Japanese - American Relations, 1941: A Preface to Pearl Harbor

Edward Gorn
Western Michigan University

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JAPANESE - AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1941: 
A PREFACE TO PEARL HARBOR

by

Edward Gorn

A thesis presented to the 
Faculty of the School of Graduate 
Studies in partial fulfillment 
of the 
Degree of Master of Arts

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 1966
PREFACE

There are as many interpretations as there are writers on the positions of American foreign policy during the diplomatic negotiations with Japan in 1941. Historians supporting President Roosevelt's position tend to blame Japan's imperialism and expansionism as one of the main causes of the war. Revisionist historians like Charles Beard, Harry Elmer Barnes, and Charles Tansill, place the responsibility for Japan's declaration of war and surprise attack on the intransigent approach of the Roosevelt administration. To place the full burden of responsibility for the failure of negotiations on either Japan or the United States is to oversimplify the complex events of 1941. The value of the historical writings supporting President Roosevelt's position is their explanation of Japan's aims and purposes in the Far East, while the revisionist's significant contribution is their critique of the method and principles of American foreign policy in the Far East.

In this study an attempt will be made to give a balanced explanation of the diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan, and to examine the reasons why both Japan and the United States failed to reach a negotiated settlement.
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CHAPTER I

AMERICAN - JAPANESE RELATIONS IN THE
NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Until the mid-1800's, Japan was an isolated nation, living
within its ancient cultural heritage, untarnished by Western tradi-
tions. Living in the traditional manner, she possessed neither the
Western sense of morality, justice, and democracy nor the economic,
military, and political power of the Western Powers. Except for
admitting the annual Dutch boat, which visited Nagasaki harbor,
Japan pursued a policy of avoiding contact with Western nations.

Traders of Western nations, among them the United States,
voyaged to the Far East in the 1830's to open ports of trade. As
early as 1832, Edmund Roberts, an American official, traveled to
the Far East to seek a treaty with Japan, but he died on the way.
Fourteen years later, Commodore James Biddle, under instructions
from the American government, tried unsuccessfully to open negotia-
tions for a treaty of commerce with the Japanese. The factors
motivating American interest were: The well-being of shipwrecked

1 Alexander DeConde, A History of American Foreign Policy
American sailors who had been maltreated; possible coaling stations for the newly-emerging steamships; and the need for markets. 1

On July 8, 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, the younger brother of the hero of the Battle of Lake Erie, sailed into the Bay of Yedo (Tokyo) where he made representations for a treaty, giving the Japanese until spring to make a reply. In February, when Perry returned with more gunboats, the rulers of Nippon were prepared to negotiate because they were aware of the overwhelming Western military strength which had played a significant part in suppressing the Chinese in the Opium War on the mainland. On March 13, 1854, a treaty of Amity and Commerce was signed, by which the Americans were permitted to establish a consulate in Japan, the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate were opened for trade, Japan was bound to respect and return sailors, and most favored nation treatment was accorded. 2

Townsend Harris, a New York merchant of ability who was appointed the first American Consul General in Japan, pursued a policy of persistence to further break down Japanese isolation. The result was the Harris Treaty of July 29, 1858, which opened four


2 Ibid., pp. 142-43.
additional ports, permitted Americans to live in Toyko for trade purposes, granted the right of extra-territoriality, and provided for the exchange of ministers.¹

As a result of the Shimonoseki Affair of 1863 in which a feudal baron attempted to close the Straits of Shimonoseki, Great Britian, France, Holland and the United States intervened and Japan was forced to pay a three million dollar indemnity.² The leaders of Japan realized that if such bombardments, indemnity payments, and concessions were to be avoided in the future they had to build their own counter-power. With determination and a facile ability for learning new skills and techniques, Japan began to westernize. Western nations aided in her development, not foreseeing that Japan might one day possess the power to threaten Western dominance in Asia. A Japanese naval training school was opened in 1855. Americans viewed the Japanese buildup as protection against European imperialism. The United States, rather than a European nation was chosen to play the role of teacher.³ The Japanese government instructed members of its embassy in Washington to study naval yard operations, the casting of cannons, and operational procedures.⁴ By the 1870's

¹DeConde, p. 237.
²Wellborn, p. 144.
⁴Ibid., p. 76.
the Japanese Navy was "...rapidly increased into quite a large and serviceable force," wrote American Minister to Japan, Charles E. Delong, to the Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish.¹

Japanese naval personnel were also trained in American. Between 1870 and 1906, Japanese ensigns studied at Annapolis. After the latter date Congress became concerned about espionage, and closed the Naval Academy to foreigners. Also the Naval Academy send American graduates to serve in Japan in different capacities. Furthermore, educators, engineers, agricultural experts and, to a lesser extent, missionaries also aided in the westernization process.²

Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power on History, which was translated into Japanese, became an important reference book for both the United States and Japan. Mahan's main theme, that naval expansion and commercial growth are complimentary, was important to a nation which was composed of islands and which was dependent on the seas as the main artery of transportation.

As national consciousness and power grew with economic, educational and military progress, unpleasant aspects of Japanese national aspirations began to appear. In 1876, imitating Perry's tactics, Japan secured trade agreements with China and Korea by a

¹Quoted in Neumann, p. 78.

²Ibid., pp. 80-85.
show of force in their harbors. By the 1880's success in diplomacy increased the confidence of the leaders of Japan. Despite the increasing Japanese role in Far Eastern affairs, the American press showed little hostility toward Nippon. In the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, American opinion favored Japan while the official American position was one of neutrality.

Around the turn of the century, the two dramatic developments related to American foreign policy in the Far East were the acquisition of a Pacific Empire and the Open Door Policy. Concerned with the scramble for spheres of influence by Europeans nations, Secretary of State John Hay issued a series of statements in 1899 and 1900 which were designed to promote American economic interests without the necessity of acquiring territorial possessions in China. The Open Door notes, sent in 1899, sought equal treatment for commerce and navigation in all of China including the spheres of interest held by foreign powers. In 1900 Hay announced the United States would seek to safeguard the territorial and administrative integrity of China. Hay's policy was based on the assumption of what Brooks

1 Ibid., p. 99.
2 Ibid., p. 104.
Adams called "America's economic supremacy." In August, 1901

Brooks Adams wrote:

There seems no reason to doubt that as time goes on, America will drive Europe more from neutral markets... America's attack is based not only on her superior resources and her more perfect administration but on her tariff.

Hay's policy was not designed to create a colonial relationship but rather to permit the United States to compete with the rising empire of Japan for markets and raw materials in China. Inevitably both nations would interpret that interest in China as essential to the well-being of their respective national interests.

The first serious confrontations between Japan and America occurred when the United States acquired Hawaii and the Philippines. Tokyo protested that these acquisitions would disrupt the status quo in the Pacific and would endanger the residential and commercial rights of Japanese citizens in these territories.

In the chauvinistic spirit characteristic at the turn of the century, both Japan and the United States continued to expand their Pacific fleets. Some Americans began to fear that the Nipponese

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3 Neumann, pp. 113-15.
Navy possessed sufficient offensive power to attack American possessions. ¹ After signing an alliance with Japan, in 1902, Great Britain reduced its Pacific squadron, virtually giving "its adherence to a Japanese political principle in the Far East equivalent to the Monroe Doctrine to the United States." ² Meanwhile the United States was steadily building up its naval power. From 1901 to 1909, the American standing, among the world's fleets moved from fifth to second position. Tokyo regarded the American possessions in the Pacific as possible arsenals and bases for an attack against Japan. ³ Furthermore increasing anti-Japanese sentiments on the west coast of the United States did little to improve relations between the countries.

In spite of these factors, the American political and business communities endorsed and aided Japan in the Russo-Japanese War which ended in 1905. Kuhn, Loeb, and Company, a New York banking firm issued a series of war bonds to support Japan. ⁴ The only practical alternative to Russian power in the Far East was "... at that time the Japanese power, not Chinese." ⁵ The

¹Ibid., pp. 115-16.
²Ibid., pp. 118-20.
³Ibid., p. 120.
⁴Kuhn, Loeb and Company was a Jewish firm which may have aided Japan because of the anti-Jewish Russian pogroms. Neumann, p. 122.
belligerents accepted American mediation at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where a peace treaty was signed in 1905. Russia, the first European nation to be defeated by an Asiatic power, lost her position in the Pacific, ceding to Japan the southern half of Sakhalin, recognizing Japan's primary position in Korea, and giving up rights and concessions in Southern Manchuria. ¹

In the summer of 1905, Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of State, William Howard Taft, met with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Katsura, in Tokyo, and drafted a memorandum agreeing to accept Japan's control of Korea in return for Japanese disavowal of aspirations in the Philippines. ² Three years later, on November 30, 1908, Root-Takahira Agreement was signed, in which Japan and the United States agreed to maintain the existing status quo in the Pacific region, to respect the territorial possessions of each other in the region and to support by pacific means the independence and integrity of China. ³ One writer states:

Our government found little difficulty in reconciling itself to the establishment of Japanese predominance in Korea. And the Taft-Katsura and Root-Takahira

¹Neumann, p. 123.
²DeConde, p. 370.
³Wellborn, p. 233.
agreements of 1905-1908, respectively, whatever they may have meant to us, surely meant to the Japanese an implicit recognition of the position they have acquired in Manchuria. ¹

Japanese immigration into the United States stirred lively opposition on the West Coast in the early years of the Twentieth Century. At the height of anti-Nipponese agitation, the San Francisco Board of Education segregated oriental and caucasian students. Japan's sense of national honor was deeply hurt. Sensational newspapers spread anti-oriental propaganda, especially the widely read Hearst newspapers. President Theodore Roosevelt dealt with the problem by persuading the school board to rescind its order and securing the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 with Japan in which the latter agreed not to issue passports to laborers destined for the United States. ² Relations between the two countries were deteriorating in spite of the Gentlemen's Agreement. In 1907 the United States Navy turned down a Japanese offer to establish closer relations and to exchange information as Japan was doing with its British ally. In the following year, the Great White Fleet traveled around the world, including a stopover in Tokyo where President Roosevelt hoped that a show of American power would act as a

¹Kennan, p. 42.

²Wellborn, p. 231.
deterrent to Japan's expanding aspirations. A correspondent for the Chicago Tribune reported that,

The fleet made a vivid and far-reaching impression... it caused the Japanese to realize the formidable power of the United States as nothing else would possibly have done.

Luckily, the American sailors were warmly welcomed in Japan.

During the era of "Dollar Diplomacy," E. H. Harriman, an American railroad promoter, planned to construct a railroad in Manchuria and China which would be part of a world-wide network. However, Japan refused to approve this plan as she did not welcome the prospect of a rival in Manchuria, which she considered her sphere of influence.

Another significant factor in the relations between the United States and Japan, was America's growing interest in China. Business investments had grown from $20,000,000 in 1900 to $50,000,000 in 1914. Twenty-five hundred missionaries had come to China whereas their counterparts were fewer numerically in Japan. After the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of a republic on the mainland, a pro-Chinese American foreign policy emerged because of the great missionary zeal, and the bright lucrative economic prospects offered by the Chinese market. Simultaneously Japan's growing navy, emerging

\(^1\)Quoted in DeConde, p. 372.
nationalism, and exclusion of American interest in Manchuria did not aid Japanese relations with Washington. ¹

Japan joined the allies in World War I, and with the help of Britain, seized the German possessions on the Shantung Peninsula, its chief port of Kiachow, and the German islands in the Pacific. Mahan viewed this as a blow to American power. He wrote to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, that the acquisition of German possessions in the Pacific "... is one thing in the hands of a power whose main strength is in Europe, and quite another that they should pass into the hands of one so near as Japan."² Japanese occupation of Shantung brought charges in Congress that Japan had violated the Open Door Policy.³ Also in January 1915, Japan took advantage of the war to promote her interest in China by presenting the "Twenty-One Demands" which called for official Chinese sanction of Japanese economic activities in the Shantung Peninsula, Southern Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and in mining areas of the Yangtze Valley. At the insistence of the United States, these demands were somewhat modified.⁴

¹Neumann, p. 137.
²Quoted in Neumann, p. 143.
³Neumann, p. 143.
⁴DeConde, p. 416.
At the peace conference, Japan wanted confirmation of her claim to the German possessions she had seized in the War, equal status with the other great powers, and a statement of racial equality. The Allies and the United States refused to put a statement of racial equality in the treaty and Woodrow Wilson insisted that the former German islands be given to Japan only under a League of Nations mandate. When Japan threatened to walk out of the conference, Wilson and the Chinese representative recognized, under protest, Japan's right to Shantung. Since the Senate did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, these provisions were never formally recognized by the United States. However the Japanese could rely on the Lansing-Ishii Agreement of 1917 in which the United States recognized Japan's "special relations" with, and "special interests" in, China in return for a secret protocol respecting the rights and privileges of other friendly nations in China.

During the Twenties, tensions decreased due to the decline in Japanese militarism, post-war disillusionment, the high cost of maintaining military power, and the rise of international cooperation. The aggressive military leaders were forced to acquiesce. In this period of retrenchment and economic development, a series of agreements was signed with respect to the Far East at the Washington Conference, called by the United States in 1921.

1 Ibid., p. 476.
Great Britain, France, Japan, and the United States signed The Four-Power Treaty of December 13, 1921, which bound the signatories to respect each other's insular possessions in the Pacific; to submit disputes not settled by diplomacy to joint conferences; to communicate with one another if threatened by an outsider; to abrogate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which had been renewed in 1911 for the last time. The life of the treaty was to be ten years, after which it could be terminated on one year's notice. ¹

The Five-Power Treaty, signed on February 6, 1922, provided that no capital ships could be constructed for ten years, after which replacements might begin; total capital ship tonnage was not to exceed 522,000 each for Great Britain and the United States, 315,000 for Japan, and 175,000 for each France and Italy; the United States, Great Britain, and Japan bound themselves to refrain from fortifying insular possessions in the Western Pacific; and the treaty was to remain in force until December 31, 1936. ²

All the conference members signed The Nine-Power Treaty on February 6, 1922, which bound the signatories to respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China; to refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China to seek special rights and privileges; and to respect the Open

¹DeConde, p. 499.
Door. The secret portion of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was abrogated. Also the United States secured cable rights on Yap Island, in return for which Japan's mandates over the Carolinas, Mariannas, and Marshalls were recognized. Japan also signed a treaty with China for the return of Shantung. ¹

In 1927, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Auguste Briand expanded a proposed treaty between France and the United States into a multinational pact, outlawing war. By signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact in August, 1925, the original fifteen signatories, including Japan, pledged to renounce war as an instrument of irrational policy and to seek solutions to international disputes by peaceful means.

However, the cooperative spirit which had been dominant in the 1920's was rudely shattered by the world-wide economic collapse which began as the decade of the 1930's dawned. Japan reverted to an aggressive policy, and thereafter relations between the United States and Japan entered upon a new era.

¹Ibid., p. 292.
CHAPTER II

DECLINE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, 1929-1940

After the stock market crash of 1929, which caused a serious economic and social upheaval, American-Japanese relations rapidly deteriorated. Some factions in Tokyo, particularly the Japanese army, desired an aggressive foreign policy. Their hand was strengthened when the United States imposed the Hawley-Smoot tariff which curtailed Japanese imports to the United States. With the rise of Chinese nationalism on the mainland, the Chinese army harassed the Japanese in their Manchurian sphere of influence. The Japanese Kwangtung army, in need of a significant military victory, boldly seized the opportunity to attack and to annex Manchuria in 1931, consequently setting it up as a sovereign state under the name of Manchukuo in February, 1932. In Japan, individuals who opposed military expansion were branded as "corrupt politicians" or selfish financial magnates.

1 Manchukuo means Manchu country.


When the Lytton commission which had been appointed to investigate for the League of Nations, recommended that Manchuria be restored to China, Japan in refusing, asserted that her interest would not be served by this course of action because of the anarchy in China and because of the hostility of the Chinese government. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in March, 1933, after being condemned by a vote of censure.¹

Chinese reaction to the "Manchuria Incident" stirred up anti-Japanese sentiments in Shanghai. The lives and property of thirty thousand Japanese were threatened. Ten thousand soldiers and sailors from Japan were dispatched to quell the riot and to protect Japanese citizens. Finally in May, 1932, when Japan and China agreed to a truce, Nipponese forces were withdrawn and conditions returned to normal.²

The United States refused to recognize any change of status in Manchuria. On January 7, 1932, American policy towards Manchuria took the form of the Hoover-Stimson doctrine, which stated, in effect, that the United States would not recognize the legality of any change which impaired its rights in China or which violated treaty agreements including the Kellogg-Briand Pact.³ The Kellogg-Briand Pact

¹Neumann, p. 187-93.

²Shigemitsu, pp. 76-79.

³Neumann, p. 194.
outlawed war as an instrument of national policy. At this early date Stimson was contemplating economic boycott against Japan but it was not applied for fear of an extremist reaction in Japan. The incoming Roosevelt government also refused to recognize Manchukuo.

Unlike the United States, where the separation of duties between the military and civilian powers are clearly defined and where the transfer of power from one elected government to another is peaceful, Japan had an unstable political balance. Between 1931 and 1937 there were seven different Japanese cabinets. In April 1931, Premier Hamagushi was assassinated and in March 1932, Premier Inukai met the same fate. "That was the end of party government. By terrorism the government's defenses had been breached. There was no longer any direct obstacle to the maneuvers of the military."1

Assassination threats from neo-military factions, reactionary parties, and ultra-nationalists menaced moderate leaders. Between 1932 and 1936, the governments headed by Saito and Okada were referred to as navy cabinets because the two Premiers were important navy leaders.2

In February, 1936, young officers desiring reform and power began a rebellion. Lieutenant-General Nagata was assassinated in the War Ministry because of the dismissal of General Masaka,

1Shigemitsu, p. 81.

2Ibid., p. 85.
Director of Military Training who was a popular idol of the young officers.

When the Tokyo Division of the army was ordered to proceed to Manchukuo, the young officers felt the move was designed to get rid of the disfavored officers and they rebelled. Three cabinet ministers were murdered, Prime Minister Okada survived only because the assassins killed his cousin who looked like him. The rest of the Cabinet resigned. The rebels wanted a reform government led by the army and a cabinet formed by General Masaka. The revolt was quelled by February 29, 1936. Those leaders who did not commit suicide were court martialed. The succeeding Hirota and Hayashi governments were weak. "The Hirota Cabinet was little more than a tool of the military." 2

The Supreme Command, free from government control, was made up of the army and navy leaders. Plans against potential enemies were prepared. The navy had little use for the army's emphasis on North China while the army felt that a southern advance was dangerous. A compromise of moving southward from Northern China was finally agreed to. However the Prime Minister was not informed, for this was considered a service matter.

1Ibid., pp. 105-06.
In 1934 the Armau declaration, aimed at restoring friendly ties with China, was enunciated. Japan planned: to forego any moves into China proper while paying special heed to the "Open Door" policy; to encourage foreign nations both to help China restrain her anti-Japanese sentiments and to withhold war munitions; and to recognize that both countries were threatened by communism. While this plan was approved by the cabinet, the Kwantung Army in North China ignored the declared policy of the government. 1 Also the army was carrying on its own negotiations with the German government. The Japanese military attaché in Berlin was pro-German, anti-communist, and anti-American. The modern army had been built on a German model and most Japanese leaders had studied in Germany. Through the initiative of Lieutenant-Colonel Oshima, and without the full knowledge of the Japanese Ambassador in Germany, Japan negotiated and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact in November, 1936. There really were two governments in Japan--the Cabinet and the Supreme Command (General Staff), each running the country independently of the other until October, 1941, when Premier Hideki Tojo co-ordinated the affairs of the two. 2

The rise of militarism, political instability in Japan, and the withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations did not contribute

1Ibid., p. 98.

2Ibid., p. 122.
to good relations with the United States. The United States clearly tended to be partial towards China in the 1930's.

Pearl Buck's book, The Good Earth, which was the basis of a film, reached a wide audience in the United States and promoted a sympathetic view of the Chinese peasant. The Japanese image was at a low ebb. The success of missionaries in converting many Chinese to Christianity, especially Chiang Kai-Khek and the important Soong family, were without parallel in Japan.¹ The American press was generally anti-Japanese.²

In the State Department, Stanley K. Hornbeck, Chief of Far Eastern Division, who was anti-Japanese, was extremely influential in the formulation of American foreign policy in the Far East. As early as 1931, he was in favor of economic sanctions against Japan. Two years later he stated that his government would not recognize "governments by swords." American Ambassador to Japan Joseph C. Grew, replied that such statements were not conducive to the easing of tensions in the Pacific.³ From 1937 to 1941, after he was relieved of his position, Hornbeck continued to be influential as the Advisor on Political Relations to the Secretary of State.

¹Neumann, p. 15.
²Ibid., p. 209.
³Ibid., pp. 193-201.
President Roosevelt had sentimental ties with China; his grandfather was involved in the China Trade. Henry L. Stimson, former Secretary of State under President Hoover and later Secretary of War for President Roosevelt, stated that the President had a "... personal hereditary interest" in China.\(^1\) "Unquestionably our relations to the peoples of the Far East had been colored by a certain sentimentality towards the Chinese."\(^2\) Furthermore, as a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and as a lover of ships, the President was interested in a powerful American navy. On June 16, 1933, $238,000,000 of the National Recovery Administration funds were allotted to a naval building program. Tokyo and other foreign capitals felt that the United States had reopened the naval race.\(^3\) The Japanese cabinets led by Premiers Saito and Okada between 1932 and 1936, as has been noted, were commonly referred to as the naval cabinets. After President Roosevelt announced a massive naval rebuilding program, the Japanese government, following suit, seized upon this opportunity to increase naval appropriations and to plan the building of twenty-two ships.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Quoted in Neumann, p. 200.

\(^2\)Kennan, p. 49.

\(^3\)Neumann, p. 201.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 204.
Economic factors also contributed to increasing enmity between the United States and Japan. Although the two countries had lucrative trade agreements, the China market, with its larger population which seemed to offer an unlimited potential for American exports, was alluring to the United States. One writer in 1932 stated:

Our interest in China today is not due to any altruistic urge . . . it is dictated by the insistent demand of trade in the Far East and by the strong hold which the markets of China have always exerted upon the American imagination. ¹

Any Japanese invasion and occupation of territory on the mainland of China meant elimination or at least a diminution of American trade in that territory. Manchukuo's exports to the United States declined from $14,600,000 in 1932, to $7,710,000 in 1936. By 1940, the decline in trade was even greater. ² Furthermore, Japan emerged as one of America's chief competitors in foreign markets and threatened American manufacturers in the United States.

In 1933, a naval conference was held in London to discuss the Washington Treaty of 1922 and the London Treaty of 1930. The navy cabinet wanted parity with the United States and England in the tonnage ratio of capital ships. ³ When delegates from the United States and


³Under the Treaty of Washington (1921) the Japanese had agreed to hold its capital ships to a total tonnage of about three-fifths that of British and United States fleets.
Great Britain refused, Japan after serving notice of her intention to abrogate the treaty, withdrew from the conference. ¹ Shigenori Togo, a diplomat who was to become Foreign Minister, opposed the abrogation of the treaty, claiming that "... an armaments race leading to a Japanese-American war—would ultimately bring about a world war."² The United States navy held manoeuvres west of Hawaii. After the announcement of the abrogation of the naval treaties Japan viewed this move as an intimidation. The next year, Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany.

In July, 1937, a cabinet headed by Prince Fuminaro Konoye, a well liked moderate, succeeded the Hayashi government.³ On July 7, 1937, Japanese and Chinese troops clashed near the Marco Polo Bridge, ten miles west of Peiping. Negotiations failed partly because the rising Chinese nationalists could not compromise with their hated enemy. But Japan was also to blame.

Japan might well have displayed patience and prudence; she should have never stirred beyond Manchuria. Instead, the incompetence of the government, and the recklessness of the army intrigues in North China led her on . . . If we study the reason [for the war with China], it is that Japan's political system broke down.⁴

¹ Shigemitsu, p. 91.
² Togo, p. 31.
³ Konoye was Premier until 1939. He also led a second cabinet from July 22, 1940, to July 17, 1941, and a third government from July 18, 1941, to October 16, 1941.
⁴ Shigemitsu, p. 139.
While its troops invaded China, Japan referring to this fight as the "China Incident," did not declare war formally because this would have violated her pledge in the Kellogg-Briand Pact and would have cut off the sale of United States war material to Japan. On October 5, 1937, when President Roosevelt made his famous "Quarantine The Dictators" speech, isolationist feeling in the United States caused him to postpone this idea for the time being. ¹ Japan, completely isolated, was condemned by the League of Nations for violating the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. ² On December 12, 1937, Japanese planes zeroed in on the U. S. S. Panay and three Standard Oil tankers on the Yangtze River. While the Japanese government quickly apologized and paid an indemnity of over $2,000,000, thousands of Japanese citizens sent contributions to the American embassy to aid the survivors and the families of the deceased. ³ Japanese occupation of Nanking caused the United States officials to issue a formal protest over damages to American property. ⁴

After the Marco Polo bridge incident, Japanese forces occupied Peiping and Tientsin, drove northward into Inner Mongolia and westward into Shansi province. By December 1937, Nippon's army and

¹DeConde, p. 570.
²Ibid., p. 571.
³Neumann, p. 234.
⁴Ibid.
navy assaulted and captured Shanghai and proceeded up the Yangtze River to occupy Nanking. After fleeing to Hankow, the China government established its headquarters at Chungking for the duration of the war. As the war moved south in 1938, Japanese forces occupied Canton, but thereafter its military machine became mired in China. Throughout 1939 and 1940 the "China Incident" was a stalemate and Japanese military gains were negligible.¹

In November 1938, Prince Konoye pronounced his East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was intended to make Japan the economic, military, and political leader of Asia. Also it renounced the old principles of the Open Door in China.² That year, Japan went on a war footing when the Diet passed the National General Mobilization Law, empowering the government to control human and material resources.³

In conjunction with the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the Japanese helped establish the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei in Nanking. Wang Ching-wei, formerly political heir to Sun Yat-sen and a prominent member of the Kuomintang, collaborated with Japan in the overthrow of both the Chinese Communist and Chiang Kai-Shek.⁴

¹Togo, pp. 26-27.
²DeConde, p. 573.
³Togo, p. 37.
⁴Ibid., p. 38.
Indecision over the "China Incident" and conflict of objectives between the civilian and military authorities led to constant changing of cabinets in 1939-1940. After Premier Konlye resigned in early 1939 there were three successive governments. The Hiranuma Cabinet fell after seven months. The government of General Abe was overthrown mainly because of this inability to reach an understanding with China over the "China Incident." Admiral Yonai, a moderate, lasted only six months because he opposed the Army's renewed idea of an alliance with Germany. In July, 1940, Prince Konoye was again called upon to form a government. 1

The Japanese invasion of China threatened China's political future, American economic interests in China and the Open Door policy. Admiral Yarnell, a retired United States naval officer, realized that the "New Order" meant the expulsion of all western trade and influence from the Far East except on Japan's terms. He wrote: "We are dependent almost entirely upon this area for a number of raw materials vitally essential to us in peace and war." 2 An argument, often stated, was that if Japan were to win China, the United States would lose an important import-export market. 3 It was asserted that

1 Ibid., p. 39.


3 Bisson, p. 95.
the undeclared war "for the first time has threatened the complete extinction of American rights and the American interest in China."\(^1\)

American policy makers in 1938 were faced with three prospects: complete withdrawal from the Far East; negotiation with Japan on the changing status quo; or increased tensions which would result from steps to meet the Japanese thrust. Steps were taken to restrict war supplies going to Japan. In the early summer of 1938, the government imposed a "moral embargo" when airplane manufactures were asked and consented to refrain from sending equipment to Japan.\(^2\)

In 1939, economic pressure was opposed by Ambassador Grew because he believed that economic sanctions carried to their logical conclusion would mean war, and because if the imposed sanctions were lifted later it would mean a loss of American prestige. The cutting of Japan's oil supply, he feared, would lead to Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies.\(^3\)

While economic sanctions against Japan were studied in 1938, the President loaned $25,000,000 to help China resist Japanese military conquest.\(^4\) The United States also purchased silver from China, which gave Chiang Kai-Shek funds to buy more military supplies for

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\(^1\) Johnstone, p. 8.

\(^2\) DeConde, pp. 575-76.

\(^3\) Neumann, p. 244.

\(^4\) DeConde, p. 573.
his troops. On July 26, 1939, Secretary of State Hull informed Tokyo that the United States intended to abrogate the Commercial Treaty of 1911.\(^1\) After the treaty expired in January of 1940, trade was on a day-to-day basis. Hornbeck, now Political Advisor to the Secretary of State on Far Eastern Affairs, advocated a strong policy and was supported by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, along with two new Roosevelt Cabinet appointees, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Morgenthau and Stimson advocated an embargo on oil, iron, and steel scrap shipments to Japan. In May, 1940, the Pacific fleet's base was transferred from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, as Hornbeck had urged. Two months later, Congress passed a law placing strategic materials under a licensing system and on July 26, the President signed an order to include aviation gasoline, lubricating oils, high grade iron and steel scrap.\(^2\)

In August, when the Japanese occupied Northern Indo-China, the United States retaliated by announcing, on September 25, a huge loan to Chiang Kai-Shek and on the following day an embargo was imposed on all iron and steel scrap going to Japan.\(^3\) By the end of 1940, the main item of trade between Japan and the United States

\(^1\)Neumann, p. 253.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 263.

\(^3\)DeConde, pp. 587-90.
was oil. The Japanese threat in the Far East was not the only problem confronting the decision-makers in Washington. Nazi Germany also loomed as a terrible threat to Western democracy. From the moment of his ascendency to the office of Chancellor of Germany, Adolph Hitler sought to restore his nation to its status as a first-rate power in Europe. The League of Nations, an instrument devised to maintain the status quo of the Treaty Versailles, was ineffective as a deterrent. Germany proceeded to occupy the Rhineland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. From 1933 to 1939 all attempts to maintain the status quo through peaceful means were in vain. Once again, nationalism of Europe had come to the fore and with the invasion of Poland, in September 1939, the world was again at war.

President Franklin Roosevelt had to consider numerous factors in formulating his foreign policy. There was in being a strong isolationist movement, and the Congress was passing restrictive neutrality laws. At the outset of war, the United States declared her neutrality. On September 3, 1939, President Roosevelt stated:

...I have said not once but many times that I have seen war and that I hate war. I hope that the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will and I give you assurances that every effort of your government will be directed to that end. ...

However, with the fall of Poland, the Low Countries and France, the President expressed solemn concern as to the fate of the Allies. The swift victories of Germany had not been expected and the original contention that the Allies were capable of resisting German aggression had to be revised.

During 1940, Roosevelt commenced defense preparations and began sending aid to Britain. On May 16, 1940, he asked and received from Congress $896,000,000 for the armed services: $546,000,000 for the army; $250,000,000 for the navy; and $100,000,000 to the President for emergency measures. With the fall of France, the United States intensified its military preparations and its obligations to the Allies. On July 10, 1940, the American President asked Congress for $4,848,171,957 for arms to equip two million men.

By September 14, 1940, the Burk-Wadsworth compulsory military act was passed, providing sixteen million men between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five for the draft, effective October 16, 1940. On December 29, 1940, the President maintained that the United States must become the "arsenal of democracy" and supply Great Britain with arms, ships, and airplanes. By this

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1Ibid., p. 240.
2Ibid., p. 254.
3Ibid., p. 273.
4Ibid., p. 310.
declaration the United States permitted the sale of arms and foodstuffs to the British, while denying any such supplies to the Axis powers. The Americans were involved, in 1940-1941, in an undeclared war with Germany, in which there were, in the Atlantic, many exchanges of shellfire.

While the situation was serious in Europe, American policy in the Pacific theater became more stringent and inflexible. By the end of 1940, the cabinet in Washington felt that Great Britain and her allies could not defeat the Axis powers themselves.1 Germany, concerned with the war in Western Europe, expressed a desire to maintain friendship with the United States. It was her fervent desire to avoid a mistake similar to that made in World War I. So long as Roosevelt pledged that "we will not send our men to take part in a European war,"2 and so long as Congress did not declare war, it became advantageous for Germany to shy away from declaring war on the United States.

Both Germany and Japan had talked about an alliance prior to 1940. After Prince Konoye became Premier for the second time, negotiations for an agreement began in August of 1940. Foreign Minister Matsuoka favored cooperation for the purposes of neutralizing

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2Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, p. 259.
America. Also Japan attempted to restrain the United States from entering the war. In the negotiations between Germany and Japan the central theme was:

A strong and determined attitude, unequivocal and unmistakable, on the part of the three nations, Japan, Germany, and Italy and the knowledge of it by the United States and the world at large at this juncture, that alone can only be of a powerful and effective deterrent on the United States . . . ¹

Prince Konoye, the Japanese Prime Minister, opposed the proposed alliance, but he was unable to impose his views on Foreign Minister Matsuoka, and Minister of War Tojo. The matter was presented to the Emperor, who consented to a defensive alliance because the danger of war with the United States was real. ² On September 27, 1941, the Three Power Pact, otherwise called the Tripartite Pact, was signed in Berlin by Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop, Ambassador Kurusu, and Count Ciano, the respective representatives of the governments of Germany, Japan, and Italy. ³ The main clause of the Pact was Article III by which the three signees agreed to provide political, economic, and military assistance to one another if any of the three powers were attacked by a power not at that time involved

³_Germany Foreign Policy, p. 204.
in the European war or in the Chinese-Japanese conflict. ¹

Ambassador Grew, in writing to Washington the next day, mentioned that a senior member of the Italian Embassy stated the word "attack" in Article III could mean various kinds of attack, including economic sanctions, and that the alliance was intended as a "stop light" for the United States. ² Germany and Italy threatened the United States with the prospects of a two front war, hoping that this fact would force the United States into easing its tensions with the Axis powers. However, this did not occur, for Roosevelt was committed to both England and China. If anything the Tripartite Pact was one of the major factors in stimulating the trend of American opinion away from isolationism."³ In fact, the pact really meant that "war in Asia and war in Europe are one and the same war."⁴

It appears that since Germany would avoid war in the Atlantic Ocean, how could the United States get Japan to invoke the Tripartite

¹Ibid., p. 204-05.


⁴Johnstone, p. VIII.
Pact and to make the initial overt act of war?¹ The embargoes in 1940-1941, the unwillingness to negotiate about the "China Incident," and the refusal to trade with Prince Konoye's government had taken their toll. As far as the United States was concerned, it was merely a matter of when the war would officially begin.

Japan's miscalculated aim in signing the Tripartite Pact was to prevent the United States from going to war. It appeared to coincide with the army's policy of close ties with Germany. Prince Konoye, who had not yet begun his peace offensive, did not have the complete support of the military leaders who were unwilling to retreat from China even though the Japanese had not made any gains since 1938.

Japanese expansion affected the status quo in the Far East. As the United States and Japan disagreed on principles and aims of their policies and as the respective countries were bonded to acts and principles of the previous decade, the vicious circle of events became entangled. It became very difficult to agree on an honorable solution which would satisfy the United States and Japan.

CHAPTER III

ATTEMPTS FOR PEACE FROM JANUARY TO JULY 1941

From January, 1941, to December 7, 1941, Japan intensified her efforts to reach a negotiated settlement with the United States. In summing up his impression of the diplomatic intercourse, Joseph C. Grew, the United States Ambassador to Japan expressed the view that:

... little or no evidence is apparent in the official correspondence of a desire or of efforts on the part of our government to simplify Prince Konoye's difficult task or to meet him even part way. So far as we in the Embassy could perceive, the policy of the administration during this critical time was almost completely inflexible... 1

This statement by an American ambassador confirmed the central theme of American foreign policy which frustrated Japanese representatives in Washington.

At the beginning of 1941, Premier Konoye appointed retired Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura as Japan's Ambassador to the United States. He was chosen because he had known President Roosevelt when the latter was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. 2


arriving in Washington, Nomura was given advice by Foreign Minister Matsuoka who held a strong pro-Axis, non-conciliatory position towards negotiations with the United States. Since Nomura desired peace, he disregarded Matsuoka's advice and proceeded from the beginning of his tenure as Ambassador to Washington to work closely with Premier Konoye.

After being replaced as Ambassador to Germany by General Oshima, Saburo Kurusu returned to Japan via the United States to unofficially talk with officials in Washington. America's Charge d'Affaire in Berlin, Leland Morris, felt that Kurusu's belief was that war with the United States would be a disaster. Since Kurusu was married to an American woman, he was favorably disposed to peace between the two countries.¹

From Shanghai, on February 14, 1941, Consul General Lockhart sent a message to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, concerning a military conference held in Nanking involving high Japanese military officials. The eighteen commanding officers expressed the desire to end the China War and were prepared to recognize Chiang Kai-Shek. The Japanese might be willing to guarantee China's national independence, which would mean the withdrawal of all Japanese troops south of the Great Wall. American mediation was to be considered. The opinion expressed at the Nanking Conference was thought to be the attitude of the Tokoyo government. The basic

¹F. R. U. S. The Far East, IV, 30.
aim, as stated by Japanese army officials, was that both sides should come out of the conflict without loss of face. The desire for peace expressed here also came from Tokyo, where the Japanese government wanted all the possibilities discreetly explored. The telegram of February 14, 1941, permitted the American government to know unofficially that the Japanese desired peace. An American mediation clause was included to allow the United States to take the initial steps to peace.

On February 15, 1941, while Chiang Kai-Shek met with Japanese officials, the United States Ambassador to China, Nelson Johnson, wrote that if the United States consented to withdrawal of the Japanese troops from China, Japan would consolidate her position in the South Seas.

In reply to a query from Ambassador Leahy in Vichy, France on February 2, 1941, Cordell Hull stated that there was no significant change in the talks between either Japan and the United States or Japan and China. The sending of Foreign Minister Matsuoka to Nanking constituted a high level of representation in the Japanese hierarchy. By dismissing the possibility for the meeting's success, Hull indicated a clear skepticism of the chance for an agreement at the conference.

1 Ibid., p. 36.
2 Ibid., p. 41.
3 Ibid., p. 47.
The initiative for Japanese-American negotiations in the spring of 1941 came from the private efforts of the Japanese special envoys and two Maryknoll Catholic priests, Bishop James E. Walsh and Father James M. Drought who worked with fellow Roman Catholic, United States Postmaster-General Frank C. Walker. The Maryknoll fathers labored on a preliminary "Draft Understanding" with Japanese representatives.\(^1\) The two Japanese visitors to the United States were Tadao Wikawa and Colonel Hideo Iwakuro. Mr. Wikawa, an ardent Christian whose daughter was studying at Columbia University, was a prominent man in Japanese financial circles. He was preparing negotiations for Colonel Iwakuro, who was described as one of "the driving forces of the army."\(^2\) Both men were designated to aid Ambassador Nomura. Both men had the blessing of the Japanese government.\(^2\) The Colonel Iwakuro appointment meant that the army was prepared to negotiate seriously with the United States. Ambassador Grew significantly remarked that the Colonel was one of the most important leaders of the young officers' group and had the confidence of the Minister of War.\(^3\) Hideki Tojo chose the Colonel because he was experienced in dealing with the "China

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\(^3\) Ibid., p. 53.
However, by February 28, 1941, Plenipotentiary representative of Japan Mr. Tadao Wikawa was prepared to take the following steps:

1. To invite President Roosevelt to mediate the Japanese-Chinese conflict.
2. To nullify Japanese participation in the Axis alliance by refusal to send Germany supplies and to keep Germany out of the Far East.
3. To freeze the Pacific nations into the status quo.
4. To pledge their government against any political or military aggression in the Far East.
5. To promote amicable relations by economic and financial agreement.

Japan suggested that the United States appoint a representative to work out privately a draft agreement, and upon official approval of the terms by Japan, the President could call a conference to broadcast the agreement which would have previously been consummated.

In a memorandum, dated March 7, 1941, Advisor on Political Relations Roger Hornbeck stated:

... Our immediate problem, it seems to us, is that of 1) keeping the Japanese in a state of hoping and yet having to guess and 2) finding out all we possibly can regarding their thoughts and their actual or possible intentions. ...

This statement allowed the United States to inquire into the Japanese position without permitting that leeway which would make a successful

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1 Butow, American Historical Review, LXV, (July, 1960), 824.
3 Ibid., p. 62.
negotiation possible. The attitude of the Department of State seemed to be inflexible while the Japanese searched for amicable solutions to the problems confronting the two countries.

On March 11, 1941, after learning of the Japanese attempts for peace via a Plenipotentiary representative, Hull, in a conversation with Nomura, denounced Japanese methods of government, and inquired whether the Japanese Ambassador to Washington thought Japan would attack Singapore. Nomura replied that if the embargoes persisted, the military group in Japan would get complete control of the government. The embargo was hurting Japan considerably and in order to conclude an agreement in the South Seas, the trade embargo must be lifted. At the conclusion of the visit, Hull stated that the United States wanted Japan to cease all action on the mainland before discussions took place. He desired these terms without defining the position of his country. ¹

Five days later the American preliminary draft of an "Agreement in Principle" ² which was drawn up by Postmaster-General Walker and the State Department was approved by the Japanese Plenipotentiary representative Wikawa. These principles were:

1. Total dissolution of the German-Japanese partnership, and the complete cessation of trade.
2. Release of considerable Japanese tonnage to be chartered by the United States.

¹Ibid., p. 68.
²Ibid., p. 95.
3. United States and Japanese naval agreement for mutual aid.
5. Creation of autonomous states to prevent seizure of war spoils.
6. Guarantee of the Philippines independence and conditional aid in war.
7. Japanese pledge against political and military seizure of territory.
8. Vast economic provisions for mutual benefit.

Proposed secret terms for a settlement of the China-Japan conflict involved China's independence, withdrawal of Japanese troops, and no imposition of indemnities. Provisions were made for: gold credit; future distribution of new oil resources; equitable ownership of new undeveloped fields; and Japanese-American ownership of raw material companies in the South Pacific. ¹

On the next day, the seventeenth of March, Walker mentioned that top members of the Japanese cabinet were endangering their lives by allowing the negotiations to take place. The Plenipotentiary agent would not confide his aim to the Japanese embassy unless a substantial agreement was reached. ²

On March 11, 1941, the President of the United States signed the Lend-Lease bill of January 11. This Lend-Lease program appropriated $7,000,000,000 for aid to Great Britain. ³ While the United

¹Ibid., pp. 97-107.
²Ibid., p. 111.
³Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, p. 339.
States government attempted to insure Japanese denial of aid to Germany, it proceeded on March 27, to lease from Great Britain for ninety-nine years, naval sites at Newfoundland, Bermuda, The Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua, and British Guiana. 1 As a result of Lend-Lease, the occupation of Greenland, and the submarine trouble in the Atlantic, Matsuoka told Ambassador Grew in Tokyo that the American foreign policy was designed to make war with Germany inevitable. If the United States was the aggressor, Japan would honor Article III of the Tripartite Pact. 2

When Colonel Iwakuro came to New York at the end of March he have his "unofficial" consent to the "Agreement in Principle." However, he did insist on economic and political concessions before it would be politically possible "to effect a 180 degree change" 3 in Japan. Postmaster-General Walker also noted that "if these negotiations with the United States fail, the Japanese authorities are certain that they will lose control and a war in the Southwestern Pacific will be started." 4

While the Plenipotentiary representative was trying to work out an agreement, Ambassador Nomura began conversations on a regular basis with Secretary of State Hull.

1Ibid., p. 351.
3Ibid., p. 119.
4Ibid., p. 120.
The United States also was searching for guarantees. On April 7, 1941, Hornbeck's appraisal of Japan's proposal was negative, as he wanted Japan to cease all manoeuvres in China as a concrete example of her intentions. The Japanese suggestion that the United States minimize European influence in Southeast Asia was answered by the question: "Why should we help Japan against Great Britian?"

Hornbeck also inferred in this proposal that to give some economic consideration to the Japanese was disadvantageous to America. Finally he concluded with the idea that it would serve the United States' purpose if China was in a war with Japan in the event that the United States entered the war against the Japanese. Hence, the high cost of Japanese soldiers, ammunition supplies, and energies in the Chinese theater would leave the United States less to contend with militarily. ¹

Through the months of April, May, and June, Colonel Iwakuro and Mr. Wikawa and American representatives worked on the re-drafts, oral explanations, and supplements to the original "Agreement in Principles," which would be satisfactory to both the United States and Japan. However Hornbeck's attitude seems to be indicative of the predominant trend in the State Department, i. e., being doubtful of Japanese intentions.

¹Ibid., pp. 123-25.
... I do not believe those leaders Japanese political and military leaders, and I therefore do not believe that Japan will in the near future abandon in any sense whatever their doctrine of military conquest by force. . . .

United States rejection of the Japanese Plenipotentiary's proposal was based on a series of arguments set forth by Hornbeck on

May 23, 1941:

1. Japan is bent on imperial expansion.
2. Japan hopes for control in China.
3. Japan wants power, prestige, and privileges in the Far East.
4. Japan wants to delay our decisions.
5. Japan wants to prevent United States support of Great Britain.
7. Japan wants to shake Great Britain's confidence in the United States.

While doubts were being expressed in Washington, Ambassador Grew wrote to Washington on May 26 and May 27, stating that if the United States could reach an agreement with Japan, changes in Japanese policy could be effected. Grew reported that neither the extremists nor the moderates had made important gains although he believed the momentary trend favored the moderates. In another dispatch the American Ambassador wrote that the attempted bilateral commitment had the approval of the Emperor, the cabinet, and probably

1Ibid., p. 162.
2Ibid., p. 223.
3Ibid., p. 231.
the Privy Council. While the only opposition could come from the army and navy, "We have good reason to believe that both the War and Navy Ministers, in general terms, favor a settlement along the general lines under discussion."¹ According to Grew the United States has very much to gain.

From the point of view of constructive statemanship, I believe that our Government should proceed with the negotiations with a view to entering the proposed commitments. The alternative might well be progressive deterioration of American-Japanese relations eventually leading to war... If a settlement on paper can be achieved, I have substantial hope that it will not fail in implementation.²

The Chinese position at this time was stated by the Reverend W. P. Mills of Nanking who said, in the light of Japanese concessions, the Chinese had become firm and now wanted Japan to evacuate Manchuria.³ Therefore no headway in talks, either in the United States or in China was being made by Japan. Also China's Ambassador to the United States, Hu Shih, wrote to the Secretary of State that he doubted whether Japan could be weaned away from the Axis powers.

I am therefore compelled to conclude that... the best solution seems to lie in assisting China to continue to a successful ending to her war of resistance of Japanese aggression, and in maintaining a firm diplomatic and naval position in the Pacific.⁴

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 232.
³Ibid., p. 234.
⁴Ibid., pp. 225-226.
Another serious blow to Japan's economic and military potential came on the twentieth of June, when the United States restricted the export of petroleum products to all nations except Great Britain.¹

As the negotiations became more intense, the relations between Japan and the United States worsened. Two days after the American army occupied Iceland, Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles received a communiqué from the Office of Naval Operations, mentioning that the Japanese were going to march into southern Indo-China.²

On the same day, Grew mentioned that he was not getting all the confidential information available, which made it impossible for him to be up to date with Washington's position. He mentioned "... A motor cannot function effectively unless it is hitting all cylinders ..."³

Japan made two changes in the American draft on "Agreement in Principle." The first proposed that the withdrawal from China take place two years, at a maximum, upon restoration of peace and the second that, rather than negotiate on the Manchukuo question, Japan wanted recognition of Manchukuo.⁴

¹Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, p. 424.
³Ibid., p. 300.
⁴Ibid., p. 313.
When the "Draft Understanding" was sent to Tokyo, Japanese civilian and military leaders felt that the relations with the United States were on the verge of improving. The Japanese government felt that the "Draft Understanding" was an official revision of an earlier American "Agreement in Principle." Since Washington did not regard Iwakuro and Wiwaka as official representatives with the full blessings of the Japanese cabinet, the State Department interpreted Tokyo's positive reply as Japan's first "official proposition" to the proposed understanding. Japan erroneously judged and measured various subsequent American proposals using the "Draft Understanding" as a guideline. Therefore the hardening of the American position was disappointing to Japanese leaders.¹

On July 17, 1941, the second Konoye government resigned. There was a grave difference of opinion between Foreign Minister Matsuoka and Premier Konoye. Matsuoka felt that Article III of the Tripartite Pact meant that Japan had to side with Germany if war should occur between the United States and Germany, whereas the Prime Minister did not share this view. The resignation of the whole cabinet was used to eliminate dissident members.² On the following day the third Konoye government was formed with Admiral Toyoda being appointed as Foreign Minister. Grew reported that

¹Butow, American Historical Review, LXV, (July, 1960), 834.
Admiral Toyoda was considered friendly towards the United States and was not known to have any pro-Axis sentiments.\(^1\) On July 19, Grew felt that the new Konoye government meant the removal of "Nazi-Fascist tinge" in the cabinet, no reversal in policy except to take less advice from Germany and to avoid a clash with the United States, and a fusion of military, economic, and political leaders.\(^2\)

In mid-July, Japan demanded that the Vichy government of France agree to Japanese occupation of southern Indo-China. On July 24, 1941, the Japanese, upon reaching an agreement with Vichy France, moved into southern Indo-China and occupied, not only the air bases, but also the army bases. A last minute American effort for a multilateral agreement failed as the proposal did not reach Japanese officials in Tokyo until after southern Indo-China was occupied.\(^3\) The Japanese occupation of southern Indo-China was instigated partially as a reaction to the United States moving into Greenland and Iceland and partially as a reaction to the embargo the United States imposed on raw materials, specifically the latest one on petroleum, which was issued on June 20, 1941. Also the Japanese were disillusioned about the failure to reach a negotiated settlement with the United States. The State Department was aware of the move

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 328.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 332.
in early July, 1941. There were different opinions on what the nature of the American response to Japan would be. While the desperate economic situation in Japan prompted the move into southern Indo-China, the United States interpreted it as an act of bad faith while the conversations in Washington were continuing.

Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs Maxwell Hamilton opposed "...instituting a program of drastic economic and other restrictive measures against Japan." ¹

R. Kelly Turner, the Director of the War Plans Division of the Navy Department, wrote to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Stark, setting forth reasons for rejecting a total embargo. Turner stated that licensed control had created sharp decline of American export in machine tools, ferro-alloys and refined copper, while scrap iron export was practically negligible. United States trade with Japan in 1941 fell from $11,336,000 in January to $6,594,000 in May. "It is generally believed that the shutting off of American supply of petroleum will lead promptly to an invasion of the Netherlands East Indies." ²

Admiral Stark informed President Roosevelt that he opposed the embargo because: though not immediately, an embargo would hamper Japan's long-term effort; and an embargo would result in

² Ibid., pp. 837-39.
an early Japanese attack against the British and Dutch possessions in the Far East as well as the Philippines. 1

On July 25, 1941, President Roosevelt imposed a total embargo on Japan and froze Japanese assets in the United States. 2 Stanley K. Hornbeck favored these moves and warned against the measure becoming just a mere gesture of retaliation. 3 Realizing that the freezing of assets and the embargoes might lead to an attack on the Philippines, President Roosevelt dispatched General Douglas MacArthur to set up United States military headquarters in Manila and to organize its defenses. 4 Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson interpreted the American measures as the "road to war." 5

American policy was committed to a course of action which was by its very nature suspicious of Japanese intentions. Secretary of State Cordell Hull felt that:

We were convinced that an Allied victory was possible and we were determined to do everything we could to bring it about, short of actually sending an expeditionary force to


2Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, p. 450.


Europe or the Orient. 1

. . . our position as a Government had been made clear. We regarded Japan as an ally of Hitler and Mussolini, a signatory to an alliance aimed at us. We considered Japan's expansionist ambitions an eventual danger to our own safety. 2

In late July the United States broke off conversations on the "Draft Understanding" with Colonel Iwakuro and Mr. Wikawa. Events led to a strong stand by the United States while Japan took the initiative of trying to find ways and means to bring about a negotiated settlement. However, when Premier Konoye and the army and navy simultaneously decided to move south in Indo-China and to preserve negotiations, they "cut the ground from under diplomacy, and rendered an eventual war between Japan and the United States inevitable." 3

The intransigent United States attitude in the first six months of the 1941 negotiations is thus clear from the record. Japan represented a threat to the American position in the Far East. The United States was convinced of the need for an Allied victory in Europe and the Orient. Officials in Washington, aware of the Japanese army's power, were not sure if a negotiated settlement with the


2 Ibid., p. 982.

3 Togo, p. 81.
civilian cabinet would be honored by the Japanese military leaders. Furthermore, Japan had violated previous treaties and the United States feared she would break any new agreement. When Japan was condemned as an aggressor in Manchuria, she walked out of the League of Nations and by invading China she did not honor her commitment to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Japan had an existing agreement with Germany i.e., the Tripartite Pact, and since Tokyo was willing to disregard this pact, policymakers in Washington were not assured that Japan would subsequently honor a pact with the United States. Also Washington was not sure whether Japan wanted to withdraw from the costly war in China because she wanted peace or because she wanted to utilize their military power against the rich British, Dutch, and French possessions in the Far East. Finally the Japanese occupation of southern Indo-China during negotiations with the United States led Washington to doubt Japan's desire for peace.
CHAPTER IV

JAPAN'S PLANS FOR WAR AND
THE FALL OF THE KONOYE GOVERNMENT

Like all nations which are involved in peace conversations, Japan prepared plans for war as an alternative if negotiations failed. In early 1941, the Japanese navy defined four instances in which Japan might have to go to war. These were: an all out embargo; Anglo-American strategic cooperation against Japan; Anglo-American military build-up in the Far East; and the possible separation of England and America as allies. ¹ In January of 1941 Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto conceived a bold plan for a lightning strike against American military forces and installations at Pearl Harbor.²

During the summer of 1941 army and navy staff officers frequently discussed with government officials the possible ramifications of a war against the United States and England. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, fully realized the difficulties Japan would face in an extended struggle, including insurmountable problems of maintaining and increasing qualified flight crews and supplying minimum numbers of combat planes to the front.

¹Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 203.
²Neumann, p. 278.
Admiral Yamamoto frankly informed Premier Konoye:

If you tell me that it is necessary that we fight, then in the first six months to a year of war against the United States and England I will run wild, and I must also tell you that should the war be prolonged for two or three years, I have no confidence in our ultimate victory. ¹

After the United States froze Japanese assets, England and Dutch East Indies followed suit, and Japan faced the prospect of a total economic blockade. Tokyo regarded the new American measure as the final major link in the encirclement of Japan. War Minister Hideki Tojo felt that because Japan depended on the Asian continent for foodstuffs and raw materials, trade was a matter of life and death for his country. He stated that "Japan was being coerced by a circle of force directed against her by American, Britain, China, and the Dutch."²

On July 31, Chief of the Naval General Staff Admiral Nagano conveyed his impressions of relations with the United States to the Emperor. While the navy wished to avoid war with the United States, no adjustment could be made so long as Japan adhered to the Tri-partite Pact. Since Japan had only a two-year supply of oil, if


² Quoted in Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 224.
negotiations were not successful, Japan would have no choice but to go to war in order to maintain itself. ¹

The army and navy did not agree on what policy Japan should follow. After being pressured by the army's general staff, the Japanese navy agreed that war preparations should begin while diplomatic negotiations continued, and that if diplomacy failed to bring about a settlement by the middle of October, the use of force would be unavoidable. ²

On September 3, 1941, the top cabinet ministers and the leader of the Supreme Command decided:

If, by the early part of October, there is no prospect of being able to attain our demands, we shall immediately decide to open hostilities against the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

The next day the third Konoye cabinet gave its approval to this decision. The army was determined that if current negotiations failed, war would immediately begin. ³ By September 6 an Imperial Conference approved war preparation if diplomatic negotiations failed. Approval for the Pearl Harbor attack plan was to be given in mid-October. Twenty-nine separate targets from Hawaii to the Philippines, Malaya, and Hong Kong were chosen for simultaneous attack. ⁴

¹Ibid., p. 234.
²Ibid., p. 246.
³Ibid., p. 250.
⁴Neumann, p. 279.
In August American policy stiffened and the Atlantic Conference illustrated the fact that the United States was not ready to compromise with Japan in the Far East. The Atlantic Conference, held off the coast of Argentia Bay, Newfoundland, from August 9th to 12th ended with a pledge of non-belligerence and continued United States' aid to the British effort against Nazi tyranny. However, the trip through a German-mined sea was not solely for the purpose of drawing up a series of principles against the Third Reich, but also to draw up a common policy of resistance to further Japanese aggression. Recalling the significance of the meeting with reference to the Far East, Winston Churchill stated in a speech to Parliament, on January 27, 1942,

The probability, since the Atlantic Conference . . . that the United States even if not herself attacked would come into a war in the Far East and thus make final victory assured, seemed to allay some of these anxieties . . .

During the Atlantic Conference, Churchill asked for a joint ultimatum against Japan, but Roosevelt was against this proposal for fear that Congress might not approve it. He did agree though,


... to do some plain talking to Japan—not an ultimatum but something that very closely approximates that and can easily lead to it later if the Japanese do not accept our demands.¹

When President Roosevelt returned from the Atlantic Conference he handed a written statement to Japanese Ambassador Nomura, in which the United States berated the Japanese move into Indo-China and warned Japan

• • • Such being the case, this government now finds it necessary to say to the government of Japan, that if the Japanese government takes any steps in pursuance of a policy or program of military domination by force or threat of force of neighboring countries, the government of the United States will be compelled to take immediately, any and all steps which it may deem necessary towards safeguarding the legitimate rights of American nationals, and towards insuring the safety and security of the United States.²

This statement seemed to indicate that the next military move on the part of the Imperial Japanese government might bring the United States into the war. Great Britain, the Netherlands, and China also sent identical notes to Japan.

On the following day, Prince Konoye made a proposal to meet Roosevelt at Honolulu to resolve their problems. Ambassador Grew, on August 19, referred to Konoye's attempt for peace by stating

"... It reveals a supreme effort on the part of the government to maintain peace with the United States ..." The Ambassador's

¹Quoted in Neumann, p. 272.

explanation for this proposal was that Japan was economically starving as a result of United States embargoes and that extremists were trying to get control of the government. Grew also mentioned that if this meeting was rejected there would be a shift in policy and that the Konoye cabinet would be replaced. Thus the fate of the country would be in the hands of the military.\(^1\) In a note to the Secretary of State, three days later, Grew voiced his distress over the considerable amount of press comment of the alleged encirclement of Japan by the United States and Great Britain.\(^2\)

In Washington, Admiral Nomura still worked for a peaceful conclusion to the China question. It was the idea of the Japanese that the United States try to bring Japan and China together to negotiate the end of the war.\(^3\) However, ten days before, on August 18, 1941, Secretary of State Hull stated the position that the President had taken. President Roosevelt said that when Japan ceased her expansionist activity and furnished a clear indication that she would embark on a peaceful program, the United States would consider resumption of the informal exploratory discussions.\(^4\) China's Foreign Minister Quo stated that Chiang Kai-Shek did not favor a

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 398.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 409.

\(^3\)F. R. U. S., Japan, II 576-79.

peaceful solution of the China war with Japan unless it was a part of a general world settlement. The policy now definitely left the Japanese war machine in China without hope of peace. Pressure was brought to bear on the United States and Great Britain by China, whose desire was to get the two Anglo-Saxon nations into a Pacific war. ¹

In Tokyo, Ambassador Grew constantly was warning the State Department of the explosive situation in Tokyo. On the topic of the drastic effect of the embargo on the Japanese economy, Grew mentioned "... In Japan, a psychology of despair leads characteristically to a do or die reaction ..." He concluded this note:

... The position as we see it is that if our government is still prepared to explore an approach from Japan, time is of the essence. There would seem to be developments in the making which if not immediately anticipated might well eliminate the last possibility though slim it may be, of preventing the spread of the war to the Pacific ... ²

Grew actually questioned whether the United States desired to negotiate its differences with Japan. Two days later, Grew noted that because of the American embargo and the lack of progress in negotiations the Japanese people felt they must prepare for a war. There was conscription, mobilization, air raid shelters built, and restriction on travel. He noted that there was a campaign in Japan to prepare for war if negotiations failed. ³

¹ Ibid., p. 395.
² Ibid., p. 398.
³ Ibid., p. 409.
On the same day, August 29, 1941, commenting on Washington's publicity concerning Konoye's peace offer, Grew noted that this underestimated the grave situation in Japan and placed Prince Konoye in an even more dangerous situation. Furthermore the American ambassador stated that

... there can be no doubt as to the genuiness of the present efforts of Prince Konoye to find some mutual ground for conciliation with a view to avoid the steadily increasing risk of war ... .

The following day, Grew pleaded with Washington to illustrate to the Japanese that the United States desired better relations. The policies of the United States were reflected by Roger Hornbeck

... Although we should take no unfair advantage, we have everything to gain and little or nothing to lose by standing firm on our principles and our policies ...

The stiff attitude towards Japan was not denied by Hornbeck nor was it readily acceptable to Grew.

While no progress in negotiations was made in either China or Washington, the Dutch and British sent warnings in the form of harsh notes, indicating that if Japan made another advance militarily, there would be no other recourse but war. Though there was no

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1Reports of Japanese-American negotiations were released to the press after the Japanese government demanded secret talks.


3Ibid., p. 416.

4Ibid., p. 419.
formal American, British, Chinese, and Dutch encirclement, this did in fact happen with these four powers declaring that they would not permit, for any reason, any further Japanese thrust.

President Roosevelt replied to Konoye's offer of a personal meeting in Honolulu by presenting a series of principles which must be accepted before the proposed conversation could commence. Hornbeck, commenting on a possible meeting of the two leaders, felt that the Japanese had nothing to offer the United States. He constantly disregarded the sound advice of Grew, whose ten years in Japan permitted him to accurately evaluate the Japanese position in relation to the United States. The proposed meeting was compared to the Munich Conference. This was a false analogy as there were two different nations involved and different matters at stake. Hornbeck disregarded the build up of tensions in Japan because he thought they were exaggerated, indicating a distrust of Grew, who was on the spot and able to transmit numerous reliable data.

Chiang Kai-Shek, in an interview on September 10 in Chungking with representatives of the American press, officially acknowledged the failure of Chinese-Japanese conversations by announcing that China would continue to fight.

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1 William Langer and Everett Gleason in their book *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941*, stated that Stimson, Welles, and others were against the meeting in varying degrees.

C. E. Gauss, the United States Ambassador to China, wrote to the Secretary of State, on September 14, 1941, the following:

... The announcement of the sending of the American military mission to China was hailed as a definite indication that appeasement was dead and that the United States was preparing for military and strategic collaboration with China extending even beyond material aid. ¹

The continuation of the war in China, the inflexibility of the United States, the imminent failure of the proposed Roosevelt-Konoye talks, and the embargoes led to an increase of pro-Axis sentiment and propaganda in Japan. Grew rementioned that talk of the fall of the Konoye government was near as the Japanese Premier had failed to solve the economic dilemma of Japan, ² and he also notified Washington that on the twelfth of September the military command was centralized under the symbolic leadership of Emperor Hirohito. This move was to counteract the extremists and to commence intense preparation in case of war. ³ Two and a half weeks later, Ambassador Grew sent a telegram in which he reviewed telegrams since the spring of 1940, which revealed an intensified effort by Japan to bring about the meeting of the two heads of government. Grew personally felt that the meeting might keep the situation from going from bad to worse. If the Americans kept stalling, he reiterated, it may lead to a military government.

¹Ibid., p. 447.
²Ibid., p. 441.
³Ibid., p. 447.
I feel that we shall fail to reach our objectives if we insist and continue to insist in the preliminary conversation on the furnishing by Japan of the sort of specific, clear-cut commitment which we would expect to see embodied in any formal and final degree of confidence in the professed good faith and sincerity of intention of Prince Konoye and his supporters. I do not believe that we can succeed in creating an orientation in Japan which would lead to a general improvement in our relations and the hope of avoiding ultimate war in the Pacific.

Grew mentioned in another telegram that his British colleague was against United States settling its disputes with Japan by negotiation.

On October 2, 1941, Secretary of State Hull replied to Grew's telegram as if its contents were completely disregarded. In his statement, Hull reiterated that the United States government wanted more than the word of the Japanese government. It wanted a showing of sincerity by some act such as the withdrawal from Indo-China.

Finally, President Roosevelt, on the advice of the Secretary of State, rejected the idea of meeting with Prince Konoye on October 2, 1941.

On October 7, Prime Minister Konoye transmitted his view to Grew to the effect that:

1. The memorandum of October 2, 1941, was far from conciliatory and places the Prime Minister in a difficult position, as with the failure of negotiations, more fuel was being added to his enemies and the army.
2. Many people in the Japanese government are coming to the point of view that Japan has fallen into a trap. As the Americans have no intention of reaching an

\[^{1}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 488-89.}\]
\[^{2}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 489.}\]
\[^{3}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 494.}\]
agreement with Japan, but rather they desire to keep
the Empire in a position of quasi-hostility.

3. The United States' notes tend to be argumentive and
great care was taken not to give Japan any specifi­ca­
tions or to lay any of their cards on the table.¹

During September, little transpired in the negotiations. By
September 25, 1941, at a Liaison Conference held in Japan by the
Supreme Command and the cabinet, it was decided that the decision
for war or peace must be made by October 15 at the latest. The
strict adherence to the September plan upset Konoye to such an
extent that he talked of resigning, although he was partly responsible,
for he gave his consent to the September Plan. He was dealt a severe
blow when the American government again rejected a meeting be­
tween himself and President Roosevelt. ²

When the navy became hesitant on October 12 about committing
Japan to war and when Konoye and Foreign Minister Toyada could
not offer the assurance of a peaceful solution through negotiations,
Tojo stated that Japan recognized the principle of withdrawing the
troops from China with neither indemnities nor annexation. But the
United States' demand for unconditional and immediate withdrawal
"would not be in keeping with the dignity (ishin) of the army." As it
became clear that Tojo dominated the cabinet meetings and the plan

¹Ibid., p. 501.

²Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 262-63.
of September 6 was instituted, the diplomats had little time or room to negotiate. ¹

As a result of the American attitude and the internal situation in Japan, Premier Konoye and his cabinet resigned at 8:15 p.m. on October 16, 1941. ²

¹Ibid., p. 273.
CHAPTER V

THE TOJO GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR PEACE
AND WAR AND THE BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

When Prince Konoye and his cabinet resigned on October 16, the choice of his successor was limited to either War Minister Tojo or Navy Minister Oikawa. Tojo was summoned to the palace where Emperor Hirohito asked him to form a cabinet without being bound to the Imperial Conference's decision of September 6, 1941, which essentially approved preparation for war in mid-October if peace negotiations failed.¹ By October 17 his cabinet was completed and the formal ceremony took place on the following day.²

Shigenori Togo accepted the post of Foreign Minister in the Tojo cabinet for the purpose of averting, not starting a war. Toyada, the former Foreign Minister, and Tojo admitted that within Japanese circles, the army was still the main obstacle to negotiations.³

There were different reactions among American officials concerning the new Tojo government. Captain R. E. Schuriman, a member of Admiral Stark's staff, felt that there was no radical

¹ Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 293.
² Ibid., p. 312.
³ Togo, p. 55.
change in Japanese policy forthcoming. Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs Maxwell Hamilton assessed the Tojo cabinet as middle of the road. He iterated that Japan's most important problems were to secure oil and ferrous material and to break the economic and commercial embargoes of Japan by the ABCD powers. He felt that Japan would not reject a negotiated settlement, but at the same time if peace was not forthcoming the opportunity for a solution by force will not be lost through lack of preparation or deployment of forces. Hamilton proposed eight points for a negotiated settlement but these were not presented to Japanese representatives.

They were:

1. To charter Japanese merchant ships in exchange for cotton and non-military commodities.
2. To furnish Japan with steel in exchange for delivered ships.
3. To buy goods from Japan required by the United States.
4. To barter non-military commodities with Japan.
5. To indicate to Japan, the importance of good relations.
6. To resume the sending of American vessels to Far Eastern ports.
7. To send some prominent American such as Bernard Baruch or Thomas Lamont to Japan.
8. To dispatch a professional baseball team to Japan.

Bishop James E. Walsh, referring to the shift in government, stated that Japan wanted peace but if peace were to be preserved an agreement must be reached without delay, as the new government

Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 313.


Ibid., p. 524.
was putting its house in order to move in another direction if peace did not come.¹

Concerning the removal of troops from China and Indo-China, Ambassador Grew explained, on October 25, that

... these same leaders are confident that provided Japan is not placed in an impossible position by the insistence on the part of the United States, that all Japanese troops in these areas be withdrawn at once, such a removal can and will be successfully effected... There is a good possibility of a reorientation of Japanese policy.²

The inflexible attitude of the United States was reflected by the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who was quoted as saying that the American government was satisfied that the Japanese planned more expansion and war. The statement upset Grew because Knox went to the public and presented fallacious information that the Japanese were expanding, without mentioning Grew's clarification that the new leaders in Tokyo were trying to bridge the gap between the United States and Japan.³ Another United States policy-maker said, in a manner contradicting the American Ambassador.

... With the removal of Prince Konoye as Prime Minister in October, 1941, and the appointment of General Tojo as

¹Ibid., p. 527.


his successor, any possibility of such negotiations vanished. From that time on the die had been cast...¹

Sumner Welles rejected Grew's opinion as valid even though Grew had been in Japan for ten years. Hull's aide constantly and unreliably misinterpreted Japanese attempts to reach a negotiated settlement.

Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, judging the situation in Washington, wrote in October 1941, in his diary about the trend of events concerning Japan.

For a long time I have believed that our best entrance into war would be by Japan... Japan has no friends in this country, but China has. And of course if we go to war against Japan, it will inevitably lead us into war against Germany.²

United States Ambassador to Britain John Winant, stressed to Hull the warning of a surprise attack and also conveyed plans for intergovernmental consultation in the Pacific.³

Grew mentioned that upon the failure of a peace program, armed conflict would be unavoidable and it would come with dramatic suddenness. His November 3, 1941, note from Tokyo also stressed the element of an imminent surprise attack from Japan.⁴ Originally Tojo did not become Premier to lead Japan into war, but if he failed


²Quoted in Neumann, p. 282.


⁴Trefousse, p. 298.
to break the deadlock of indecision, "... he was prepared to assume the leadership of the nation in war."¹

The remainder of October was used by the Japanese to review national policy. The oil needs for the military-industrial complex was the main factor in the decision to go to war. By October 30 three alternative courses of action were presented by policy-makers in Japan as follows:

1. A policy of caution at the expense of great hardships at home.
2. An immediate launching of hostilities.
3. Further diplomatic effort with simultaneous preparation for war.

Plan 1, aimed at avoiding armed conflict, was rejected because the liquid fuel stock would be depleted in two years and the Japanese military force would grind to a halt. Being equivalent to military suicide, this plan was discarded. Tojo opposed Plan 2 as it ran counter to the Emperor's pleas of searching for peace through negotiations. Plan 3 was the accepted compromise, with a deadline for war to be established if a diplomatic victory was not achieved.² The deadline for the successful conclusion of negotiations was set for November 30, 1941. Formal confirmation of the new policy took place at an Imperial Conference which was held on the fifth of November.³

¹Quoted in Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 313.
²Ibid., pp. 319-20.
³Ibid., pp. 321-25.
On November 5, Foreign Minister Togo sent Saburo Kurusu to Washington to aid Admiral Nomura who requested aid because of his lack of diplomatic experience. Tokyo wrote to Nomura that Kurusu's mission was to convey in person to you information concerning the latest situation here, to assist you in the final stages of negotiations, and by cooperating with you to break the deadlock so as to bring negotiations speedily to a successful conclusion. 1

At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East after World War II, Tojo testified that there was no design whatsoever to camouflage Japan's intentions if any, to start war. It came purely from the wish to bring negotiations to a successful conclusion. But whatever Japan's intention it worked in the United States' favor as the Kurusu Mission prolonged negotiations and permitted more American preparation. "To the Japanese a delay in hostilities was not a gain, but a loss."2

Important officials in the State Department were aware of Kurusu's intentions incoming to Washington by means of "Magic" which was the term used to identify decoded intercepted messages from Japan. The Navy had broken the Japanese code and messages sent from the Foreign Minister in Tokyo to Washington were intercepted by the office of Naval Intelligence. Therefore the United


2Ibid., p. 304.
States government knew many of Japan's proposals and plans before they were presented by the Japanese envoys to the State Department.

While Kurusu journeyed to Washington the Japanese Ambassador, Admiral Nomura presented a proposal to the Secretary of State. It provided for: the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Indo-China after successful negotiations; withdrawal within two years from China, except North China, Inner Mongolia, and Hainan Island; and recognition by Japan of the principle of economic non-discrimination. Hull discarded the proposal when he found out that it was a bargaining document for the proposal which was to be presented on November 20, five days after Kurusu arrived in Washington.

Dispatch #736 sent from Tokyo and intercepted by Intelligence in Washington on November 5, 1941, asked the Japanese envoy to complete an agreement by the twenty-fifth of November. On the following day, the State Department received a message from Grew that Japan's economic situation was deteriorating and that the Japanese were planning to seize raw materials, notably oil, tin, and rubber if peace failed.

Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operation, wrote two days after the deadline was set that

1Ibid., p. 304.


Events are moving rapidly towards a real showdown in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The navy is already in the war in the Atlantic, but the country doesn't realize it. Apathy, to the point of open opposition, is evident in a considerable section of the press. Meanwhile the Senate is dragging out the debate with reference to arming merchant men. Whether this country knows it or not we are at war. ¹

On November 9, Winston Churchill publicly stated at a Lord Mayor's banquet, that if the United States should find herself engaged in a war with Japan, Great Britain would follow within the hour. ²

On the next day Japan's Foreign Minister Togo mentioned in his talks with Grew, that it was felt that if the United States did not cease imposing economic pressure, Japan might have to resort to some action for self-defense. ³

Meanwhile, the State Department in Washington received a "Magic" dispatch on November 11 emphasizing the date of November 25 as absolutely immovable. "You can see therefore that the situation is reaching a climax, and that time is indeed becoming short." ⁴

At this point, the United States leaders knew that the Japanese were totally backed up to the wall. The parallel communications of August, by the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, stated that they would not tolerate any other territorial acquisition

¹Quoted in Beard, p. 431.
²Hull, II, 1059.
³Trefousse, p. 300.
⁴Quoted in Kimmel, p. 90.
by Japan. At best, the United States knew that Japan was to move in
South East Asia, if negotiations failed.

On November 13, 1941, Secretary of State Hull received a re­
port from the American Embassy in Tokyo stating that Japan was
under strain and her economic structure could not withstand it. 1

Two days later, Tokyo informed Admiral Nomura and Saburo
Kurusu, who had just arrived from Japan, that the date for reaching
an agreement was immovable. 2 On November 16, 1941, Foreign
Minister Togo wrote to the Washington Embassy:

... have read your #1090 and you may be sure that you
have all my gratitude for the efforts you have put forth,
but the fate of our Empire hangs by the slender thread
of a few days so please fight harder than you ever did ... 3

These secret codes, which the Japanese were not aware that
the Americans were decoding, displayed an apparent sincerity in
salvaging negotiations while the Americans aware of Japanese pur­
poses, were adamant and unyielding.

On November 17, 1941, Grew emphasized "... the need to
guard against any sudden Japanese naval or military actions in such
areas as are now involved in the Chinese theater ... " He talked of
new action in Siberia and the Southwest Pacific. He felt that the Em­
bassy's duty was to watch for signs of military operations and that

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2Kimmel, p. 90.

3Quoted in Kimmel, p. 91.
"... every precaution is being taken to guard against surprise ..." 1

The same day Foreign Minister Togo appealed for peace, while asking for greater mobilization. Meanwhile in Washington, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau showed how the United States has not changed her policy. Without defining raw material concessions, the American government wanted from Japan: restoration of China; one billion yen indemnity for reparation of China; and the sale to the United States of part of the Japanese navy. 2 The Chief of the Division for Far Eastern Affairs Maxwell Hamilton sent Morgenthau's proposal to Hull as follows:

1. Withdrawal from China and Indo-China;
2. Withdrawal from Manchuria;
4. Negotiation of a non-aggression pact. 3

On November 20, 1941, aside from their suggestion of a modus vivendi, the Japanese representatives in Washington presented a proposal which constituted further major concessions by Japan to reach peace.

1. The government of Japan and that of the United States undertake not to make any advancement in Southeast Asia and the Pacific except in Indo-China where Japanese troops are now stationed.
2. Japan will withdraw from Indo-China upon the establishment of peace in the Pacific and in the peace talks, they shall move the troops from southern Indo-China to northern Indo-China.

1Quoted in Trefousse, p. 302.


3Ibid., p. 623.
3. The government of Japan and the United States shall cooperate to acquire goods and commodities which the two countries need from the Dutch East Indies.

4. This stipulation refers to restoration of trade relations and the supplying of Japan required quantities of oil.

5. The government of the United States should refrain from taking measures which will be prejudiced to the restoration of peace between Japan and China.¹

The Japanese coded messages sent to Nomura two days later stated that it was difficult to extend the deadline beyond November 25.

"There are reasons beyond your ability to guess why we want to settle Japanese-American relations by the twenty-fifth . . ." but Togo stated that a four-day extension until November 29 would be granted. "This time we mean it, the deadline can't be absolutely changed. After that things are automatically going to happen."²

During this critical period in negotiations, as a reply to the November 20 proposals presented by Kurusu and Nomura, American officials toyed with the idea of a proposed modus vivendi with Japan. Six months before, President Roosevelt had conceived of a plan which would enable the United States and Japan to resume economic relations. In exchange Japan would restrict troops in Indo-China and Manchukuo; would not invoke the Tripartite Pact if the United States entered the European war; and would conduct peace talks initiated by American representatives.³ In November the Far Eastern

¹Quoted in Trefousse, p. 303.

²Quoted in Kimmel, p. 91.

³Hsu, p. 305.
Division of the Department of State proposed:

1. Direct negotiations between Japan and China.
2. During negotiations, Japan declare an armistice.
3. During negotiations no Japanese reinforcements in China or Indo-China.
4. During negotiations no Japanese shipments of military supplies.
5. During negotiations no United States shipments of military supplies to China.
6. Immediate negotiations on resumption of trade and commerce on trade commodities.
7. And after a Sino-Japanese peace, the United States was to resume normal trade relations.¹

However, final draft of a proposed *modus vivendi* with Japan was ready by November 22, 1941. Originally Secretary of State Hull favored the proposal even if it only stalled the beginning of the war. The terms included:

1. An affirmation of peaceful intentions by both governments.
2. A promise by both governments not to advance by force or threat of force into areas including Southeastern or Northeastern Asia or in the Southern or in the Northern Pacific areas.
3. An undertaking by Japan to withdraw its armed forces from southern French Indo-China and to reduce the total of her forces in French Indo-China to the number which was there on July 26, 1941, and not to send additional forces to Indo-China for replacement.
4. An undertaking by the United States to relax the freezing order to the following extent:
   a) Imports from Japan to be freely permitted--two-thirds of it to be raw silk--and American goods frozen in Japan to be forwarded to the United States.
   b) Exports from the United States to Japan:
      i) Bunkers and supplies for vessels engaged in the trade here provided for.
      ii) Food supplies not in shortage in the United States.

¹Ibid., p. 305.
iii) Raw cotton to the extent of six hundred thousand dollars per month.
iv) Medical supplies.
v) Petroleum: to be supplied on monthly basis for civilian use only, such as for the fishing industry, the transport system, etc. The amount of petroleum would be decided upon after consultations with the governments of Britain and the Netherlands. The above amount may be increased later.

5. An undertaking by Japan to relax freezing and export restrictions on the United States.

6. An undertaking by the United States to ask Australia, Britain, and the Netherlands to take similar measures.

7. Any Japanese talks with China to be based on peace, order, and justice.

8. This modus vivendi to remain in force for three months with an understanding that an extension would be in order after a general settlement is reached. ¹

The conceived proposal would have been the first concrete attempt for peace. The liberal terms might have permitted Japan to have a most favored nation status concerning trade with the United States and to allow for ways in which Japan could possibly withdraw from the war in China.

On November 22 Hull informed the diplomatic representative of China, Britain, the Netherlands, and Australia of the proposed modus vivendi. Britain and the Netherlands gave superficial approval but China's reaction was violent. Hu Shih, the Chinese Ambassador to the United States, felt that the retention of twenty-five thousand Japanese soldiers (the amount of soldiers there on July 25, 1941) in French Indo-China was a threat to China. There was no provision for the end of the conflict between Japan and China. Chiang Kai-Shek

wired his brother-in-law T. V. Soong, who was in Washington, that if the embargo is relaxed "... the morale of the entire people of China will collapse ... The Chinese army will collapse."1

Because of the pressure Secretary of State Hull reported to President Roosevelt that:

In view of the opposition of the Chinese government and the half-hearted support of the actual support of the British, the Netherlands, and Australian governments and in view of the wide publicity of the opposition ... I desire very earnestly to recommend that at this time I ... withhold the modus vivendi proposal.

When the President approved Hull's recommendation, the modus vivendi was shelved.2

After the modus vivendi was withheld, Secretary of State Hull, aware of the November 29 deadline stated: "The Sword of Damocles that hung over our heads was therefore attached to a clock work set to the hour." On the next day, November 25, 1941, Hull stated:

There is practically no possibility of an agreement being achieved with Japan ... It would be a mistake to assume that our conversations are going on.3

On the same day, Secretary of War Stimson referred to the counter proposal which Hull was to present the following day as a reply to Japan's proposal of November 20 that "... I don't think there

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1Quoted in Hsu, pp. 305-06.

2Ibid., pp. 306-07.

3Quoted in Hull, p. 1077.
is any chance of the Japanese accepting it because it was so drastic...\textsuperscript{1} General George Marshall and Admiral Stark were opposed to Hull's ten point proposal for fear it would cause Japan to commence war.\textsuperscript{2}

Secretary of State Hull handed the outline for the proposed agreement between the United States and Japan, to Ambassadors Numura and Kurusu on November 26. Section one provided for four principles of peace:

1. Principles of inviolability of territorial integrity and sovereignty of each and all nations.
2. Principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs.
3. Principle of equality between nations.
4. Principle of reliance on international cooperation and conciliation.

Section two proposed steps to be taken by the governments of Japan and the United States.

1. Multilateral non-aggression pact with Great Britain, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand, and the United States.
2. Pledge to respect territorial rights of Indo-China.
3. The government of Japan to withdraw all military, naval, air, and police forces from China and Indo-China.
5. Both the United States and Japan to negotiate a trade agreement.
6. Both the United States and Japan to give up all extraterritorial rights in China.

\textsuperscript{1}Quoted in Trefousse, p. 139.

\textsuperscript{2}Richard Van Alstyne, "Before Pearl Harbor," \textit{Current History}, XX, (February, 1951), 76.
7. Both nations shall respectively remove restrictions on assets in respective countries.
8. Stabilization of the dollar-yen rate.
9. No treaty with a power which would affect this proposal.
10. Both the United States and Japan to work to the applicability of this proposal. ¹

When Hull presented this proposal to the Ambassadors, Kurusu mentioned that his government would throw up its hands. ²

The Secretary of State said to the British Ambassador: "... The diplomatic part of our relations with Japan was virtually over and that the matter will now go to the officials of the army and the navy ..." and that the Secretary of State knew war was imminent. ³

After receiving Hull's answer to proposal B, Nomura and Kurusu tried to use it as a basis of negotiation by proposing to their government that a top-level conference be held between Vice-President Wallace or White House Advisor Harry Hopkins and ex-Premier Konoye or Viscount Ishii, possible in Honolulu. The idea of further negotiations was rejected in accordance with Plan 3, which the Japanese Imperial Conference adopted on November 5, 1941. ⁴

When the American Office of Naval Intelligence intercepted Togo's message sent to the Japanese embassy, important officials knew that relations would be defacto ruptured. The coded message stated:

²Beard., p. 137.
³Quoted in Beard, p. 247.
⁴Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, pp. 338-39.
Well, you two Ambassadors have exerted superhuman efforts but in spite of this, [Japanese Ambassadors' effort] the United States has gone ahead and presented this humiliating proposal. This was quite unexpected and extremely regrettable. The Imperial Government can by no means use it as a basis for negotiations. Therefore, with a report of the view of the Imperial Government on this American proposal which I will send you in two or three days, the negotiations will be defacto ruptured. This is inevitable . . .

Since leaders in Tokyo felt that Hull's proposal would actually reduce their country to a third-rate power and since "Japan could get no relief short of surrender of her fundamental position, she chose war." Formal confirmation for war took place on November 30 when the Japanese government called an Imperial Conference which "linked the fate of the nation to the use of force." Tojo stated that the United States added new conditions and called for unilateral concessions from Japan such as withdrawal of troops from China, repudiation of the Wang Ching-wei government, and minimizing the Tripartitie Pact. Submission would mean the forfeiting of Japan's power and authority. After all the cabinet ministers and Admiral Nagano, reporting for the army and navy, had made their reports to the Emperor supporting the Prime Minister, the decision for war was made. On December 2, 1941, Admiral Nagano informed the Emperor that December 7 was set for the simultaneous attacks on Pearl Harbor

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1 Quoted in Kimmel, p. 93.
2 Van Alstyne, p. 76.
3 Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 359.
and other targets. On Sunday, which was a day of rest, the number of war ships in harbor would be comparatively large. 1

In Washington, Secretary of War Stimson felt that an attack on British and Dutch possessions in the Southwest Pacific would require the United States' participation in a war against Japan. On November 25 and November 28, policy-makers prepared a diplomatic manoeuvre as a warning to Japan, and a political manoeuvre, as a message to Congress and the people. Both the dispatch and address declared that any southward advance by Japan would invade America's vital interest which was the same as an attack on American soil. 2

Washington wrote to Commander of the Asiatic Fleet Hart that Great Britain would be assured of American support in the eventuality of a Japanese attack on British possessions. 3 Also the War Department in London wrote to Brock Popham, the British representative in Manila, that there were assurances of United States armed support if Japan attacked either British and or Dutch possessions. 4

Since the policy-makers in the State Department and in the Roosevelt cabinet accepted the prospects of war rather than negotiations

1Ibid., p. 370.
3Beard, p. 541.
4Kimmel, p. 114.
via a modus vivendi, the main theme of American policy was to derive a plan which would both unite the country in a war with Japan and Germany and would make the Japanese the aggressors in war. While Nomura and Kurusu had conversations with the State Department, Secretary of State Hull knew that negotiations were defacto ruptured since November 28, 1941. While the cabinet knew that war would begin any day, nothing could be done to prevent an attack. Secretary of War Stimson stated that:

In spite of the risk involved, however, in letting the Japanese fire the first shot, we realized that in order to have the full support of the American people it was desirable to make sure that the Japanese be the one to do this so that there would remain no doubt in anyone's mind as to who was the aggressor.  

Up until forty-eight hours before Japan's attack, the possibility and probability of war appeared inevitable. If there was any doubt that there would be a war, it was eliminated by the message sent from Tokyo to Washington, December 6, 1941, mentioning that a separate fourteen point memorandum was to be sent the next day. American Army and Navy Intelligence deciphered a thirteen point message sometime early Saturday afternoon or evening which stated:

The American Government obsessed with its own views and opinions, may be said to be scheming for the extension of the war . . . it is exercising in conjunction with Great Britain and other nations pressure by economic power. Recourse to such pressure as a means of dealing with international relations should be condemned as it is at times more inhumane than military pressure . . . It is a fact of

1Quoted in Current, p. 169.
history that the countries [of East Asia for the past hundred years or more] have been compelled to observe the status quo under Anglo-American policy of imperialistic exploitation and to sacrifice themselves to the prosperity of the two nations... ¹

The tone of the first thirteen points definitely established, unofficially, that a state of war existed at any moment. On this night, as much as eleven hours before the attack, Washington was notified of the critical condition. On Saturday evening between 9 p.m and 10 p.m. the thirteen-part message was brought to Roosevelt who read the thirteen parts to his guest Harry Hopkins and said "This means war." Commander Shultz described the conversation as follows:

... Mr. Hopkins, then expressed a view that since war was undoubtedly going to come at the convenience of the Japanese, it was too bad that we could not strike the first blow and prevent any sort of surprise. The President nodded and then said in effect, 'No, we can't do that. We are a democracy and a peaceful people.' Then he raised his voice and this much I remember definitely, he said, 'But, we have a good record.' The impression I got was that we would have to stand on that record, we could not make the first overt move, we would have to wait until it came... ²

On December 7, 1941, President Roosevelt sent a plea for peace to Emperor Hirohito which arrived after the Japanese fleet advanced on their targets. ³ Between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. on the same Sunday in Washington, part fourteen of the Japanese message #902, which was decoded, stated in part:

¹Quoted in Kimmel, p. 102.
²Quoted in Sherwood, pp. 426-27.
The Japanese government regrets to have to notify hereby the American government that in view of the attitude of the American government it cannot but consider that it is impossible to reach an agreement through further negotiations.¹

The fourteen-part message was to be presented at 1 p.m., December 7, 1941, to the State Department and the decoding machines in the Japanese Embassy were destroyed by the staff.² However Ambassador Nomura and Kurusu submitted the message to Cordell Hull at the State Department at two o'clock, an hour after the simultaneous Japanese attacks on Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Pearl Harbor.

At ten o'clock in the morning, three hours before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Captain Kramer of Naval Intelligence brought the intercepted fourteenth part of the Japanese message to Secretary of State Hull's office where Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of the Navy were present. These policy-makers in Washington knew war was near "... and Mr. Hull said he was certain that the Japanese were planning some deviltry and we were all wondering where the blow would strike."³

At one o'clock Washington time, a Japanese task force of twenty-three vessels including six aircraft carriers conducted a successful surprise attack on Pearl Harbor,⁴ causing twenty-eight

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²Ibid.

³Quoted in Trefousse, p. 135.

⁴Okumiya, p. 301.
hundred American casualties while destroying or damaging the major portion of the United States Pacific fleet. ¹

The attitude summing up the American government's opinion was expressed by Robert Sherwood at three o'clock on December 7, 1941, when President Roosevelt called in Secretary Hull, Stimson, Knox, as well as Admiral Stark and General Marshall for a conference.

The Conference met in not too tense an atmosphere because I think that all of us believed . . . the enemy was Hitler and that he could never be defeated without force of arms; that sooner or later we were bound to be in war and that Japan had given us an opportunity. Everyone however agreed on the seriousness of the war and that it would be a long, hard struggle. ²

¹Trefousse, p. 25.
²Sherwood, p. 431.
CONCLUSION

There are many reasons the United States took a strong stand towards Japan in 1941. Germany was the main threat to the Western democracies whereas Japan was of secondary importance. While Germany was conquering the European democracies, Japan acquired territories which were auxiliary to the European nations. But Japan's military expansion did, in fact, represent a threat to the Western Allies. It appears that Japan was conciliatory in her demands towards the United States and that the conciliation stemmed from Japan's powerful position in the Far East. However, it can be assumed that the object of Japan's reaching an agreement with the United States was to safeguard some of the fruits of Nipponese expansion and to restore normal trade relations. Japanese attempts for a rapprochement with the United States were neither altruistic nor submissive. At the end of the negotiations she was placed in the difficult position of either completely acquiescing to the United States' demands in exchange for economic benefits or going to war. She chose the latter.

The United States was also in a precarious position. A declaration of war without a provocative act, would have split the country because of the strong isolationist sentiment. On the one hand, Germany's quick victories in Europe had aroused grave concern. While
the United States was supplying economic aid to Britain and her allies through Lend-Lease and other acts, she was not fully united in a desire to declare war on Germany, and even if the President and his cabinet had gone to Congress to ask for a declaration of war, it is doubtful that the latter would have given its approval. Since Germany had avoided a confrontation with the United States, the latter waited for something to occur in the Atlantic.

Since invasion of Manchuria (Manchukuo), the United States' relationship with Japan was strained and when Japan invaded China and signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany, the relations went from bad to worse. This pact, designed to keep the Americans out of the European or Chinese War, did the opposite as it linked the destinies of Japan and Germany. Economically, the United States had issued a series of restrictive embargoes on raw materials going to Japan, which was climaxed in July 1941, with the freezing of Japanese assets in America after the Japanese military moved into southern Indo-China. Because of this, Japan was faced with either acquiescing to the United States or expanding, which meant war. The attempts to reach an agreement with the United States failed.

American policy-makers in the United States favored a strong stand against Japan. While in the earlier part of 1941, Japanese Plenipotentiary representative and the State Department explored a "Draft Understanding" which the United States rejected after Japan invaded southern Indo-China. The embargo, the support of Chiang
Kai-Shek's war in China, and the parallel notes after the Atlantic Conference were indications of American policy. In the last minute negotiations in November, 1941, while the Executive branch and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were aware of the Japanese decoded messages which indicated the imminence of war, they did not present conciliatory proposals to the Japanese Ambassadors. A last minute proposal was presented, which the Japanese interpreted as an ultimatum.

From that moment on the United States waited for war, aware that if Japan was at war, Germany would also be at war with the United States. While she knew that an attack was to occur, the United States could not make the initial attack because in a democratic nation, the government was responsible to the people and the people would not condone such an act. But with the assault at Pearl Harbor, the country became united and prepared to fight the Axis powers. The attack, although not expected at Pearl Harbor, and the declaration of war by Japan and Germany, provided the reasons for a United States declaration of war. Nathaniel Peffer, a Far Eastern publicist, wrote that Pearl Harbor was "neither an accident nor a coincidence, but wholly in the logic of American history. Pearl Harbor was an effect not a cause."¹

George Kennan a former noted ambassador and diplomatic historian clearly summed up the American government's attitude towards Japan in the period between the two world wars. Japan was the

¹Neumann, p. 289.
target of diplomatic pressures as the United States refused to discuss specific arrangements and acted with reluctance to suggest or to take responsibility for practical alternatives to the courses of actions which they opposed. The bulk of diplomatic activity was designed

... to deflect other powers notably Japan, from the pursuit of specific action we did not like. Rarely could we be lured into a discussion of the real quantities involved: of such problems as Japan's expanding population, or the weakness of government in China... we hacked away... at the positions of the other countries... above all the Japanese, in the unshakeable belief, that if our principles were commendable, their consequences could not be other than happy and acceptable... I can only say that if there was a possibility that the course of events might have been altered... it must be admitted that we did very little to exploit this possibility.¹

In conclusion, American policy toward Japan was designed either to make Japan accept the loss of all the Japanese had won by armed conquest since 1931 or go to war. When war was the order of the day, the United States policy-makers were not altogether sorry as it provided the United States with the opportunity of defeating Germany and Japan.

¹Kennan, pp. 45-48.
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