee of Nineteen see Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 225.

Britain which had the largest influence in the formation of League policy, an outgrowth of British determination to support the League while at the same time keeping to a minimum any League action against Japan. The distinction is important, for the Americans normally took a much dimmer view of Japan's activities in China than the British. The British were able, therefore, to delay action on the Lytton Report until their effort at conciliation through the Committee of Nineteen had obviously failed. The smaller powers in the League Assembly, helpless without big power support, and not provided any longer with the American moral leadership that had led to invocation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the nonrecognition resolution of March 11, 1932, had to wait patiently until Britain was ready to admit failure of the conciliation attempt and announce readiness to go ahead with a vote on the Lytton Report. Had the United States continued a more active involvement in League affairs this vote might have come sooner. The result, however, considering the determination of Japan to resist League interference in Manchuria, would probably have been the same.

Such were the circumstances that the British, who had tried so earnestly to avoid a League showdown with Japan over Manchuria, were forced to acknowledge by the middle of January, 1933, that conciliation had failed. Simon was partly prompted to announce this decision by Stimson, who told him through

Atherton on January 13 that, in the American opinion, conciliation had been futile and that "now is the time to discuss the next situation." Far from being restrained in China by the conciliation effort, the Japanese were moving troops south of Manchuria into the province of Jehol and were threatening Peking and Tientsin south of the Great Wall. Stimson considered this move a "matter of grave concern," and that any "action by the Powers must be coordinated within the League." He did not, however, mention how the United States would contribute to this coordinated action.⁷²

Simon answered Stimson three days later. "As regards the Manchurian situation," he wrote the American secretary, "my information is that the effort which the League has been making to find a basis for conciliation is likely to fail." He did not regret that the effort had been made, but he agreed with Stimson that further action had now to be taken, and quickly. "I think," Simon declared, "that the League has no other course before it but to adopt the Lytton Report."⁷³

Adoption of the Lytton Report, however, immediately raised the question of what effect this action would have on Japan. The British believed that in the near future, as the debate over Manchukuo reached a climax, Japan would either be ex-

⁷² Memo of conversation between Stimson and Atherton, Jan. 13, 1933, F.R., 1933, III, 54-57.

⁷³ Mellon to Stimson, Jan. 16, 1933, ibid., 88-90.

pelled from the League or decide to leave it on her own. Of the two possibilities they considered that "it would be much better that Japan should leave the League than that we should have to expel her."⁷⁴ Pratt summed up the problem for Britain in a memorandum on January 17, 1933.⁷⁵

We shall only be able effectively to head off a demand for the expulsion of Japan by showing that we are prepared to join in a dignified and quite unequivocal condemnation of her action. We shall run, of course, a risk of antagonizing Japan, but antagonizing Japan in this way and to this extent, namely, by vindicating the sanctity of international obligations, would probably not result in any very great damage to our material interests, whereas if we do not go at least thus far our moral prestige which is the real basis of our position in China would be destroyed and the eventual damage to our material interests would be far greater. Moreover unless we take the bold and simple course of condemning Japan we shall run the far graver risks of weakening the League and alienating America.

At this climactic moment, therefore, the British decided to go with the League and the United States in condemning Japan. Their anxiety to keep Japan in the League was not as great as their anxiety to preserve the prestige of the League, a prestige they hoped might someday be useful in preserving peace in other parts of the world. Remaining on good terms with the Americans, who wanted to see Japan censured by the League, also strongly influenced the British decision to end the conciliation effort and proceed with the vote on the Lytton Report.

⁷⁴ Minute by Cadogan, Jan. 17, 1933, B.F.O., Vol. 17074, No. F392/33/10.

⁷⁵ Memo by Pratt, Jan. 17, 1933, ibid.

All that remained before the Assembly voted on the report, a vote that would undoubtedly extend the nonrecognition principle to Manchukuo, was some assurance that the United States would publicly support the League's action. On February 6, 1933, the Committee of Nineteen unanimously decided to recommend to the Assembly "not merely non-recognition in law" of Manchukuo, "but non-cooperation with it in practice." Anthony Eden assumed that the United States would approve both these steps, which he classified as "negative actions," but wondered if the Americans would go beyond them into the area of sanctions. Hugh Wilson told Eden flatly, however, that he "questioned decidedly whether my government would be willing to go beyond and into the realm of positive sanctions," adding that, in his opinion, "the League should look carefully ahead as to where the path might lead before entering on the way of sanctions." He told Eden, however, that he could not speak for the Roosevelt administration which would be coming into office in a few weeks.⁷⁶

On February 17 the Committee of Nineteen made formal presentation of its report to the Assembly, recommending adoption of the Lytton Report and nonrecognition of Manchukuo. Simon made one last effort to associate the United States in the procedure by asking Stimson to publicly endorse the Committee's report before the Assembly voted on it. But Stimson backed away

⁷⁶ Wilson to Stimson, Feb. 7, 1933, F.R., 1933, III, 152; Stimson to Wilson, Feb. 7, 1933, ibid., 152-54.

from such an endorsement, telling Simon that he thought such a public statement by the United States, before Assembly action, "would be most highly unwise both from our standpoint and from the standpoint of the nations in the League.... I said that if we should do so, it would inevitably be seized upon by Japan as evidence that the United States was behind the whole movement of the Assembly and was now seeking to impose its will upon the Assembly in the adoption of this report." Such action might also cause resentment among some members of the League, who could rightly consider it an unwarranted interference with the League by an outside power.⁷⁷ Stimson for months now had finished trying to lead Britain and the League on the Manchurian crisis. His failure to win a strong condemnation of Japan, either in the League or in his own country, had frustrated him to the point where he no longer wished to associate himself with diplomatic initiatives against Japan. He would certainly support the conclusions of the Lytton Report, but not before they were officially adopted by the Assembly, and he would not go beyond the moral condemnation of Japan, a step he had previously taken unilaterally in his January 7 note, and in the Borah letter of February 23, 1932.

There seemed little doubt that the Assembly would adopt

⁷⁷ Memo by Stimson of conversation with Osborne, Feb. 18, 1933, ibid., 186-87.

the recommendations of the Committee of Nineteen, despite the effect that this would have on Japanese membership in the League. On February 21 Setsuzo Sawada, director of the Japanese Bureau of the League of Nations, told Hugh Wilson in Geneva that adoption of the resolution would mean Japan's departure from the League.⁷⁸ No one believed that Sawada was bluffing.

The League Assembly, however, now with the full support of Great Britain, was not deterred by this threat. For several weeks the British had accepted this Japanese action as inevitable following adoption of the Lytton Report. Even a last-minute and desperately worded cable from Lindley in Tokyo could not sway them from their determination. Lindley's cable arrived in London on February 23, the day before the Assembly voted. It read:⁷⁹

The League has now been dealing with this question since September 1931 and direct consequence of its activities has been conversion of local quarrel to a world disturbance which now threatens to develop into a world war.

If the League wishes to survive I suggest most respectfully that all efforts at Geneva should be directed to finding good reason for doing nothing more. His Majesty's Government would then be free to take measures essential to defence of British interests.

It was an indication of British determination to censure Japan, regardless of consequences, that Lindley's warnings

⁷⁸ Wilson to Stimson, Feb. 21, 1933, ibid., 190-91.

⁷⁹ Lindley to Simon, Feb. 23, 1933, B.F.O., Vol. 17077, No. F1200/33/10.

and suggestions went unheeded. One Foreign Office adviser commented on the cable: "Perhaps this is hardly suitable for repetition to Geneva!" Orde agreed that it should not be forwarded to the British delegation at Geneva, since it would be misleading, an example of Lindley probably exaggerating the consequences of British and League action. He thought that an answer to Lindley was "hardly required."⁸⁰ Britain was going to vote for adoption of the Lytton Report and nonrecognition of Manchukuo.

The League Assembly adopted the Lytton Report on February 23, 1932, with Japan casting the only dissenting vote. While the Assembly resolution did not specifically call for nonrecognition of Manchukuo, it implied this action by accepting the Lytton Commission's recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria. On the following day Stimson gave "general endorsement" to the principles enunciated in both the Lytton Report and the League resolution adopting that report.⁸¹ The tone of his endorsement, however, was temperate and conciliatory, a restraint that the Japanese recognized and approved.⁸² Stimson apparently wished to avoid any unnecessary friction with Japan during his last few weeks in office.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Stimson to Wilson, Feb. 25, 1933, F.R., Japan, 1931-1941, I, 115-16.

⁸² Memo by Stimson of conversation with Debuchi, Feb. 27, 1933, ibid., 116-17.

The British, however, were not quite finished acting on the Sino-Japanese dispute. Near the end of February they suddenly imposed an embargo on the shipment of war materials to Japan and China. Their motives are not entirely clear, though it appears that they simply believed that a world-wide restriction on the sale of arms and ammunition to the contending parties would reduce the magnitude of the conflict. For such an embargo to be effective, of course, general support had to be won from the other large countries, and especially the United States.

On February 24 the British asked what Washington thought of an arms embargo against China and Japan. Stimson told Ambassador Lindsay that the moment for such a step seemed all wrong, because an indiscriminate embargo against both China and Japan would reduce the force of the moral judgment being made against Japan at the League of Nations. Furthermore, Congress had passed no legislation allowing the American government to impose such an embargo. Stimson also wondered if an embargo might not be more harmful to China than to Japan, since the Japanese had a much greater capacity to produce weapons of war.⁸³ The British, Stimson made it clear, could expect no cooperation from the Hoover administration on an embargo of weapons against Japan and China.

⁸³ Memo by Stimson of conversation with Lindsay, Feb. 24, 1933, F.R., 1933, III, 204-05.

Without American support it seemed pointless for Great Britain to go ahead with such an action on her own. Surprisingly, however, Simon announced to Parliament on February 27 that the British government was no longer authorizing the export of arms to either Japan or China as of that date. His announcement was not well received either by the British public or by members of Parliament. The Liberals criticized the action on the grounds that it dealt impartially with the two powers when in reality Japan was the aggressor. The Conservatives and the larger part of the British public saw in it a danger of involving Britain in the Far Eastern embroglio, an involvement they decidedly wished to avoid. Simon had qualified his announcement of the embargo, however, by adding that he did not "intend my own country to get into trouble about it," a qualification that momentarily placated most of his critics.⁸⁴

But over the next two weeks opposition to the embargo became widespread in Britain, because no other nations were instituting embargoes of their own. From Tokyo Lindley reported that the Japanese believed that the embargo had been imposed to "please America," an accusation that the Foreign Office correctly and vigorously denied.⁸⁵ Under these pressures Simon

⁸⁴ Mellon to Stimson, Feb. 28, 1933, ibid., 217-18.

⁸⁵ Lindley to Simon, Mar. 2, 1933, with minute by Allen, Mar. 3, 1933, B.F.O., Vol. 17078, No. F1413/33/10.

announced in Parliament on March 6 that, since there was no indication of general international support for the embargo, the British government was seriously reconsidering its decision.⁸⁶

As part of this reconsideration Simon made a last attempt to draw the United States into the action. Stimson told him once again, however, that lacking legislation giving President Hoover authority to take such a step, the American government could not oblige Great Britain; and there seemed little chance of such legislation being passed in the near future.⁸⁷ The British considered no further. On March 13 Stanley Baldwin, Parliamentary leader of the Conservative Party, announced in the House of Commons that as of that date the embargo on arms shipments to Japan and China had been lifted.

The last action by the British to influence the course of the Sino-Japanese dispute over Manchuria coincided with Japan's formal withdrawal from the League of Nations, and a sharp decrease of Anglo-American cooperation in the Far East. Japan gave notice of her intention to leave the League on March 27, 1933. Even before this date, however, Britain and the United

⁸⁶ British embassy to State Department, Mar. 6, 1933, F.R., 1933, III, 225-26.

⁸⁷ Wilson to Stimson, Mar. 11, 1933, ibid., 232-33; State Department to British embassy, Mar. 11, 1933, ibid., 231-32; Stimson to Wilson, Mar. 11, 1933, ibid., 233-34.

States, frustrated in both their joint and unilateral efforts to solve the Far Eastern problem, had all but abandoned trying to work with each other in a common policy. Atherton reported the British attitude in a message from London on March 9, 1933:⁸⁸

England desires to take no individual action in the Far Eastern crisis. In this she is supported by like opinion on the part of France, both countries being willing to lose their individual identity in association with the work of the League of Nations. Accordingly, the Cabinet prefers cooperation with the United States under the aegis of the League of Nations to any purely Anglo-American policy.

The Roosevelt administration, which came into office on March 4, 1933, an administration that would spend its first months dealing almost solely with domestic depression problems, showed a similar disinclination to work out a common Anglo-American Far Eastern policy. Hornbeck, kept over in his State Department position by the Roosevelt administration, defined the American attitude for Cordell Hull, the new secretary of state, in a memorandum on April 24, 1933:⁸⁹

Both Great Britain and France are members of the League of Nations. The responsibility of both, especially the British, in connection with this whole matter is greater than ours; their willingness to cooperate during the past twenty months has been less to be relied upon than has ours; and the Japanese have taken less unkindly to exertions on the part of the foreign powers initiated by them than to the like initiated by us. It therefore is believed that the Pres-

⁸⁸ Atherton to Hull, Mar. 9, 1933, S.D. 793.94/6074.

⁸⁹ Hornbeck to Hull, April 24, 1933, S.D. 793.94/6206.

ident and the Secretary of State, if approached by the British or the French on this subject should be prepared to discuss it, but unless so approached should avoid discussion of it. In other words, any initiative taken in connection with discussion here and now of this question should be British and/or French and not American.

The Japanese conquest of Manchuria, therefore, while not recognized by Great Britain and the United States, was not to be further actively opposed by them either. The independent state of Manchukuo, an obvious creation of the Japanese military, in part owed its precarious existence through the 1930's to the passive British and American attitudes. Not until the fall of Japan in 1945 would Manchuria revert to Chinese control.

As the Roosevelt administration came into office in March, 1933, therefore, the prospects of Anglo-American cooperation in the Far Eastern crisis were almost nonexistent. If Britain cooperated with the United States in the Far East it would have to be through the League of Nations. As for the Americans, they were willing to "discuss" Far Eastern problems, but only if first approached by the British. The tragedy of this situation would not be clear until later on in the decade.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

British and American efforts, either unilateral, in conjunction with each other, or through the League of Nations, only partially frustrated Japanese ambitions in China during the period 1931-1933. While in retrospect it is tempting to condemn Great Britain and the United States for failing to stop the Japanese aggression, it is difficult to say what stronger action they could have taken. Fighting economic depressions at home and in the world, and subject to public opinions which demanded a peaceful solution to the crisis, neither country could wage war against Japan for the sake of Manchuria. And as the crisis deepened toward the end of 1931, it became increasingly apparent that only military action or economic sanctions against Japan could prevent China's loss of Manchuria. Such action, however, could not be taken.

Henry Stimson, Lord Reading, Sir John Simon, and the British and American Far Eastern diplomats and officials, were subject to powerful domestic restraints on their policies. Although Stimson, Reading and Simon all had their moments of extreme anger against Japan, each realistically understood and submitted to these restraints. The overwhelming majorities in each country consistently opposed any action that might lead to war against Japan. Any Anglo-American cooperation, therefore, had to be carefully worked into the framework of British and American public opinion.

But within this framework, it must be asked, did the State Department and the Foreign Office make the most of the opportunities offered them for cooperation? In closely studying the answer to this question a definite pattern of failure emerges. The willingness of one government to cooperate in taking strong action against Japan was in inverse proportion to the willingness of the other. Each government acted as a brake on the other, so that at no time during the crisis were both the United States and Great Britain willing to apply simultaneously their maximum possible diplomatic pressures against the Japanese. At no time, therefore, did Japan have to face strong, united diplomatic action from Britain and America.

A brief look at the major diplomatic efforts of either country during the crisis supports this contention. During the October, 1931 session of the League Lord Reading took the lead in drawing up a resolution giving the Japanese military three weeks to evacuate the occupied areas in Manchuria. Stimson blunted the force of this resolution, however, by not mentioning the time limit in his follow-up message to Tokyo. The Japanese had not so subtly played on the American fears of arousing their ire by pointing out how unpopular Lord Reading, because of his forceful sponsorship of the October 24 resolution, had become in Japanese public opinion. The soft tone of Stimson's message to Tokyo re-

flected both Washington's fear of Japan and its desire to increase American popularity with the Japanese at Great Britain's expense.

This temptation to profit from each other's problems with Japan was a recurring theme of Anglo-American Far Eastern policy during this period, and at least partially explains the consistent British and American failures to work together in strong diplomatic action. When the contemplated action was moderate, as in the December 10 resolution setting up the Lytton Commission, which the Japanese themselves favored at the time, then Washington and London fully cooperated with each other. But when the action was expected to displease the Japanese, as in the Stimson nonrecognition note, or possible invocation of the Nine-Power Treaty, then support from the other government was not forthcoming. The Japanese found it easy, since London and Washington were so sensitive to Japanese public opinion, to play the British and the Americans off against each other.

Another explanation of British and American failure to work together at crucial points in the crisis, at least to the limits that would be tolerated within their countries, can be found in the lack of confidence in each other's ability to develop and carry through specific policies. During the height of the Shanghai crisis in February, 1932, Hornbeck sent the following memorandum to Stimson:¹

¹ Hornbeck to Stimson, Feb. 17, 1932, S.D. 793.94/4438.

Atherton points out that Sir John Simon has to consult with members of the Cabinet. I think he might have added that the British Minister for Foreign Affairs is not likely to make what he regards as a definite commitment of the British Government, in a matter of Far Eastern policy, without having first checked the proposal over with his permanent Under Secretaries. You have, I think, much greater independent authority and freedom of action than he has. These facts have, it seems to me, a bearing on the question of procedure in relation to the problem of cooperation. It should not be expected that Simon can or will at the moment when a new proposition is put up take as conclusive a position as can you.

Hornbeck's assessment of Simon's freedom of action was essentially correct. The British secretary did depend to a great extent on the opinions of the Foreign Office advisers, permanent under secretaries, and members of the cabinet. Simon's decisions on major Far Eastern problems consistently followed the consensus of the Foreign Office, which just as consistently kept in step with the Conservative Party leadership.

Hornbeck was also correct in claiming that Stimson had more freedom of action than Simon, in so far as the American secretary's decisions were less a product of consensus among his advisers than were Simon's. But while Stimson could act more quickly and more independently than Sir John, he still had to accept severe limitations imposed upon him by the American president, the American Congress, and the American public. While occasionally trying to override these limitations by making strong moral pronouncements against Japan,

as in the nonrecognition note and the Borah letter, which he hoped would successfully take the place of force or sanctions, Stimson knew that his admonitions against Japan could not be backed up by power, or even by the threat of power.

The British also clearly understood that the United States was not prepared to impose sanctions on Japan or to use military force to oust her from Manchuria. They believed that in the event of a military showdown in the Far East they would have to fight Japan alone, a prospect that no one in the British government relished. Simon had to base his policy on what he considered to be the realities in the Far East; the first being Japanese strength and British weakness in the Pacific. Belief that America would not go beyond moral finger-waving was the second. Stanley Baldwin said privately at the end of February, 1932: "You'll get nothing out of Washington but words, big words, but only words."² This sentiment prevailed generally throughout the British establishment, and accounts in part for British reluctance to support Washington on any action that might lead to conflict with Japan.

With such limits imposed on their policies, and with such doubts of each other's ability to form policies or take action, it is easier to understand why the British and the Americans found it so difficult to work closely with each other when

² Thomas Jones, A Diary with Letters (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), 30.

the stakes were high; especially when strong action was expected to provoke the Japanese. But in viewing the history of Japanese aggression in the Pacific throughout the 1930's it is also easy to condemn Great Britain and the United States for their failure to unite against Japan when the initial attacks were made against China in Manchuria. Faced with the combined determination of Britain and America to resist her designs against China, Japan might well have abandoned these designs altogether, thus reducing tensions in the Far East, preserving the integrity and prestige of the League of Nations, and making it easier for the western democracies to frustrate Hitler and Mussolini later on in the decade.

Such an argument, however, assumes remarkable foresight and wisdom on the part of the British and American statesmen, who could not have been expected, as early as 1931-1933, to recognize the great danger to world peace inherent in German and Italian totalitarianism. Japanese aggression in the Far East, while potentially a menace to the League of Nations, had still to be considered in relative isolation, apart from events in Europe and other parts of the world. For if Japan were to be stopped it would not be the League of Nations which would do the stopping, but rather Great Britain and the United States, the only two countries with sufficient interest and sufficient resources.

These two countries, however, were not prepared to fight

Japan in 1931, 1932, or 1933. Despite their general desire to work together in international affairs, their mutual fear of the growing might of Japan, and their anger at the Japanese for using force in violation of solemn agreements, the United States and Great Britain could take no actions, either singly or together, that might lead to war. As for cooperation in other matters, those strictly on a diplomatic level and not expected to lead to war, London and Washington played something of a game with each other, each consciously or unconsciously following its own self-interest in seeking diplomatic advantage with Japan. As a result of this failure to forcibly oppose Japan in Manchuria, by the early spring of 1933 China found herself temporarily abandoned by Britain and America, who tacitly accepted Japanese control of Manchuria.

The Sino-Japanese dispute of 1931-1933 demonstrates the limitations of purely diplomatic action against a strong, determined aggressor state. It also shows how difficult it is for two nations, even those as closely aligned culturally and politically as Britain and America, to cooperate diplomatically in times of peace. Whether greater Anglo-American cooperation would have stopped Japan in Manchuria is, of course, highly debatable. But the lack of such cooperation before World War II left China to face an expansionist Japan alone. Only the forge of war, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, could bind the English speaking nations to a common purpose and a common policy.

By the war's end, however, the Nationalist government, never strong at any time during its existence, was falling to the revolutionary armies of Mao Tse-tung, which had thrived on the turmoil of the Japanese invasions. Britain and America, while certainly not solely responsible for the domestic conditions that spawned a Mao, must accept some of the blame for not coming more quickly to the aid of a China which they had done so much, during a century of exploitation, to disintegrate politically and economically. Had the Chinese been able to work out their problems during the 1930's without Japan constantly intruding upon their territory and their sovereignty, it is more than possible that a viable state could have been established. A stable China, aided instead of hindered by outside forces, would not have been such an easy mark for the communist revolutionaries.

But as in the case of the rise of the European dictators, so also in the case of the Chinese communists; there were no crystal balls in London and Washington. British and American problems were immediate, and mainly economic. The possible communization of China, while occasionally discussed in both capitals, was a problem infinitely removed from stock exchanges and bread lines. This was the greater reality for Britain and America in 1931-1933, and it easily triumphed over the moral indignation aroused by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Appendix I

Excerpts from a letter sent by Burnett Walker, one of the head officials of the Guaranty Company in New York, to R.H. Brand, of Lizard Bros. and Co., Ltd., London. The letter was forwarded by Brand to Sir John Simon on May 17, 1932.

My Dear Brand,

Before starting for California on a holiday I had a talk with the State Department about Japan which I think has some importance and which I think I should pass along to you. I talked with Castle, who, as you probably know, is the Under Secretary, and with Hornbeck, the chief of the Far Eastern Division. I regard the latter as distinctly pro-Chinese but the former is considered much the best man in the State Department on Japan and I think is well acquainted with Japan's minor problems, and ours in the Far East as they are affected by a weak or strong Japan. You may recall that Castle was our Ambassador at Tokio while the London Conference was on a couple of years ago. I asked Castle what the attitude of our government would be on Manchuria if some reasonable sort of settlement could be made in Shanghai. He said I could rely upon it that we would go no farther in this than the League of Nations. He did not spell it out for me but there is no doubt in my mind after these discussions with the State Department that the Japanese, in our vernacular, have Stimson's goat completely. The President and Castle have been, I feel sure, restraining influences and Castle said confidentially but flatly that I could rely upon it that the President would not let us take a position in advance of that taken by the League.

.....

I am passing along the gist of these conversations to you, both because I think they are important enough for you to have and because I am hoping that if you agree with them you will put in a word in the right quarters both in England and France. I can hardly believe that either England, France, or America would find it pleasant or profitable for Japan to lose control of her situation. In view of what I think is Stimson's clear desire to take as strong a position as possible against Japan in connection with Manchuria it is of particular importance what England and France do. While the small nations in the League may take their fling at Japan I should suppose your government and France would pretty well determine the League's Far Eastern policy. To the extent, if any, that this is not true, some work might well be done in appropriate quarters in the League. I shall be interested in your views on this.

I am sure I need not remark on the highly confidential character of this note.

Burnett Walker

Sir John Pratt, on May 30, 1932, minuted this letter:

We need not allow ourselves to be dragged too far by Mr. Stimson. It is for the good of the world at large that Japan should succeed in her Manchurian programme ----- now that she has definitely embarked on it----- and our aim should be to protect our interests but to avoid exasperating Japan by a policy of pin pricks.

Appendix II

Memorandum by Eugene H. Dooman, first secretary of American embassy in Great Britain, November 12, 1932, entitled "Control of British Policy with Respect to the Far Eastern Situation."

The Far Eastern policy of the present British Government is actually in the hands of Mr. Baldwin, Lord Hailsham, Secretary for War, Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary for India, who together with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Sir John Simon, and Mr. J.H. Thomas, Secretary for the Dominion, form the Far Eastern Committee.

Of these, Eyres-Monsell is perhaps the least known in the United States. He is married to an American but has no contact whatever with the various societies whose business it is to promote relations with the United States and is personally not known to anyone in the Embassy in London. He is, however, reputed to be an extreme Tory, a big navy advocate and to be the personification of reactionary ideas. Lord Hailsham will be remembered as having been the principal British delegate to the Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations at Kyoto in 1929. He should know a great deal about the Far East but it must be remembered that he is also a Conservative, although perhaps not quite so extreme as Eyres-Monsell. These two, together with Mr. Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare, who has been included in the Committee not only because of the possible effects of the Sino-Japanese dispute upon the British position in India but because

he is also a Conservative, are believed to be the final authority in this matter. It is doubtful whether the others are able effect any fundamental change in the policy which may be laid down by the Conservative element, although it must be obvious that they would have a voice in giving final shape to this policy from their respective personal viewpoints and from the circumstances with which each is best acquainted. Early this year, for example, when Mr. Stimson was endeavoring to reach a common point of view with the British Government through Sir John Simon, the Far Eastern Committee apparently did not consult Mr. MacDonald who was then in Scotland recuperating from an illness, as Mr. MacDonald later told Mr. Atherton that if he had known all the circumstances he would have given Mr. Stimson all the support he could command.

The following rather free characterizations of members of the Foreign Office who are dealing with the Far Eastern situation may be of interest.

Sir John Simon's controlling ambition is to become Prime Minister, which is of course a fairly large order for one who is still a Liberal in name at least. He proposes, as I see it, to reach this end by being the great conciliator, a role which permits him to employ to advantage his temperament and his unquestionable talents in this direction, and to gain at the same time the approval of the Tory back-benchers. His note on the German claim to equity in arms is an admirable

exposure of his personal strategy. It pronounces sympathy for the claims of Germany and simultaneously marshals all the arguments of law to condemn this claim. It is thus a recommendation for conciliation between France and Germany and at the same time an effort to meet the Conservative opposition to relaxing control over Germany's armament. There has been of late some modifications in the attitude of the Tories towards the Manchurian question, but it is still definitely short of the Liberal viewpoint; and I can not think that Sir John will take a position which incorporates the vigorous Liberal viewpoint so long as it would compel him to hazard his political future.

Sir Robert Van Sittart [sic], Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is an intellectual exquisite. Those who knew him some years ago, when he was married to an American to whom he was greatly devoted, describe him as having been a man of very warm personality with a great capacity for friendship. They say that his wife's death in tragic circumstances completely changed his temperament: today his warmth is not conspicuous and one is impressed chiefly by his brilliance and cynicism. He follows Lord Tyrell as the spear-head of the francophil movement in the Foreign Office, and I believe that he approaches every important question from the direction of the Anglo-French relationship. He does not give me the impression of being particularly interested in the Far Eastern situation in itself.

I have never seen Sir John Pratt who is, I believe, described as an adviser in the Far Eastern Department. And so far as I can recall Mr. Atherton has seen him only once since the beginning of the Sino-Japanese dispute, and that was on October 26 when Mr. Norman Davis conferred with Sir John Simon. Sir John Pratt was formerly in the British consular service in China, his last post being at Ningpo. He is not accessible and his opinions are not quoted by members of the Foreign Office, but it is believed by the Embassy that Sir John Pratt is the brains of the Foreign Office in matters relating to the Far East and that the Foreign Secretary leans very heavily on him for advice in matters of policy which do not involve British interests in other parts of the world.

Sir Victor Wellesley, the Assistant Secretary in Charge of Far Eastern Affairs, is not very impressive. He is heavy, physically and mentally. He is verbose, but after an interview one is never quite certain of what he said or meant. He is a member of a prominent Conservative family, and I should say that he, with Sir John Pratt, is the principal influence in the Foreign Office on the side of caution and of a negative policy.

Mr. Orde, Chief of the Far Eastern Department, has never been in the Far East. I am not quite certain how much voice he has in matters of policy. He once asked me what the Foreign Secretary had said to Senator Reed on the occasion of

the latter's visit when in London last September and whether he had indicated what his policy was, adding with a laugh "I am sure I don't know what it is." He impresses one, however, as having great ability and being quite straightforward. The Embassy in London relies very much on Orde as he does not talk except when he can talk with authority and to some purpose.

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Portions of each of these documentary collections have been published. Used in this work were the pertinent volumes of Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, for the years 1931-1933, and Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, 1931-1933, Vol. I. These volumes were published by the United States Government Printing Office. Two volumes of published British documents were also used. These were volumes VIII and IX of Documents in British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Second Series, edited by Rohan Butler and J.P.T. Bury, and published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London.

While the published American documents are fairly complete, the published British records end on March 4, 1932. The British documents deposited in the Public Record Office, therefore, were an invaluable source of information on events after that date.

Also of primary importance were the unpublished Henry L. Stimson papers, and especially the diary, deposited in the Yale University Library.

Of secondary importance, but occasionally useful, were the Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), and the Congressional Record.

Finally, the New York Times and the London Times for the period were read with the object of tracing the courses of action in the major capitals and at Geneva, and to discover any facts that might have been omitted, or escaped the attention of this researcher, in the Foreign Office and State Department documentary collections.

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